



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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## Senate Democratic colleagues call for the passage of Fair Elections legislative package

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| ISSUE: **VOTING RIGHTS, VOTING REFORM, EARLY VOTING**

Every American citizen has a protected right to vote. This inalienable right is the very foundation of our democratic way of life, and yet throughout our state and nation, there have been deliberate efforts to suppress this right and make it harder for a person to cast their vote.

New York's voter turnout is among the nation's worst – a direct correlation to voter suppression and antiquated laws. To address this problem and strengthen the democratic process in New York my Senate Democratic colleagues and I have introduced a series of bills that will enable early voting, modernize voter registration, protect citizens from voter suppression efforts, cut voting system bureaucracy and red tape, and combat disenfranchisement efforts.

The legislation advanced by the Senate Democratic Conference will establish:

- **Early Voting:** This bill, S.7400 would establish an Early Voting system to permit eligible voters in New York State to vote in person during a designated period prior to any primary, special, or general election day.
- **The Deceptive Practices and Voter Suppression Act:** This bill, S.2952 creates a new electoral crime of voter suppression, punishable as a misdemeanor.
- **The Voter Empowerment Act:** This bill, S.3304 creates a modern voter registration system that will reduce costs for processing voter registrations and maintain complete and accurate voter registration lists. This legislation will help reduce the inaccuracy and

disenfranchisement caused by human error while also helping to prevent fraud.

- Consolidation of Federal and State Primaries: This bill, S.3562 would save tax payer dollars and make state primary elections the same day as federal primary elections.
- Constitutional Amendment to Repeal 10-Day Voter Registration Requirement: This bill, S.2478A is a concurrent resolution that amends Section 5 of Article 2 of the Constitution to eliminate the ten-day advance voter registration requirement. Once adopted, the Legislature would set guidelines for this provision.
- The Voter Friendly Ballot Act: This bill, S.7538 will enact changes to the layout of the ballot to be more accessible and easy to understand for voters.
- Prohibiting Election Districts from being Split On and Off Campus: This bill, S.3092 prohibits election districts being drawn in such a way that they are partly on and partly off a college or university campus property with 300 or more registered voters, excluding inactive voters. It would also require that the poll sites for election districts serving college or university voters should be on the campus or college or university property, or at a site approved by the college or university.
- Change of Party Enrollment Reform: This bill, S.5615 would allow a voter who has changed their enrollment from one party to another to vote in a primary election unless the change is submitted during the ninety days prior to a primary election.
- Expansion of Affidavit Voting: This bill, S.4074 would allow for the casting and counting of ballots by voters, otherwise eligible, when the voter appears at the wrong Election District but within the proper county.
- Reduce Restrictions on Affidavit Voting: This bill, S.1265 eliminates the requirement to include previous registration address when applying for an affidavit ballot.
- Uniform Closing Night Procedures Act: This bill, S.7090 would streamline process for closing poll sites at the end of an Election Day to better maintain integrity in the process by ensuring an orderly and uniform procedure.
- No-Fault Absentee Voting: This bill, S.840, would amend the state Constitution to allow for

any voter to request to vote by mail without declaring any reason for doing so.

- Reduce Voter Registration Timeline Requirements: This bill, S.7131, will lower the statutory registration deadline from 25 to 15 days for primary elections and from 20 days to 10 days for the general election.

My Senate Democratic colleagues and I have also issued a report detailing where New York State stands compared with other states on issues like early voting, same day registration, combatting voter disenfranchisement, and other pro-voter issues. The full report is available here: <https://www.scribd.com/document/369800086/NYS-Senate-Democratic-Conference-Voting-Reforms-and-Policy-Report>