



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Michael Gianaris

As Early Voting Lines Stretch On For Hours, Senate Deputy Leader Gianaris Announces “Make Voting Easy” Act, Requiring More Poll Sites

MICHAEL GIANARIS October 29, 2020

| ISSUE: **MAKE VOTING EASY ACT**, **EARLY VOTING**, **BOARD OF ELECTIONS**, **VOTING RIGHTS**, **ELECTION REFORM**



NEW YORK – Senate Deputy Leader Michael Gianaris, who **personally witnessed** lines stretching for several blocks at Early Voting poll sites, is proposing new legislation to substantially increase the number of Early Voting sites across New York. Under Senator Gianaris’ proposal — the Make Voting Easy Act — every county in New York would be

required to have one poll site for every 25,000 registered voters.

“Boards of Elections failed to adequately provide enough Early Voting opportunities this year. All over the state, people have been waiting several hours to vote, which is not what our democracy should look like,” said **Senate Deputy Leader Michael Gianaris**. “The current structure of our Boards of Elections has failed to fulfill its primary mission of facilitating voting. Drastic reform is necessary.”

"At a moment when our democracy is on the ballot, it is imperative that our laws do more to make voting easier and more accessible," said **Senator Zellnor Myrie, Chair of the Elections Committee**. "I am grateful to the poll workers diligently managing the extraordinary turnout this year, but we must do more. As we heard during our Elections Committee hearings this year, and as we are seeing on the ground across our city, there is clearly a need for an even greater expansion of early voting to ensure everyone has access to the polls."

Senator Myrie chaired Senate hearings following New York's first-ever Early Voting in 2019 and will lead the Senate's efforts after this election to provide oversight over voting problems currently being experienced.

The Board of Elections was questioned extensively earlier this year by legislators at a hearing chaired by Senator Myrie following failures during the June primary elections. This latest failure has created large crowds for extended periods during a global pandemic, an outcome policymakers had tried to avoid.

An analysis of Early Voting sites across the state shows that a majority of counties would see an increase in the number of polling locations [under Senator Gianaris' proposal](#). In the 5 boroughs, Queens would move from 17 Early Voting sites to 48, the Bronx would go from 17 to 33, Brooklyn from 27 to 66, Manhattan from 16 to 48, and Staten Island from 10 to 13.

In 2019, Senator Gianaris identified the problem of too few Early Voting sites for that year's primary election and called on the New York City Board of Elections to expand the number of sites across the five boroughs. While the Board responded by increasing the number somewhat, it is clearly not enough.

Early Voting was enacted last year for the first time by the state legislature. The bill was sponsored by Senator Myrie with the support of Senator Gianaris and the entire Senate Democratic Majority. Senator Gianaris was the first person in Queens to vote early in 2019.