



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Lee M. Zeldin

Senator Zeldin Calls for Passage of His Legislation to Remove Deceased New Yorkers from the Voter Rolls

LEE M. ZELDIN November 7, 2013

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THE VOTING DEAD

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ALBANY- In an effort to promote and preserve our democratic process, Senator Lee M. Zeldin (R-C-I, Shirley) called today for passage of his legislation (S.1688) to ensure that the names of deceased voters are removed from the voter rolls upon their death.

Currently, Election Law requires that the name of a voter must be removed from the registration roll upon death. The process requires that the New York City Department of Health and the New York State Department of Health transmit a list of deceased persons to the New York State Board of Elections. The Board then distributes the names to the relevant local Boards for removal. However, this list is not compiled in real time nor does it list the names of individuals who have died outside of New York State.

According to a study done by the Pew Center in 2012, more than 1.8 million dead people are registered to vote throughout the country. Highlighting the local nature of this issue, in October of this year, Newsday performed a computer analysis which showed roughly 6,100 deceased persons are still registered to vote in Nassau County and 2,490 are registered to

vote in Suffolk.

“Our nation was founded upon the principles of democracy,” said Senator Zeldin. “As such, we have a duty to protect the integrity of the democratic process. This is not an issue to politicize. It is about ensuring the accuracy of our records in order to preserve the functionality of our democratic system.”

Senator Zeldin first introduced the legislation in June of 2012 and it was reintroduced during the 2013 Legislative Session where it progressed through the Elections Committee.

While the intent remains the same, an amended version of the legislation will be introduced during the upcoming session which will further clarify and simplify the process. The legislation will require the State Board of Elections to annually review the Social Security Administration’s Death Master File and notify the relevant local Board of any and all deceased voters on the registration roll.

Further, this bill protects any voter who may be erroneously removed from the registration roll by allowing them to vote via an affidavit ballot in the same manner that an inactive voter would be permitted to vote.

“In a process where every vote counts, it is vital that we ensure the validity of each and every vote and crack down on any opportunity to commit fraud while protecting those who have been erroneously removed,” concluded Senator Zeldin. “It has been made clear that this is a very real issue and I thank the local news outlets for shining light on it. I sincerely hope that we will see it passed in the upcoming Legislative Session.”