

1009

2011-2012 Regular Sessions

I N   S E N A T E

(PREFILED)

January 5, 2011

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Introduced by Sens. STEWART-COUSINS, ADAMS, ADDABBO, BRESLIN, DIAZ, DUANE, HASSELL-THOMPSON, KRUEGER, MONTGOMERY, PERKINS, SAMPSON, STAVISKY -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Elections

AN ACT to amend the election law, in relation to prohibiting the suppression of voters

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK, REPRESENTED IN SENATE AND ASSEMBLY, DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

1     Section 1. This act shall be known and may be cited as the "deceptive  
2 practices and voter suppression prevention act".  
3     S 2. The election law is amended by adding a new section 17-151 to  
4 read as follows:  
5     S 17-151. DECEPTIVE PRACTICES. 1. ANY PERSON, POLITICAL COMMITTEE,  
6 LABOR ORGANIZATION, CORPORATION, OR OTHER ENTITY, WHETHER ACTING UNDER  
7 COLOR OF LAW OR OTHERWISE, WHO KNOWINGLY COMMUNICATES OR KNOWINGLY CAUS-  
8 ES TO BE COMMUNICATED DECEPTIVE INFORMATION, KNOWING SUCH INFORMATION TO  
9 BE FALSE AND, IN ACTING IN THE MANNER DESCRIBED, PREVENTS OR DETERS  
10 ANOTHER PERSON FROM EXERCISING THE RIGHT TO VOTE IN ANY ELECTION, IS  
11 GUILTY OF A MISDEMEANOR.  
12     2. THE FOLLOWING DEFINITIONS ARE APPLICABLE TO THIS SECTION: (A)  
13 "DECEPTIVE INFORMATION" MEANS FALSE INFORMATION REGARDING: (I) THE TIME,  
14 PLACE, OR MANNER OF ANY ELECTION; (II) THE QUALIFICATIONS FOR OR  
15 RESTRICTIONS ON VOTER ELIGIBILITY FOR ANY ELECTION, INCLUDING ANY PENAL-  
16 TIES ASSOCIATED WITH VOTING BY INELIGIBLE VOTERS; (III) INFORMATION  
17 REGARDING A VOTER'S REGISTRATION STATUS OR ELIGIBILITY; OR (IV) THE  
18 POLITICAL PARTY AFFILIATION OF ANY CANDIDATE; AND  
19     (B) "ELECTION" AS USED IN THIS ARTICLE SHALL BE DEEMED TO APPLY TO AND  
20 INCLUDE ALL ELECTIONS ADMINISTERED BY THE STATE OR CITY OF NEW YORK  
21 BOARDS OF ELECTIONS, OR ANY COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS, INCLUDING ANY

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

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1 GENERAL, PRIMARY, RUN-OFF, OR SPECIAL ELECTION FOR ANY STATE OR LOCAL  
2 OFFICE OR BALLOT PROPOSITION.

3 3. ANY PERSON AGGRIEVED BY A VIOLATION OF SUBDIVISION ONE OF THIS  
4 SECTION MAY INSTITUTE A CIVIL ACTION OR OTHER PROPER PROCEEDING FOR  
5 PREVENTATIVE RELIEF, OR MAY APPLY FOR A PERMANENT OR TEMPORARY INJUNC-  
6 TION, RESTRAINING ORDER, DECLARATORY JUDGMENT, OR OTHER ORDER IN ANY  
7 COURT WITH JURISDICTION PURSUANT TO SECTION 16-100 OF THIS CHAPTER.

8 4. ANY ATTEMPT TO COMMIT AN OFFENSE DESCRIBED IN SUBDIVISION ONE OF  
9 THIS SECTION, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE APPLICABLE PROVISION OF THE PENAL  
10 LAW, IS A CLASS B MISDEMEANOR.

11 5. THE PROVISIONS OF ARTICLE TWENTY AND ARTICLE ONE HUNDRED FIVE OF  
12 THE PENAL LAW, RELATING TO CRIMINAL LIABILITY FOR CONDUCT OF ANOTHER AND  
13 CONSPIRACY, SHALL APPLY TO PROSECUTIONS UNDER THIS SECTION.

