



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Zellnor Myrie

Myrie Releases Report on Election Reform and Voting Rights

ZELLNOR MYRIE November 15, 2021

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| COMMITTEE: **ELECTIONS**



ALBANY- Senator Zellnor Y. Myrie, Chair of the Senate Elections Committee, today released a comprehensive report on improving New York's system of election administration and protecting the rights of voters. The report includes a historical overview of how New York's elections have developed over time along with recent issues impacting voters, a review of the Committee's statewide hearings, and recommendations to improve election administration and strengthen democracy in New York.

In June 2021, after a highly-publicized tabulation error by the New York City Board of Elections, Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins called for hearings on election reform and legislative action to improve elections and protect voting rights. Over the next several months, Senator Myrie and the Elections Committee held five hearings across the state, collecting testimony from over 100 individuals to determine the major issues facing voters and potential solutions to those issues.

The Committee's major recommendations are:

Structural Reforms

- Restructure the New York City Board of Elections
- Reform Local Boards of Elections Outside of NYC
- Change the Relationship Between the State Board of Elections and local Boards of Elections

Operational Reforms

- Reform the Selection Process, Qualification and Accountability Structure for Election Commissioners
- Raise Poll Worker Standards, Improve Recruitment and the Poll Worker Experience
- Additional Improvements to the Voter Experience

Other Changes to the Law

- Enact Additional Changes to Make Voting Easier

Passing the John R. Lewis New York Voting Rights Act

Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins said: “The Senate Majority is committed to expanding New Yorkers' access to the ballot while safeguarding the integrity of our elections. To that effect after every election we have sought to identify issues in the administration of our elections system and pass legislation to deal with these issues. This year we held the first-ever public hearings to hear directly from voters and other stakeholders statewide. I commend Elections Committee Chair Sen. Zellnor Y. Myrie for holding a series of statewide hearings to learn about the most pressing issues New York voters are facing at the ballot box and for producing this comprehensive report featuring invaluable input from stakeholders across the State to strengthen our elections.”

Senator Myrie said: "Over the past several months, we've travelled the state to hear directly from voters, poll workers, advocates and elections administrators themselves about the deep, structural problems with New York's elections. These problems are not new, but in an era where the legitimacy of elections has come under attack across the country, it's more important than ever that we solve them. This report summarizes what we heard, and provides a roadmap toward improving election administration and strengthening voting rights in New York.

"The stakes for election reform, and for protecting voters' rights, have never been higher. My Senate colleagues and I will not hesitate to address these challenges head-on, and look forward to acting on this report when we reconvene in January."