COLLECTION IV — ELECTORAL REFORM

Electoral Reform in New York State

An overview of electoral reform efforts in Albany, including ranked-choice voting legislation.

By Daniel P. Devine · Civest Sphere · November 2026

Recent changes

New York has made major changes to how elections work since 2019:

- **Early voting** began in 2019. It runs for nine days, ending the Sunday before Election Day.
- **Registration deadline** was moved from 25 days to 10 days before an election by a law signed in December 2022.
- **Early mail voting,** enacted in 2023, lets any registered voter vote by mail without needing an excuse.
- **Public campaign financing** for state offices launched in 2022 and was first used in 2024.
- **The John R. Lewis Voting Rights Act of New York,** enacted in 2022, adds state protections against voting discrimination in local elections.
- **Ranked-choice voting** has been used in New York City primary and special elections since 2021.

Proposals voters rejected

In 2021, voters rejected ballot proposals that would have allowed Election Day registration and no-excuse absentee voting in the state constitution. (No-excuse mail voting was later created by statute.)

Reforms under debate

Bills introduced in the 2025–2026 legislative session include proposals to:

- use ranked-choice voting in some nonpartisan primaries and other elections;
- use ranked-choice voting for presidential elections in New York;
- change ballot access rules and petition requirements.

As of early 2026, these ranked-choice bills were in committee. Bills that don't pass by the end of a two-year session must be reintroduced. Check NYSenate.gov for the current status of any bill.

Local action

Local governments can also change how they run some elections. For example, the Town of Newburgh adopted ranked-choice voting after a voting rights lawsuit, and other New York communities have debated the change.

How to get involved

1. Follow bills on NYSenate.gov and record your position there.
2. Contact your State Senator and Assembly member. See *How to Find Your Elected Officials*.
3. Testify at hearings held by the Senate and Assembly elections committees.

Civest Sphere provides this overview for education. We take no position on these proposals.

OFFICIAL SOURCES

- NY State Senate — Legislation (https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation)
- NY State Board of Elections (https://elections.ny.gov)

Last reviewed November 2026. This guide is general information, not legal advice. Laws, deadlines and procedures change, so confirm details with the official source before you act.

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