



A Stronger, Safer Democracy For All

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 8, 2026

Contact: Louie Sawi

letnyvote@gmail.com

Let NY Vote applauds the Legislature for passing a crucial voter protection and election resiliency safeguard directing officials to restore time after significant election disruptions; Calls on Governor to sign measure ahead of 2026 Midterms

NEW YORK — The New York State Legislature passed a key voter protection bill on the final day of the 2026 legislative session ([S4602B](#) / [A5846B](#)) to improve preparedness, protect communities from targeted or inadvertent election disruptions, and provide localities with a resiliency plan in the event of a stoppage of voting that exceeds one hour. If signed by Governor Hochul in the coming weeks, the pro-democracy measure will be in place in time for State and Federal Midterm elections this fall.

The safeguard is necessary to improve the state's coordinated response to various lengthy disruption scenarios that have occurred in recent elections, typically without recourse for impacted voters. In 2022 on the final Sunday of early voting in the competitive contest between Governor Hochul and former Rep. Zeldin, a bomb threat targeting the Jackie Robinson Complex in East Harlem deprived communities of at least two hours of voting while NYPD cleared the sole polling place assigned to tens of thousands of voters. In the 2023 General Election, a countywide technology issue in Orange County prevented voting at all eight Votecenters. Days later, a lockdown was ordered on Election Day at Oneida's MVCC campus poll site due to a person with a gun.

The new law will help ensure that voters are not shouldering the burden of genuine emergencies that can disrupt fair access to the ballot in their communities. For example, on Election Day 2024, an Ithaca voter accidentally drove a car into a poll site, disrupting balloting for 87 minutes. In 2022, an electrical fire disrupted primary voting in Jefferson County. While first responders focus on public safety, bipartisan election officials must work together to restore service, communicate contingency plans, and maintain integrity and fairness in the voting process.

The administrative Time Extender provides a layer of resiliency that supports election officials, law enforcement, and emergency management. First, the timeframe for voting at impacted election districts is tolled and extended if a disruption or emergency completely stops voting for more than one hour. This ensures fairness by restoring the time lost, insulating communities from foul play, technology glitches, or emergencies. Second, the bill improves transparency and public trust, by documenting and escalating



A Stronger, Safer Democracy For All

lengthy election disruptions to the independent State Board of Elections and Attorney General's Office. Third, the measure provides a modern communications plan, directing officials to timely inform relevant stakeholders and dispel misinformation.

If signed, this voter protection would reduce perverse incentives for foul play and mitigate the harm caused by inadvertent disruptions without the need for expensive, time-consuming, and often-elusive emergency litigation. The measure also addresses a glaring gap in state law, complementing New York's antiquated election disaster statute. Without this safeguard, the law is virtually silent as to how the state's 58 bipartisan local election boards should respond to lengthy disruptions and emergencies at the polls.

Let NY Vote applauds the Legislature for passing this critical voter access priority and calls upon Governor Hochul to sign the measure into law ahead of the 2026 Midterms.

Senator Kristen Gonzalez, Chair of the Senate Elections Committee, said: "Voting is a constitutional right and the cornerstone of democracy. As legislators, we have a responsibility to protect the right to vote and access to polling locations. New Yorkers should not be denied their civic duty because of disruptions out of their control. As we approach the midterm elections, the Governor must sign S.4602 to ensure polling locations are given extensions in urgent circumstances. New York is a leader in voting rights and accessibility, let's stand by that."

"In a moment when our very democracy seems under threat, we need to take every possible step to protect the right to vote. New York has passed nation-leading voter protections in recent years. But we have no rapid-response solution to interruptions at poll sites," **said State Senator Andrew Gounardes.** "My bill would extend hours at poll sites whenever voting is disrupted, ensuring access for all New Yorkers. It's a commonsense solution to protect our elections and our civil rights, and it's time to make it law."

Assemblywoman Latrice Walker, Chair of the Assembly Election Law Committee, said: "The Time Extender Remedy for Significant Election Disruptions is a necessary safeguard in the rare case of an obstruction or interruption that lasts for an hour or more. This voter protection measure could be triggered by a natural disaster, a technological issue, or some other type of emergency at the polls. There's nothing more sacred in our democracy than the right to vote, and we must do everything in our power as lawmakers to protect it. Every eligible voter has the right to ballot access – no matter the circumstances. I commend my colleagues for passing the bill and I encourage Gov. Kathy Hochul to sign it into law, so that it's in effect for the mid-term election in the fall."

