

MEMORANDUM OF SUPPORT

PROTECT CONFIDENTIALITY OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIMS' VOTER REGISTRATION RECORDS

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The New York State Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NYSCADV) urges the New York State Legislature to pass this legislation which will deter the ability of abusers to locate victims via voter registration records. This legislation will ensure that domestic violence victims are able to safely register to vote without fear that their abusers will be able to find them through public voter records.

Under current law, addresses of voters can be obtained by anyone under the Freedom of Information Act. This can have enormous consequences for a domestic violence victim who is fleeing and/or hiding from an abuser and subsequently wishes to register to vote in their new location.

Currently, a domestic violence victim has to obtain a court order to keep their voting enrollment information -- and hence their new address -- confidential. Due to the difficulty, complexity and cost of court proceedings, many victims instead choose not to register to vote. This bill would remove the requirement for a victim to obtain a court order and instead direct local Boards of Election to maintain the confidentiality of a domestic violence victim's address if a written request is made.

NYSCADV supports the passage of this legislation, which would amend Election Law to:

- Remove the requirement that domestic violence victims have to obtain a court order to protect the confidentiality of their voter registration information;
- Permit domestic violence victims to submit a written self-attestation of their status as a domestic violence victim to their local Board of Elections, which must then maintain the confidentiality of such information; and,
- Require the Board of Elections to ensure that domestic violence victims' voter registration records are kept separate from the records which are available for public access.

NYSCADV urges the New York State Legislature to pass this legislation to simplify the process for a domestic violence victim to ensure the confidentiality of their voter registration information.

ABOUT NYSCADV:

Established in 1978, NYSCADV is designated by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services as the information clearinghouse, primary point of contact, and resource center on domestic violence for the State of New York. NYSCADV is responsible for supporting the development of policies, protocol, and procedures to enhance domestic violence intervention and prevention and also provides education and technical assistance to the network of primary-purpose domestic violence service providers statewide.

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