



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

John J. Flanagan

Senate Passes Legislation To Save Taxpayers \$25 Million By Setting An August Date For State And Congressional Primaries

JOHN J. FLANAGAN March 2, 2016

| ISSUE: **ELECTION**



The New York State today passed legislation that creates one August primary date for state and Congressional races, saving taxpayers at least \$25 million and bringing the state into compliance with federal election requirements for overseas balloting. The bill ([S6604](#)), sponsored by Senator Fred Akshar (52nd Senate District), would designate the third Tuesday in August as the date to merge the current federal non-presidential primary held in June and the state primary held in September.

Senator Akshar, Chairman of the Senate's Elections Committee, said, "We have a responsibility to our constituents to eliminate government waste, save taxpayer dollars, and make it easier for the people to make their voices heard at the polls. A consolidated primary date will increase voter turnout and make it easier for our brave men and women serving in our armed forces to participate in the electoral process. I was proud to sponsor this bill."

Senate Majority Leader John J. Flanagan said, "This bill saves significant taxpayer money because it will reduce the number of times voters have to go to the polls for primary elections and ensures that the votes being cast by the military men and women risking their lives overseas to protect our freedom are counted. Holding the primary in June would unfairly inject politics into the critical work being undertaken during our legislative session, making August the most logical date."

Fourteen other states hold state and/or Congressional primaries in August. Setting a date for these elections earlier in the year would interfere with the state budget and end-of-session state legislative work that takes place, hindering the ability of current elected officials to perform their legislative responsibilities.

The bill passed today would merge the federal non-presidential and state primaries to the third Tuesday in August. This would save New York State approximately \$25 million by not having to hold both the currently scheduled June Congressional primary and September State primary and reduces the number of times voters would have to go to the polls.

An August primary election date also ensures that military personnel and New Yorkers living abroad would have an opportunity to vote and have their votes counted. In 2009, the Military Overseas Voter Empowerment (MOVE) Act was enacted to provide greater protections of the voting rights of military personnel, their families, and other overseas citizens.

Among other provisions, the MOVE Act requires states to transmit validly-requested absentee ballots to military and overseas voters no later than 45 days before a federal election. New York State's current September primary is not compliant with the 45-day MOVE Act requirement.

The bill will be sent to the Assembly.

RELATED LEGISLATION

2015-S6604

- 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

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Relates to primary elections and the timely transmission of ballots to military voters stationed overseas

January 29, 2016

In Assembly Committee

Sponsored by Fred Akshar

Do you support this bill?