



Legislation Text

File #: Res 0553-2015, **Version:** A

Res. No. 553-A

Resolution calling on the New York State Legislature to pass, and the Governor to sign, A.8582-A and S.3813-B, which would allow early voting in New York State.

By Council Members Cabrera, Chin, Constantinides, Johnson, Kallos, Koo, Richards, Rose, Williams, Rodriguez, Rosenthal, Van Bramer, Levin and Vallone

Whereas, Only 28.8% of eligible voters cast a ballot in the 2014 New York State General Election, near the bottom of the turnout rate for all states; and

Whereas, Some have attributed New York's low voter turnout to the State's lack of an early voting option; and

Whereas, Thirty-three states and the District of Columbia offer voters the option of no-excuse, in-person voting before Election Day, while three states exclusively utilize vote-by-mail; and

Whereas, Only 14 states allow only in-person voting on Election Day or voting by absentee ballot with a required excuse; and

Whereas, New York is one of these 14 states, as a voter in New York must visit his or her assigned polling location between 6:00 A.M. and 9:00 P.M. on Election Day in order to cast a vote; and

Whereas, A voter may only vote prior to Election Day in New York by absentee ballot and, even then, only if such voter affirms that he or she has an acceptable reason for being unable to physically visit at his or her assigned polling site on Election Day; and

Whereas, In the 2012 General Election, between 30% and 40% of voters nationwide cast their ballot before Election Day; and

Whereas, A 2010 United States Census Bureau survey found that the most common reason cited by non-

voters for not voting is a category defined as “No time off/too busy”; and

Whereas, Allowing voters more than a single day to vote would accommodate those who are physically unable to vote on Election Day; and

Whereas, The 15-hour window of opportunity to vote in New York potentially results in disenfranchisement due to unintended delays in opening poll sites, as occasionally happens locally, given the large number of poll sites in New York City; and

Whereas, Evidence suggests that, when combined with same-day registration, early voting has a positive effect on voter turnout; and

Whereas, If enacted, A.8582-A by New York State Assembly Member Brian Kavanagh, and companion bill S.3813-B by State Senate Minority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins, would address the need for early voting by enabling registered voters to vote in person during a designated period before Election Day; and

Whereas, These bills would bring New York State in line with two-thirds of the states and contribute to more representative elections in the future; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls on the New York State Legislature to pass, and the Governor to sign, A.8582-A and S.3813-B, which would allow early voting in New York State.

Dss/lw
LS #3393
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