

**Opposing Moving Certain Local Elections To Even Numbered Years
And Urging New York State Governor Hochul To Veto
A.04282B/S.3505B**

Referred to: The Laws, Rules and Government Services Committee (Chairman Heppner and Legislators Gavaris, Levine, Roberts, and Ronk)

Minority Leader Kenneth J. Ronk, Jr., and Legislators Corcoran, Fabiano, Hansut, Litts, Lopez and Roberts offer the following:

WHEREAS, the Ulster County Legislature believes that increasing participation in the election process and reducing costs of government operations is good for our republic; and

WHEREAS, Assembly Member Amy Paulin and State Senator James Skoufis reintroduced legislation that would move local elections to even-number years during the 2023 legislative session; and

WHEREAS, versions of this legislation were introduced in previous years and failed to reach the floor for a vote due to lack of support; and

WHEREAS, after the 2022 session concluded, the bill sponsor indicated that hearings would be held on the proposal through the Election Committee process; however, there were no hearings held; and

WHEREAS, the legislation passed in the middle of the night on the last days of the legislative session which is counter to the idea of an open and transparent government; and

WHEREAS, the Ulster County Legislature has several concerns with this bill; and

WHEREAS, this legislation usurps the Home Rule powers reserved by local governments and protected by the Constitution of the State of New York, raising questions of legality and constitutional authority; and

WHEREAS, local municipalities have had the ability to change their elections to even-number years for decades, and chose not to do so; and

WHEREAS, we believe that establishing the schedule of local elections is the right of the local government, and has been for more than 100 years; and

WHEREAS, The Assembly Bill sponsor indicated that she had not received any messages of support for this proposal from any of the 57 Counties and 933 Towns across New York State impacted by this legislation; and

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WHEREAS, this legislation excludes more than half of all New Yorkers who vote in cities and villages from the changes to election law, creating an inequity among New York voters; and

WHEREAS, this legislation unfairly excludes the elections to offices in New York City and all other cities and villages in New York State, as well as certain offices within all counties and towns; and

WHEREAS, the proposed legislation circumvented the legislative committee process during this session, limiting public input and understanding of the impacts; and

WHEREAS, there has been no financial analysis or operational analysis of the impacts on local Boards of Elections; and

WHEREAS, there are concerns that the current election and ballot counting technology would not be able to adequately meet the demands of the significantly increased ballot size; and

WHEREAS, this will create confusion amongst voters in towns and counties across New York State; and

WHEREAS, separating the elections affords voters more time and focus to better understand important local issues and provides candidates the appropriate platforms to explain their stance on issues without having to compete against national and state level campaigns; and

WHEREAS, moving local elections to even-numbered years would increase the cost of campaigns for local office, reducing the number of candidates willing to invest funds into their own campaign, because the cost of media will increase to compete with national and state level campaign advertisements; and

WHEREAS, there are significant legal and constitutional questions regarding the legality of this measure that have not been adequately addressed; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Ulster County Legislature urges the Governor to oppose this legislation and utilize her veto authority to reject this proposal; and, be it further

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RESOLVED, that the Clerk of the Ulster County Legislature shall forward copies of this resolution to Governor Kathy Hochul, Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart Cousins, Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie, Senate Minority Leader Robert Ort, Assembly Minority Leader William Barclay, Assembly Bill Sponsor Amy Paulin, Senate Bill Sponsor James Skoufis, Assemblywoman Sarahana Shrestha, Assemblyman Brian Maher, Assemblyman Christopher Tague, Assemblyman Jonathan Jacobsen, Senator Michelle Hinchey, and Senator Peter Oberacker,

and move its adoption.

ADOPTED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

AYES:

NOES:

Defeated in Committee: Laws, Rules and Government Services on July 13, 2023

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

NONE