



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Leroy Comrie

## No-Excuse Absentee Constitutional Amendment Passes Senate

LERROY COMRIE January 15, 2019

| ISSUE: **NO EXCUSE ABSENTEE VOTING, ABSENTEE VOTING**



**Albany, NY** — State Senator Leroy Comrie, together with the Senate Majority Conference, passed major legislation today to improve New York State's broken electoral system. New York consistently ranks as one of the worst voter turnout states in the nation. As the first major act this legislative session, the Senate Majority Conference, under the leadership of Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins, passed a series of bills that will enable early voting and no-excuse absentee voting, modernize and expand voter registration, extend Primary Election voting hours, impose limits on LLC contributions and ensure uniformity

throughout the state.

Senator Comrie's sponsored legislation, S.1049, a proposed constitutional amendment that will allow any voter to request an absentee ballot without needing to declare a reason for doing so. Under current law, absentee ballot requests may only be fulfilled for voters who will be outside of the county in which they are registered on Election Day, are unable to appear at the polls due to illness or disability, or are detained and awaiting Grand Jury action or in prison for a conviction for a non-felony offense. Individuals with work or family commitments, including people who work multiple jobs or who provide fulltime care for relatives, are effectively barred from casting a ballot on Election Day.

"Countless New Yorkers across our state lack access to the ballot because of antiquated absentee voting requirements," said Senator Comrie. "Passing no excuse absentee voting will simplify requirements so that New Yorkers with work and family obligations—folks who for too long have been denied a reasonable opportunity to vote—rightfully have the ability to participate in our democracy by casting a ballot."

Because these requirements are included in the state Constitution, Senator Comrie's legislation must pass the Assembly twice and the Senate once again in at least two years before receiving consideration by voters in a statewide referendum.

Other landmark legislation included in the package include:

*Early Voting:* This bill, S.1102 introduced by Chair of the Elections Committee, Senator Zellnor Myrie, will establish an Early Voting system to permit eligible voters in New York State to vote in person during a designated period.

*Consolidation of Federal and State Primaries:* This bill, S.1103 introduced by Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins, will save tax payer dollars and make state primary elections the same day as federal primary elections. It also ensures that New York State's election law complies with the federal Military and Overseas Voter Empowerment (MOVE) Act.

*Closing the LLC Loophole:* This bill, S.1101, introduced by Senator Brian Kavanagh, will amend Election Law to hold LLC's to the same aggregate contribution limit of \$5,000 that applies to corporations. The amendment would require the disclosure of the identity and proportion of ownership of all direct and indirect owners of the membership interests in the LLC. This legislation will also amend the Election Law to require all contributions made to political committees or campaigns by an LLC be attributed to each member of the LLC in proportion to the member's ownership interest.

*Same-Day Voter Registration:* This bill, S.1048 introduced by Deputy Majority Leader Michael Gianaris, amends the constitution to remove the ten-day advance voter registration requirement, subject to second passage of the next legislature and approval by a statewide referendum.

*Voter Registration Transfers:* This bill, S.1099, introduced by Senator David Carlucci, will require the Board of Elections to transfer the registration and enrollment of a voter to wherever they move in New York State.

*Voter Pre-Registration:* This bill, S.1100, introduced by Senator David Carlucci, will enable 16- and 17-year olds to pre-register to vote and requires local boards of education to adopt policies to promote student voter registration and pre-registration.

## 2019-S1049

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- Introduced
- - In Committee Assembly
  - In Committee Senate
- - On Floor Calendar Assembly
  - On Floor Calendar Senate
- - Passed Assembly
  - Passed Senate
- Delivered to Governor
- Signed By Governor
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Authorizes ballot by mail by removing cause for absentee ballot voting

January 10, 2019

In Senate Committee **Judiciary**

Sponsored by **Leroy Comrie**

Do you support this bill?

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