

STATE OF NEW YORK

5889

2021-2022 Regular Sessions

IN SENATE

March 22, 2021

Introduced by Sens. PARKER, KRUEGER, SEPULVEDA, SERRANO -- 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 enacting the "Modern-
ized Voter Registration Act of New York"

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

1 Section 1. This act shall be known and may be cited as the "Modernized
2 Voter Registration Act of New York".

3 § 2. The election law is amended by adding four new sections 5-200,
4 5-201, 5-205 and 5-207 to read as follows:

5 § 5-200. Automated voter registration. 1. Notwithstanding any other
6 manner of registration required by this article, each person in the
7 state qualified to vote pursuant to section 5-102 of this article, shall
8 be automatically registered to vote as provided in this section,
9 provided that the person consents to voter registration.

10 2. The state board of elections or county board of elections shall
11 register to vote or update the registration record of any person in the
12 state qualified to vote pursuant to section 5-102 of this article who
13 consents to the registration or update and does any of the following:

14 (a) completes an application for a new or renewed driver's license,
15 non-driver identification card, pre-licensing course certificate,
16 learner's permit or certification of supervised driving with the depart-
17 ment of motor vehicles, or notifies such department in writing of a
18 change of his or her name or address;

19 (b) completes an application for services, renewal or recertification
20 for services, or change of address relating to such services from agen-
21 cies designated in section 5-211 of this title;

22 (c) completes an application for services, renewal or recertification
23 for services, or change of address relating to such services from any

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

LBD07681-02-1

1 municipal housing authority as set forth in article thirteen of the
2 public housing law;

3 (d) registers for classes at institutions of the state university of
4 New York and the city university of New York;

5 (e) completes a maximum sentence of imprisonment or is discharged from
6 parole;

7 (f) completes an application for unemployment insurance;

8 (g) becomes a member or employee of the division of military and naval
9 affairs; or

10 (h) completes an application with any other state or federal agency
11 designated as a source agency pursuant to paragraph (b) of subdivision
12 three of this section.

13 3. (a) The term "source agency" includes the department of motor vehi-
14 cles, any government agency designated pursuant to section 5-211 of this
15 title, the state university of New York and the city university of New
16 York, all public housing authorities listed in article thirteen of the
17 public housing law, the department of corrections and community super-
18 vision, the department of labor, the division of military and naval
19 affairs and any agency designated by the state board of elections pursu-
20 ant to paragraph (b) of this subdivision.

21 (b) The state board of elections may designate additional state agen-
22 cies to serve as sources for voter registration. In designating an agen-
23 cy under this paragraph, the state board of elections shall consider:

24 (i) the likelihood that source records reflect a large number of
25 eligible citizens;

26 (ii) the extent to which source records reflect eligible citizens who
27 would not otherwise be registered under the act to modernize voter
28 registration;

29 (iii) the accuracy of personal identification data in source records;
30 and

31 (iv) any additional factors designated by the chief election official
32 as reasonably related to accomplishing the purposes of the act to
33 modernize voter registration.

34 4. The state board of elections and the source agencies shall enter
35 into agreements to ensure that for each person described in subdivision
36 two of this section, each source agency electronically transmits to the
37 state or local boards of elections the following information in a format
38 that can be read by the computerized statewide voter registration list:

39 (a) given name or names and surname of surnames;

40 (b) mailing address and residential address;

41 (c) date of birth;

42 (d) citizenship;

43 (e) driver's license or non-driver identification card number, last
44 four digits of the person's social security number, or a space for the
45 person to indicate that her or she doesn't not have any such number;

46 (f) political party enrollment, if any;

47 (g) an indication that the person intends to apply for an absentee
48 ballot, if any; and

49 (h) an image of the person's signature.

50 In the event that any transmission of data pursuant to this section
51 fails to include an image of an individual's signature, the absence of a
52 signature shall not preclude the registration of an eligible citizen.
53 The board of elections shall develop procedures to enable an eligible
54 citizen, whose information is transmitted pursuant to this section and
55 whose information lacks an electronic signature, to provide a signature
56 at the polling place or with an application for an absentee ballot

1 before voting. The board may require an elector who has not provided a
2 signature before arriving at the polling place or submitting an absentee
3 ballot to present a current and valid photo identification or a copy of
4 a current utility bill, bank statement, government check, paycheck, or
5 other government document that shows the name and address of the voter.

