



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

Legislature unanimously approves change to strengthen election process for military voters

THOMAS F. O'MARA March 3, 2011

| ISSUE: **ELECTIONS**

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Albany, N.Y., March 3—The New York State Senate gave final legislative approval today to legislation sponsored by State Senator Tom O'Mara (R-C, Big Flats), chairman of the Senate Elections Committee, to ensure that special elections in New York State provide more time for military absentee ballots to be mailed and counted.

The Senate unanimously approved O'Mara's legislation -- the occasion marking the first piece of legislation O'Mara has had approved as a state senator. [[Watch Senator O'Mara's comments on today's action](#)]

“It’s the right time to make this change, and it’s a sound piece of legislation. It ensures that New York’s servicemen and servicewomen are given every reasonable opportunity to have their voices heard and their votes counted in special elections,” said O’Mara, who noted that the new law is expected to be in effect for an upcoming special election in western New York’s 26th Congressional District.

New York Governor Andrew Cuomo recently noted that current state law fails to provide adequate time for state and county boards of elections to adhere to federal law requiring that elections officials finalize and transmit to military voters overseas the final ballot within 45 days of a special election.

Cuomo sent a proposal to change the law to both houses of the Legislature on February 23rd and urged its swift enactment. It was approved by the Assembly yesterday and will now be delivered to the governor to be signed into law.

[\[Read Governor Cuomo's statement\]](#)

Once it’s signed by Cuomo, the new law becomes effectively immediately. [\[Read more in the Star-Gazette\]](#)

Under current state law, special elections are held between 30 and 40 days from their announcement by the governor. The new law will more than double that timeframe to between 70 and 80 days and give county boards of elections adequate time prior to special elections for absentee ballots for military voters to be mailed and counted in compliance with federal law.