

# STATE OF NEW YORK

9676

## IN SENATE

May 17, 2024

Introduced by Sen. WEBB -- 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 "student voter empowerment act"

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

1 Section 1. Short title. This act shall be known and may be cited as  
2 the "student voter empowerment act".

3 § 2. Subdivision 18 of section 5-211 of the election law, as amended  
4 by chapter 481 of the laws of 2023, is amended to read as follows:

5 18. (a) [~~(i)~~] On or before January first, two thousand twenty, all  
6 institutions of the state university of New York and the city university  
7 of New York shall create and make available to all students a webpage  
8 for voter education on each such institution's website, containing a  
9 link to an application for voter registration, a link to an application  
10 for an early mail ballot, updated information about the location and  
11 hours of the polling place designated for students registered to vote on  
12 the contiguous property of the institution, if such polling place exists  
13 pursuant to subdivision five-a of section 4-104 of this chapter or as  
14 designated by the local board of election, key dates for voting regis-  
15 tration, voting times, and absentee voting detailed in the state board  
16 of elections political calendar, information about the voting rights of  
17 students, contact information for the county board of elections, and the  
18 name and contact information for the [~~administrator responsible for~~  
19 ~~voter registration assistance~~] student voting coordinator on each  
20 campus.

21 [~~(i)~~] (b) Each such institution shall, at the beginning of the school  
22 year, and again in January of a year in which the president of the  
23 United States is to be elected, provide an application for voter regis-  
24 tration and an application for an early mail ballot to each student in  
25 each such institution. Each institution shall be considered in compli-  
26 ance with the requirements of this [~~subparagraph~~] paragraph for each  
27 student to whom the institution electronically transmits a message  
28 containing the link to the webpage for voter education, the link to an

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

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1 application for voter registration and the link to an application for an  
2 early mail ballot, if such information is in an electronic message  
3 devoted exclusively to voter registration.

4 [~~(iii)~~] (c) Each such institution shall provide the same degree of  
5 assistance as required of participating agencies.

6 [~~(b)~~] 19. (a) Each institution within the state university of New York  
7 and the city university of New York shall designate a staff member to  
8 act as a student voting coordinator. The student voting coordinator  
9 shall develop and implement a student voting action plan to increase  
10 student voter registration and voting and democratic participation among  
11 students. Such student voting action plan shall cover the two year  
12 period immediately preceding each statewide general election, provided  
13 however that the action plan following the effective date of the chapter  
14 of the laws of two thousand twenty-four that amended this subdivision  
15 shall cover the period after such effective date, and shall be updated  
16 after each statewide general election.

17 (b) The student voting action plan shall include:

18 (i) A minimum of three election outreach events to increase democratic  
19 participation and student voting during an academic year, including at  
20 least one event during the forty-five days preceding a general or prima-  
21 ry election. At least one event shall be held in-person. Such events  
22 shall be open for all students to attend, and may be sponsored by  
23 student organizations, provided they maintain requirements in paragraph  
24 (c) of this subdivision.

25 (ii) Provision of informational materials on voting and voter regis-  
26 tration, including but not limited to application and online application  
27 for voter registration as required in subdivision eighteen of this  
28 section, in central locations and high-traffic areas on campus, includ-  
29 ing during orientation events for new students and during course regis-  
30 tration processes, and in electronic messages, social media platforms,  
31 and text messages to cellular phones, to the extent the institution uses  
32 such methods to provide information to students.

33 (iii) In consultation with local boards of elections, provision of  
34 pre-filled voter registration applications with relevant residential  
35 addresses on the contiguous property of the college or university.

