



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph A. Griffo

Griffo Supports Senate Extension of Military Vote Count

JOSEPH A. GRIFFO March 7, 2011

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Griffo Supports Senate Extension of Military Vote Count

Governor-backed measure expected to be signed soon

New York State Senator Joseph A. Griffo (R-C-IP, Rome) this week, voted to ensure that special elections in New York State provide more time for military absentee ballots to be mailed and counted.

The Senate passed the legislation (Senate bill # 3500); one day after the Assembly passed the companion version.

Currently state election law specified that special elections are held between 30 and 40 days from their announcement by the Governor. This new measure will more than double that time-frame 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.

“We’re basically aligning the State law to follow the federal mandate. We’re trying to ensure that all service personnel based in New York, who are engaged in operations anywhere in world, will know that their vote will count at election time,” said Griffo, the former Chair of the Senate Committee on Elections, who noted that the new law is expected to be in effect

for an upcoming special election in the local New York 116th State Assembly District.

Griffo also noted pointed to a 2009 study which revealed that nationally, less than only 3/4 of absentee ballots filed by armed service personnel serving abroad, were counted in time for the last Presidential election.

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 the final ballot to military voters overseas within 45 days of a special election.

Governor Cuomo sent a proposal to change the law to both houses of the Legislature on February 23rd and urged its swift enactment. The Senate and Assembly quickly acted upon the bill and it will now be delivered to the Governor to be signed into law. The measure would take effect immediately.