



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph P. Addabbo Jr.

Addabbo urges action on legislation to reform New York State election laws and encourage greater voter participation

SENATOR JOSEPH P. ADDABBO, JR. January 26, 2018

| ISSUE: **VOTING REFORM, VOTING RIGHTS, EARLY VOTING, VOTER PROTECTION, ADDABBO**

In an effort to combat New York's abysmally low rates of voter turnout and otherwise reform the state's often archaic election laws, NYS Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr. is joining with a number of his Senate colleagues in advancing a package of bills to make it easier for all residents to participate in their democracy.

"Expanding and protecting voter rights here in New York is paramount in making the process easier and more accessible for a larger number of voters," said Addabbo, who joined in a State Capitol press conference to advocate for the legislation. "Having one of the lowest voter participation rates in the nation does not reflect well on our state. Voting is the cornerstone of our democracy, and if we want to continue to have a strong democracy, we need to enact sensible measures to allow and encourage more voters to get to the ballot box."

Out of the comprehensive multi-bill legislative package, Addabbo is personally co-sponsoring four of the proposals. One (S.7538) would change the layout of ballots to make them easier to read and understand, and another (S.840) would establish "no fault" absentee balloting by enabling any voter to request and cast their ballot by mail without declaring any reason for doing so. A third bill (S.3562), which would save taxpayer money spent on organizing and holding elections, would require state primary elections and federal primary elections to be

held on the same day. In addition, the Voter Empowerment Act (S.3304) would create a modern voter registration system to reduce costs for processing registrations, maintain complete and accurate voter registration lists, and make it easier overall for New Yorkers to register and vote.

Addabbo, who was chairman of the NYS Senate Elections Committee in 2009, noted that these proposals build upon legislation he has advanced in the past, including more than a dozen state laws he sponsored during the period when New York State and New York City were implementing provisions of the federal Help America Vote Act (HAVA).

“Many of the laws I sponsored were designed to improve voter education and awareness while making it easier for residents to get to the polls,” Addabbo said. “They included laws to provide better notice of primary elections to voters, streamline the absentee ballot process, help make sure that polls are routinely sited near public transportation routes, and expand the type and number of buildings with access for the disabled that can be used as polling sites.”

Additional election and voting reform bills in the legislative package Addabbo is supporting seek to establish an early voting system; create a crime of voter suppression; and implement uniform poll closing procedures to ensure integrity in the process. Others would expand and reform affidavit voting by allowing ballots to be cast and counted when a voter accidentally appears at the wrong election district in the right county.

“It’s no secret that we have great challenges ahead in restoring public trust in our electoral system and in our government itself,” said Addabbo. “We obviously require reasonable safeguards to ensure the integrity and veracity of our election process and results. However, it is equally clear that we need to remove unnecessarily burdensome obstacles that cause people to jump through hoops to participate in their democracy and that ultimately discourage people from even bothering to vote.”

2017-S7538

- 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
-

Enacts the voter friendly ballot act; repealer

January 22, 2018

In Senate Committee [Elections](#)

Sponsored by [Brian Kavanagh](#)

Do you support this bill?

2017-S840

- 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
-

Authorizes ballot by mail by removing cause for absentee ballot voting

January 05, 2017

In Senate Committee [Judiciary](#)

Sponsored by [Leroy Comrie](#)

Do you support this bill?

2017-S3562

-
- 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 24, 2017

In Senate Committee [Veterans, Homeland Security and Military Affairs](#)

Sponsored by [Andrea Stewart-Cousins](#)

Do you support this bill?

2017-S3304

-
- 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
 -

Enacts the voter empowerment act of New York

January 20, 2017

In Senate Committee [Rules](#)

Sponsored by [Michael Gianaris](#)

Do you support this bill?