

**Andrew Goodman Foundation
Bard College Center for Civic Engagement
Citizens Union
Common Cause/NY
League of Women Voters of New York State
New York Public Interest Research Group (NYPIRG)
Reinvent Albany
Vote Early NY**

NEWS RELEASE

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For More Information:

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NYPIRG IDENTIFIES 20 COLLEGES WITH A SUBSTANTIAL STUDENT POPULATION AND NO POLLING PLACE WITHIN A MILE

YOUTH VOTE COALITION DEMANDS BOARD OF ELECTIONS PROVIDE INFORMATION TO JUSTIFY OFF CAMPUS POLLING LOCATIONS

(Albany, NY) NYPIRG today released an analysis of general election polling site data from the State Board of Elections showing 20 four year colleges with 1,000 or more full time students *and* on campus housing do not have a polling place within a mile of campus.

In 2022, New York initiated an important new program to help young adults attending college to more easily vote. The law stated that campuses that have 300 registered voters or more living on campus and registered at their college address should have a polling place. Given the size of the student population at the 20 schools NYPIRG identified and the usual requirement that first and second year students live at an on-campus address, it is reasonable to assume that each should have been eligible for a polling site.

A coalition of civic and youth voting groups called on the Board of Elections to justify why those schools did not qualify for a polling place under the 2022 law. The coalition formally requested communications and documents from the State Board to shed light on the decision-making process that led to the placement of poll sites.

NYPIRG first released a study of poll sites in May, ahead of the primary. That report found 97 colleges with on student housing but no poll site on campus. Since then, only two colleges, Buffalo State and Geneseo, have seen a poll site added to campus. Further, the report found 26 colleges (20 four year schools and six community colleges) with more than 1,000 full time students and on campus housing had no poll site within a mile. That has not since changed.

“Students too often face barriers to voting, and placing poll sites far off campus further dampens turnout among young voters,” said Blair Horner, Executive Director of NYPIRG. “New Yorkers have a constitutional right to vote, policymakers should be reducing obstacles to voting, not increasing them. County Boards have a responsibility to make sure students have every opportunity to vote in the general election.”

"College students must be able to cast their ballots on their campus, as required by state law. In just a few weeks, New Yorkers — some for the first time — will vote in consequential elections across the state. We should be encouraging students to get involved, not shutting them out of the process. Local Election

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Commissioners must add more poll sites on college campuses before Early Voting starts,” said Susan Lerner, Executive Director of Common Cause New York.

"The lack of on-campus polling locations is alarming, especially during a prime opportunity to engage young people in the electoral process, like a presidential election. Boards of Elections and higher education leaders should work together to dismantle the barriers that have long hindered student participation in elections,” said Ben Weinberg, Director of Public Policy at Citizens Union.

“Andrew Goodman Foundation Ambassadors across New York have worked tirelessly to build a culture of civic engagement on campuses. Now it’s time for our leaders to support the efforts of our young people by ensuring they have reasonable access to polling sites on the campuses where they live and learn,” said Rashawn Davis, Executive Director of The Andrew Goodman Foundation.

"Voting has long been a challenge for college students due to transportation issues, scheduling conflicts, and a lack of information about the voting process. While recent legislation aimed to facilitate voting for New York's 1.1 million college-age students, we have yet to see significant increases in on-campus polling locations. By ensuring that these sites are conveniently located, we can empower students to actively engage in the democratic process and make their voices heard on the issues that matter most to them," said Erica Smitka, Executive Director, League of Women Voters of New York State

ATTACHMENTS:

List of the 20 colleges

Letter to the state board of elections

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October 4, 2024

Henry T. Berger, Co-Chair, NYS Board of Elections
Peter S. Kosinski, Co-Chair, NYS Board of Elections
Essma Bagnuola, Commissioner, NYS Board of Elections
Anthony J. Casale, Commissioner, NYS Board of Elections
Kristen Zebrowski Stavisky, Co-Executive Director, NYS Board of Elections
Raymond J. Riley III, Co-Executive Director, NYS Board of Elections

New York State Board of Elections
40 North Pearl Street, Suite 5
Albany, NY 12207-2729

Dear Commissioners and Co-Executive Directors of the New York State Board of Elections:

This letter is a follow up letter to the ones we sent you in the Spring and Summer. As you know, our organizations are concerned with youth voter participation and we wrote urging the Board to review polling locations to ensure that all covered colleges have polling locations placed on campus for the upcoming General Election.

In our original letter, we included an analysis conducted by NYPIRG that showed some number of colleges in the state do not have on-campus poll sites even though many have a significant number of students living on campus. We argued at that time that the survey's findings raised important questions and we urged the Board to investigate to ensure that the rights of young voters registered in their college communities are being protected as required under the law.

We have now reviewed the locations of polling sites for the General Election and found few changes with regards to including polling locations on college campuses. Below are 20 four-year colleges that have on campus housing, a full-time student population of more than 1,000 and whose nearest polling place is a mile or more away from campus. We would like to understand how the law requiring a polling place on or contiguous to college campuses with 300 or more registered voters is being applied in these cases. To that end, we are requesting under the Freedom of Information Law any communications and documents related to the decisions to not include polling places on the campuses listed below.

We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Rashawn Davis, Andrew Goodman Foundation
Ben Weinberg, Citizens Union
Susan Lerner, Common Cause/NY
Erica Smitka, League of Women Voters of New York State

Blair Horner, NYPIRG
Jonathan Becker, Bard Center for Civic Engagement
John Kaehny, Reinvent Albany

cc: State Senator Zellnor Myrie
State Senator Kevin Parker
State Assemblymember Latrice Walker
State Assemblymember Nily Rozic
Terry Pratt, Assistant Counsel to the Governor

CAMPUS	CITY	DORMS (Y/N)	POLLING PLACE ON CAMPUS	DISTANCE TO NEAREST PRIMARY POLLING PLACE (Miles)	DISTANCE TO NEAREST GENERAL ELECTION POLLING PLACE (if different from primary)
Nazareth College	Rochester	Y	N	1	No change
State University of New York at Potsdam	Potsdam	Y	N	1	No change
Mount Saint Mary College	Newburgh	Y	N	1.1	No change
State University of New York at Delhi	Delhi	Y	N	1.1	2.3
Utica College	Utica	Y	N	1.1	No change
Molloy College	Rockville Centre	Y	N	1.2	No change
College of Staten Island	Staten Island	Y	N	1.4	No change
Hamilton College	Clinton	Y	N	1.5	No change
State University of New York at Oneonta	Oneonta	Y	N	1.5	No change
LIU Post	Greenvale	Y	N	1.6	No change
United States Military Academy	West Point	Y	N	1.6	No change
State University of New York Polytechnic Institute	Utica, Marcy	Y	N	1.7	No change
St. John Fisher	Pittsford	Y	N	1.8	No change
Dominican College	Orangeburg	Y	N	1.9	No change
State University of New York at Farmingdale	Farmingdale	Y	N	2	No change
St. Bonaventure University	Allegany	Y	N	2.1	1.6

Niagara University	Lewiston	Y	N	2.1	No change
Culinary Institute of America	Hyde Park	Y	N	2.8	No change
New York Institute of Technology	Old Westbury	Y	N	3	No change
State University of New York at Old Westbury	Old Westbury	Y	N	4.7	No change