



BACKGROUND

New York State counties manage and operate elections in the state. We have some of the lowest voter turnout rates in the country.

2018 EXECUTIVE BUDGET PROPOSAL

The Executive Budget proposes to institute early voting in New York State to make it easier for New Yorkers to vote. The proposal requires every county to offer residents access to at least one early voting poll site during the 12 days leading up to Election Day. Counties must have one early voting poll site for every 50,000 residents. The bipartisan County Boards of Elections would determine the specific location of early voting polling places, subject to standards of accessibility and convenience.

The Governor's 30-day amendments included \$7 million in funding for counties to implement election reform initiatives.

2018 LEGISLATIVE BUDGET PROPOSAL

The Assembly includes Article VII language to establish a 7-day early voting period for primary, general, and special elections. The Assembly modifies the Executive proposal to include \$7 million to offset the costs of early voting and other voting reforms borne by counties by removing appropriation language that requires approval from the Director of the Budget.

The Senate denies the Executive recommendation of \$7 million to allow for early voting. The Senate is open to discussing proposals that increase access to voting while ensuring proper compliance with the Election Law. The Senate believes any voter reform proposal must include adequate funding for counties.

COUNTY SOLUTION

NYSAC rejects the proposed changes related to early voting, as the cost of early voting will far exceed the \$7 million proposed by the Governor and Assembly. After surveying counties, we estimate that early voting will cost upwards of \$1 million *per county*. These costs stem from the necessary additional oversight, printing, staffing, and maintenance of polling stations. As it stands, this cost will fall to already financially burdened local governments and taxpayers, as county boards of elections have the responsibility to manage election operations.

“No Excuse” Absentee Ballot Solution

We believe that the most cost-effective alternative to this proposal is to implement a new “no excuse” absentee ballot application, so that registered voters who are unable to vote on election day, for any reason, can vote by absentee ballot.

Cost Savings Measure: Hold Federal and State Primaries on the Same Day

This cost of the current early voting proposal is exacerbated by the need for two primary elections in New York in 2018, as current election law mandates that the federal primary cannot be held on the same day as the state and local primaries. The expense of the proposed changes can be lessened by allowing the federal and state primaries to be held on the same day, which the State Legislature has the power to permit under Election Law Section 8-100. If the Governor and the State Legislature do not support this amendment, the State should absorb the costs of the State primary election.