



The League of Women Voters of New York State
62 Grand Street, Albany, New York 12207
Phone: 518-465-4162 Fax: 518-465-0812
www.lwvny.org E-Mail: lwvny@lwvny.org

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS *of New York State*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 25, 2017

Contact: Jennifer Wilson
Jennifer@lwvny.org (518) 465-4162

PRESS RELEASE

New York State Needs Voting Reforms NOW!

Members of the League of Women Voters of New York State, the New York State Assembly and Senate gathered at the Million Dollar Staircase to call on the Governor and their legislative colleagues to pass comprehensive voting reforms in New York State.

The legislature and Governor promised to address voting reform after budget negotiations were completed. Now that the budget has been passed, the legislature must keep their promise and put in place early voting, automatic voter registration, better ballots, and electronic poll books. The process should begin to implement no-excuse absentee ballots and same day voter registration.

On Wednesday, the Assembly Election Law Committee will be taking up A.2064/S.2950 (Kavanagh/Stewart-Cousins), a bill to allow for early voting up to 7 days before an election. This is one of many reforms that must be passed before session ends in June. Without reforms to modernize New York's registration and voting systems, voters will continue to be subjected to long lines at the polls, voter purges, and voter registration deadlines that cause voters to be disenfranchised and disengaged.

New York State continues to be one of the worst states in the nation in terms of voter turnout and participation. The League of Women Voters of New York State wants to see New York ranked at the top, but without these reforms we will continue to lag behind. The legislature must act to pass reforms that will make voting easier and more accessible to all New Yorkers.

“The League of Women Voters of New York State applauds the Senate and Assembly Members who have sponsored voting reform legislation this session. The time is now to pass voting reforms in New York State; we must enfranchise all voters and ensure that everyone is afforded an equal opportunity to cast their ballot for whichever candidate they choose. We hope that the two houses will work together to pass these reforms before session ends.” **Jennifer Wilson, Program and Policy Director for the League of Women Voters of New York State**

Senator Michael Gianaris said, "The assault on voting rights has damaged our democracy and disenfranchised millions of Americans. New York can and should be doing more to empower voters. As the author of the Voter Empowerment Act, I am proud to support efforts to increase dismal voter participation rates and have a process that encourages, rather than discourages, voter enfranchisement."

"New York's voting laws lag terribly -- much like our voter turnout rate," **said State Senator Daniel Squadron.** "We need to turn New York around so voters are given a better chance to exercise their voting rights. The Democratic Conference and the Policy Group I chair have highlighted shocking facts about New York's voting laws, and proposed a comprehensive package to fix them. I thank the League of Women Voters, Leader Stewart-Cousins, and my colleagues in government."

"Early voting is one of a few key reforms that would make the ballot box more accessible to millions of New Yorkers. Our election laws and voting procedures must be modernized so that participating in our democracy is as open as possible. I firmly support any effort to allow more New Yorkers to participate in our Primary and General Elections." **Assemblyman Robert Carroll**

"As ranking member on the New York State Senate Committee on Elections, I am committed to supporting common sense elections reforms that expand ballot access for all New York voters. Every legislator should agree that we must strive to empower voters across our state by making voting easier and more accessible, and that's exactly what no excuse absentee voting, automatic voter registration, and early voting do," **said State Senator Leroy Comrie.** "I look forward to working with my colleagues in the legislature to make these reforms happen. I thank Assembly Member Kavanagh and Leader Stewart-Cousins for introducing these crucial reforms."