6 5. If an agency does not routinely request information concerning the
7 citizenship status of individuals, it shall maintain records sufficient
8 to transmit to the board indications of United States citizenship for
9 each person described in subdivision two of this section, but shall not
10 retain, use, or share any such information relating to an individual's
11 citizenship for any other purpose.

12 6. The state board of elections shall prepare and distribute to
13 participating agencies written instructions as to the implementation of
14 the program and shall be responsible for establishing training programs
15 for employees of source agencies listed in this section. Training shall
16 include requirements that employees of any source agency communicate to
17 each individual identified in subdivision two of this section that the
18 source agency maintains strict neutrality with respect to a person's
19 party enrollment and all persons seeking voter registration forms and
20 information shall be advised that government services are not condi-
21 tioned on being registered to vote, or eligibility to register to vote.
22 No statement shall be made nor any action taken to discourage the appli-
23 cant from registering to vote.

24 7. The agreements between the state board of elections and the source
25 agencies shall include the format in which information will be transmit-
26 ted, whether and how each entity will collect, in addition to the manda-
27 tory information listed in subdivision four of this section, additional
28 information on a voluntary basis from persons for the purpose of facili-
29 tating voter registration, the frequency of data transmissions, the
30 procedures, and other measures that will be used to ensure the security
31 and privacy of the information transmitted, and any other matter neces-
32 sary or helpful to implement the requirements of this section.

33 8. Each source agency shall cooperate with the state board of
34 elections and county board of elections to facilitate the voter regis-
35 tration of each person described in subdivision two of this section, and
36 to electronically transmit the information needed to register each such
37 person to vote or to update each such person's voter registration
38 record.

39 9. Each source agency shall enter into an agreement with the state
40 board of elections finalizing the format and content of electronic tran-
41 smissions required by this section no later than September first, two
42 thousand twenty-three; provided, that each source agency shall be able
43 to comply fully with all requirements of this section, including the
44 collection and transmission of all data required to register individuals
45 to vote, by January first, two thousand twenty-four.

46 § 5-201. Same day registration. Each county shall allow any eligible
47 individual on the day of an election and on any day when voting, includ-
48 ing early voting, to register to vote in such election at the polling
49 place and to cast a vote in such election.

50 § 5-205. Internet registration. 1. The board shall ensure that the
51 following services are available to the public at any time on the offi-
52 cial public websites of the appropriate county or municipality, in the
53 same manner and subject to the same terms and conditions as the services
54 provided by voter registration regulations: (a) online application for
55 voter registration; (b) online assistance to applicants in applying to
56 register to vote; (c) online completion and submission by applicants of

1 the mail voter registration application including assistance with
2 providing a signature in electronic form; and (d) online receipt of
3 completed voter registration applications.

4 2. Any county or municipality shall accept an online voter registra-
5 tion application provided by an individual under this section, and
6 ensure that the individual is registered to vote in the state, if (a)
7 the individual meets the same voter registration requirements applicable
8 to individuals who register to vote by mail in accordance with the law
9 using the mail voter registration application form and (b) the individ-
10 ual provides a signature in electronic form.

11 3. For purposes of this section, an individual provides a signature in
12 electronic form by (a) executing a computerized mark in the signature
13 field on an online voter registration application; or

14 (b) submitting with the application an electronic copy of the individ-
15 ual's handwritten signature through electronic means.

16 4. (a) Upon the online submission of a completed voter registration
17 application by an individual under this section, the appropriate state
18 or local election official shall send the individual a notice confirming
19 the state's receipt of the application and providing instructions on how
20 the individual may check the status of the application, and (b) as soon
21 as the appropriate election official has approved or rejected an appli-
22 cation submitted by an individual under this section, the official shall
23 send the individual a notice of the disposition of the application.

24 5. Any county or municipality shall make the services made available
25 online under subdivision one of this section available through the use
26 of an automated telephone-based system, subject to the same terms and
27 conditions applicable under this section to the services made available
28 online, in addition to making the services available online in accord-
29 ance with the requirements of this section.

30 § 5-207. Updating registration information through the internet. 1.
31 The board shall ensure that any registered voter on the computerized
32 list may at any time update the voter's registration information,
33 including the voter's address and electronic mail address, online
34 through the official public website of the election official responsible
35 for the maintenance of the list, so long as the voter attests to the
36 contents of the update by providing a signature in electronic form in
37 the same manner required under the law.