"The passage of this legislation gives election administrators an important tool to protect voters when disruptions occur," **said Ashley Torres, Commissioner of Ulster County**



A Stronger, Safer Democracy For All

Board of Elections and President of New York State Election Commissioners Association. “Elections happen in real time, and when unexpected issues impact voting, we need the ability to provide timely and meaningful remedies. This bill ensures local Boards of Elections can respond quickly, extend voting opportunities when necessary, and protect every voter’s opportunity to cast a ballot when it matters most.”

“We applaud the New York state legislature for taking steps to make elections more resilient,” **said Patrick Berry, Counsel, Voting Rights and Elections Program, Brennan Center for Justice at NYU Law.** This bill will ensure that voters can still cast a ballot regardless of disruptions at polling places. While the federal government continues to try to undermine our elections, New York lawmakers are showing up for voters and election workers in force. We urge Governor Hochul to sign this bill without delay.

“Campaign Legal Center is thrilled by the passage of this landmark legislation that will help ensure that all voters have an opportunity to safely cast their vote and make their voices heard,” **said Kelsey Rogers, Director of State Advocacy at Campaign Legal Center.** “At a time when access to the ballot is increasingly under threat, we commend the legislature for recognizing the gravity of this legislation and the importance of advancing pro-democracy reforms in New York. We’re particularly grateful for the efforts of Assemblymember Gibbs, Senator Gounardes, and our partners at the Let New York Vote coalition in making this policy a reality. We look forward to working with the Governor and election officials to successfully implement this law and make New York a national leader on this issue.”

Anna Humphrey, Transportation & Community Organizer, Center for the Disabled, New York said: “The Center for Independence of the Disabled, New York (CIDNY) applauds the New York State legislature for passing this bill, which is a massive victory for New Yorkers with disabilities who routinely face physical and technological barriers on election day. We urge the governor to sign this bill into law before the midterm elections to ensure that voters who rely on accessible equipment are never disenfranchised by unexpected poll site closures.”

“Citizens Union commends the State Legislature for passing this common-sense reform to protect voters when elections are disrupted. No New Yorker should lose the right to cast a ballot because a polling place was closed, delayed, or otherwise unable to operate,” **said Grace Rauh, Executive Director at Citizens Union.** “This bill gives local boards of elections a practical, clear remedy to restore lost voting time. It will also create an important record of voting disruptions, giving state officials the information they need to identify recurring problems and strengthen election administration. We urge Governor Hochul to sign this bill as soon as possible so these protections are in place ahead of the midterm elections.”



A Stronger, Safer Democracy For All

"Our democracy depends on all eligible voters being able to participate in elections. A voter should not lose the opportunity to vote because a disruption at a poll site prevented them from doing so," said **Karla Bradley, Executive Director of the New York Civic Engagement Table**. "At a time when other states are pulling back protections for voters, New York should lead the way by expanding protections as we head into our midterm elections. The New York Civic Engagement Table thanks the New York State legislature for their leadership in passing the Time Extender Bill (S4602 / A5846) and urges Governor Hochul to swiftly sign it into law to protect the voting rights of New Yorkers."

"Whether it's a power outage or flooding, surprise poll site closures present serious problems for New York voters," said **Perry Grossman, Director of the Voting Rights Project at the New York Civil Liberties Union**. "Right now, when voting plans get disrupted, New Yorkers have no real shot at pulling together the papers and running to court in time to get back those opportunities to vote. But by requiring the Board of Elections to extend voting hours automatically at poll sites when major disruptions happen, this bill fixes that problem — and reduces incentives for bad actors to intimidate voters or obstruct poll sites. Voters shouldn't be penalized for circumstances out of their control."

Deborah Porder, Lead Organizer for Indivisible Scarsdale said: "Governor Hochul must protect New York voters by signing the bill to extend polling place hours in the event of significant disruptions that stop us from voting. Why would the Governor not take this minimal step to protect our rights when the Legislature passed the bill before the upcoming Midterms?"

"We're both thrilled that the Assembly and the Senate passed this legislation. Once it's signed into law by the Governor, if there is an unexpected disruption, voters, instead of being turned away, will still be able to cast a ballot," said **Wendy Lubin and Liz Wassell of Indivisible Ulster**. "We thank Jarret Berg; Ashley Torres, Ulster County Board of Elections Commissioner; and Ulster County Legislator Lindsey Grossman for their invaluable role in ushering this legislation through."

Erica Smitka, Executive Director, League of Women Voters of New York State said: "Access to the ballot cannot depend on whether a polling place avoids every emergency, outage, or disruption. Strong election systems plan for the moments when things go wrong. This bill gives local Boards of Elections a clear tool to restore lost voting time and protect voters from being disenfranchised by circumstances outside their control. The League of Women Voters of New York State urges Governor Hochul to sign it without delay before the 2026 election."



