



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Zellnor Myrie

Myrie and Senate Majority Kick Off Session With Voting Rights Package

ZELLNOR MYRIE January 9, 2024



Includes Elections Database Bill Honoring Late Dr. John Flateau

ALBANY— Today the Senate passed a package of bills that would strengthen and protect voting rights and improve elections in New York State. The package, advanced by **Elections Committee Chair Zellnor Y. Myrie (D-Central Brooklyn)**, builds on the Senate's previous work to enact strong voter protections and improve election administration.

"For the past six years, the Senate Majority has placed voting rights and election reform at the very top of our agenda," **said Senator Myrie.** "By passing key voting rights bills at the beginning of each new legislative session, we are demonstrating our commitment to making New York a more voter-friendly state. At a moment when other states are moving in the opposite direction, I'm proud of and grateful to my colleagues for standing up for our democracy."

Among the bills passed by the Elections Committee and the full Senate today was **S.657-A, the "Dr. John L. Flateau Voting and Elections Database and Academic Center of New York Act."** This bill would establish the New York voting and elections database and institute to maintain a statewide database of voting and election data, which is currently not centralized. The bill, sponsored by **Senator Myrie,** was recently renamed to honor the late civil rights leader Dr. John Flateau, who passed away late last month.

"It's especially fitting that we pass legislation in honor of Dr. Flateau, a leader who I was privileged to know personally and whose contributions to voting rights and democracy in New York State are legendary," **added Senator Myrie.** "We may have lost a giant, but Dr. Flateau's legacy will live on in the work we continue to do to protect New Yorkers' rights."

The other legislation passed by the Senate today includes:

- **Crime of Voter Suppression:** This bill, S263, sponsored by Senator Stewart-Cousins, prohibits deceptive practices and the suppression of voters, and increases penalties for violations of the elective franchise.
- **Political Committee Public Website Transparency:** This bill, S6675, sponsored by Senator Neil Breslin requires public-facing websites that are operated by political committees to include "paid for by" language.

- **Democracy Preservation Act:** This bill, S371, sponsored by Senator Michael Gianaris would ban political spending by foreign-influenced business entities in New York's state and local elections.
- **Absentee Ballot Drop-off Box Locations:** This bill, S610, sponsored by Senator Brad Hoylman, allows local Board of Elections to establish absentee ballot drop-off locations to provide voters with a convenient alternative option to submit their absentee ballots.
- **Portable Polling Locations:** This bill, S242, sponsored by Senator Rachel May, amends the election law to allow counties the option to establish portable polling places for early voting.
- **Refreshments at the polls:** This bill, S616, sponsored by Senator Myrie, allows snacks and non-alcoholic drinks to be given to voters waiting in line at the polls.
- **Protecting Constitutional Rights:** This resolution, B1460, sponsored by Senator Liz Krueger, rescinds calls for a constitutional convention to protect all existing constitutional rights.
- **Ballot Order:** This bill, S5943, sponsored by Senator James Skoufis modifies the order in which candidates appear on the ballot in descending order based on the size of the electorate and requires certain federal offices to be listed before state, county, and local offices.
- **Multistate Voter List Maintenance Organizations:** This bill, S6173B, sponsored by Senator James Skoufis authorize the state board of elections to join a multistate voter list maintenance organization such as the electronic registration information center also known as ERIC.