



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Brad Hoylman-Sigal

## Senate Passes Hoylman Bill Allowing New Yorkers to Submit Absentee Ballots Via Secure Drop Boxes

BRAD HOYLMAN-SIGAL January 11, 2021

| ISSUE: **SENATOR BRAD HOYLMAN, SD 27, ELECTION REFORM, BALLOT DROP BOX, ABSENTEE VOTING**

NEW YORK -- Today, the New York State Senate passed legislation ([S.492](#)) sponsored by Senator Brad Hoylman (D/WFP-Manhattan) that would allow local Boards of Elections to establish absentee ballot drop box locations across the state.

Ballot drop boxes have been proven to be a secure, reliable option in at least 33 states and the District of Columbia, and have been widely used for years in states that conduct their elections entirely by mail such as Colorado, Hawaii, Oregon, Utah, and Washington. Recent analyses show miniscule rates of possible fraud in those states (0.0025%).

**Senator Hoylman said:** “In the most recent elections, some New Yorkers stood on line for as long as five hours to cast their ballots. With today’s vote, New York is one step closer to joining the at least 33 states and the District of Columbia that reduce wait times and make voting easier and safer by deploying secure drop boxes as an option for returning absentee ballots. Thank you to Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins for prioritizing legislation that protects our democracy, while others desperately attempt to undermine the power of the vote. I look forward to continuing to work with Assemblymember Dick Gottfried to enshrine this legislation into law.”

On August 31, 2020, Senator Hoylman, Assemblymember Gottfried, and other elected officials from New York City gathered on the steps of the Farley Post Office Building in Manhattan with a prototype of a secure ballot drop box to grow support for this legislation.

This past summer the U.S. Department of Homeland Security [issued guidance](#) to state and local election officials on how to conduct secure elections during the pandemic that called drop boxes a “secure and convenient means for voters to return their mail ballot.”

The legislation passed today would do the following:

- Authorize local Boards of Elections to establish locations with secured absentee ballot drop boxes for voters to return their marked absentee ballots;
- Require local Boards of Elections to post the locations of absentee ballot drop boxes on their websites the same day the locations are established;
- Direct the State Board of Elections to promulgate rules and regulations to implement the establishment of absentee ballot drop-off locations, including, but not limited to the location, chain of custody, pick-up times, proper labeling, and security of the drop boxes; and
- Deem an absentee ballot to be timely received by a Board of Elections if a voter deposited their ballot in a drop box before the close of polls on Election Day.

More than 84,000 absentee ballots were invalidated during the June 2020 Democratic primary election in New York City: a stunning 21% of all ballots received by the NYC Board of Elections. Many ballots were invalidated for reasons related to the mail-in process, such as lack of an appropriate postmark or late arrival due to delays.

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## 2021-S492

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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
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Authorizes boards of elections to establish absentee ballot drop-off locations

January 04, 2021

In Assembly Committee

Sponsored by **Brad Hoylman-Sigal**

Do you support this bill?