



May 2, 2022

Submitted via email

Kathy C. Hochul
Governor, State of New York

Andrea Stewart-Cousins
Majority Leader, New York State Senate

Carl Heastie
Speaker, New York State Assembly

Robert Ort
Minority Leader, New York State Senate

William A. Barclay
Minority Leader, New York State Assembly

Re: Move all June elections to August to coincide with court-mandated primaries

Dear Governor Hochul and legislative leaders,

In light of the New York State Court of Appeals' decision to invalidate Congressional and State Senate district lines, we urge you to postpone all June 2022 elections to August 23, so that they will coincide with the court-mandated primary elections for Congress and State Senate. Currently, the court decision leaves in place primary elections for Statewide offices, State Assembly, judicial offices, and elections for party positions. The decision on whether to change the June primary was left to the legislature to make.

Splitting primary elections between June and August will be absolutely detrimental to voter turnout and unnecessarily increase administrative burdens and costs on local boards of elections. New York consolidated its primary elections in 2019 precisely for those reasons. That reform, which was passed under the leadership of the Senate Majority Leader and the Assembly Speaker, led to higher primary turnouts and a more effective election administration.

Splitting primary elections will also confuse voters. Having two separate elections for the two houses of the legislature will be especially confounding, and unprecedented. Elections in redistricting years are fraught enough, with many voters finding it challenging to know in what districts they are located.

Consolidating the 2022 primary elections would minimize the impact of the Court's ruling on voters, candidates, and election officials and would provide some stability to the current electoral cycle.

Changing the political calendar requires swift legislative action due to legal deadlines and administrative constraints. We urge you to prioritize such legislation in the next few days.

Sincerely,

Betsy Gotbaum
Executive Director
Citizens Union

Laura Ladd Bierman
Executive Director
League of Women Voters of New York State