36 (iv) Dissemination of information about voter registration and voting  
37 opportunities to all students on the website created pursuant to subdi-  
38 vision eighteen of this section, including:

39 (A) the dates for early voting and election day voting;

40 (B) the last day for voter registration, enrollment, and change of  
41 enrollment;

42 (C) the process to search for a voter's early voting and election day  
43 assigned poll sites and voter registration status;

44 (D) the location and hours of the polling place designated for  
45 students registered to vote at any address on the contiguous property of  
46 the institution, pursuant to subdivision five-a of section 4-104 of this  
47 chapter, if such polling place is designated;

48 (E) the process and deadlines for applying for and returning absentee  
49 ballots, early mail ballots, and for curing defects in absentee ballots;

50 (F) the option to use students' campus residence address to register  
51 to vote;

52 (G) the protections for the right to vote pursuant to title two of  
53 article seventeen of this chapter, the John R. Lewis voting rights act  
54 of New York, and the rights of voters with disabilities; and

55 (H) the assistance for language-minority groups as provided by section  
56 17-208 of this chapter.

1 (v) Support of student organizations engaged in activities to increase  
2 voter registration and voting by students, including but not limited to  
3 professional assistance, dissemination of information of activities, or  
4 financial support.

5 (vi) A policy allowing a student to be excused from class or absent  
6 from a job with the institution for a reasonable period for the purpose  
7 of voting on election day, if the student does not have three hours of  
8 continuous time out of class or off from a job with the institution  
9 during the time the polls are open on election day.

10 (vii) Any other activities to improve access to voting and voter  
11 registration for students.

12 (c) The work of the student voting coordinator and the activities in  
13 the student voting action plan, including but not limited to outreach  
14 events, informational materials, and communications, shall not be  
15 conducted for the purpose of favoring or disfavoring particular candi-  
16 dates or political parties.

17 (d) The chancellor of the state university of New York and the chan-  
18 cellor of the city university of New York shall promulgate rules for the  
19 manner of developing the student voting action plan which shall include  
20 consultation with staff, faculty members, and student organizations with  
21 experience in civic engagement.

22 (e) Each institution within the state university of New York and the  
23 city university of New York shall enroll in the National Study for  
24 Learning, Voting, and Engagement by the Institute for Democracy and  
25 Higher Education at Tufts University. Within thirty days of receiving a  
26 report from the National Study for Learning, Voting, and Engagement by  
27 the Institute for Democracy and Higher Education at Tufts University, an  
28 institution shall send the report to the state board of elections. The  
29 state board of elections shall make such reports publicly available on  
30 the website.

31 (f) The state university of New York and the city university of New  
32 York, on behalf of each institution within its system, shall on or  
33 before June first, two thousand twenty, and each subsequent year, submit  
34 a report disaggregated according to each institution to the state board  
35 of elections that includes:

36 (i) the efforts of the institution to register voters in the preceding  
37 calendar year;

38 (ii) a date-stamped screen shot of the webpage for voter education  
39 that contains the required information under [~~paragraph (a) of this~~]  
40 subdivision eighteen of this section;

41 (iii) the number of students who were registered for course work in  
42 the preceding twelve months at such institution and the number of clicks  
43 on the links to online voter registration and early mail ballot applica-  
44 tions; [~~and~~]

45 (iv) any other efforts or recommendations the institution plans to  
46 implement to improve access to voter registration and early mail ballot  
47 voting for students at the institution; and

48 (v) each student voting action plan developed and implemented pursuant  
49 to paragraph (b) of this subdivision.

50 [~~(e)~~] (g) The state board of elections shall make the reports provided  
51 pursuant to paragraph [~~(b)~~] (f) of this subdivision publicly available  
52 on its website.

53 § 3. Paragraph (a) of subdivision 1 of section 17-208 of the election  
54 law, as added by chapter 226 of the laws of 2022, is amended to read as  
55 follows:

1 (a) more than two percent, but in no instance fewer than three hundred  
2 individuals, of the citizens of voting age of a political subdivision or  
3 residents of a college or university are members of a single language-  
4 minority group and are limited English proficient.

5 § 4. This act shall take effect one year after it shall have become a  
6 law; provided, however, that if chapter 226 of the laws of 2022 shall  
7 not have taken effect on or before such date then section three of this  
8 act shall take effect on the same date and in the same manner as such  
9 chapter of the laws of 2022 takes effect. Effective immediately, any  
10 rules and regulations necessary to implement the provisions of this act  
11 on its effective date are authorized to be made and completed on or  
12 before such date.