



POLITICS

New videos feature AG and everyday NY'ers calling for early voting

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March 16, 2021



Courtesy of the Governor's Office

Governor Andrew Cuomo Votes at Mt. Kisco Presbyterian Church on November 6, 2012. Cuomo is a proponent of early voting in New York state, a measure that could be passed as part of the 2018-2019 budget.



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With a final vote on New York’s 2019 budget expected by the end of this week, proponents of early voting are making a final push to ensure funding for the measure.

Ahead of the budget vote, the “Let NY Vote Coalition,” a public watchdog group comprised of more than 30 organizations and unions, has released a series of six videos featuring Attorney General Eric Schneiderman and everyday New Yorkers speaking out in support of the early voting proposal.

In addition, a group of 99 local officials such as mayors and county legislators from across the state joined the effort by petitioning Gov. Andrew Cuomo and leaders of the state Legislature to prioritize early voting in the 2018-2019 budget.

The plan — which was introduced in Cuomo’s 2018 State of the State Address and later announced as a 30-day budget amendment — would provide up to 12 days of early voting with \$7 million in funding. Neither the Assembly or Senate have been as amicable with the idea – the Assembly’s budget outline included funding for up to 8 days of early voting, while the Senate’s outline lacked any funding for early voting.

The series of short video clips features residents from across New York state, representing various socioeconomic backgrounds. In one video, U.S. Army veteran Na’ilah Amaru discussed her experience living in various states and the discrepancies in voting laws between them.

“I’ve called several states home before I moved here to New York,” Amaru said. “I didn’t realize how difficult voting could be until I move here, because New York is the only state I’ve lived in that denies citizens the right to early voting. I lived in Texas, I lived in Georgia and I lived in Alabama, which are all much easier to vote in, and provide citizens access to the ballot box that New York currently denies us.”



It's time for New York to do what 37 other states have already done and pass early voting. It's a non-partisan no brainer that 67 percent of New Yorkers support," Lerner said in public statement. "Common Cause joins with over 30 organizations from across the state in urging the legislature to include funding for early voting in the final budget and bring New York's antiquated system of elections into the 21st century."

Negotiations on the budget are set to continue throughout the remainder of this week, ahead of the April 1 deadline. Lawmakers are working to address differences on a number of issues besides early voting, including transportation concerns in Manhattan, school aid and changes to the state tax code in respond to the new federal tax code, which was established by law in December.

Supporters of the proposal, including Amanda, a working mother who did not wish to use her last name, are hoping that voting will become far less of an inconvenience once the proposal is passed.

"As a working mother, I have my job duties and I have my caregiving duties with my kids," Amanda said in her video. "On election day, I usually have to arrange for someone to come to the house to watch my kids early so that I can get to the polls before work. Or if it's been a crazy morning, like my kids are out of control or sick, then I have to make arrangements after work.

"Early voting would help me because I wouldn't have to choose between getting to my job on time or making sure my kids are being taken care of, and voting."