

**RESOLUTION BY THE PROGRESSIVE CAUCUS OF THE
NEW YORK STATE DEMOCRATIC COMMITTEE
IN SUPPORT OF AMENDING ELECTION LAW
TO END FUSION VOTING IN NEW YORK**

WHEREAS New York is one of just four states that allows the practice called fusion voting which permits minor political parties to cross-endorse major party candidates; and

Whereas the practice of electoral fusion allows minor parties to disproportionately influence candidate choice, election results and government policy by offering to endorse or nominate a major party's candidate; and

Whereas many such secondary parties cross-endorse so as to obtain enough votes in the November general election to maintain their party line, but do not legitimately and independently procure enough signatures, and therefore do not have the requisite number of actual Committee Members in a county to constitute a bona fide Committee under election law; and

Whereas because of the lack of bona fide Committees with actual Committee Members, these secondary party leaders wield disproportionate political influence by essentially gaming the electoral process; and

Whereas some minor parties such as the Independence Party overtly manipulate fusion voting to enact their transactional pay-to-play politics; and

Whereas even non-corrupt minor parties can be – and are - manipulated on a local level so that a regional minor party line can have an agenda that directly contravenes the explicit mission of said minor Party, such as the Women's Equality Party being run by anti-choice advocates in Dutchess County, or the Working Families Party being controlled by Republicans in Rockland County, and

Whereas these kinds of local takeovers once again demonstrate the undemocratic and out-sized power and influence minor parties can obtain by gaming election law; and

Whereas fusion voting can also enable Democratic Party candidates for office to subvert the will of Democratic voters, by enabling a candidate who loses the Democratic nomination to remain on the ballot as a candidate for multiple minor parties in the General election; and

Whereas candidates for office should support increased political transparency and honesty by choosing a party line that best represents their political opinions thereby allowing the voters of New York to accurately choose candidates who reflect their political values; and

Whereas the Members of the New York State Democratic Committee (“NYSDC”) are proud to be Democrats and wish to encourage candidates to run as Democrats and not dilute the political power and reach of our party; and

Whereas the Progressive Caucus of the NYSDC is proud of our role in successfully moving progressive party policy, legislation in Albany and candidates forward; and

Whereas, there are supposedly candidates and voters who do not want to run or vote on the Democratic Party line because they believe that our party is insufficiently progressive, we believe that such individuals should choose to either bring their values to bear on our party and work to make it more progressive, or choose another party that better reflects their individual political beliefs; but they should not cannibalize our political lines in order to support their candidates while hurting ours; and

Whereas, despite the stated belief that minor parties enhance the reach and success of Democratic Party candidates, in fact the opposite is more often true; minor parties with opposing political agendas often cynically join together to strengthen their raw political power, and

Whereas, ending fusion voting would enable voters to mostly accurately vote their conscience and political beliefs; and

Whereas, ending fusion voting would enhance the power of State Committee members within all parties in New York rather than concentrate the power of those parties in the hands of party leadership, and

Whereas, rather than strengthening the power of party bosses within a dominating two party system, ending fusion voting would instead strengthen the voices and impact of progressives within the Democratic Party, and

Whereas, early voting reform will continue to be stymied by fusion voting due to New York’s long-standing normative practice of extensive and complicated election law challenges; and

Whereas, none of our Democratic Senators, including our newly elected Democratic Senators, needed outside party lines beyond the Democratic Party line to win their current seats, and

Whereas, maintaining fusion voting consumes enormous resources, consolidates power in the hands of a few, and obfuscates the election process for most general voters, and

Whereas, in one of the most hotly contested recent elections in memory, the 2016 Presidential, a paltry 57 percent of the State’s voters cast a ballot or – in other words – almost half of the State’s eligible voters failed to vote, and

Whereas New York is repeatedly cited by activists and analysts of all political and ideological views as having one of the worst voting systems in the entire country,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the New York State Democratic Committee calls for an end to the practice of fusion voting in New York as it undermines good government and misleads voters regarding where candidates stand on important issues; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the New York State Democratic Committee calls upon the Governor, the Senate and the Assembly to immediately amend New York election law and rid our great state of this deceptive and undemocratic process.