



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Alessandra Biaggi

SENATOR BIAGGI INTRODUCES BILL TO ALLOW VOTERS TO REQUEST ABSENTEE BALLOTS IN CASE OF PUBLIC HEALTH RISK

ALESSANDRA BIAGGI March 10, 2020

As the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) in NYS spreads, Senator Biaggi takes precaution to protect voters' rights amid outbreak.

ALBANY, NY – Amid the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak in New York State and ahead of the presidential primary election, State Senator Alessandra Biaggi has introduced legislation ([S8015](#)) to allow eligible voters to request an absentee ballot if they are concerned that voting in person could expose themselves or others to a public health risk.

The New York Department of Health and Mental Hygiene has advised individuals with underlying health conditions who are at a greater risk of serious illness if they contract the virus to avoid unnecessary gatherings or events. Accordingly, at risk individuals may want to avoid voting in person at a crowded polling place on a presidential primary Election Day. [According to recent reports](#), there are 4,000 people quarantined around New York State to prevent the spread of the Coronavirus. Any individuals still in quarantine on Election Day in April will be unable to exercise their right to vote.

Current statute provides limited circumstances for eligible voters to request an absentee ballot, such as being out of their county of residence or New York City on Election Day, or

having an illness or disability that prevents them from appearing in person to vote. This bill would add an additional criteria for requesting an absentee ballot for New Yorkers who are in quarantine or concerned about the public health risk.

State Senator Alessandra Biaggi (D-Bronx/Westchester) issued the following statement:

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“As the Novel Coronavirus spreads in our state, and New York approaches a consequential presidential primary election, we must act to ensure that every voter can make their voice heard in April. There are many older New Yorkers and those with underlying health conditions in my district who are at a heightened risk from the virus – they should not have to choose between safeguarding their own health and fulfilling their civic duty. Nor should New Yorkers who are in quarantine be denied their right to participate on Election Day. While I hope that the current public health crisis will have calmed by the April and June primary elections, we must prepare for all scenarios, and act now to ensure that every New Yorker can safely vote in our upcoming primary elections. I urge the Legislature to advance this bill swiftly.”

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RELATED LEGISLATION

2019-S8015

- 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 absentee voting

March 09, 2020

Signed by Governor

Sponsored by [Alessandra Biaggi](#)

Do you support this bill?