



August 25, 2020

Andrea Stewart-Cousins
New York State Senate Majority Leader
Jamaal Bailey
New York State Senator, 26th District
Alessandra Biaggi
New York State Senator, 34th District
Shelley Mayer
New York State Senator, 37th District
David Carlucci
New York State Senator, 38th District
Peter Harckham
New York State Senator, 40th District

Gary Pretlow
New York State Assembly Member, 89th District
Amy Paulin
New York State Assembly Member, 88th District
Nader Sayegh
New York State Assembly Member, 90th District
Steve Otis
New York State Assembly Member, 91st District
Thomas Abinanti
New York State Assembly Member, 92nd District
David Buchwald
New York State Assembly Member, 93rd District
Kevin Byrne
New York State Assembly Member, 94th District
Sandra Galef
New York State Assembly Member, 95th District

Honorable Members of the Westchester County New York State Delegation:

We, the undersigned members of the Westchester County Legislature, urge you to pass Senator Hoylman & Assemblyman Gottfried's bills (S.08902/A.10942), which would authorize Boards of Elections to establish absentee ballot drop-off locations.

We write to you at an unprecedented time. Against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic, we approach a crucial presidential election that could see the highest voter turnout ever in New York. As we saw in the June primaries, the pandemic creates issues Boards of Elections have never faced before: often polling locations need to be consolidated, because many regularly used sites are unavailable. Some of these consolidated sites make social distancing difficult. Many experienced poll workers are older, and at higher risk of becoming severely sick if they contract COVID-19, so Boards of Elections are faced with shortages of workers, or the need to rapidly recruit and train new workers.

Westchester County and New York State pride ourselves on providing open, fair elections available to all registered voters. In order to provide a safe and secure election, Governor Cuomo and the New York State Legislature have already taken important steps to provide voters with additional options for casting their ballots, including expanding access to absentee voting.

Because of this expansion, we expect an unprecedented number of votes to be cast by absentee ballot. This already presents challenges for Boards of Elections, which are compounded by current budgetary and operational concerns at the United States Postal Service (USPS). As a result, there is great concern among voters that absentee ballots will not be received at the Board of Elections on time, or at all.

Many states already provide, or are now implementing, secure drop-boxes where voters can submit absentee ballots. These receptacles serve similar functions as a mailbox, but are only for absentee ballots to be collected by the Board of Elections. If locations are determined and publicized ahead of time, and sufficient security is provided, these drop-boxes would provide voters with another safe, secure option for casting ballots.

The Westchester County Board of Legislators will assist the County Board of Elections to ensure that every vote can be cast and counted. We urge you to immediately pass S.08902-Hoylman/A.10942-Gottfried.

CC: Hon. Carl Heastie, New York State Assembly Speaker
Hon. Brad Hoylman, New York State Senator, 27th District
Hon. Richard Gottfried New York State Assembly Member, 75th District



Chairman Benjamin Boykin
Legislator, 5th District



Majority Leader MaryJane Shimsky
Legislator, 12th District



Margaret Cunzio
Minority Leader, 3rd District



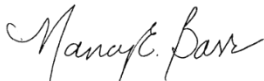
Colin Smith
Legislator, 1st District



Kitley Covill
Legislator, 2nd District



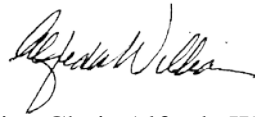
Vedat Gashi
Legislator, 4th District



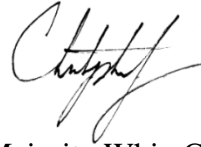
Nancy Barr
Legislator, 6th District



Catherine Parker
Legislator, 7th District



Vice Chair Alfreda Williams
Legislator, 8th District



Majority Whip Christopher Johnson
Legislator, 16th District



Catherine Borgia
Legislator, 9th District



Damon Maher
Legislator, 10th District



Terry Clements
Legislator, 11th District



David Tubiolo
Legislator, 14th District



Ruth Walter
Legislator, 15th District



Jose Alvarado
Legislator, 17th District