



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

George M. Borrello

## Senator Borrello and GOP Colleagues Urge Governor Cuomo to Protect Election Integrity by Vetoing Absentee Ballot Legislation

GEORGE M. BORRELLO June 4, 2020

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“When the State Senate returned to Albany last week for a two-day session, my expectation was that we would be acting on legislation to help the thousands of struggling small businesses in New York who have been brought to the brink by our economic shutdown, addressing the continuing missteps in the state’s COVID-19 response to our nursing homes, the failures of the Department of Labor’s handling of unemployment claims and the ongoing overreach of the Governor’s emergency powers. Yet, we addressed none of those issues.

However, the Majorities in both houses did pass legislation that will create yet another problem at this difficult time - Senate Bill 8130D which will allow for the electronic application of absentee ballots and remove the requirement that such applications be signed by the voter.

“The right to vote is the most fundamental right in our democracy. Yet, this legislation would undermine trust in the integrity of our election process by expanding the potential for voter fraud. A signature has always been required of those requesting absentee ballots to verify the person requesting and returning the ballot are one in the same. Without that verification, there will be virtually no way for boards of election to ensure the legitimacy of the ballot. Nationwide research on voter fraud by the Heritage Foundation has shown that absentee ballots are particularly vulnerable to manipulation. We know that firsthand here in New York; in its last audit of boards of election absentee voting processes, the Comptroller’s office found the process lacking proper oversight and identified many ballots without the proper information that should have been rejected, but instead were counted. A 2014 candidate for the 86<sup>th</sup> Assembly district used absentee ballots for a fraud scheme that nearly succeeded in placing him in office.

“As we continue to navigate the myriad challenges presented by COVID-19, ensuring that eligible voters exercise their right to vote is an issue we need to address. However, it must be done without compromising the integrity of the election process. This legislation fails that test, which is why I, along with several of my colleagues, have sent a letter to Governor Cuomo requesting that he veto this legislation.”

The letter Senator Borrello and his colleagues sent to Governor Cuomo is attached.