



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Michael Gianaris

Senate Deputy Leader Gianaris Announces His Voting Reform Bills Signed Into Law By Governor Hochul, Requiring Timely Counting Of Absentee Ballots And Increasing Number Of Early Voting Sites

MICHAEL GIANARIS December 23, 2021

| ISSUE: **ABSENTEE BALLOTS, EARLY VOTING, MAKE VOTING EASY ACT, VOTING REFORM, VOTING RIGHTS**



NEW YORK – Senate Deputy Leader Michael Gianaris announced that Governor Kathy Hochul signed two of his bills to improve New York’s elections. The first, the Make Voting Easy Act ([S.4306-b/A.5424](#)), greatly increases the mandated number of early voting sites. The second requires absentee ballots be counted in time for unofficial results to be known on election night ([S.1027-a/A.7931](#)).

“To increase faith in our democracy, people should be able to vote more easily and know election results in a timely manner. That includes ensuring voters do not wait on lengthy lines to vote early, and requiring absentee ballots to be counted more expeditiously,” said **Senate Deputy Leader Michael Gianaris**. “I am grateful Governor Hochul signed these critical measures into law, which will give New Yorkers greater confidence in our elections.”

“With the increased use of absentee ballots that we saw over the last year due to the pandemic, and with the passage of legislation which will permit no excuse absentee ballots in the future, it is important that our boards of elections are able to efficiently canvass and count those ballots,” **Assembly Member Robert Carroll**, the Assembly Sponsor the absentee counting bill, said. “This legislation will streamline that process, and help make sure every New York voter’s ballot is counted. I was pleased to work with Senator Gianaris to pass it, and am glad Governor Hochul saw fit to enact it.”

“Few rights are as important as the right to vote and early voting access has proven a successful way to make it easier for voters to exercise that right,” said **Assembly Member Al Taylor**, the Assembly sponsor of the Make Voting Easy Act. “I am proud to sponsor the Make Voting Easy Act along with Senator Gianaris so that all New Yorkers wishing to do so can vote early and safely in our state without fear of burdensome wait times or excessive crowding and I thank Governor Hochul for signing it.”

During the Covid-19 pandemic, more New Yorkers voted by absentee ballot than ever before. That led to some elections, including the NY-22 congressional race as well as state Senate races across the state, taking weeks before outcomes were determined. Senator Gianaris’ legislation requires absentee ballots to be canvassed prior to Election Day with results to be announced after polls close on election night – rather than the current rules, which require lengthy delays in the process.

Senator Gianaris also identified the problem of too few Early Voting sites 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 slightly, it was clearly not enough. Early Voting was enacted for the first time by the state legislature in 2019. Senator Gianaris was the first person in Queens to vote early in 2019.

Blair Horner, NYPIRG Executive Director, said “NYPIRG applauds Governor Hochul's approval of legislation to make voting easier in New York. We thank Senator Gianaris and Assemblymembers Carroll and Taylor for their advocacy of these two measures. For too long New York suffered from low voter participation. These bills, plus others approved in recent years, have bolstered the state's democracy.”

Dustin Czarny, Democratic Caucus Chair NYS Elections Commissioner Association, said, “Now more than ever it is important for New York to invest and expand in our Democracy. The Make Voting Easy Act expands on Early Voting in New York by adding more sites and ensuring that all New Yorkers have access to this vital reform. Furthermore, the signing of S1027A safeguards the absentee ballots of New Yorkers shielding them from unnecessary challenges and allows Boards of Elections to include most absentee ballot results on election night allowing New Yorkers to know the election results in a quicker more modern fashion. I thank Senator Gianaris for his leadership on these vital reforms and look forward to implementing them in 2022.”

RELATED LEGISLATION

2021-S4306B

- 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

- Relates to enacting the "Make Voting Easy Act" to require the board of elections to designate at least one early voting polling place for every thirty thousand registered voters in each county

February 03, 2021

Signed by Governor

Sponsored by **Michael Gianaris**

Do you support this bill?

2021-S1027A

- 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 the canvassing of absentee, military and special ballots and ballots cast in affidavit envelopes; repealer

January 06, 2021

Signed by Governor

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Do you support this bill?