

Rebecca Seawright



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Seawright Fights for Expanded Voting Sites, Election Reform

Assemblymember Rebecca Seawright continues her fight in the state Assembly to expand ballot access, increase polling locations, and end the multi-day gridlock that plagued voters in the 2020 presidential election on the Upper East Side, Yorkville, and Roosevelt Island.

Having already personally secured additional early voting sites for the district--including a new location at the Metropolitan Museum of Art--Seawright rallied support in the Assembly for the sweeping package of "common-sense" measures.

"We are voting to strengthen our democracy, to end voter suppression, and to wipe away antiquated rules and restrictions proven to keep eligible voters from exercising their franchise," she said.

Assembly Member Seawright dedicated her remarks on the floor [last night](#) in honor of late civil rights leader Medgar Evers.

The Make Voting Easy Act requires the New York State Board of Elections to guarantee that New York City maintains at least one early voting poll site for every 40,000 registered voters. This legislation also increases the number of hours early voting polling places must be open on weekends and legal holidays from five hours to eight hours.

Seawright also successfully approved updated procedures for canvassing absentee, military, special, and affidavit ballots. To speed up the counting, election boards would be required to review absentee, military, and special ballots on a rolling basis prior, during, and after the election. All valid ballots would be counted on election night.

The bill clarifies standards for ballot qualifications defining a ballot valid, defective but curable ballot, or an invalid ballot. Ballot challenges would be held in abeyance. After the election, candidates may challenge board findings in court.

The 2020 election saw a dramatic increase in the use of absentee ballots due to the COVID-19 pandemic. For the second time, the Legislature recently passed a constitutional amendment that would allow "no excuse" absentee voting in the future. This amendment will be on the ballot in November, and if the voters pass it, absentee voting may become as common as Election Day voting.

"Even as efforts are underway in other parts of the country to make voting harder, in New York, we in the Assembly Majority are working to make it easier," said Speaker Carl Heastie.

Seawright thanked Speaker Heastie for making election reform ***"a top legislative priority that will benefit our citizenry for years to come."***

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