A Stronger, Safer Democracy For All

"I'm deeply grateful to Let NY Vote Coalition and Indivisible for their leadership and persistence in getting this across the finish line. I also want to thank Ulster County Board of Elections Commissioner Ashley Torres for her leadership and advocacy for fair and accessible elections. In Ulster County, I was proud to author a letter signed by all 19 Democratic members of our Legislature urging our State representatives to pass the full package of voting rights legislation. The extension of polling hours during emergencies is a critical protection -- especially for more rural communities like ours -- and I urge the Governor to sign it into law without delay," said **Ulster County Legislator Lindsey Grossman**. "And we must not forget that 3 other critical bills remain unpassed: to deter frivolous voter challenges, empower student voters, and guarantee ballot access for eligible incarcerated New Yorkers. We will continue pushing for their passage next session, alongside the incredible advocates who make this work possible."

Elizabeth Liz of the Ulster Activists Election Reform Committee said: "The Election Reform Committee of Ulster Activists strongly supports the Time Extender for Polling Place Disruptions Act (A5846A/S4602A) and urges Governor Hochul to sign it into law. When polling place disruptions last more than one hour, this bill extends voting time to ensure that every voter has a meaningful opportunity to cast a ballot. By protecting access to the polls during unexpected disruptions, the legislation strengthens democracy and helps ensure that every voice is heard."

"Unite NY commends the New York State Legislature for passing the Time Extender Bill," said **Anthony Thomas, Executive Director of Unite NY**. "No voter should lose the opportunity to cast a ballot because of a disruption they cannot control. This bill gives election officials a clear way to restore lost voting time and protect every New Yorker's right to vote."

Bob Stromberg, Bethlehem Morning Voice Huddle said: "The Bethlehem Morning Voice Huddle (bmvhuddle.org), an Indivisible group, strongly supports the signing of A5846B Gibbs / S4602B Gounardes (time extender for polling place disruptions). This bill would allow a local Board of Elections to extend voting hours either that same voting day or on a later voting day by the amount of time lost to voting by the disruption. This removes the need to ask a court to order such an extension. The Huddle has several members who have served as election inspectors, and we understand that busy citizens might lose the chance to vote if a disruption occurs when they plan to vote. This bill would ease the administrative burden of responding to such disruptions for local Boards of Election and direct them to act promptly to restore the lost voting hours."

For years, voters, candidates and their communities have unfairly borne the brunt of lengthy election disruptions that can lead to voter suppression and potentially distort election results in close contests, said **Jarret Berg, Co-Founder and Voting Rights Counsel at Vote Early New York**. The equitable time-extender policy places the law on



A Stronger, Safer Democracy For All

the side of New York voters and improves the resiliency of our democracy by laying down a modern, uniform plan for bipartisan officials to follow when responding to rare but foreseeable election disruptions or emergencies at the polls. We thank the legislature for passing this critical voter protection and urge the Governor to sign it in time for the 2026 General Election.

Myra Saul, co-lead organizer, Westchester for Change said: Voters are understandably concerned about the upcoming mid term elections, including disruptions at the polls, which could range from a simple loss of electricity to malicious behavior, like bomb threats. Instead of the unpredictability and arbitrariness of judicial remedies across local jurisdictions, this bill treats all candidates and voters equally with the institution of a systematic, predictable solution. Westchester for Change urges Governor Hochul to sign the 'extender' bill promptly to protect voters and the election process at this critical time for our democracy.

~ ~ ~

ABOUT LET NY VOTE

Let NY Vote is a nonpartisan, statewide coalition of over 200 grassroots networks, civil rights and civil liberties organizations, re-entry communities, good government groups, unions, social service providers, immigrant and disability rights groups, and everyday citizens fighting to improve our elections by making voter registration and voting more accessible and equitable for every eligible New Yorker. Members of the coalition include 32BJ SEIU, the Brennan Center for Justice at NYU School of Law, Brooklyn Voters Alliance, Center for Law and Social Justice at Medgar Evers College, Center for Popular Democracy, Citizen Action NY, Citizens Union, Common Cause NY, Generation Vote, League of Women Voters of NYS, New York Branch NAACP, NALEO, New York Civil Liberties Union, NYDLC, Planned Parenthood Empire State Acts, Stand Up America, Vote Early NY, several local Indivisible chapters, and many more.

A full list of the members of Let NY Vote can be found [here](#).

PRESS CONTACT

letnyvote@gmail.com