



Legislation Text

File #: Res 0307-2018, **Version:** *

Res. No. 307

Resolution calling upon the New York State Legislature to pass, and the Governor to sign, legislation that would authorize Same-Day Voter Registration in New York, allowing eligible New York City residents to register to vote and cast a ballot at the poll-site on Election Day.

By Council Members Cabrera, Ayala, Ampry-Samuel and Kallos

Whereas, All eligible New Yorkers deserve a reasonable opportunity to exercise their fundamental voting rights; and

Whereas, New York State consistently has one of the lowest voter turnout rates, ranking 41st among states in the 2016 General Election, according to the United States Elections Project; and

Whereas, Potential voters often find it challenging to register, due to confusing rules and/or lack of time, resulting in nearly 25% of eligible voters not being registered, according to the public policy group Demos; and

Whereas, Under the current process, the voter registration must be completed several weeks before an election, causing many hopeful registrants to not be eligible to vote in the election that they were interested in taking part; and

Whereas, New York State has closed primary elections that require voters to register with a political party in order to participate in their party's primary; and

Whereas, New York currently has the earliest party enrollment change deadline in the United States: it is a full year and 25 days prior to the current year's General Election; and

Whereas, As a result, while the General Election voter turnout is regularly low (62% in 2016), the 2016 Congressional and State Primary Elections saw an abysmal 8% voter turn-out; and

Whereas, Steps can be taken to modernize the voter registration process, which will increase the number

of potential voters and the chance of higher voter turnout; and

Whereas, Same-day voter registration would allow eligible New Yorkers to register to vote and cast a ballot on Election Day, extending the right to vote to those who have only recently become interested; and

Whereas, There are currently 15 states and the District of Columbia in the United States that have implemented same-day voter registration; and

Whereas, Public policy group Demos analyzed voter turn-out data from 1980 to 2012 and found that turn-out rates were 10% higher in states with same-day voter registration; and

Whereas, Using 2012 presidential election data, Demos found that four of the top five states for voter turnout had implemented same-day registration; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the New York State Legislature to pass, and the Governor to sign, legislation that would authorize Same-Day Voter Registration in New York, allowing eligible New York City residents to register to vote and cast a ballot at the poll-site on Election Day.

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