



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Kevin Thomas

## Senator Kevin Thomas And Senate Majority Advance Legislation to Protect Voter Health and Election Participation Amid the COVID-19 Pandemic

KEVIN THOMAS January 26, 2021

| ISSUE: [ABSENTEE VOTING](#), [ELECTION REFORM](#), [DEMOCRACY](#), [LOCAL ELECTIONS](#), [COVID-19](#)



(Garden City, NY) - Senator Kevin Thomas, together with the Senate Majority, voted to advance election system reforms to protect New York voters' health and our state's democratic process amid the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. The bills build on the major legislation passed earlier this month, and the historic reforms enacted during the 2019 and

2020 Legislative Session. The legislative package includes expanded access to absentee ballots, lower petition requirements for the 2021 elections, remote participation for political party designation conferences, and protections for nursing and long-term care facility residents.

“This legislation package works to ensure that we are protecting voters' health and our electoral process amid the COVID-19 pandemic,” Senator Kevin Thomas said. “I thank my colleagues in the Senate Majority, and Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins for continuing to strengthen our democracy and protect New Yorkers as they exercise their right to vote. We will continue supporting New Yorkers at the ballot box and work to eliminate barriers that exist to limit participation.”

The bills advance by Senator Kevin Thomas and the Senate Majority include:

- **Protect New Yorkers’ Health by Expanding Access to Absentee Ballots:** This legislation, Senate Bill S.1632 sponsored by Senator Shelley Mayer, will allow voters to request an absentee ballot for upcoming village elections if they are concerned about contracting or spreading a disease that may cause illness to the voter or to other members of the public.
- **Reduce Petition Numbers to Help Protect Public Health:** This legislation, Senate Bill S.2733 sponsored by Senator Rachel May, will reduce the number of signatures for designating and nominating petitions to thirty percent of the number required by law.
- **Enable Remote Participation for Political Party Designations:** This legislation, Senate Bill S.1705A sponsored by Senator Michelle Hinchey, will enable political parties to use video or telephone conferencing to conduct party designations and nominations for village, town, and political party elections.
- **Protect Nursing and Long-Term Care Facility Residents’ Health while Guaranteeing Access to Absentee Ballots:** This legislation, Senate Bill S.1644 sponsored by Senator Jeremy Cooney,

will ensure that absentee ballots can be delivered to New York nursing homes and long-term care facilities without Board of Elections inspectors having to physically enter the premises. This will help avoid accidental exposure to COVID-19 for residents of these facilities.

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#### RELATED LEGISLATION

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### **2021-S1632**

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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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[Relates to absentee voting during village elections](#)

January 14, 2021

In Senate Committee **Elections**

Sponsored by **Shelley B. Mayer**

Do you support this bill?