

TUESDAY, MAY 2

VOTER

DAY 2017

Fact Sheet

This is a critical moment for voting rights in New York. Nearly 2 million voting-age citizens in our state are not registered to vote. New York's voter turnout rate is one of the lowest in the nation. Our restrictive, outdated voting laws pose significant obstacles for too many New Yorkers. While other states have made it easier for people to register and vote, our state has fallen far behind.

New York should take the lead by making sure that every eligible New Yorker can register and cast a ballot. Our city and our state are strongest when all citizens can participate equally in electing our leaders and choosing our priorities. It's time for the legislature to take action, break down New York's long-standing barriers to voting, and show the nation what a modern, inclusive, and participatory election system looks like.

How will the **VOTER EMPOWERMENT ACT** (A2278, S3304) remove barriers to voter registration?

With two million eligible New Yorkers currently left off the voter rolls, it is long past time to transform the state's approach to voter registration. Right now, most of us register by filling out a pen-and-paper registration form and mailing it to the Board of Elections. This system is prone to errors, including typos and lost registration forms. The Voter Empowerment Act will improve our current voter registration process and help more people get registered by:

- Making it the government's responsibility to make sure that every citizen who wants to be registered is a registered voter.
- Allowing city and state agencies that interact with voters to automatically register them with the Board of Elections — unless a voter opts out.
- Expanding online registration, so that more people can register and update their information online.
- Updating a voter's registration automatically if he or she moves within the state.
- Allowing 16- and 17-year-olds to preregister so that their registrations turn active once they turn 18.
- Creating an Election Day failsafe for voters who show up at the polls and find they are not registered, so they will be able to cast a regular ballot.

How will **EARLY VOTING** (A2064, S2950) improve access to the ballot for New Yorkers?

Early voting will ensure that voters have the opportunity to make it to the polls and make their voices heard. Early voting has become accepted as a norm across the nation—over two-thirds of other states allow voters to cast a ballot before Election Day. It's time that we catch up. New Yorkers lead busy lives. By allowing at least an additional week for early voting, including the Saturday and Sunday before the election, we can shorten waiting times on Election Day, improve access for voters juggling work and family obligations, and help businesses so that their employees can make it to the polls without missing work.

What is the **NEW YORK VOTES ACT** (A5312)?

Every eligible New Yorker should be able to register to vote and cast a ballot that counts.

The New York Votes Act is comprehensive new legislation that will guarantee this right. The bill includes:

- Automatic electronic registration at government agencies.
- Election Day registration, which would allow voters to register or update their information in person at their polling place.
- No-excuse absentee ballots, so that New Yorkers can vote by mail for any reason.
- Two weeks of in-person early voting, so that voters can vote when it's convenient for them.
- Improved poll worker training, so that voters can have a better experience at the polls.
- Additional protections for voters.

What is **“PRECLEARANCE”** (A5925) and how will it protect my voting rights?

Preclearance ensures that no citizen is denied their right to vote based on race or minority status. It requires counties with populations with at least 10 percent of any racial, ethnic, or language minority group to get approval from the New York State Attorney General before making any changes to the voting process, such as changing poll site locations or purging the voter list. These types of changes to the voting process can disproportionately or negatively impact voters of protected classes. New York should take the lead by becoming the first state in the nation to pass this strong safeguard into law at the state level.

How do I get **INVOLVED**?

Join us on the bus to Albany on May 2nd as we meet with legislators to talk about why New Yorkers need better elections and ask them to support these bills. To sign up, go to **www.votebetterny.org**.

Don't have time to get on the bus? You can help by signing our online petition. Visit our website for a link.

Want to help us grow our efforts? Follow us **@nycvotes** and ask your friends to sign our petition and come up to Albany. Tell your legislators why you want better elections using **#VoteBetterNY**.

Know of organizations that might want to join the Vote Better NY coalition? Let us know who we should reach out to! E-mail **scastillo@nyccfb.info** with suggestions.



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Better NY**

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