

June 30, 2021

**SUBMITTED VIA EMAIL**

Dear Senate Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins, Assembly Speaker Heastie, Senate Minority Leader Ort, and Assembly Minority Leader Barclay,

We write in support of a letter submitted by the State Board of Elections on June 22, 2021 regarding the need for additional office space to support increased programming and agency responsibilities.

Over the last two years, the State Board of Elections (SBOE) has been handed an expansive list of priorities including instituting early voting, creating a state-wide online voter registration portal, implementing automatic voter registration, and planning for a new public campaign finance program. These responsibilities have been added to an already lengthy checklist of day-to-day operational tasks related to the running of our state's elections and supporting county boards of election.

The SBOE has traditionally been an underfunded and overburdened agency that has had very limited resources to ensure New York's elections remain secure, accessible, and transparent. We are pleased that the legislature has made improving our state's elections a priority, but we are concerned that these added responsibilities may be impossible to implement without proper operational support. Without the space for staff to test equipment, field phone calls from voters and candidates, or hold public meetings the SBOE will fail to adequately carry out these new reforms.

Our joint organizations strongly support the SBOE's request to relocate their offices to accommodate their growing staff. The staff of the SBOE has stated that the Office of General Services Division of Budget, and Governor's offices have been unwilling to support the SBOE in their efforts to safely accommodate their need for additional space for staff and programming. We urge you to work with the SBOE and these agencies to resolve this issue as quickly as possible. It is critically important that this issue be remedied as soon as possible to ensure these new programs can be implemented before the 2022 election.

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