

Stop Voter Suppression in New York State Primary!

New York has the most restrictive deadline to change party enrollment in the country and **deceives the public about the deadline.**

To change party enrollment **in other states, the average deadline is 25 days** before any election. In New York the deadline is **October of the year before the primary elections**, which is 6 months before the presidential primary and 9 months before the state and local primary. To make matters worse, the **instructions on the NY Voter Registration Form indicate the deadline is 25 days!**

The Democratic and Republican National Committees are **private organizations** which set the agenda and conduct primary elections for their parties. Many obstacles make it futile to run third party candidates in most elections. Therefore the only viable candidates are chosen in **private primaries**. In New York, membership in those private parties is **limited by unreasonable deadlines that are hidden from the public.**

In 2009, bills to change the deadline to 25 days were introduced in the NY Legislature but they have been ignored. It's time to stop lying to the public and give the people access to vote in primary elections.

Senate Bill [S2338](#) and Assembly Bill [A1423](#)

Bills were introduced in 2009 to the New York State Legislature to change the party membership deadline to 25 days before any election. These bills have been stuck “in committee” in both houses for 10 years. They have been resubmitted in 2019.

Reasons to Pass these Bills ASAP

1. Many voters do not align with either party on many issues but want to vote in the primary when there is a candidate that represents them. Unaffiliated voters make up about 1/3 of the electorate and cast the deciding votes in the general election yet are purposefully left out of the selecting the candidates that will run in the general election.
2. Most New Yorkers don't know what the deadline is or already think the deadline is 25 days as is printed on the Voter Registration Form.
3. It would cost nothing to change this. All other deadlines would entail the cost to change the registration form and advertise the change.
4. All other states have more reasonable deadlines, averaging 25 days. The majority of states also have open or semi-open primaries which allows more people to participate in these crucial elections.
5. It would be show good faith that our legislators are interested in what the electorate wants rather than demanding party loyalty before the prior year's general election, before the party platform is written, and before voters know which party will be in power.
6. 25 days is an adequate time for Board of Election workers to implement party changes.
7. Opponents argue that it will result in “party raiding,” whereby voters change their party affiliation to overwhelm the vote in the opposing party. Evidence in other states does not support this position, and there is no evidence that the long deadline serves to prevent this when an organized group is determined.

Actions to Help Increase Primary Election Fairness

1. If you are a resident of NY State, go to <https://www.nysenate.gov/user/login> and create an account.
2. Go to Senate Bill [S2338](#) and click “aye” to show support, then message your Senator to express support and ask them to “co-sponsor” the bill.
3. Go to Assembly Bill [A1423](#) and click “aye.”
4. Call, write to, or visit your State Senator and District Assembly Person and ask them to co-sponsor these bills. You can find your Assembly Person at <http://nyassembly.gov/mem/search/>
5. Call or write Attorney General Letitia James - <http://www.ag.ny.gov/contact-attorney-general> and Governor Andrew Cuomo - <https://www.governor.ny.gov/content/governor-contact-form>.
6. Call, write or visit the people on the Elections Committees in both the Senate - <https://www.nysenate.gov/committees/elections> and Assembly - <http://nyassembly.gov/comm/?sec=mem&id=13>.
7. Call, write or visit the leaders and speakers of both houses.
8. Join [LetNYVote](#), and show your support to change this deadline.
9. Contact me, Cary Kittner, 845-532-8190, cary@carykittner.com, This document “Stop Voter Suppression in New York State Primary!” can be found at carykittner.com, under the Election Reform tab.

NYS Board of Elections Omits and Obscures Deadline

1. The instruction on the [voter registration form](#) are not correct. It says, “You can also use this form to...change your party membership...25 days before the election you want to vote in.”

New York State Voter Register

Register to vote

With this form, you register to vote in elections in New York State. You can also use this form to:

- change the name or address on your voter registration
- become a member of a political party
- change your party membership

Send or deliver this form

Fill out the form below and send it to your county's address on the back of this form, or take this form to the office of your County Board of Elections.

Mail or deliver this form at least 25 days before the election you want to vote in. Your county will notify you that you are registered to vote.

2. The voter registration form completely omits the deadline, including in the [Political party](#) box on the form.

3. Prior to 2018 the NY Board of Elections website omitted the party membership deadline on the [Voter Registration Deadlines](#) page. Now it is listed under [General Election Deadlines](#), though it is only relevant to primary elections.

Political party

You must make 1 selection

Political party enrollment is optional but that, in order to vote in a primary election of a political party, a voter must enroll in that political party, unless state party rules allow otherwise.

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I wish to enroll in

- Democ
- Republ
- Conser
- Green p
- Workin
- Indepe
- Womer
- Reform
- Other

I do not wish to enroll in

- No part

4. The NYS Board of Elections website obscures the deadline in an unintelligible sentence as follows:

“A change of enrollment received no later than 25 days before the general election shall be deposited in a sealed enrollment box and opened the first Tuesday following that general election and entered in the voter's registration record.”

Number of Days Required to Change Party Membership Before Primary Elections

State	primary type	days
Alaska	C caucus	0*
Citizens Abroad	C primary	0*
Hawaii	C primary	0*
Idaho	S caucus	0*
Illinois	O primary	0*
Iowa	S caucus	0*
Kansas	C caucus	0*
Maine	C caucus	0*
Minnesota	O caucus	0*
Montana	O primary	0*
Nebraska	C caucus	0*
Nevada	C caucus	0*
North Dakota	O caucus	0*
Utah	O caucus	0*
Washington	O caucus	0*
Indiana	O primary	3
Wisconsin	S primary	4
Vermont	O primary	6
Wyoming	C caucus	13
Alabama	O primary	15
California	S primary	15
South Dakota	S primary	15
Maryland	C primary	21
Oregon	C primary	21
Virginia	O primary	21
West Virginia	S primary	21
North Carolina	S primary	25
Oklahoma	S primary	25
Louisiana	C primary	26
Massachusetts	S primary	26
Missouri	O primary	26
Ohio	S primary	27
Arizona	C primary	28
Florida	C primary	28
Georgia	O primary	28
New Mexico	C primary	28
Tennessee	O primary	28
Texas	O primary	28
D.C.	C primary	29
Pennsylvania	C primary	29
Arkansas	O primary	30
Colorado	S primary	30
South Carolina	O primary	30
Mississippi	O primary	30
Michigan	O primary	38
Puerto Rico	O primary	49
New Jersey	S primary	55
Delaware	C primary	59
Connecticut	C primary	91
Rhode Island	S primary	91
New Hampshire	S primary	101
Kentucky	C primary	113
New York	C primary	193
New York	C primary	262

Average Deadline-
25 Days

O **Open Primary**
Anyone can vote in any primary

S **Semi-Open Primary**
Must be registered in the party or unaffiliated to vote in the primary

C **Closed Primary**
Must be registered in the party to vote in the primary

New York State Has the Most Suppressive Deadline For Primary Elections

New York voters must join or change party membership a month before the prior year’s general election; before it is known which party will be in power, the party’s platforms, or who will be running for office. This deadline combined with closed primaries results in election turnout in NY that is among the lowest in the country.

****New York has two separate primaries, Presidential in April, State and local in June, with a fixed deadline at the beginning of October the year before for party changes. That creates a need for two time lines, one for each primary. Other states have one deadline prior to any election.**