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## **MAYOR DE BLASIO SIGNS LEGISLATION CREATING ONLINE VOTER REGISTRATION SYSTEM**

*For the first time, New Yorkers will be able to register or change their registration online or via a new mobile app*

**NEW YORK**—Mayor Bill de Blasio today signed legislation allowing for the creation of an online system to make voter registration easier for New York City residents. The Mayor previously held a public hearing for the bill, Intro 508-A, on November 27, 2017. Under this new legislation, the City will create an online portal and mobile application where voters can submit registration information or submit updates to their registrations.

“We’re embracing technology to help make voting more accessible for New Yorkers. This bill is one step towards fixing our antiquated electoral system, which for far too long has discouraged participation in the democratic process,” said **Mayor de Blasio**. “For the first time ever, New Yorkers will be able to submit the necessary registration information or submit updates to their registration online or through a mobile app. Now it is time for Albany to follow our lead and pass meaningful electoral reform to expand access to voting.”

“Online voter registration will make it easier for all New Yorkers to register or change registration online or through mobile apps and will help increase democratic participation,” said **Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito**. “Voting is one of the most powerful forms of self-expression, so I am excited to see how this program will help New Yorkers better engage with the electoral process. I thank Council Member Ben Kallos for pushing this bill through and for his continued advocacy for voter rights.”

In addition to requiring online and mobile apps for voters to submit their information, this new law requires the CFB to provide voters with a mechanism for an electronic signature on the voter registration form. It would also allow CFB to use signatures already provided to other city agencies, including IDNYC, if appropriate. After the voter submits the information online, CFB would print the information onto a voter registration form with an electronically affixed signature and then deliver the printed voter registration form to the New York City Board of Elections. The bill takes effect in 18 months.

Mayor de Blasio has been an advocate for reforming the State's antiquated voting laws. This has included pushing for early voting, same-day registration and automatic voter registration during the last legislative session in Albany. Under his leadership, the City has also offered the NYC BOE \$20 million in exchange for critical administrative reforms. The NYC BOE has yet to respond to this offer.

"The right to vote is the right that protects all other rights," said **New York Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman**. "Any law that makes it easier for New Yorkers to vote is a good law; any law that makes it harder to vote is a bad law. Yet New York's current voting system is an affront to the values of democracy on which this state was built. The bill marks a key step forward in the fight for more accessible elections, allowing New York City to begin to bring our electoral process into the 21st century. My office will continue to fight to expand voting rights for all New Yorkers."

"Any modern, inclusive election system must include online voter registration that is accessible to all eligible voters. While more New Yorkers are registered than ever before, more than three-quarters of a million voting-age citizens have yet to claim their place on the voting rolls. That's why we're proud to be part of this essential effort to further expand access to voter registration in New York City, and we look forward to working with our many partners in government to make it happen. Thanks are due to Mayor Bill de Blasio, Council member Ben Kallos and his colleagues, and the advocates who supported this important legislation," said **Amy Loprest, Executive Director, NYC Campaign Finance Board**.

"Democracy should be a click away. We are used to filling out forms online with the click of a mouse and voter registration should be no different. You should be able to register and receive a confirmation by email, just like any other website," said **Council Member Ben Kallos**. "Barriers to registration must be removed so that anyone who is eligible to register can do so quickly and easily. Thank you to Mayor Bill de Blasio for supporting this legislation and making it law. With the support of his administration, we are sure to see a positive impact from this legislation."

"Voting is a fundamental right that belongs to every American, and a responsibility of every citizen. Yet in the 21st century, access to the ballot is still far from universal. We need smart reforms to make it easier for New Yorkers to vote. I thank Mayor de Blasio and the City Council for taking an important step toward increasing access for voters in our city by creating a new system for online voter registration," said **State Senator Liz Krueger**.

"Promoting on-line access to voter registration is in line with the core elements of democracy. The Electronic Voter Registration Bill brings New York City forward into the 21st century by using available technology to make voting easier and is more consistent with the way young people communicate. This is a significant step towards ensuring greater voter participation and turnout and civic involvement, which we urgently need at all levels of the governing process," said **Assembly Member Rebecca Seawright**.

"Online registration is an important step in removing barriers to voting. New Yorkers—especially young people and people of color—will now be able to register more easily. Thanks to the New York City Council for passing this commonsense bill. Now it's incumbent upon the

New York City Board of Elections to work with the New York City Campaign Finance Board to make sure this is a reality,” said **Susan Lerner, Executive Director of Common Cause/NY**.

“We applaud the Mayor for signing this bill, which will make it easier to register to vote. Our democracy works better when everyone can participate. With Republicans attacks on working people and voting rights across the country we need to fight to enfranchise all voters. We strongly support the implementation of this bill and other ways to ensure more New Yorkers can register and vote,” said **Hector Figueroa, President of 32BJ SEIU**.

"Citizens Union has long maintained that electronic signatures are valid on voter registration forms, a view confirmed by the Attorney General, and we commend the Mayor and City Council for adopting this approach in an effective way to stimulate greater voter participation. We urge the New York City Board of Elections to act quickly to help implement the law,” said **Alan Rothstein, Interim Executive Director of Citizens Union**.

"At a time when voting rights throughout the country are under attack and our state continues to produce some of the lowest voter participation rates in the nation, our elected leaders need to stand up and make it easier for eligible New Yorkers to vote and be heard. The Mayor and City Council are now taking a major step forward, by enabling all residents who are eligible to vote to register online rather than through an antiquated mail-in process, and they should be applauded. We urge our leaders in Albany to build on these efforts and take voter registration modernization statewide,” said **Chisun Lee, Senior Counsel, the Brennan Center for Justice**.

"Reinvent Albany commends Mayor de Blasio, Councilmember Kallos, Attorney General Schneiderman and the Campaign Finance Board for advancing this legislation," said **Alex Camarda, Senior Policy Advisor for Reinvent Albany**. "Reinvent Albany strongly supports using technology to make voter registration easier, and the portal created by this legislation will make voter registration more seamless. We call on the City Board of Elections to accept digitally signed voter registration forms and support a 21st century voter registration system."

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