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I N   A S S E M B L Y

March 8, 2016

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Introduced by M. of A. SEPULVEDA, MOSLEY, LAVINE, RIVERA, SOLAGES, MAYER, GOTTFRIED, BLAKE, CRESPO -- Multi-Sponsored by -- M. of A. LOPEZ, RAMOS, RICHARDSON -- read once and referred to the Committee on Election Law -- committee discharged, bill amended, ordered reprinted as amended and recommitted to said committee

AN ACT to amend the election law, in relation to enacting the young adult voter registration act

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

1     Section 1. Legislative findings. The legislature hereby finds and  
2 declares that voting is a central tenet of democracy. The vitality of  
3 the democratic process depends on voter participation in elections. Yet,  
4 far too few New Yorkers vote in local, state or national elections, and  
5 voter participation has been declining. The legislature finds that  
6 affirmative steps are necessary to encourage and increase voter partic-  
7 ipation in all elections.

8     The legislature further finds that this decline and lack of partic-  
9 ipation is due, in part, to the fact that voters find it difficult to  
10 register to vote. Although state law provides mechanisms for distribut-  
11 ing voter registration forms by state agencies as part of agency-based  
12 voter registration programs, the department of education does not  
13 participate in such programs. The legislature finds that the department  
14 of education is uniquely positioned in the state to enhance the partic-  
15 ipation of young people in the democratic process by distributing voter  
16 registration forms to potential young voters.

17     S 2. This act shall be known and may be cited as the "young adult  
18 voter registration act".

19     S 3. The election law is amended by adding a new section 5-231 to read  
20 as follows:

21     S 5-231. YOUNG ADULT VOTER REGISTRATION. 1. REGISTRATION OF VOTERS.  
22 EACH PUBLIC OR PRIVATE HIGH SCHOOL WITHIN THE STATE SHALL MAKE AVAILABLE  
23 DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR TO ALL STUDENTS SUCH MATERIALS AS MAY BE  
24 PUBLISHED BY THE BOARD OF ELECTIONS RELATING TO VOTER REGISTRATION AND,

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

LBD13495-02-6

1 WHERE APPROPRIATE, SHALL PROVIDE APPLICATIONS FOR REGISTRATION AND  
2 ENROLLMENT, AND MAY ASSIST IN THE EXECUTION OF SUCH APPLICATIONS.

3 2. REGISTRATION OF GRADUATING SENIORS. THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
4 SHALL PROVIDE A POSTAGE PAID VOTER REGISTRATION FORM TO EACH GRADUATING  
5 STUDENT WHO RECEIVES A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO  
6 A REGENTS, LOCAL, GENERAL EQUIVALENCY OR INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION  
7 PROGRAM DIPLOMA, OR TO ANY STUDENT WHO REQUESTS ONE.

8 3. FORMS TO BE AVAILABLE AT SCHOOL. THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION SHALL  
9 ENSURE THAT POSTAGE PAID VOTER REGISTRATION FORMS ARE AVAILABLE IN THE  
10 MAIN OR CENTRAL OFFICE OF EACH HIGH SCHOOL UNDER THE JURISDICTION OF THE  
11 DEPARTMENT FOR STUDENTS WHO WISH TO OBTAIN ONE. THE DEPARTMENT SHALL  
12 ALSO ENSURE THAT EACH SUCH HIGH SCHOOL PROVIDES ADEQUATE NOTICE TO ITS  
13 STUDENTS OF THE AVAILABILITY OF SUCH FORMS IN ITS MAIN OR CENTRAL  
14 OFFICE.

15 4. SUFFICIENT QUANTITY OF FORMS. THE DEPARTMENT SHALL REQUEST FROM THE  
16 BOARD OF ELECTIONS A SUFFICIENT QUANTITY OF VOTER REGISTRATION FORMS TO  
17 MEET THE REQUIREMENTS OF THIS SECTION.

18 S 4. This act shall take effect on the thirtieth day after it shall  
19 have become a law.