



March, 2018

Dear Hon. Messrs. Cuomo, Flanagan, Heastie, and Klein and Ms. Stewart-Cousins:

We, the undersigned local officials, urge you to commit to giving all eligible New Yorkers the freedom to vote by including Early Voting funding and legislation in the 2018-19 state budget, as well as an expansive Automatic Voter Registration system, as the first steps towards modernizing elections in New York State.

As local elected officials, we see firsthand the challenges of running elections in New York. The experience which New Yorkers have voting varies much too widely. While some New Yorkers do not experience problems registering and accessing the voting booth, for too many the process is confusing and discouraging. Even one voter who is disenfranchised because of antiquated voting laws is one voter too many- and we know that there are many who are not able to cast their ballots.

It is important for all New Yorkers that our voting system works well, yet our state has consistently failed to adopt any of the common-sense steps that would safeguard our elections without shutting eligible citizens out of the voting process. There are 37 other states including Texas, Ohio, Florida, Georgia, North Carolina and Oklahoma that have adopted Early Voting laws to enable more citizens to have their voices heard and improve election administration. We believe that it is unacceptable that New York is not among them. Even worse, New York's failure to adopt simple reform measures has been cited as an excuse when other states attempt to cut back or repeal voting rights in an effort to deny citizens the opportunity to vote. There is much to be done to ensure that New York's election laws help foster a truly inclusive and representative democracy. Establishing and funding an Early Voting process in New York is an important first step that can be accomplished during this budget cycle. We urge you to do everything in your power to achieve that goal.

Hard working New Yorkers should not need to choose between their jobs and voting. Early Voting in New York would finally give voters who are seniors, disabled, in school, working, or parents taking care of their families, a chance to get to their polling location and cast their ballots when it is convenient for them – not just on one day. Early Voting would also be an important addition to New York's disaster preparedness, helping to avoid the confusion and chaos that can result from extreme weather events, such as Superstorm Sandy and Hurricane Irene, that may occur close to Election Day.

Early Voting has shown to be popular with voters across the political spectrum as well as both Republican and Democratic election administrators. We are impressed by the recent Siena College polling results, which show that no matter where New Yorkers live – in rural, urban or suburban areas – a significant majority of them support early voting for New York. We were not surprised by these polling results, as they mirror our own experience in talking with our constituents.

Setting up an Automatic Voter Registration system that functions through contacts with numerous state agencies will improve the security and accuracy of our voter rolls, as well as help combat our state's persistent low voter turnout.

Now more than ever, we must recognize that voting rights are civil rights. Generations of brave Americans fought and died to ensure that we have the opportunity to vote, but New York's failure to pass simple solutions for fair and secure elections poses a serious threat to freedoms that we depend on and work so hard to protect.

Our state must encourage voting, rather than discourage it, by working to reform outdated voting laws as so many other states have successfully done. With your leadership, we can set up an Early Voting system that ensures the accuracy of New York's elections and the health of our democracy.

