STATE OF NEW YORK

8615

2025-2026 Regular Sessions

IN SENATE

December 12, 2025

Introduced by Sen. GONZALEZ -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Rules

AN ACT to amend the election law, in relation to establishing the election security navigator program

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

Section 1. Legislative findings and declaration. The legislature hereby finds that New York's elections are administered by a decentralized network of state and county boards of elections, many of which face resource constraints and limited technical staffing capacity. In light of growing cybersecurity threats, sophisticated disinformation campaigns, and physical threats to election infrastructure and operational disruptions, coordinated state support is necessary to safeguard New York's election systems. To ensure that local boards of elections receive technical guidance, training, and response assistance tailored to their specific vulnerabilities and resource levels, the legislature declares that the public interest requires that a dedicated election security navigator program be established with funding adequate to support the maximum number of county boards of elections who seek such support.

§ 2. The election law is amended by adding a new section 3-113 to read as follows:

§ 3-113. Election security navigator program. 1. For the purposes of this section:

(a) "Navigator program" shall mean the election security navigator program established pursuant to this section.

(b) "Program director" shall mean the director of the navigator program.

2. (a) There is hereby established within the state board of elections an election security navigator program. The head of such program shall be the program director who shall be appointed by the state board of

EXPLANATION--Matter in *italics* (underscored) is new; matter in brackets [-] is old law to be omitted.

LBD13952-02-5

elections. The program director shall have expertise in election cybersecurity, operational security, and personnel management.

(b) The navigator program shall have the following functions, powers and duties:

(i) provide assistance on a voluntary basis for local boards of elections in mitigating cybersecurity threats, improving physical and operational preparedness, and enhancing public confidence in the integrity of elections;

(ii) develop and operate the navigator program based on a system that prioritizes requests for allocation of services that considers local boards of elections' need, risk, and available resources, as determined by the state board of elections;

(iii) employ or contract election security navigators to carry out the functions and duties of the navigator program with respect to local boards of elections and local jurisdictions and serve as a liaison between the state board of elections, local jurisdictions, and local boards of elections;

(iv) facilitate information sharing between the state board of elections, local jurisdictions, and local boards of elections on election threats, vulnerabilities, and incident reports;

(v) conduct or coordinate ongoing risk assessments for election offices and infrastructure;

(vi) assist with incident response planning, continuity of operations planning, and tabletop exercises;

(vii) provide training and standardized guidance materials to support local preparedness;

(viii) coordinate access to appropriate and trustworthy international, federal, state, multi-state, and private cybersecurity resources that currently exist or have yet to be formed;

(ix) assist local boards of elections in applying for funding opportunities or deploying available funds related to election security including, but not limited to, federal grants under the Help America Vote Act, the Homeland Security Grant Program, and the State and Local Cybersecurity Grant Program; and

(x) develop an election security navigators student program in partnership with the state university of New York.

3. No later than three months after the effective date of this section, the state board of elections shall commence the process of designing the election security navigator program through a needs-based assessment considering:

(a) state election security support and services;

(b) the capabilities and needs of local jurisdictions as regards local boards of elections, including the needs for: cybersecurity expertise, incident response coordination, incident response plan development, and exercises that include incident response scenarios;

(c) direct consultation with a representative sample of local boards of elections; and

(d) consultation with:

(i) the state office of information technology services;

(ii) the state division of homeland security and emergency services;

(iii) current and former staff of the federal Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency;

(iv) officials administering election cybersecurity programs in other states; and

(v) private sector, non-profit, and academic experts in cyber and election security.

Any information contained in a needs-based assessment for any local board of elections or local jurisdiction conducted under this subdivision shall be kept confidential and shall not be made available for disclosure or inspection under the freedom of information law unless a subpoena or other court order directs the state board of elections or relevant local board of elections to release such assessment.

4. (a) No later than three months after the completion of the needs assessment pursuant to subdivision three of this section, the state board of elections shall promulgate regulations establishing the navigator program with the functions, powers and duties as set forth in subdivision two of this section.

(b) The state board of elections shall conduct no fewer than two public hearings to elicit comment and feedback on the proposed regulation establishing the navigator program, with one hearing held in Albany and at least one held in New York city. Before finalizing the regulations establishing the navigator program, the board of elections shall consider the comments and feedback received, modify the proposed regulation as appropriate in light of the comments and feedback received, and issue a report indicating the manner in which it responded to the comments received before finalizing its regulations establishing the election security navigator program.

5. (a) The state board of elections shall publish on its publicly available website and submit to the governor, the temporary president of the senate, and the speaker of the assembly, an annual report regarding the activities and performance of the election security navigator program no later than March first of each year. The content of the report shall include, but not be limited to:

(i) aggregate performance metrics;

(ii) services provided;

(iii) the types of existing and emerging risks identified;

(iv) any recommendations for changes to state statutes or regulations affecting the navigator program; and

(v) any budgetary requests or other changes to navigator program financing.

(b) In the annual report provided pursuant to this subdivision, beginning with the report covering the second year of the program, the state board of election shall report on progress in developing an election security navigators student program in partnership with the state university of New York.

6. (a) The navigator program shall be funded through a separate general budget allocation to the state board of elections in an amount sufficient to provide assistance to the local boards of elections. The program director shall annually submit a budget request for an amount not less than three million dollars, adjusted annually for inflation.

(b) The state board of elections shall be authorized to apply for and receive additional federal and private sources of funding and may enter into agreements with federal and state agencies to facilitate and carry out the functions, powers and duties of the navigator program.

§ 3. Severability. If any clause, sentence, paragraph, subdivision, section or part of this act shall be adjudged by any court of competent jurisdiction to be invalid, such judgment shall not affect, impair, or invalidate the remainder thereof, but shall be confined in its operation to the clause, sentence, paragraph, subdivision, section or part thereof directly involved in the controversy in which such judgment shall have been rendered. It is hereby declared to be the intent of the legislature that this act would have been enacted even if such invalid provisions

had not been included herein. The provisions of this act shall be severable and if any portion thereof or the applicability thereof to any person or circumstance shall be held to be invalid, the remainder of this act and the application thereof shall not be affected thereby.

§ 4. This act shall take effect immediately.