



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Michael Gianaris

## Senate Deputy Leader Gianaris, Assembly Member Walker Announce Their Landmark Automatic Voter Registration Legislation Signed By Governor

MICHAEL GIANARIS December 22, 2020

| ISSUE: **AUTOMATIC VOTER REGISTRATION**, **#AVRNOW**, **VOTING RIGHTS**, **ELECTIONS**, **VOTING**



NEW YORK - Senate Deputy Leader Michael Gianaris and Assembly Member Latrice Walker announced the New York Automatic Voter Registration Act ([S.8806](#)) has been signed into law by the Governor. The legislation will automatically register eligible New Yorkers to vote upon interactions with various state and local agencies.

**Senate Deputy Leader Michael Gianaris** said, “At a time in our country when voting rights are under assault, New York is living up to our potential as a progressive leader. Access to the ballot box should be easy and fair, and enacting Automatic Voter Registration will go a long way towards improving voter participation. I am proud and thankful that the Governor has signed this bill, paving the way for over a million more New Yorkers to vote.”

**Assembly Member Latrice Walker** said, “I am proud to be the prime sponsor of this monumental election reform bill. The right to vote is fundamental in a democracy such as ours and has been under attack for over one hundred and fifty years. The Automatic Voter Registration (AVR) bill puts New York State on the right side of democracy and history by acknowledging years of voter suppression and making the process to register to vote easy, and accessible to New Yorkers. I along with the other members of the legislature will continue to fight for the fundamental rights that keep our democracy alive. Voting should be easy, efficient, and accessible.”

Prior to a series of election reforms enacted by the Senate and Assembly as part of the historic 2019 session, New York routinely had some of the lowest voter turnout rates in the country. In 2018, for example, New York ranked 48<sup>th</sup> in turnout. Automatic registration also enjoyed the support of 64% of New Yorkers in a recent poll.

Eighteen other states and the District of Columbia have modernized their voting laws in this or similar ways. In Oregon, 94% of eligible individuals who interacted with applicable agencies were registered, leading Oregon to have the largest turnout increase between 2012 and 2016. In 2018, it had one of the highest turnout rates in the country.

**Susan Lerner, Executive Director of Common Cause/NY and co-founder of the Let NY Vote Coalition** said, “New York finally has enacted automatic voter registration, thanks to the tenacious leadership of Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins, Senator Mike Gianaris, and

Assembly Member Latrice Walker! We have finally brought New York in line with 19 other states plus D.C. We can't wait, it's time to let New York vote!"

**Sean Morales-Doyle, Deputy Director of the Voting Rights and Elections Program at the Brennan Center for Justice at NYU School of Law.** "Adopting automatic voter registration is a big step forward for New York, which would join sixteen other states and D.C. in embracing this reform. The policy has dramatically increased registration in states across the country. And because this bill would put AVR in place in a number of New York agencies, it is sure to reach a broad cross-section of New Yorkers. I thank Senator Gianaris and Assembly Member Walker who consistently fought for this legislation."

**Sean McElwee of AVR Now** said, "AVR NOW applauds the state Senate for passing this vital reform to give millions of New Yorkers a more secure and efficient access to the ballot. We thank Senator Gianaris and Assembly Member Walker for their leadership on this issue."

**Saad Amer, Founder, Plus1Vote** said, "We are seeing so many flaws in the fabric of our democracy. Constant attacks on our electoral system disproportionately impact youth and people of color. Automatic voter registration will enfranchise thousands and remove unnecessary huddles to participating in our democracy. I am glad this legislation is finally enacted after years of effort by so many, and I appreciate Senator Gianaris his unwavering determination on this issue."

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RELATED LEGISLATION

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**2019-S8806**

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- 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
  -

Establishes an electronic personal voter registration process

July 18, 2020

Signed by Governor

Sponsored by **Michael Gianaris**

Do you support this bill?