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UNH State Fiscal Year 2018-19 Budget & Policy Priorities **Voting Reform Agenda**

To make voting a more fair and accessible process for all eligible voters, New York State must modernize election laws by implementing policies that meet the needs of all New Yorkers. By adopting the following proposals, New York State will improve its ability to protect and expand the right to vote for every New Yorker.

Early Voting would allow voters to cast their ballot in person on specified dates leading up to Election Day. New York is among only thirteen states that do not allow early voting. Allowing early voting would eliminate many of the barriers that inevitably arise for New Yorkers with inflexible schedules and facilitate increased participation in elections.

Invest \$6.4 million to implement Early Voting to support counties seeking to make voting easier for constituents with inflexible schedules and increase voter satisfaction.

Automatic Voter Registration would increase New York voter rolls by 2 million new voters by automatically registering eligible voters when they interact with designated state agencies, unless they opt out. To ensure that AVR works for everyone, it would need to be extended beyond the DMV.

Restoring Parolee Voting Rights would allow over 44,000 citizens that are paying taxes and raising families to cast their vote in all New York elections. New Yorkers on parole are denied their right to vote until they complete their parole, at which time they must re-register with the Board of Elections. Sixteen states and D.C. restore voting after term of incarceration.

Flexibility to change Party Affiliation would make it easier for unaffiliated registered voters to support their chosen candidate in the early stages of an election, while still maintaining the integrity of primaries. 43 percent of New Yorkers identify as independent voters. This means they don't have a say in the primaries, which often decide the general election in many New York counties. Flexibility to change party affiliation gives registered voters more time to make an informed decision about who they want to vote for.

Electronic Poll Books would replace the current paper voter rolls with a digital system intended to streamline polling place administration. Electronic voter rolls would allow for quick updates, reduce errors, cut down on administrative costs and facilitate a smoother voting experience.

UNH recommendation: Adopt legislation that facilitates the ability of all New Yorkers to vote by passing common sense reforms for fair and secure voting in New York State: 1) Early Voting; 2) Automatic Voter Registration; 3) Parolee Voting; 4) Party Affiliation Flexibility (5) Electronic Poll Books

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