



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Michelle Hinchey

# **Hinchey's First Bill Passes State Senate in COVID Safety-Focused Local Elections Package, Enables Remote Participation for Political Party Designations**

[Michelle Hinchey](#)

January 27, 2021

ISSUE:

- [Party Nominations and Designations](#)
- [Combating COVID-19 and Protecting New Yorkers](#)
- [Absentee Ballots](#)



**Albany, NY...**Today the State Senate passed legislation ([S1705A](#)) sponsored by Senator Michelle Hinchey (SD-46), authorizing political parties to use video or telephone conferencing to conduct party designations and nominations for village and town elections. Hinchey's bill passed the State Senate unanimously and was included as part of a broader package of bills to accommodate social distancing concerns and expand ballot access for local elections amid the COVID-19 pandemic. This is Senator Hinchey's first bill to pass the State Senate.

"During a public health crisis like COVID-19, we need to ensure that every step of our electoral process is pandemic-proof, **said Senator Hinchey.** "With local elections fast approaching, my bill recognizes that allowing our towns and villages to use video or telephone conferencing to nominate candidates for local office is a public health necessity at this time and essential to preserving our democratic process. We've entered a truly unprecedented moment in history where the shift to remote work has become a crucial adaptation to protect public health. I'm proud to see my first bill pass the Senate and hope it will soon be signed into law."

**Carolyn Riggs, Chairwoman of the Greene County Democratic Committee, said,** "We're thankful to Senator Hinchey for taking the lead and protecting Village residents' health and safety while also allowing our treasured democracy to continue. The fundamental ability for our communities to nominate and elect one of their own to lead at any level of office must be maintained. We appreciate the

Senator's work on this early in the session and are confident she will continue to do the people's work."

Hinchey's bill also requires committee members to receive 72-hours notice before a political party designation conference is set to take place and allows for the use of remote notarization of those party nominations and designations.

The package of bills advanced by the Senate today addresses different impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on local elections, focusing on expanding absentee ballot access, lowering petitioning requirements for the 2021 elections, and advancing protections for residents of nursing homes and long-term care facilities.

- **Authorizes Voters to Request an Absentee Ballot Due to Risk of Illness:**

This bill, [S1632](#), sponsored by Senator Shelley Mayer, allows voters for upcoming village elections to request an absentee ballot if they are concerned about contracting or spreading a disease that may cause illness to them or to other members of the public.

- **Lowers Petitioning Requirements for 2021 Elections:** This bill, [S1758A](#), sponsored by Senator Rachel May, reduces the number of signatures needed for designating and nominating petitions to thirty percent of the number required by law.

- **Protects Health of Residents in Nursing Homes and Long-Term Care Facilities While Guaranteeing Access to Absentee Ballots:** This bill, [S1644](#), sponsored by Senator Jeremy Cooney, ensures that absentee ballots can be delivered to residents of nursing homes and long-term care facilities without Board of Elections inspectors having to physically enter the premises.

*Senator Michelle Hinchey represents the 46th Senate District, which includes Greene and Montgomery Counties and parts of Albany, Schenectady, and Ulster Counties. Senator Hinchey serves as Chair of the Agriculture Committee and sits on the Alcoholism and Substance Abuse, Commerce, Economic Development and Small Business, Cultural Affairs, Tourism, Parks and Recreation, Energy and Telecommunications, Environmental Conservation, and Local Government Committees.*

## related legislation

### [2021-S1705A](#)

- 
- 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
  -

[Authorizes party designations and nominations for all elections to be made via video teleconference or web conference](#)

January 14, 2021

In Senate Committee [Elections](#)

Sponsored by [Michelle Hinchey](#)

Do you support this bill?

### [2021-S1632](#)

- 
- 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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[Relates to absentee voting during village elections](#)

January 14, 2021

In Senate Committee [Elections](#)

Sponsored by [Shelley B. Mayer](#)

Do you support this bill?

## **[2021-S1758A](#)**

- 
- 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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[Reduces the number of signatures for designating and nominating petitions](#)

January 14, 2021

In Senate Committee [Elections](#)

Sponsored by [Rachel May](#)

Do you support this bill?

subscribe

Aye

Nay

## **2021-S1644**

- 
- 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
  -

[Relates to absentee voting by residents of nursing homes and other long-term care facilities](#)

January 14, 2021

Signed by Governor

Sponsored by [Jeremy Cooney](#)

Do you support this bill?

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Aye

Nay