



## Talking Points: Election Reform in New York State

### Target: NYS Senators Representing Ulster County

**Early voting** (Senate Bill S2950 and Assembly Bill A2064) and **Automatic and same-day voter registration** (Voter Empowerment Act, Senate Bill S3304 and Assembly Bill A2278)

- Early voting and comprehensive, automatic voter registration are two cornerstones of modern voter rights.
- Allowing early voting will make it much easier for working people to make it to the polls.
- Early voting has become the norm in 34 states. It works.
- NY State ranks near the bottom for turnout of registered citizens. In 2010, New York had the lowest turnout of all states. In 2016, the state was ranked second to last with only 21% of all eligible voters turning out in April's Presidential primary and single digit turnout in the Congressional primaries.
- NY is in the bottom five states of eligible but unregistered citizens, with approximately 33% unregistered citizens. This is compared with the national average of 25%.
- New York has the opportunity to be a leader in joining the 6 states that have automatic registration, increasing participation with an opt-out system, rather than opt-in.
- Early voting and automatic registration are very popular policies, even across party lines.

**Party Enrollment Reform** (Senate Bill S2940 and Assembly Bill A5943)

- New York has the most restrictive deadline to join or change party membership in the nation, effectively preventing millions from voting. This [report prepared by Cary Kittner](#) shows just how bad New York's deadline is when compared to other states.
- This rule results in the disenfranchisement of millions, as many young people, students, people of color and recently registered people are unaware of the deadline (the voter registration form is misleading and nowhere states that party changes must be made up to 11 months prior to an election).
- New Yorkers deserve a fair deadline, like the one used in most other states: a postmark 25 days prior to an election.
- The current law requires people to change parties before they even know who will be running for office.
- Some 3 million (27%) of registered New York voters were legally shut out of voting in the last presidential primary election because they had not re-registered as Democrats or Republicans more than 6 months prior to the primary.
- No other state comes near NY's unconscionably long enrollment period, a fact which has subjected NY to national scorn and has shattered its reputation as a land of democratic institutions.