

# Unite NY Calls for Open Primaries in New York State

*Miniscule Primary Voter Turnout Demonstrates a Glaring Need for Democracy to Be Open to all Voters*

ALBANY, NY, UNITED STATES, June 29, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Albany, NY – Abysmal voter turnout in last week's primary elections clearly demonstrates the need for election reform and [Unite NY](#) has been joined by entrepreneur and 2018 Libertarian candidate for Governor Larry Sharpe in calling on both the Democratic and Republican parties to open their primary processes to give more New Yorkers a greater say at the ballot box.

Last week the four largest cities across Upstate New York held contested democratic primaries for mayor and voter turnout was extremely low, with

only 13 to 26 percent of registered democrats turning out to decide who will lead their cities. In Albany, Kathy Sheehan garnered a measly 3,600 votes in a city of nearly 100,000 people. The current leader in the Syracuse race attracted just over 2,700 votes, while total Democratic Party primary turnout in Rochester and Buffalo was 20 and 26 percent, respectively.

Given that these cities heavily favor Democrats, the primary often serves as the de facto election, meaning in a city like Buffalo where there is no general election opposition, only 7 percent of eligible voters will have cast a ballot for the likely incoming mayor.

Unite NY Founder Martin Babinec said, "Voter engagement is a vital part of giving people a voice and breaking the grip our current two-party system has by being tilted towards party bosses with restrictions that shut out competition in the electoral process. The fact of the matter is that people aren't turning out to vote because they don't feel like they have a choice or a voice in our



Unite NY Logo

current electoral process. That is precisely why we need reforms like open primaries, ranked choice voting, and initiative and referendum so that we can put the power of government back where it belongs, in the hands of the people.”

2018 Libertarian candidate for Governor Larry Sharpe said, “Closed primaries are the number one reason why New Yorkers feel trapped, feel powerless and then check-out. This is proven by the embarrassingly low primary voter turnout this year, after record voter turnout last year. The system is allowing the status quo to facilitate our statewide decay.”



Larry Sharpe, Entrepreneur and 2018 Libertarian candidate for Governor of New York

Unite NY is the new political home for independent and moderate voters in New York and is strongly supporting a host of electoral reforms that will take power away from party bosses and put it back in the hands of the people. One of those reforms, Ranked Choice Voting was used in New York City and was extremely

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*Larry Sharpe*

successful, driving more than 135,000 more New Yorkers to the polls than at the last open mayoral primary in 2013. That increase in voter participation is larger than the entire population of the Cities of Utica and Schenectady COMBINED.

New York is one of only 9 states that still uses a completely closed primary system, effectively disenfranchising more than three and half million voters in the state who are not enrolled in any political party. The need is even more dire since last year. Under the auspices of a COVID relief bill, five of New York’s seven minor parties lost ballot status,

leaving half a million people without a party.

The action Unite NY is calling for does not require legislation, rather, both parties could simply change their rules to allow more New Yorkers to participate in the electoral process.

About Unite NY: Unite NY is a new political home in New York State for Republicans, Democrats, conservatives, liberals, independents, and others to come together to seek common sense

solutions. This new movement offers a home to more than 3.5 million New York voters not currently enrolled in a major party. Focused on a non-partisan approach to fixing real problems in our government, democracy, and economy, Unite NY supports candidates who understand working together is the only way we can succeed. Further, in 2022, Unite NY seeks to establish a ballot line by running a candidate for Governor to help fill the void created by our loss of 5 of the 7 minor parties previously holding statewide ballot access now eliminated from voter choice as the result of 2020 legislation which tripled the qualification hurdles needed to qualify as a minor party. More information is available at: [UniteNY.org](https://UniteNY.org)



Martin Babinec, Founder, Unite NY

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