

September 20, 2023

The Honorable Kathy Hochul
Governor of New York State
Executive Chamber
State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

RE: The New York Early Mail Voter Act (S7394/A7632)

Dear Governor Hochul:

We write this letter to thank you for signing the New York Early Mail Voter Act (S7394/A7632) into law. By signing this bill, you have cemented your standing as a national leader in the fight to expand voting rights and strengthen our democracy.

New York has historically made it difficult for voters to exercise their freedom to vote. However, key reforms in recent years have begun to turn the tide, strengthening the right to vote in New York. Early voting, online voter registration, and automatic voter registration, to name just a few, are expanding the franchise to ensure that every eligible New Yorker can make their voice heard. Last year, you signed the landmark John R. Lewis Voting Rights Act of New York, ensuring that New York is leading the nation with new laws to protect the fundamental right to vote. Your signature on the New York Early Mail Voter Act continues that important work.

As you know, the New York Early Mail Voter Act will create a process where any registered voter in our state can cast an early mail ballot. New York will join 35 other states that allow any registered voter to vote by mail either early or on election day.

All eligible New Yorkers will be able to enjoy the convenience and efficiency of mail voting. Mail voting is a common-sense and secure method of voting that has been used for decades in other states, and provides voters a way to vote in the privacy and security of their own home. Elderly voters, voters with disabilities, young voters, those who work busy schedules, and voters with childcare responsibilities will no longer be forced to vote in-person in order to have their voices heard.

With this law, any voter who needs or simply prefers to vote by mail will have that opportunity. By giving voters more ways to vote in a safe, secure, and accessible way, this law will increase voter turnout in New York – especially among harder-to-reach populations like young voters and voters of color.

Expanded access to mail voting will also benefit election officials, reducing polling place lines and easing administrative burdens on election officials. As other states have found, increasing the number of voters casting mail ballots can decrease total election administration costs.

Implementing this legislation in time for the 2024 election is particularly important. With the COVID exception for absentee voting expired at the end of 2022, this new law can ensure that all New Yorkers have the option to vote by mail if they wish in 2024 and beyond.

By signing this bill, you are guaranteeing that all New Yorkers have access to mail voting and enjoy a safe, accessible, and secure method of casting their ballots in future elections. Thank you for signing this bill. We look forward to working with you to ensure election officials begin implementation as soon as possible in advance of the 2024 elections.

Sincerely,

Stand Up America

Common Cause/NY

Citizen Action of New York

Alliance of Families for Justice

Bethlehem Morning Voice Huddle

Black Voters Matter Fund

Brooklyn Voters Alliance

Center for Law and Social Justice at Medgar Evers College

Chinese-American Planning Council

Citizens Union

Council on American-Islamic Relations, New York (CAIR-NY)

Dutchess County Progressive Action Alliance

Elmont Cultural Center

Empire State Indivisible

Faith in New York

Generation Vote

Indivisible Brooklyn

Indivisible Scarsdale

Indivisible Westchester

Labor-Religion Coalition of NYS

LatinoJustice PRLDEF

March On / Future Coalition

Markers For Democracy

National Action Network

New York for Biden+Harris
New York Civic Engagement Table
New York for Democracy
New York Immigration Coalition
NY Democratic Lawyers Council Legislative Affairs Committee
Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition
Open Buffalo
Partnership for the Public Good
Planned Parenthood Empire State Acts
Public Citizen
ReSisters
Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter
Strong Economy For All Coalition
Third Act, NYC
Uplift Syracuse
Westchester for Change
Women Creating Change
The Workers Circle
Ulster Activists (U-ACT)
YMCA of Greater New York