

RESOLUTION

At a Town Board Meeting of the Dewitt Town Board, held on March 12, 2018 at 7:00 pm at the Dewitt Town Hall, 5400 Butternut Drive, in the Town of Dewitt, New York, seven members of the Town Board being in attendance, the following resolution was introduced by Councilor Rigney and seconded by Councilor Young:

NYS LOCALITY RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF ENACTMENT OF EARLY VOTING AND AUTOMATIC DMV REGISTRATION IN THE FY 2018-19 NYS BUDGET

Resolution calling on the New York State Legislature to pass, and the Governor to sign funded legislation in the FY 2018-19 State Budget which would allow early voting and Automatic Voter Registration at selected state agencies as well as the Department of Motor Vehicles in New York State.

Whereas, Popular sovereignty through voting is a foundational bedrock of our democracy; and

Whereas, All eligible New Yorkers deserve a reasonable opportunity to exercise their fundamental voting rights; and

Whereas, Nine states, including large states with diverse urban and rural populations, and the District of Columbia have already approved automatic voter registration; and

Whereas, Thirty-seven states and the District of Columbia offer voters the option of voting early before Election Day without requiring any excuse while only thirteen states, including New York, offer no in-person early voting while requiring an excuse to vote absentee; and

Whereas, A New York voter may only vote prior to Election Day by absentee ballot and, even then, only if such voter affirms that he or she has an acceptable reason for being unable to physically visit at his or her assigned polling site during the entire single Election Day; and

Whereas, A voter in New York may otherwise only visit his or her assigned polling location between 6:00 A.M. and 9:00 P.M. on a single weekday Election Day in order to exercise their right to vote, which fails to provide adequate due process to ensure the franchise; and

Whereas, an estimated two million eligible New Yorkers remain unregistered to vote and New York's Motor Voter law contains an inadvertent policy of non-registration; and

Whereas, The single Election Day causes unnecessary systemic pressure and places administrative strain on local election officials; and

Whereas, Early Voting better distributes the systemic pressure placed on election administration by reducing the effects of high-impact voting disruptions such as severe weather events, broken machines, impaired poll site access, and common voter suppression tactics; and,

Whereas, In the 2016 General Election over 47 Million voters nationwide cast their ballot before Election Day; and

Whereas, A 2010 United States Census Bureau survey found that the most common reason cited by non-voters for not voting is a category defined as "No time off/too busy"; and

Whereas, Allowing voters more than a single day to vote would accommodate those who are physically unable to vote on Election Day; and

Whereas, , Allowing voters more than a single day to vote would eliminate conflicts between voting and job, family, or care-giving responsibilities; and

Whereas, If enacted in the State Budget as proposed, with funding to assist counties with implementation, Early Voting would help modernize and improve New York's election process by providing registered voters with eleven days of early voting, including several weekdays and evenings during which to vote and hours during the two weekends prior to an election; and

Whereas, To provide flexibility to local officials, the number of early voting sites and their operating hours and locations may be adjusted to distribute resources in a manner tailored to constituent needs, with hardship exemptions available to localities if necessary; and,

Whereas, Board of Elections safeguards will prevent early voters from casting multiple ballots in the same election; and

Whereas, registered New York voters who move residences across county lines are removed from the voter rolls rather than maintaining, updating, and transferring their registration to their new locality of residence; and

Whereas, an expanded Automatic Voter Registration proposal would sign up eligible New Yorkers to vote, or update an existing registration automatically when one interacts with state agencies , so New Yorkers may have access their fundamental right to vote, while always providing New Yorkers the option to opt out of registration; and

Whereas, properly implemented Automatic Voter Registration Improves the security and accuracy of voter rolls by making sure registrations are complete and stay updated and saves taxpayer money by freeing up time administrators use to manually input voter information.

Whereas, This legislation would bring New York State in line with over two-thirds of the states and contribute to more representative elections in the future; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Town of DeWitt calls on the New York State Legislature to pass, and the Governor to enact funded legislation in the FY 2018-19 State Budget which would allow early voting and automatic voter registration at numerous state agencies in New York State, and it is further

Resolved, that the Town Clerk is directed to transmit a copy of this resolution to the Town's Legislative delegation, and to publish this resolution to the public.

Adopted 7 Ayes