YOUR VOTING RIGHTS AT THE POLLS

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

New York voters have strong protections under the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Act of New York (NYVRA) and the federal Voting Rights Act of 1965. All voters have the right to cast their ballot independently and privately.

Here are your rights when you head to the polls to cast your ballot.

Election Protection Hotline:
866-OUR VOTE (866-687-8683

VOTER REGISTRATION

Does New York have same-day registration?

No. New York does not have same-day registration. But in our state, there is a single day when voters can both register and vote.

On the first day of early voting, which is 10 days before Election Day, voters can go to an early voting site, fill out a registration affidavit, and cast an affidavit ballot in the same visit.

I'm registered as an independent or other third party voter. Can I vote in the primary elections?

No. New York has a closed primary system, meaning that only voters who are affiliated with a party with candidates on a primary ballot can cast a vote.

If you want to vote in a future primary, you must change your party enrollment by February 14 of that year (or the next business day if it falls on a weekend). Changes submitted after that date do not take effect until after that year's primary has concluded.

CASTING YOUR VOTE

Can I vote by mail?

Yes. Any voter can request an early vote-by-mail ballot online, by mail up to ten days before the election, or in-person at your local county Board of Elections (BOE) at any time up to the day before Election Day. You can cast your completed ballot by mail or deliver it in-person early to the BOE or your polling place.

I requested a mail-in or absentee ballot. Can I still cast my vote in person?

Yes, but you will be required to cast an affidavit ballot, and your affidavit ballot will only be counted if the BOE doesn't receive your mailed ballot. If your mailed ballot does arrive to the BOE, that ballot is the one that counts.

What if there is a problem with the voting machines?

Poll sites keep emergency paper ballots on hand for exactly this situation, and no voter can be turned away because a scanner or ballot-marking device is out of service. Ask a poll worker for an emergency paper ballot, mark it, and it will be scanned once the equipment is working again or during the official count. If you're told to leave without voting, ask for the chief inspector or site coordinator, and if the problem isn't resolved, call the Election Protection Hotline and the NY Attorney General's Election Protection Hotline.

What if I have an issue with a poll worker?

First, ask to speak with the chief inspector or site coordinator – every poll site has one, and many issues can be resolved on the spot. If it isn't resolved, contact your county Board of Elections or the Election Protection Hotline.

You can file a formal complaint online at electionenforcement.ny.gov.

What if the polls close while I'm in line?

If you're in line when polls close, you are legally guaranteed the right to cast your vote. If you are turned away before casting your vote, ask for the chief inspector or site coordinator, and call the Election Protection Hotline.

INTERPRETATION & LANGUAGE ACCESS

Can I bring an interpreter with me to help me cast my vote?

Yes. You have the right to bring an interpreter of your choice to help you cast your ballot, including family, friends, poll workers, or anyone else you trust to interpret for you—except for representatives of your employer or union.

Does my polling place have interpreters available?

Under the NYVRA and federal Voting Rights Act of 1965, many counties and local governments are required to provide language assistance.

For more information on which counties and local governments are required to provide language assistance, visit nyclu.org/voting-rights.

DISABILITY RIGHTS

Is my polling place accessible? What accommodations are available?

Federal law requires all poll sites to meet accessibility standards, and poll sites undergo accessibility surveys.

Voters with a print disability can request a ballot with access features that allow them to mark their ballot at home. A print disability is any disability that interferes with the effective reading, writing, or use of printed material, including blindness, low vision, dyslexia, dysgraphia, learning disabilities, and physical disabilities that limit writing abilities.

Any voter may request to use a Ballot Marking Device (BMD), which is an accessible voting machine that allows people with blindness, low vision, limited dexterity, physical impairments, or other disabilities to mark their ballots privately and independently. BMDs also provide audio instructions to guide voters through the voting process.

If there are long lines at the polling place or other conditions that cause accessibility barriers, voters with disabilities should notify poll workers of the need for accommodations.

Can I bring someone with me to help me cast my vote?

Yes. You have the right to bring any person of your choosing to assist you with the voting process, except for representatives of your employer or union.

Do I have to provide proof of my disability to access these supports?

No. Any voter who requests assistance is entitled to receive assistance, regardless of the reason.

VOTER INTIMIDATION & ELECTIONEERING

What should I do if I witness electioneering?

Electioneering is an effort to persuade voters to cast their ballots for or against particular candidates, parties, or issues. Examples include handing out a candidate's flyers, wearing a "yes on Proposition X" t-shirt, or putting up a poster that says "Vote for X Party."

New York law prohibits electioneering within 100 feet of the entrance to a polling place. If you witness prohibited electioneering, tell a poll worker. You can also report the activity to your county BOE or the Election Protection Hotline.

What should I do if I experience or witness voter intimidation?

All voters have the right to cast a ballot freely and fairly, without fear of intimidation. Voter intimidation – using or threatening force, violence, or coercion to stop someone from voting or to influence how they vote – is a crime under both state and federal law. If you experience or witness it, report it right away to a poll worker and call the Election Protection Hotline.

POLICE & ICE AT THE POLLS

Why are police at my voting site?

You have the same right to vote free of intimidation from police or anyone else. If an officer's conduct feels intimidating or interferes with your voting, report it the same way you would any voter intimidation.

In New York City, the law requires at least one police or peace officer to be assigned to every polling place. This is a statutory requirement, not a sign that anything is wrong. Their role is to enforce rules like the 100-foot electioneering boundary, not to question or intimidate voters.

Do I need to prove my citizenship when I cast my vote?

Unless you are completing an affidavit ballot, which is essentially both a voter registration form and a ballot in one and requires the voter to attest to citizenship, you are not required to prove or discuss your citizenship status at the polls. You also do not need to show ID to vote.

What are my rights if ICE is at my voting site?

Federal law prohibits armed federal agents from being deployed at voting sites. In 2026, New York State enacted a law barring federal agents from making civil immigration arrests at polling sites without a signed judicial warrant or court order. Both the federal Voting Rights Act and the NYVRA treat intimidation by ICE agents the same as any other voter intimidation.

If you see ICE agents at your polling site, report it to the Election Protection Hotline.

HOTLINES & RESOURCES

Election Protection Hotline:
866-OUR VOTE (866-687-8683)

New York Attorney General Election Protection Hotline:
866-390-2992

NYCLU.ORG/VOTING-RIGHTS

NYCLU
ACLU of New York
www.nyclu.org