

## MEMORANDUM OF SUPPORT

### **Voter Registration Portability: Transfers Across County Lines**

**A3411 (Kavanagh) / S1732 (Carlucci)**

The New York Democratic Lawyers Council (NYDLC) strongly supports the enactment of A3411 / S1732, which would require the Board of Elections to keep New Yorkers on the voter rolls when they move in-state by transferring the existing registration to the voter's new county or city Board.

Currently, a New York voter living in one county or city who moves within the state to a new locality becomes ineligible to vote unless they proactively update their registration or re-register in the locality of their new residence. This leads to confusion, incentivizes unscrupulous behavior, and infringes rights by disenfranchising thousands of otherwise-eligible New Yorkers each election.

Registration portability is a key aspect of registration modernization.<sup>1</sup> Once an eligible resident is on New York's voter rolls, they should remain registered as long as they continue to be eligible and reside in New York (and one day, perhaps this cooperation could extend interstate). Nationwide, 14 states presently or will soon permit same-day registration (which resolves this issue as voters may update their registration on Election Day) and another 7 states have a portable registration system that saves votes even where a voter doesn't update their record ahead of Election Day.<sup>2</sup>

Moreover, the present need to re-register with each move widens the voter participation gap among demographic groups who move more often and vote less often (young people, communities of color, lower-income Americans).<sup>3</sup>

Finally, New York election law already counts the ballot of a resident who moves *within* their county or city, without requiring them to re-register. This fix would reduce unexpected roadblocks to voter participation, streamline registration, protect civil rights, and meet the modern expectations of busy New Yorkers.

**For the foregoing reasons, NYDLC strongly supports the enactment of A3411 / S1732.**

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<sup>1</sup> Brennan Center for Justice, *VRM in the States: Portability*, Feb. 3, 2017, <http://bit.ly/2q7hZ8V> (visited May 20, 2017).

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*

<sup>3</sup> J Mijin Cha and Liz Kennedy, *Millions to the Polls: Permanent & Portable Voter Registration*, Demos, Feb. 18, 2014, <http://bit.ly/2qFyEnU>.