

For Immediate Release: January 12, 2026

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Senate Majority Advances Reforms to Protect Election Integrity and Support Election Workers

(Albany, N.Y.) Today, the New York State Senate Majority will advance legislation to further strengthen New York's democracy by protecting voters, safeguarding election workers, and modernizing our election system against interference and abuse. This legislative package cracks down on deceptive practices that suppress or intimidate voters by increasing penalties for violations of the elective franchise, ensuring that bad actors face real consequences. This package also includes moving New York's primary to Super Tuesday, elevating New Yorkers' voices earlier in the presidential nominating process.

President Pro Tempore and Senate Majority Leader, and bill sponsor, Andrea Stewart-Cousins said, "In New York, we believe our democracy is strongest when every voter can participate freely, safely, and without interference. Each legislative session, we begin by paying homage to the voters of this state and reaffirming our responsibility to protect the integrity of our elections. This package advances legislation to combat voter suppression, expand early voting, block foreign-influenced money in our elections, safeguard the independence of our state's electoral process, and move New York's presidential primary date to Super Tuesday. At a time when democratic norms are under attack across the country, New York is once again leading by example and upholding the principles of representative democracy for all."

Senate Deputy Leader, and bill sponsor, Mike Gianaris said, "Our democracy is stronger when access to voting is more accessible, and our elections are free from undue interference. As the Trump administration creates roadblocks to the ballot box, we are clearing the obstacles to registration and the inappropriate influence of big money. I am proud the State Senate is once again leading the way on protecting our democratic institutions."

Chair of the Senate Committee on Elections, and bill sponsor, Senator Kristen Gonzalez said, "Democracy works best when every New Yorker can participate freely, safely, and without fear of intimidation. As Chair of the Elections Committee, I'm proud that this legislative package strengthens election integrity by expanding accessibility, protecting voters and election workers, and confronting the growing threats of political violence and foreign influence. My bill, The New York Election Officer Protection Act ([S.8646](#)), makes it clear – violence and intimidation have no place in our elections. I'm proud of our state and legislature's commitment to being a leader in voter rights and reaffirming that our democracy belongs to the people."

The election reforms being passed by the Senate Majority include:

- **Crimes of Voter Deception and Suppression:** This bill, [S.1085](#), sponsored by Senate Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins, would prohibit deceptive practices and the suppression of voters, and increase penalties for violations of the elective franchise.
- **The Democracy Preservation Act:** This bill, [S.324](#), sponsored by Senate Deputy Leader Gianaris, would ban political spending by foreign-influenced business entities in New York's state and local elections.
- **New York Election Officer Protection Act:** This bill, [S.8646A](#), sponsored by Senator Gonzalez, prohibits the intimidation, obstruction, or the unlawful dissemination of personal information of election officers.
- **Establishing Portable Polling Locations:** This bill, [S.568](#), sponsored by Senator May, would authorize county boards of elections to establish county-wide portable polling locations for early voting.
- **Registering to Vote at a Secondary Residence:** This bill, [S.1036](#), sponsored by Senator Myrie, would permit a voter to register to vote at a secondary residence with which they maintain a continuous connection, and at which they intend to remain.
- **Training for BOE Commissioners:** This bill, [S.1035](#), sponsored by Senator Myrie, would require the State Board of Elections to create a mandatory, uniform training curriculum for all election commissioners.
- **Changing the NYS Presidential Primary Date:** This bill, [S.8604](#), sponsored by Senator Skoufis, would move the presidential primary date in New York State to Super Tuesday.

Bill sponsor Senator Rachel May said, “Our democracy works best when everyone participates, and it is our job as Legislators to make that participation as easy as possible. My bill gives local boards of elections the option to establish short-term polling sites to ensure voting is safer, more efficient, and more accessible. I am proud to advance this full voting package today and to sponsor legislation that makes it easier for all New Yorkers to exercise their right to vote.”

Bill sponsor Senator Zellnor Myrie said, “Since 2019 New York has made tremendous progress in improving our elections and protecting voting rights. But we still have work to do, especially with federal assaults on our democracy. I'm grateful to Senator Gonzalez, our Majority Leader, and my colleagues for helping keep New York on the path from worst to first.”

