



The League of Women Voters of Saratoga County
PO Box 1029, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866
www.lwvsaratoga.org

February 26, 2018

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE SARATOGA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Dear Supervisors:

The mission of the League of Women Voters is to encourage active and inclusive participation in the democratic process. We safeguard voting rights, recognizing that voting is the core foundation of democratic governance.

For this reason, we ardently oppose resolution #3 on your February 27 agenda because it would reject two options for increasing voter participation in our county: early voting and automatic voter registration. The logic is flawed and doesn't take into account new information. Our specific concerns follow:

- Funding IS available to cover the costs of implementation because on February 16, Governor Cuomo released his 30-day budget amendments, which included \$7 million for early voting.
- Studies have found that early in-person voting has a small but statistically-significant positive impact on turnout. Equally important, early voting can improve elections in a number of other ways:
 - Reducing stress on the voting system on election day
 - Alleviating long lines on election day
 - Improving poll worker performance
 - Allowing early identification and correction of registration errors and voting-system glitches
 - Providing greater access to voting and increased voter satisfaction
- Similar to what happens now when someone registers through the DMV, newly-registered voters would receive a notification from the Board of Elections with information about their registration, including where they can vote. And there is already a website where New Yorkers can check their registration status with the New York State Board of Elections.
- Automatic voter registration is a cheaper and more efficient way of registering voters than other traditional methods of registering voters, like paper-based registration systems. Automatic voter registration can capture eligible voters who DO end up voting. In the November 2016 general election in Oregon, nearly 100,000 votes were cast out of the 230,000 who registered automatically prior to the election. Among voters affiliated with a major party, those who registered through the new system voted at similar rates as those who registered through traditional means.

It is disingenuous to claim to support increased voter participation yet pass measures that suppress the voting potential of county residents. It is improper to argue that incremental cost-savings justify creating artificial and unnecessary barriers to the ballot box. We ask that you to strike resolution #3 from your legislative agenda.

Please consider us a resource to help you address concerns regarding implementing early voting and automatic registration. We also invite you to attend our forum on voter suppression at Skidmore College Tuesday evening at 6:30pm. Thank you.

Sincerely,
The LWVSC Board of Directors