



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Edward A. Rath III

## Senator Rath Discusses the State of Elections in New York

EDWARD A. RATH III December 10, 2021

| ISSUE: **ELECTIONS, BOARDS OF ELECTION, INDEPENDENT REDISTRICTING COMMISSION, REDISTRICTING, GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY**



**The Voters Have Spoken. Albany Should Listen.**

Edward Rath, State Senator -61<sup>st</sup> District, Ranking Member of the Senate Elections Committee

This past election day, the voters of New York State made their voices heard and overwhelmingly rejected three ballot propositions that would have drastically altered how the state administers its elections. While other propositions were successful, voters made informed decisions to vote against proposals that they felt would add partisanship and increase the potential of fraud in our voting process.

Unfortunately, Democrats in Albany have already begun trying to find ways to undermine the will of the residents. Just weeks after Ballot Proposition 1 failed, which would have significantly changed the voter-approved Independent Redistricting Commission to inject partisan politics into drawing district lines,

Governor Hochul signed legislation to increase the State Legislature's ability to gerrymander districts for their own benefit. This bill was signed on the eve of Thanksgiving so no one would notice.

Twice in the past 7 years, the voters have supported bipartisan legislation creating the Independent Redistricting Commission and rejected measures to weaken and politicize the system. For the Governor to sign Senate Bill S7150 directly negating the will of the voters is pure partisan pandering at its worse. The bosses of Tammany Hall would have been proud of such a deplorable act that holds the voters of our state in contempt. Actions like this which does nothing but empower corrupt party bosses are exactly why so many voters have lost confidence in their government.

The Chairman of the Senate Elections Committee also recently released a report focused on improving our election process. The report was issued after a series of hearings held across the state.

As Ranking Member of the Senate Elections Committee, I participated in several of the hearings and was hopeful that they would offer valuable insight into how to improve our system. I was interested in hearing directly from the people who administer our elections and how the state can do better. Unfortunately, I believe that the recently released report left much to be desired and made recommendations rooted in advancing a political agenda rather than making practical improvements to the administration of our elections. Among the most glaring omissions are the many ways in which the Majority in the State Legislature has failed to support our local governments and boards of elections across the State. In the name of "reform," the Democrat Majority has pushed dozens of new mandates on election administrators with little time to prepare, minimal training resources and virtually no technical or monetary support.

It is no wonder why so many election professionals feel as though the state is willingly setting them up to fail to advance a partisan agenda.

Make no mistake, there are ways that we can work to improve access for voters and ensure trust in the integrity of the system. This can only happen if the public has the confidence that all voices were heard and respected throughout the process. Bipartisanship is a must in our election process.

The last thing we should be doing is taking steps that overrules the will of the voters.