



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Liz Krueger

## Senator Krueger Applauds Senate for Passing Voting Reform Legislation Expresses Disappointment in Senate Republicans for Opposition to Ballot Access

LIZ KRUEGER March 16, 2009

New York—Senator Liz Krueger praised the Senate for passing legislation today which would expand democracy by removing barriers to voting. The bill (S.2810) authorizes the use of titles, initials or abbreviations of names as signatures on absentee ballots. "Under existing law, ballots are often thrown out because the voter does not sign exactly the way he or she signed their registration," said Senator Krueger. "This bill will reduce the number of voters who are disenfranchised on technicalities."

"Voting is a fundamental right in our country not a privilege," said Senator Krueger. "I applaud the Senate today for removing an unnecessary barrier which was prohibiting citizens from exercising their right to vote."

The bill, sponsored by Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins, expands ballot access by counting the absentee votes of people who sign their name differently from how it appears on their voter registration form. Often times people will register to vote under one name but for a number of different reasons sign their name differently.

"My legal name is Elizabeth Krueger and that is reflected on my driver license," stated Senator Krueger. "However, for most of my life I have gone by the name Liz Krueger. If

someone was in a similar situation, should their ballot be thrown out and their right to be part of the democratic process dismissed because they sign their name Liz instead of Elizabeth?"

Unfortunately, the Republican conference in the Senate unanimously voted against the bill. Many members wrongly claimed that this bill would increase the amount of fraud in elections.

"I am extremely disappointed that none of my Republican colleagues in the Senate understood that that we should not be in the business of denying people the right to vote," said Senator Krueger. "Counting ballots of registered voters who sign their name differently than it appears on their registration card does not lead to fraud...it enables democracy. Voting against this bill amounts to tacit support of voter suppression."