



STATE OF NEW YORK  
EXECUTIVE CHAMBER  
ALBANY 12224

APPROVAL #4  
CHAPTER #290

September 13, 2019

MEMORANDUM filed with Senate Bill 6374, entitled:

“AN ACT to amend the election law, in relation to the conducting of the presidential primary, to provide for the election of delegates to a national party convention or a national party conference in 2020, and the "Presidential" and "June" primary in such year; to amend the election law, in relation to electing delegates to a national party convention; and providing for the repeal of such provisions upon expiration thereof”

APPROVED

This bill sets New York’s presidential primary election for April 28, 2020. Although I believe that New Yorkers would be better served, and more empowered, by a presidential primary occurring earlier in the year, I recognize that certain national political realities prevent the state legislature from passing legislation to accomplish that goal. Therefore, in light of the State’s interest in an orderly election administration process, and out of concern for the uncertainty that would likely ensue if I were to veto this bill, I am signing this bill.

However, I believe that good government demands a consolidation of the state, local, and congressional primaries with the presidential primary. I have worked tirelessly to make the ballot box more accessible to New Yorkers, leading the fight to pass and implement early voting, and to make Election Day a holiday. We recently moved the state primary elections from September to June to consolidate congressional and state elections on one date. The same logic drives the conclusion that for next year’s presidential primary, the congressional and state elections are consolidated on the same day. It countermands that recent precedent to hold two primary elections – one in April and one in June. Having two primary elections, roughly eight weeks apart, will reduce voter participation and cost taxpayers an additional \$20 million. In addition, managing two separate elections will also burden an already troubled Board of Elections system. The State of New York is stronger when all New Yorkers participate in its democratic system, and a consolidation of all primaries is the only way to achieve that goal.

Therefore, I am calling on the legislature to pass legislation upon convening in January in order to consolidate the presidential, state, local, and congressional primaries on April 28. I recognize that this path may require the truncation of certain administrative phases of the political calendar, but the benefits far outweigh the political inconvenience.

At least fifteen other states have a single combined primary for presidential, federal and state races, and it is time for New York to do the same. Sadly, New York has at times lagged behind the rest of the nation in terms of voting laws and voter accessibility.

New Yorkers deserve a government that makes voting easier, not harder, and government should spend less of the taxpayer’s money to accomplish that goal, not more. I look forward to working with the legislature to make that goal a reality come January.

This bill is approved.