Bill sponsor Senator James Skoufis said, "By holding the presidential primary on Super Tuesday, New York would ensure its voters have a meaningful voice while the nomination remains competitive. Increasing the state's influence in the national process would encourage more earnest campaigning in New York, elevating our state's priorities and voters while injecting millions of dollars into our economy. With no additional tax or administrative burden, this legislation promises New Yorkers a far greater role in choosing our national leaders, and I'm proud that my colleagues and I continue to prioritize — as we do at the start of every legislative session — enfranchising our voters."

Democracy Coalition Coordinator at Citizen Action of New York Karen Wharton said, “On Democracy Day, we applaud the New York State Senate for taking decisive action to protect our elections from corruption and foreign-influenced corporate spending. By passing the Democracy Preservation Act, the Senate is closing dangerous loopholes and strengthening New York's public

campaign finance system — ensuring small donors, not foreign-influenced corporations, shape our democracy and government. We now urge the Assembly to act swiftly and the Governor to sign this bill into law, so these critical protections reach voters across New York.”

Director of State & Local Policy at New York Immigration Coalition Taina Wagnac said, “Democracy works best when every New Yorker can participate without fear, confusion, or exclusion. We recognize the Senate’s work on Democracy Day to advance legislation focused on voter protections, access, and election administration. Continued attention to these issues is important for immigrant and mixed-status communities, who often face barriers to civic participation. We call on the Assembly and the Governor to act to make these changes the law of our great state of New York.”

Chief Executive Officer at the Institute for Responsive Government Action Sam Oliker-Friedland said, “We applaud the Senate’s passage of S.8646, guarding election officials from intimidation and harassment, and S.1035, providing election commissioners with standardized training from the State Board of Elections. These are both critical steps toward protecting and supporting election officials in administering fair, secure, and impartial elections. By providing essential resources, strong training, and real protections from intimidation and harassment, these bills help ensure election officials can do their jobs effectively and serve New York voters with confidence.”

Counsel in the Voting Rights Program at the Brennan Center for Justice at NYU Law Patrick Berry said, “We thank Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins, Senate Elections Chair Gonzalez, and the Senate for their steadfast work to safeguard and strengthen New York’s democracy. Today’s package of pro-democracy reforms includes critical new protections for election officials and election workers against intimidation, as well as a uniform training curriculum for all election commissioners to help ensure they provide the best possible service to voters. This builds on the transformative progress New York has already made by enacting the strongest public campaign finance system in the nation, the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Act of New York, and new disclosure requirements for deceptive AI-generated election-related content. It’s more important than ever that our elected leaders continue to fight for elections in the state that are free, fair, and peaceful.”

Executive Director of The Black Institute and member of the NY BIPOC Democracy Table Tuulikki Robertson said, “For Black, Indigenous, and communities of color that have long faced voter suppression, disinvestment, and exclusion from political power, these reforms represent real progress. We applaud the New York State Senate for advancing a comprehensive Democracy Day package that protects voters from deception, expands access to the ballot, strengthens election administration, safeguards voting systems, and curbs foreign-influenced corporate spending. Together, these bills move New York closer to a democracy rooted in equity, accountability, and the lived experiences of the communities most impacted by unjust systems.”

Co-Founder and Voting Rights Counsel at Vote Early New York Jarret Berg said, “As America faces ongoing challenges to its democracy from threats at home and abroad, New Yorkers are fortunate to have State Senate leadership focused on protecting and advancing our

voting rights. We applaud the Senate Majority for again putting fundamental rights first by prioritizing this critical package of election reforms and look forward to working with lawmakers in both chambers to enact modern voting policies that will continue to improve the fairness and quality of our elections.”

Campaign Director at Free Speech for People Alexandra Flores-Quilty said, “The New York State Senate passage of the Democracy Preservation Act brings New York closer to setting a national standard for protecting elections from foreign corporate influence. We applaud the Senate’s leadership and urge the Assembly to act swiftly so New York can once again lead the nation in defending democratic self-government.”

President of the NAACP New York State Conference L. Joy Williams said, “The NAACP New York State Conference applauds the Senate Majority for continuing to prioritize democracy by advancing this package. Now more than ever, it is crucial that we defend the right to vote and expand the tools available to do so. The State Conference is particularly encouraged by the steps being taken to address voter suppression efforts. Whether by misinformation or direct intimidation, voter suppression remains the biggest threat to our democracy.”

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