



BREAKING:
Cuomo announces
Executive Order to
allow all voters to vote
via absentee in June.



THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO ADVOCATED FOR
EXPANDED ABSENTEE VOTING BECAUSE OF
COVID-19!

Take Action on Expanding Absentee Voting in Response to COVID-19

Background: With the continuing outbreak of COVID-19 in New York State, voting rights advocates are concerned over voting procedures for upcoming elections. The Governor has postponed the April primary and special elections until June 23rd, but experts are predicting that the outbreak of COVID-19 will still be active at that time. Although the League believes that in-person voting should continue to be an option, we are advocating for the expansion of absentee voting so that voters who are at high-risk of contracting COVID-19 can apply to vote by absentee.

The League is supporting [A.10203/S.8015](#), an act to amend the election law, in relation to permitting absentee voting in the event of a public health risk.

Currently, New York's law only allows an individual to request an absentee ballot if they

- a) will be absent from their county of residence or New York City on the day of the election,
- b) are unable to appear at the polling place due to illness, physical disability, or care-taking responsibilities for someone who is ill or disabled,
- c) are a resident or patient at a veteran health administration hospital, or
- d) are currently being held in jail.

These restrictive criteria do not accommodate people who are concerned about the risk voting in-person would pose to their own or others' health. High-risk individuals who are trying to limit their potential exposure or others' exposure to the virus should not have to decide between protecting their health or exercising their civic duty. Similarly, individuals who are preventively quarantined should still be able to participate in our elections.

This bill would allow New Yorkers to request an absentee ballot if they are unable to appear personally at their polling place because of a public health concern that voting in person could expose themselves or others to that risk. This will ensure that all New Yorkers can feel comfortable participating in New York's upcoming primary election in June.

NEW Sign Our Petition: Take action by signing our petition to pass legislation to expand absentee voting in New York State: <http://chnq.it/wQQq52JS8V>

How to Take Action: Although the legislature is in session, many legislators' offices are operating with limited staff. Typically, we encourage members to take action by making phone calls but because of partial staffing, we are recommending members use email and social media

to contact legislators. Members can still try to call offices but it's highly likely you won't get through to their staff.

Find Your Representative's Contact Info:

Find your Senator here: <https://www.nysenate.gov/find-my-senator>

Find your Assembly Member here: <https://assembly.ny.gov/mem/search/>

Sample Email/Call Script:

Dear Assembly Member/Senator XXX,

I write to urge you to support A.10203/S.8015 legislation to expand election law to allow absentee voting in the event of a public health risk in response to the ongoing outbreak of COVID-19.

Currently, New York's election law only allows an individual to request an absentee ballot based on a list of approved reasons including sickness, caring for a sick or disabled individual, or absence from your county or New York City. These excuses do not cover the current state of emergency related to COVID-19. This bill would expand the reasons for requesting an absentee ballot to include if they are unable to appear personally at their polling place due to a public health concern that voting in person could expose themselves or others to that risk.

No voter should have to choose between exercising their democratic right or protecting their health. Expanding absentee voting will keep voters and election officials safe from further spreading COVID-19 while allowing them to cast their ballot in the June elections.

I hope that you will support A.10203/S.8015.

Thank you,

XXX

Sample Social Posts

Use these sample posts for Facebook or Twitter. You can post these directly onto legislators' pages or post them on your own page and tag your legislator in the post.

- New York State voters deserve to vote without risking their health. The @NYSenate @NYSA_Majority should pass A.10203/S.8015 to expand absentee voting and protect voters from #COVID19
- @ Biaggi4NY @JacobsonNY104 legislation to expand absentee voting during this health crisis will mitigate the spread of #COVID19 during this health crisis. Pass A.10203/S.8015!

- Although the primary has been postponed voters are still at risk unless absentee voting is expanded to include at risk populations. A.10203/S.8015 will ensure all at risk voters can vote via absentee.
- Pass A.10203/S.8015 and allow voters to request an absentee ballot if they are at risk of contracting #COVID19. Voters deserve the right to vote safely!