



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Shelley B. Mayer

Senator Mayer and Assemblymember Wallace Encourage Voter Participation Among Young People

SENATOR SHELLEY B. MAYER September 21, 2023

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Photo Courtesy of the New York State Executive Chamber

Law Signed to Establish Voter Registration and Pre-Registration Programs in Schools During Bill Signing with Governor Kathy Hochul

(New York, New York) - New York State Senator Shelley B. Mayer and Assemblymember Monica Wallace today announced their legislation (S.1733A/A.5180A) to establish school voter registration and pre-registration programs has been signed into law by Governor Kathy

Hochul.

This law will require local boards of education, BOCES, charter schools, and non-public schools to adopt policies that promote student voter registration and pre-registration, including providing access to voter registration and pre-registration applications during the school year and informing students of the state requirements for voter registration.

On average only 50% of the voting eligible population participates in annual elections. Presidential years reach as high as 60% but midterms fall to 40%, and **voter turnout rates for 18-29-year-olds** consistently fall well below all other age groups. In 2021, 18 to 24-year-olds only made up three percent of New Yorkers who cast ballots, and New Yorkers between 25 and 34 made up only eight percent. The **New York Civil Liberties Union found** that 40 percent of people who registered to vote after the 2016 primary election deadline were 18 to 24-year-olds, meaning they registered too late to participate. By teaching the students in school about the importance of civic engagement and by providing opportunities for them to register and pre-register to vote, we are instituting the habits of civic participation that will increase citizens' political efficacy and strengthen our democracy.

Senator Shelley B. Mayer said, "I am proud my bill to establish a voter registration access program has been signed into law. It is critical to the future of our democracy that we instill in our youth that their voice matters, the importance of civic engagement, and that they have an important role to play in the future of our nation. Through this education, we help our youth form habits that they will carry with them into adulthood and we encourage them to participate fully in our democracy. I thank Assemblymember Monica Wallace for her partnership on this important legislation and Governor Kathy Hochul for signing this into law."

Assemblymember Monica Wallace said, “A strong democracy requires robust participation by everyone. This bill will help ensure young people are ready to vote as soon as they are eligible. I thank my colleague Senator Shelley Mayer for carrying this bill in the Senate and thank Governor Hochul for signing this important legislation.”

Voter pre-registration for 16 - and 17-year olds is authorized under Chapter 2 of the Laws of 2019. This law provides the framework to ensure schools with students 16- 18 provide the opportunity for students to register to vote.

This law will take effect on July 1, 2024.