38 2. Applications for voter registration shall provide an option for
39 voters to receive voter information and future registration information
40 and correspondence by email.

41 3. The board of elections shall notify every registered voter of the
42 option to register and make changes to their voter information electron-
43 ically.

44 § 3. Paragraph (k) of subdivision 5 of section 5-210 of the election
45 law, as amended by chapter 536 of the laws of 2019, is amended and a new
46 paragraph (n) is added to read as follows:

47 (k) The form shall also include space for the following information,
48 which must be contained on the inside of the form after it is folded for
49 mailing:

50 (i) A space for the applicant to indicate whether or not he or she has
51 ever voted or registered to vote before and, if so, the approximate year
52 in which such applicant last voted or registered and his or her name and
53 address at the time.

54 (ii) The name and residence address of the applicant including the zip
55 code and apartment number, if any.

(iii) A space for the furnishing of an e-mail address, the furnishing of which shall be optional, together with a notice stating that if an e-mail address is furnished, all notices and communications otherwise required to be sent by the state board of elections to the voter by postal mail shall be sent by e-mail in addition to postal mail. County boards of elections and the board of elections of the city of New York shall have the option of sending notices and communications otherwise required to be sent to the voter by postal mail by e-mail in addition to postal mail if the voter furnishes an email address.

(iv) The date of birth of the applicant.

(v) A space for the applicant to indicate his or her driver's license or department of motor vehicles non-driver photo ID number or the last four digits of his or her social security number or, if the applicant does not have either such number, a space for the applicant to indicate he or she does not have either.

(vi) A space for the applicant to indicate whether or not he or she is a citizen of the United States and the statement "If you checked "no" in response to this question, do not complete this form."

~~(vii) [A space for the applicant to answer the question "Will you be 18 years of age on or before election day?" and the statement "If you checked "no" in response to this question, do not complete this form unless you will be 18 by the end of the year,"~~

~~(viii)]~~ A statement informing the applicant that if the form is submitted by mail and the applicant is registering for the first time, certain information or documents must be submitted with the mail-in registration form in order to avoid additional identification requirements upon voting for the first time. Such information and documents are:

(A) a driver's license or department of motor vehicles non-driver photo ID number; or

(B) the last four digits of the individual's social security number; or

(C) a copy of a current and valid photo identification; or

(D) a copy of a current utility bill, bank statement, government check, paycheck or other government document that shows the name and address of the voter.

~~(ix)]~~ (viii) The gender of the applicant (optional).

~~(x)]~~ (ix) A space for the applicant to indicate his or her choice of party enrollment, with a clear alternative provided for the applicant to decline to affiliate with any party.

~~(xi)]~~ (x) The telephone number of the applicant (optional).

~~(xii)]~~ (xi) A place for the applicant to execute the form on a line which is clearly labeled "signature of applicant" preceded by the following specific form of affirmation:

AFFIDAVIT: I swear or affirm that:

* I am a citizen of the United States.

* I will have lived in the county, city, or village for at least 30 days before the election.

* I meet all the requirements to register to vote in New York State.

* This is my signature or mark on the line below.

* All the information contained on this application is true. I understand that if it is not true I can be convicted and fined up to \$5,000 and/or jailed for up to four years.

which form of affirmation shall be followed by a space for the date and the aforementioned line for the applicant's signature.

1 [~~(xiii)~~] (xii) A space for the applicant to register in the New York
2 state donate life registry for organ and tissue donations established
3 pursuant to section forty-three hundred ten of the public health law.

4 (xiii) The email address of the applicant (optional).

5 (n) Agreements adopted pursuant to section 5-200 of this title between
6 source agencies and the state or county boards of elections are not
7 required to include the collection or transmission of the information
8 requested in paragraph (j) or subparagraph (i), (viii), (x) or (xii) of
9 paragraph (k) of this subdivision, and no board of elections shall
10 refuse to register to vote or update the registration record of any
11 person in the state whose information is transmitted pursuant to section
12 5-200 of this title for the reason that such information does not
13 include the information requested by paragraph (j) or subparagraph (i),
14 (viii), (ix), (x) or (xii) of paragraph (k) of this subdivision.

15 § 4. This act shall take effect immediately.