

Dear Commissioner:

The undersigned pro-voter organizations are writing to express our strong support for an opt-out system of voter registration for New York State voters. We hope that you will support making the adoption of such a system a 2017 legislative priority for the New York State Election Commissioners Association.

Such a system, sometimes known as Automatic Voter Registration, would automatically and electronically transfer eligible citizens' information to election officials when they interact with New York State government agencies. Those who decline to be registered always have the opportunity to "opt out".

Automatic registration provides significant benefits:

- Saves money by significantly cutting down on data entry when information is transferred electronically from one agency to another;
- Reduces the administrative burden on county boards of elections created by volumes of last-minute registrations;
- Increases the accuracy of the voter rolls by replacing error-prone handwritten forms with electronic information; and
- Curbs the potential for fraud and protects the integrity of our elections.

We know that you share our dedication to efficient and economical election administration. Moving our voter registration system from an opt-in system to an opt-out system would help to improve election administration in our state and enfranchise many New Yorkers.

Six states have adopted Automatic Voter Registration, many along bipartisan lines, and the data we have so far shows that it's a great success. In Oregon, the first state to implement automatic voter registration, the rate of new registrations at the DMV has quadrupled and the overall registration rate has jumped by nearly 10 percent, a huge increase from the growth seen in the last presidential election cycle. And, most importantly, these new registrants show up to vote: In the 2016 general election nearly 100,000 Oregon votes were cast by voters who were signed up through automatic voter registration.

By adopting Automatic Voter Registration, New York would be taking a significant step toward an election system that works for voters and for election officials alike. We would be happy to answer any questions you might have and to put you in touch with election administrators who can share their experiences administering such a system with you. We will be attending the Winter Conference and look forward to discussing the advantages of an opt-out registration system with you then.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Clark, Senior Counsel
Brennan Center for Justice

Rachel Bloom, Director of Public Policy + Programs
Citizens Union

Susan Lerner, Executive Director
Common Cause/NY

Laura Ladd Bierman, Executive Director
League of Women Voters of New York State

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