



RESOLUTION 1617-FC8

TO: Members of the Executive Committee

FROM: Alex George, University Colleges Representative

DATE: November 12, 2016

SUBJECT: Enabling Student Voices

Action Requested

State University of New York Student Assembly (SUNY SA) requests that the New York State Assembly, the New York State Senate, and the State Board of Elections work to reform the current voting laws in order to give unaffiliated and third-party affiliated voters the ability to vote in primary elections at the state, congressional, and federal level. Also, to reform voter registration laws and restrictions, as both contribute to voter disenfranchisement.

Resolution

I recommend that the Student Assembly of the Student Assembly of the State University of New York (SUNYSA) adopt the following resolution:

Whereas New York State has a closed primary system which requires political party affiliation in order to vote in primary elections at the local, state, and federal levels; and

Whereas present regulations suppress the voices of more than a quarter of the voting population, as 27% of voters in New York State are registered as unaffiliated or third-party affiliates¹; and

¹ Atkin, Emily. "Meet The People Barred From Voting In New York's Presidential Primary." ThinkProgress RSS. 2016. Accessed April 24, 2016.
<http://thinkprogress.org/politics/2016/04/14/3769498/independent-voters-open-primaries-new-york/>.

Whereas this system limits the candidates in the general election at the state, Congressional, and Presidential level to persons representative of the party affiliated voting population, without input by unaffiliated and third-party affiliates, effectively producing choices that are not representative of the New York State voting population as a whole; and

Whereas New York State has further contributed to this disenfranchisement by requiring change of party enrollment' to be completed by October 9th of the previous year, thus requiring non-party affiliates to anticipate their voting patterns 6 months before the Presidential primary, 11 months before the state primary, and 8 months before the Congressional primary²; and

Whereas New York State has maintained additional voter registration regulations that require citizens to register approximately one month before any subsequent elections, be it primary or general at any level of government, adversely affecting turnout rates among Millennial voters and other unaware, first time voters³. And therefore, be it

Resolved that the Student Assembly of the State University of New York recommend that the New York State Assembly, the New York State Senate and the State Board of Elections adopt an 'open primary,' allowing all voters to participate in primary elections at each level of government.

; and, be it further

Resolved, that the Student Assembly of the State University of New York recommend that a 'same day voter registration' policy is adopted in New York State, "allowing any qualified resident of the state to go to the polls or an election official's office on Election Day, register that day, and then vote," as practiced in 15 other U.S. states and territories; and, finally, be it,

Resolved that copies of this resolution be distributed to Andrew Cuomo; New York State Governor, Michael Cusick; Chair of Election Law at the New York State Assembly, Fred Ashkar; Chair of Elections at the New York State Senate, and the Commissioners and Executive Directors of the New York State Board of Elections.

² "Voter Registration Deadlines." New York State Board of Elections Voting Deadline Page. Accessed April 24, 2016. <http://www.elections.ny.gov/VotingDeadlines.html>.

³ Ibid.