



## SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON ELECTIONS

### NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

SUBJECT: Automatic Voter Registration

PURPOSE: To discuss and examine the creation of an automatic voter registration system in New York State.

Hearing Room A  
Thursday  
May 30<sup>th</sup>, 2019  
1 PM  
Legislative Office Building  
Albany, NY 12210

Currently, New York has one of the lowest voter registration and turnout rates in the country. According to 2016 Census data, 66% of citizens in New York State are registered to vote and just 57% of New Yorkers turned out to vote in the 2016 election. This puts New York at 46<sup>th</sup> out of 50 states for registration and 43<sup>rd</sup> for voter turnout. New York also has one of the most burdensome voter registration systems in the country. In order to participate in their democracy, potential voters are required to mail paper forms, and in many cases, register up to thirteen months before an election depending on their party affiliation. New York's paper-based voter registration system is inefficient, error prone, and unjustifiably costly. A modern voter registration system that electronically transmits voter registration information will reduce costs involved in processing voter registrations, maintain complete and accurate voter registration lists, and increase voter participation.

Automatic voter registration (AVR) is an innovative policy that streamlines the way Americans register to vote. Automatic voter registration works in two steps. Eligible voters (except for those who opt out) who interact with government agencies such as the Department of Motor Vehicles and the Department of Health, are automatically registered to vote or have their existing registration information updated, unless they affirmatively decline. Voters can opt-out; it is not compulsory registration. Second, those agencies transfer voter registration information electronically to election officials instead of using paper registration forms. It is a simple process that eliminates unnecessary paperwork and lowers barriers to political participation. Fifteen other states and the District of Columbia have either approved or implemented automatic voter registration. Other states, such as Oregon and Colorado, that have implemented similar programs, have experienced increased voter registration and significant cost savings.

This hearing will explore the implications of establishing an automatic voter registration system in New York, and the steps necessary to achieve and implement a robust and accurate system.

Persons wishing to present pertinent testimony to the Committee at the above hearing should complete and return the enclosed reply form as soon as possible. It is important that the reply form be completed and returned so that persons may be notified in the event of emergency postponement or cancellation.

**Oral testimony will be limited to 5 minutes' duration.** In preparing the order of witnesses, the Committee will attempt to accommodate individual requests to speak at particular times. These requests should be made on the attached reply form or communicated to Committee staff as early as possible.

**Ten copies** of any prepared testimony should be submitted at the hearing registration desk. The Committee would appreciate advance receipt of prepared statements.

In order to further publicize these hearings, please inform interested parties and organizations of the Committee's interest in hearing testimony from all sources.

In order to meet the needs of those who may have a disability, the Senate, in accordance with its policy of non-discrimination on the basis of disability, as well as the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), has made its facilities and services available to all individuals with disabilities. For individuals with disabilities, accommodations will be provided, upon reasonable request, to afford such individuals access and admission to Senate facilities and activities.

**Zellnor Y. Myrie  
Chair  
Committee on Elections**

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**PUBLIC HEARING REPLY FORM**

Persons wishing to present testimony at the public hearing on Automatic Voter Registration are requested to complete this reply form as soon as possible and email it to:

Edline Jacquet  
Chief of Staff  
Senate Standing Committee on Elections  
Room LOB 903  
Albany, New York 12247  
Email: jacquet@nysenate.gov  
Phone: (518) 455-2410

- I plan to attend the following public hearing on Automatic Voter Registration to be conducted by the Senate Standing Committee on Elections on May 30<sup>th</sup>, 2019.
- I plan to make a public statement at the hearing. My statement will be limited to 5 minutes, and I will answer any questions which may arise. I will provide 10 copies of my prepared statement.
- I will address my remarks to the following subjects:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

- I do not plan to attend the above hearing.
- I would like to be added to the Committee mailing list for notices and reports.
- I would like to be removed from the Committee mailing list.
- I will require assistance and/or handicapped accessibility. **Please specify the type of assistance required:** \_\_\_\_\_

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

TITLE: \_\_\_\_\_

ORGANIZATION: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

FAX TELEPHONE: \_\_\_\_\_