14 6. NOTWITHSTANDING ANY OTHER PROVISION OF LAW, THE ATTORNEY GENERAL  
15 SHALL HAVE CONCURRENT JURISDICTION WITH ANY DISTRICT ATTORNEY IN THE  
16 PROSECUTION OF ANY OFFENSES UNDER THIS SECTION RELATING TO DECEPTIVE  
17 PRACTICES AS WELL AS ANY OFFENSES ARISING OUT OF SUCH PROSECUTION.

18 S 3. The election law is amended by adding a new section 17-153 to  
19 read as follows:

20 S 17-153. SUPPRESSION OF VOTERS. 1. ANY PERSON, POLITICAL COMMITTEE,  
21 LABOR ORGANIZATION, CORPORATION, OR OTHER ENTITY WHO SUPPRESSES OR  
22 THREATENS TO SUPPRESS THE RIGHT OF ANY PERSON TO LAWFULLY EXERCISE THEIR  
23 FRANCHISE, OR IN ANY OTHER MANNER COMPELS SUCH PERSON TO VOTE OR TO  
24 REFRAIN FROM VOTING FOR OR AGAINST A PARTICULAR CANDIDATE FOR PUBLIC  
25 OFFICE OR FOR OR AGAINST A PARTICULAR BALLOT PROPOSITION IS GUILTY OF A  
26 CLASS A MISDEMEANOR.

27 2. FOR PURPOSES OF THIS SECTION, THE TERM "SUPPRESS" SHALL MEAN TO USE  
28 FORCE, AUTHORITY OR AN ABUSE OF POWER TO PREVENT, RESTRAIN, INHIBIT OR  
29 COMPEL ANOTHER FROM ACTING IN HIS OR HER OWN INTERESTS OR INTENTIONS, OR  
30 INTO NOT ACTING AT ALL.

31 3. ANY PERSON, POLITICAL COMMITTEE, LABOR ORGANIZATION, OR CORPORATION  
32 WHO ATTEMPTS TO COMMIT AN OFFENSE DESCRIBED IN SUBDIVISION ONE OF THIS  
33 SECTION IS GUILTY OF A CLASS B MISDEMEANOR.

34 4. THE PROVISIONS OF ARTICLE TWENTY AND ARTICLE ONE HUNDRED FIVE OF  
35 THE PENAL LAW, RELATING TO CRIMINAL LIABILITY FOR CONDUCT OF ANOTHER AND  
36 CONSPIRACY SHALL APPLY TO PROSECUTIONS UNDER THIS SECTION.

37 5. NOTWITHSTANDING ANY OTHER PROVISION OF LAW, THE ATTORNEY GENERAL  
38 SHALL HAVE CONCURRENT JURISDICTION WITH ANY DISTRICT ATTORNEY IN THE  
39 PROSECUTION OF ANY OFFENSES UNDER THIS SECTION RELATING TO DECEPTIVE  
40 PRACTICES AS WELL AS ANY OFFENSES ARISING OUT OF SUCH PROSECUTION.

41 S 4. Section 17-166 of the election law is amended to read as follows:

42 S 17-166. Penalty. Any person convicted of a misdemeanor under this  
43 article shall for a first offense be punished by A SENTENCE OF imprison-  
44 ment for not more than one year, or by a fine of not less than one  
45 hundred dollars nor more than five hundred dollars, or by both such fine  
46 and imprisonment. Any person who, having been convicted of a misdemeanor  
47 under this article, shall thereafter be convicted of another misdemeanor  
48 under this article, shall be guilty of a felony.

49 ANY PERSON CONVICTED OF A FELONY UNDER THIS ARTICLE SHALL BE CONVICTED  
50 OF A CLASS E FELONY FOR A FIRST OFFENSE AND FOR ANY SUBSEQUENT FELONY  
51 OFFENSE UNDER THIS ARTICLE, A CLASS D FELONY.

52 S 5. This act shall take effect immediately.