Sincerely,

DuWayne Gregory, Presiding Officer, County Legislature, Suffolk County

Francena Amparo, County Legislator, Dutchess County

Tracey Bartels, County Legislator, Ulster County

Keith Batman, County Legislator, Cayuga County

Joshua Bauroth, County Legislator, Monroe County

Hannah Black, County Legislator, Dutchess County

Catherine Borgia, County Legislator, Westchester County

Craig Brendli, County Legislator, Dutchess County

Michael Brown, County Legislator, Oneida County

Doug Bullock, County Legislator, Albany County

Siela Bynoe, County Legislator, Nassau County

Deborah Dawson, County Legislator, Tompkins County

Sam Fein, County Legislator, Albany

Manna Jo Greene, County Legislator, Ulster County

Christopher Johnson, County Legislator, Westchester County

Anna Kelles, County Legislator, Tompkins County

Monica Martinez, County Legislator, Suffolk County

Kristofer Munn, County Legislator, Dutchess County

Nick Page, County Legislator, Dutchess County

William Reinhardt, County Legislator, Albany County

James Sheppard, County Legislator, Monroe County

Mary Jane Shimsky, County Legislator, Westchester County

Joel Tyner, County Legislator, Dutchess County

Tara N. Gaston, Supervisor, Saratoga County

Gregory Young, Supervisor, Fulton County

Svante Myrick, Mayor, Ithaca

Steven Noble, Mayor, Kingston

Thomas Roach, Mayor, White Plains

Kathleen Talbot, Deputy Mayor, Peekskill

Darius Shahinfar, Treasurer, Albany

Anthony Eramo, City Council President, Long Beach

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Owusu Anane, Council Member, Albany  
Dorcey Applyrs, Council Member, Albany  
Diana Ayala, Council Member, New York City  
Justin Brannan, Council Member, New York City  
Cynthia Brock, Council Member, Ithaca  
Molly Clifford, Council Member, Rochester  
Alan Cohen, Council Member, City of Oneida  
William Conrad, Council Member, Tonawanda  
Joseph Driscoll, Council Member, Syracuse  
Amber Grant, Council Member, Beacon  
Ben Kallos, Council Member, New York City  
Anna Kaplan, Council Member, North Hempstead  
Mike Kelly, Council Member, City of Plattsburgh  
Kelly Kimbrough, Council Member, Albany  
Brad Lander, Council Member, New York City  
Steve Levin, Council Member, New York City  
Laura Lewis, Council Member, Ithaca  
Jodi McCredo, Council Member, Beacon  
Karen Mejia, Council Member, Newburgh  
Ducson Nguyen, Council Member, Ithaca  
Keith Powers, Council Member, New York City  
Antonio Reynoso, Council Member, New York City  
Donovan Richards, Council Member, New York City  
Carlina Rivera, Council Member, New York City  
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Helen Rosenthal, Council Member, New York City  
Ezra Scott Jr, Council Member, Niagara Falls  
Cam Tien, Council Member, Rome  
Jumaane Williams, Council Member, New York City  
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Mark Cuthbertson, Council Member, Town of Huntington  
Terry Nelson, Council Member, Town of Beacon  
Marion Porterfield, Council Member, Schenectady  
Viviana Russell, Council Member, Town of North Hempstead  
Neil Bettez, Supervisor, Town of New Paltz  
Darrah Cloud, Supervisor, Pine Plains  
Daniel Torres, Deputy Supervisor, Town of New Paltz  
Dorothy L. Goosby, Senior Council Member, Hempstead

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John Bouvier, Town Council Member, Southampton  
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Barbra Kingsley, Town Council Member, White Creek  
Meg LeFevre, Town Council Member, Town of Plattsburgh  
Sarah Lister, Town Council Member, Potsdam  
Jen Metzger, Town Council Member, Rosendale  
Kerin Rigney, Town Council Member, DeWitt  
Tammy Taber, Town Council Member, White Creek  
Stephanie Townsend, Town Council Member, Pittsford  
Lance Wang, Town Council Member, White Creek  
Ross Whitford, Town Council Member, Eaton  
Robin Wilt, Town Council Member, Brighton  
Tom Wood, Town Council Member, Town of Plattsburgh  
Samuel Young, Town Council Member, DeWitt  
Brian Pugh, Mayor, Village of Ossining  
Molly Reilly, Mayor, Sackets Harbor  
Quantel Bazemore, Village Trustee, Ossining  
John Codman III, Village Trustee, Ossining  
Omar Herrera, Village Trustee, Ossining  
Sean O'Brien, Village Trustee, Canton  
Carmen Pineyro, Village Trustee, Freeport  
Alexandra Gordon, Vice President, Comsewogue School District Board of Education  
Elizabeth Hallmark, School Board Member, Rochester City School District  
Jennifer Mecozzi, School Board Member, Buffalo City School District  
Vickie Smith, School Board Member, Albany City School District  
Maribel Toure, School Board Member, Hempstead School District  
Tammie Williams, Library Trustee, Elmont Public Library