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## MEMORANDUM OF SUPPORT

### [Resolution No. 189-A 2024 \(Ung\)](#)

**Resolution calling on the New York State Legislature to pass, and the voters to approve, an amendment to the New York State Constitution to move New York City elections to even-numbered years.**

The organizations signed below express their support for New York City Council Resolution 189-A-2024, which calls on the State Legislature to pass legislation that would move New York City's municipal elections from odd-numbered years to even-numbered years.

New York City has suffered from [very low voter participation rates](#) in local elections for several decades, with the last City election reaching a historic low of only 23% voter turnout. Our off-year election cycle not only depresses turnout but also leads to unrepresentative electorates: the voting population is older, whiter, and wealthier than the overall population of New York City. [Studies](#) comparing odd- and even-numbered year elections [consistently show](#) that racial and age-based turnout gaps are higher in local elections than in even-year presidential and gubernatorial elections.

Aligning the timing of our municipal elections with high-profile, high-turnout federal or statewide elections would dramatically boost voter turnout for local offices, from mayor to council districts. It would also [reduce the gaps](#) in participation, particularly among young voters and voters of color. And it would save the city tens of millions of dollars a year, [according to the Independent Budget Office](#).

Other cities that have made this shift [have seen](#) voter participation in local elections double or triple, and their voting population has become more reflective of the city. It has been successfully implemented in municipalities using Ranked Choice Voting, like San Francisco and Oakland; cities with closed-primary systems, like Baltimore; and large and diverse cities like Los Angeles. Over 100 municipalities and several states have moved local elections "on cycle" over the last decade in an effort to combat low turnout.

New York State has also moved to align local elections with federal and statewide elections by passing Chapter 741/2023, which moved county and town elections to even years. Moving New York City's elections would require lawmakers to pass a constitutional amendment, which voters will then need to approve. Such legislation has the support of [Governor Hochul](#) and [dozens](#) of voting rights, disability rights, civic, and community groups. Importantly, New York City voters [support this policy](#) with nearly three-to-one approval rates regardless of age, race and ethnicity, education, or party affiliation.

Therefore, changing New York City's election calendar would be a long process that would only go into effect in the next decade, at the earliest. This gradual, long-term implementation process provides

ample time for lawmakers, election officials, civic groups, and the public to prepare for the new election calendar with necessary administrative and educational measures.

New York City must act to stop the decades-long downward spiral in voter participation in our municipal elections and move to an election calendar that gives more New Yorkers a voice in who runs their government. We urge the New York City Council to pass Resolution 189-2024.

Sincerely,

Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund (AALDF)

Brennan Center for Justice at NYU School of Law

Brooklyn Voters Alliance

Citizen Action of NY

Citizens Union

Common Cause/NY

Disabled In Action of Metropolitan NY

Downstate New York ADAPT

El Puente de Williamsburg

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