



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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Senator Gallivan reminds voters of 3 important ballot initiatives to consider this year

PATRICK M. GALLIVAN | October 22, 2014

| ISSUE: **ELECTIONS, FINANCE, GENERAL, INITIATIVES & REFERENDUMS, GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS**



Voters head to the polls in a couple of weeks to exercise their most basic democratic right; choosing the people they want to represent them at various levels of government. In addition to the candidates running for various federal, state and local offices, this year's ballot includes three important statewide propositions. Unfortunately, these proposals often don't get much attention in the media and can catch some voters by surprise.

I voted in favor of putting these three items on this year's ballot, not necessarily because I support them, but because I believe citizens should have a say on these critical issues. Here's a brief explanation of each proposition.

Proposal one would amend the State Constitution and revise New York's redistricting procedure. If approved, a commission will be established to determine legislative and congressional district lines every ten years, starting in 2020. Under the current system, the Legislature is responsible for establishing these lines. The new redistricting commission would consist of ten members, including eight appointed by leaders of the Legislature. Those eight members would appoint the remaining two members. Those serving on the commission would have to meet specific qualifications and certain principles would be followed in creating districts. The commission would also be required to hold public hearings throughout the state before establishing a final map. The commission's plan would ultimately have to be approved by the legislature and the governor.

Proposal two would allow for the electronic distribution of legislative bills to members of the Senate and Assembly. The Constitution requires that bills be printed and placed on the desks of legislators at least three days before a vote in order to give legislators time to read them. But the requirement, which dates back to 1938, currently requires a physical printed copy. The proposal would amend the Constitution so that legislative bills could be distributed to all 150 members of the Assembly and 63 Senators electronically.

Proposal three is the Smart Schools Bond Act. It would authorize the sale of up to \$2-billion in state bonds to finance capital projects and equipment in New York schools. Projects could include upgrades in school and classroom technology and installation of high-tech security features. Schools could also use the funds to construct new pre-K classrooms or replace classroom trailers with permanent instructional space.

I encourage you to research these proposals in more detail and make up your own mind on the merits of these important statewide issues. As you can see, these initiatives have both political and financial implications for residents and taxpayers. You can find more information at the Board of Elections website: <http://www.elections.ny.gov/ProposedConsAmendments2.html>

All three propositions will appear on the back of the paper ballot you will receive when you go to your polling place on Election Day, which is November 4.