

OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

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June 27, 2023

Hon. Kathy Hochul, Governor
State of New York
NYS Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Hochul,

I'm appalled that in a silent vote New York's state elected officials have, in what can only be described as a power grab, passed a last-minute bill that is a clear unconstitutional violation of the voting rights and local races outside of New York City.

I urge you to veto bills A04282 and S3505B heading your way, which will cause a catalyst of confusion caused by an unmasked-for change that will impede on the ability of voters to focus on local races.

The New York State Constitution recognizes that effective local self-governments are important to the people of the State. Local governments are the most responsive and responsible to the everyday person. They have a significant impact on everyday lives of the public, more than any other tier of government. Our hundreds of towns, villages, and counties, play a vital governance role for drinking water, social services, sewage, zoning, schools, roads, parks, police, courts, jails, trash disposal — and more. Without local government, public services would not be delivered, making home rule, a key constitutional principal.

If local elections for village, town, and county offices are forced to occur only in even years, as this bill wants to do, these local races will be overshadowed and buried by the important but unrelated issues raised in State and Federal elections. In the already crowded newsroom, there will be no room at all for local candidates to express their wishes and desires for office. There will be no time for voters to learn about the Federal, State, and local races, all in the same election season.

Let's not forget the current Albany government, the Governor, and the State Senate and Assembly, are wholly dominated by New York City politicians, and have a terrible track record when it comes to rushing policy in New York, and not considering the needs of the suburban and rural areas outside New York City.

One great example is the bail reform measures that state lawmakers, dominated by Assembly and Senate members from New York City, approved without consulting with law enforcement, district attorneys, courts, or anyone else directly involved and impacted by the changes in these processes and it led to disastrous and dire consequences that our criminal justice system is still coping with.

It is outrageous for the New York State legislature to engage in political overreach, rushing an unconstitutional election bill through covertly in the dead of night without involving the hardworking taxpayers in this state, including the residents of Rockland, in a significant decision that will without question impact local elections statewide.

State lawmakers already attempted this attack on our electoral process right ahead of Memorial Day in 2022, the weekend we honor our war dead and heroes who gave all to prevent this sort of manipulation of our elections.

Now, once again our lawmakers are seeking to fundamentally change local elections with no apparent reason, and no known purpose for the change, and on behalf of the people of Rockland, I demand you veto this bill that is a clear attack on local elections.

Sincerely,



Edwin J. Day
County Executive

CC: NYS Senator Bill Weber, NYS Senator Pete Harckham, NYS Assemblyman Ken Zebrowski, NYS Assemblyman John McGowan, NYS Assemblyman Chris Eachus, NYS Assemblyman Karl Brabanec.