



The New York Voting Rights Act

“Your vote is precious, almost sacred. It is the most powerful nonviolent tool we have to create a more perfect union.”

– U.S. REPRESENTATIVE JOHN R. LEWIS

The John R. Lewis Voting Rights Act of New York (NYVRA) is a landmark law that advances voting rights and helps ensure free and fair elections for all New York voters.

How does the NYVRA protect the right to vote?

The NYVRA **prohibits practices** that harm New Yorkers’ voting rights. These practices include:

- **voter suppression** (making it harder for voters to cast their ballots)
- **vote dilution** (weakening the voting power of a group, including through the system used to elect representatives)
- **voter obstruction** (such as interfering with voting or voters’ access to the polls)
- **voter intimidation and deception** (such as threatening voters or giving them false information about voting or elections)

The NYVRA also **places new requirements** on local jurisdictions in New York, such as counties, cities, towns, villages, and school districts:

- Some local jurisdictions are subject to the new preclearance requirement described in the following section.
- Beginning June 20, 2025, some local jurisdictions are required to expand support for voters with limited English proficiency by providing language assistance. This support could include translating ballots and voter-registration materials.

What is preclearance?

To help prevent harm to voters in New York communities with a history of violating voting or civil rights, arresting certain groups at higher rates, or having highly segregated neighborhoods, the NYVRA establishes a process known as preclearance.

Preclearance requires local officials to obtain preapproval from the Office of the New York State Attorney General (OAG) or a state court before they can make certain election and voting-related changes.

Preclearance is important because it stops harmful policies from being put into practice before they affect voters.

How does preclearance work?

Under the NYVRA, certain local jurisdictions must request preclearance before making changes. These jurisdictions are known as “covered entities.”



[View covered entities](#)

Before a covered entity can implement a change, like moving a poll site or limiting voting hours, it must submit a proposal to OAG (to get administrative preclearance) or a state court (to get judicial preclearance).



[View covered policies](#)

How the administrative preclearance process works:



1 A jurisdiction submits its proposed change to OAG. The proposal is published on the NYVRA Portal.



2 The public has an opportunity to provide feedback on the proposed change. Individuals and groups can comment on how a proposed change will affect voting and elections in a specific community.



3 The OAG reviews the submission and comments from the public. It determines if the proposed change is permitted under the NYVRA.



4 The OAG publishes its determination.

If OAG grants preclearance, the jurisdiction can make the change.

If OAG denies preclearance, the jurisdiction cannot make the change but may appeal the denial in state court.

How can I get involved?

We want to hear from you! Public comments on preclearance submissions give us important information about how a change could help or harm voters.

Visit our NYVRA Portal to view submissions and make comments.



Visit NYVRA Portal

Learn more about the NYVRA.



Learn about NYVRA

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View key voting dates and resources.



View voting resources

If you have any questions regarding preclearance, contact:

votingrights@ag.ny.gov

Experiencing problems voting? Visit ag.ny.gov/voter-complaint or call 1-212-416-9818.