S T A T E O F N E W Y O R K

6592--A

I N S E N A T E

January 29, 2016

Introduced by Sen. SANDERS -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Elections -- 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:

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

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

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

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

S 5-231. YOUNG ADULT VOTER REGISTRATION. 1. REGISTRATION OF VOTERS. EACH PUBLIC OR PRIVATE HIGH SCHOOL WITHIN THE STATE SHALL MAKE AVAILABLE DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR TO ALL STUDENTS SUCH MATERIALS AS MAY BE PUBLISHED BY THE BOARD OF ELECTIONS RELATING TO VOTER REGISTRATION AND, WHERE APPROPRIATE, SHALL PROVIDE APPLICATIONS FOR REGISTRATION AND ENROLLMENT, AND MAY ASSIST IN THE EXECUTION OF SUCH APPLICATIONS.

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

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

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

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

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