

STATE OF NEW YORK

9555

IN ASSEMBLY

March 16, 2022

Introduced by M. of A. LAVINE -- read once and referred to the Committee on Election Law

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 § 2. The election law is amended by adding a new section 17-151 to
4 read as follows:

5 § 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
22 general, primary, run-off, or special election for any state or local
23 office or ballot proposition.

24 3. Any person aggrieved by a violation of subdivision one of this
25 section may institute a civil action or other proper proceeding for
26 preventative relief, or may apply for a permanent or temporary injunc-
27 tion, restraining order, declaratory judgment, or other order in any
28 court with jurisdiction pursuant to section 16-100 of this chapter.

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

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1 4. Any attempt to commit an offense described in subdivision one of
2 this section, in accordance with the applicable provision of the penal
3 law, is a class B misdemeanor.

4 5. The provisions of article twenty and article one hundred five of
5 the penal law, relating to criminal liability for conduct of another and
6 conspiracy, shall apply to prosecutions under this section.

7 6. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the attorney general
8 shall have concurrent jurisdiction with any district attorney in the
9 prosecution of any offenses under this section relating to deceptive
10 practices as well as any offenses arising out of such prosecution.

11 § 3. The election law is amended by adding a new section 17-153 to
12 read as follows:

13 § 17-153. Suppression of voters. 1. Any person, political committee,
14 labor organization, corporation, or other entity who suppresses or
15 threatens to suppress the right of any person to lawfully exercise their
16 franchise, or in any other manner compels such person to vote or to
17 refrain from voting for or against a particular candidate for public
18 office or for or against a particular ballot proposition is guilty of a
19 class A misdemeanor.

20 2. For purposes of this section, the term "suppress" shall mean to use
21 force, authority or an abuse of power to prevent, restrain, inhibit or
22 compel another from acting in his or her own interests or intentions, or
23 into not acting at all.

24 3. Any person, political committee, labor organization, or corporation
25 who attempts to commit an offense described in subdivision one of this
26 section is guilty of a class B misdemeanor.

27 4. The provisions of article twenty and article one hundred five of
28 the penal law, relating to criminal liability for conduct of another and
29 conspiracy shall apply to prosecutions under this section.

30 5. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the attorney general
31 shall have concurrent jurisdiction with any district attorney in the
32 prosecution of any offenses under this section relating to deceptive
33 practices as well as any offenses arising out of such prosecution.

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

35 § 17-166. Penalty. Any person convicted of a misdemeanor under this
36 article shall for a first offense be punished by a sentence of imprison-
37 ment for not more than one year, or by a fine of not less than one
38 hundred dollars nor more than five hundred dollars, or by both such fine
39 and imprisonment, unless otherwise provided by law. Any person who,
40 having been convicted of a misdemeanor under this article, shall there-
41 after be convicted of another misdemeanor under this article, shall be
42 guilty of a class E felony. For any subsequent offense, he or she shall
43 be guilty of a class D felony.

44 § 5. This act shall take effect immediately.