



## Legislation Text

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Res. No. 224

Resolution calling on the New York State Legislature to pass, and the Governor to sign, S.88/A.6772, which provides for automatic voter registration and preregistration for persons applying for certain department of motor vehicles documentation and for Medicaid enrollees

By Council Members Hudson and Louis

Whereas, In both New York State and the City of New York, eligible voters are required to register to vote by certain deadlines in order to vote in primary or general elections; and

Whereas, Eligible voters might inadvertently miss registration deadlines; and

Whereas, Difficulties registering to vote could negatively impact voter turnout; and

Whereas, the term “voter turnout” refers to the participation rate of eligible voters in a given election; and

Whereas, According to a 2024 report published by the University of California San Diego, New York City ranked 49<sup>th</sup> in voter turnout (in both presidential and mayoral elections) amongst the 50 biggest cities in the United States; and

Whereas, On January 8, 2025, Senator Michael Gianaris introduced S.88 in the New York State Senate, which would allow for automatic voter registration (AVR) and preregistration for individuals applying for certain department of motor vehicle (DMV) documentation, as well as for Medicaid enrollees; and

Whereas, On March 13, 2025, a companion bill was introduced in the New York State Assembly by Assemblymember Karines Reyes; and

Whereas, AVR is a system where citizens can be registered to vote whenever they interact with government agencies rather than requiring them to actively and separately register to vote; and

Whereas, Citizens have the option to decline or opt out of voter registration during these formal interactions with government agencies; and

Whereas, If registration is not declined, the default would be to keep eligible voters registered in order to maximize access to voting and participation in elections; and

Whereas, In 2020, New York State adopted an AVR system but after several delays it has yet to be implemented; and

Whereas, S.88/A.6772 would establish a system known as “Enhanced AVR”, utilizing best practices from other states that use an AVR system; and

Whereas, Enhanced AVR relies on citizenship verification processes that already exist and are used for obtaining driver’s licenses and enrollment in Medicaid; and

Whereas, This system would automatically filter those who are citizens into a fully stream-lined automatic voter registration process and simultaneously filter out those who are not eligible for registration; and

Whereas, AVR could help mitigate registration by ineligible people by removing the onus on them to affirmatively decline registration via the automatic filtration of non-eligible individuals who may mistakenly try to register due to inattention, confusion or limited English proficiency; and

Whereas, The Enhanced AVR system would also ensure that address updates from the DMV and Medicaid automatically reach voter files thereby ensuring current and accurate voter registration records; and

Whereas, The removal of barriers to voting by implementing automatic voter registration could aid in

increasing voter turnout by increasing the number of New Yorkers able to vote in elections; 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, S.88/A.6772, which provides for automatic voter registration and preregistration for persons applying for certain department of motor vehicles documentation and for Medicaid enrollees.

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