



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James Tedisco

Tedisco and Walsh Call for New Constitutional Amendment to Protect Voter Rights in Congressional Special Elections

JAMES TEDISCO February 9, 2025

| ISSUE: **SPECIAL ELECTIONS, CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT, NORTH COUNTRY, STATE AND CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICTS**



"The 700,000 New Yorkers in NY21 Should Not Be Pawns on a Chessboard!"

Senator Tedisco and Assemblywoman Walsh respond to Majority Democrats plan to delay 21st NY Congressional District Special Election and deny representation to over 700,000 New Yorkers until November, by introducing new bill to give force of state constitutional law to existing law on filling vacancies for Congress within 70-80 days

Senator Jim Tedisco (R,C-Ballston Lake) and Assemblywoman Mary Beth Walsh (R,C-Ballston) today announced a new constitutional amendment they are introducing to protect voter rights and ensure that over 700,000 New Yorkers are not left in the lurch for nine months without representation in Washington, D.C.

Tedisco and Walsh's legislation would enshrine current state law for holding special elections into the New York State Constitution and make it much more difficult for governors and Albany legislative majorities to use honest, law-abiding New Yorkers as pawns on a chess board while they play political games with whoever is in power in the White House and U.S. Capitol.

Senator Tedisco and Assemblywoman Walsh have been forced to go this route due to a bill introduced late Friday night by the *Majority Leaders* ([S.4588](#)) to enable the Governor to delay calling the special election for New York's 21st Congressional District seat until the November 2025 election. Both Tedisco and Walsh represent portions of the 21st Congressional District.

Under current state law, when a vacancy for Congress occurs, the Governor has up to 10 days to call for a Special Election which must be held within 70 to 80 days. Tedisco and Walsh's constitutional amendment would simply enshrine this current law into the state constitution and prevent governors and majorities from constantly finagling state law to suit their dubious whims.

"It's an abomination that the Governor and Majorities are attempting to disenfranchise the voices of over 700,000 of their own constituents and rob them of their vote in Washington during one of the most crucial times in our nation's history and the representation they need to advocate for them with the federal bureaucracy when it comes to getting their Social Security checks, Medicare assistance, and income tax refunds, among other things. These

700,000 New Yorkers should not be pawns on a chessboard for the Governor and Majority Leaders to toy with in their war with the White House and Congress,” said Senator Jim Tedisco. “This isn’t about whether Democrats or Republicans are in power in Albany and Washington because if we don’t have a constitutional amendment in place for the calling of special elections, future governors and majorities can again easily bend the law when it’s politically convenient.”

“Albany Democrats have introduced new legislation to delay the special election for New York’s 21st Congressional District until November. If the Governor signs this, she will have taken away the constitutional right to representation of over 770,000 individuals in the North Country with the stroke of a pen. Following years of changes to election law to benefit themselves, we’re used to the Majority chipping away at what works, but this is a new low,” said Assemblywoman Mary Beth Walsh.

“This move disregards a law passed with bipartisan support in 2021, requiring the governor to call a special election within 10 days of a vacancy, and an election occurring 70-80 days later. The delay serves no legitimate purpose and will disenfranchise residents, leaving their concerns unaddressed for months. Adding insult to injury, the Democrats have the nerve to portray this as a wise cost-cutting measure when in reality anyone with eyes can see this as the bold, self-serving political move it really is,” said Assemblywoman Walsh.

“We wish we could say we are shocked and that they’ve ‘jumped the shark’ here but they don’t seem to care about the loss of representation in Washington because their policies led to the loss of one congressional seat in the last redistricting and we are projected to lose three more seats in the next Census. This is all about getting power, keeping power and expanding power,” said Senator Tedisco. Tedisco noted that the Majority’s laughable claim that moving the 21st Congressional District special election to November is aimed at saving money is a farce. “When you propose and pass state budgets that significantly increase

spending and taxes like the Governor and Majorities have done, moving the special election at the very last minute has nothing to do with saving tax dollars or protecting democracy and everything to do with a severe case of TDS,” said Senator Tedisco.

Senator Tedisco noted that Kathy Hochul was elected to Congress in a May 24, 2011 special election following the February 9, 2011 resignation of former Congressman Chris Lee.

“Kathy Hochul’s constituents in Western New York only had to wait about three months to get a congressional representative to serve them, why should the residents of the 21st Congressional District have to wait nine months?” asked Tedisco.

RELATED LEGISLATION

2025-S4588

- Introduced

- - In Committee Assembly
 - In Committee Senate

- - On Floor Calendar Assembly
 - On Floor Calendar Senate

- - Passed Assembly
 - Passed Senate

- Delivered to Governor
- Signed By Governor
-

Relates to filling vacancies in elective offices

February 07, 2025

In Senate Committee [Rules](#)

Sponsored by [Andrea Stewart-Cousins](#)

Do you support this bill?