



February 29, 2024

The Honorable Kathy Hochul
Governor of New York State
State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

The Honorable Andrea Stewart-Cousins
Senate Majority Leader
State Capitol Building
172 State Street,
Capitol Building, Room 330
Albany, NY 12247

The Honorable Carl Heastie
Speaker
LOB 932
Albany, NY 12248

Dear Governor Hochul, Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins and Speaker Heastie:

Thank you for your leadership in advancing important reforms to improve access to voting in New York over the past several years.

Even with recent reforms, New York still has a long way to go to [improve its substandard participation rate in elections compared to other states](#). One clear way to do so is to follow in the footsteps of states like Massachusetts, Michigan and Colorado by enacting back-end automatic voter registration (also known as Enhanced AVR). Senate Deputy Majority Leader Michael Gianaris and Assemblymember Karines Reyes will be introducing an Updated AVR legislation, and we strongly support this bill.

Back-end AVR improves access to the ballot, strengthens the security of our voting systems, and helps modernize our elections systems and records. Back-end AVR automates the voter registration system by adding eligible voters to the rolls at key target agencies including the Department of Motor Vehicles and the Department of Health, while giving individuals the choice to opt out afterward. The system provides strong protection for New York State's immigrants, using automation and documentation-based verification methods which greatly reduce the possibility that any ineligible New York State resident is registered to vote. Finally, this system makes it easier for New



York to keep its voter rolls clean and up to date, while ensuring that New Yorkers are best able to keep their addresses on the voter rolls up to date.

By eliminating traditional registration barriers, back-end AVR ensures a more racially and economically representative pool of registered voters. Research from other states has found that voters registered via back-end AVR are significantly lower-income than the traditional registration pool, and that these voters are more likely to come from communities of color. Back-end AVR holds the potential to help the state Board of Elections streamline its operations and eliminate unnecessary training and implementation steps as well, resulting in potential budgetary savings.

Under your leadership, New York has taken important steps in recent years to modernize its voting system, with more funding for election departments and common-sense policy changes to modernize our elections. Back-end AVR would build on this work, helping address the state's historically low rates of voter participation while improving access for those who are too often left out.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

ACCESS Western New York
Arab American Association of New York
Bangladeshi American Community Development and Youth Services
The Black Institute
Cabrini Immigrant Services of NYC
Chinese-American Planning Council (CPC)
Churches United for Fair Housing (CUFFH)
Community Voices Heard
DSI International Inc
Elmont Cultural Center
El Puente de Williamsburg
Faith In New York
For The Many
Generation Vote
Jericho Road Community Health Center
Korean American Family Service Center
Korean Community Media Broadcasting TV (KCMB-TV)
La Colmena



Latino Commission on AIDS, Inc.
Latino Social Work Coalition
Long Beach Latino Civic Association
Make the Road NY
MeKong NYC
MinKwon Center for Community Action
Mixteca Organization
New York Immigration Coalition
NYIC Action
Northern Manhattan Improvement Corporation
OCA Advocate New York Chapter
People's Theatre Project
Rockland Immigration Coalition
Stand Up America
South Asian Council for Social Services
Westchester Latinos Unidos
Women's Empowerment Coalition of New York City