

**Reinvent Albany**  
**Analysis of FY 2019-2020 State Budget Proposals Related to Voting**  
**March 25, 2019**



Component	Executive Budget	Assembly	Senate	Reinvent Albany Position/Comment
<p><b>Electronic poll books</b></p>	<p><a href="#">Part N of Good Government and Ethics</a> budget bill allows for electronic poll books to be used in place of paper registration records when checking in voters on Election Day. The Board of Elections is required to establish minimum security standards for technology used and create an approved list of devices.</p> <p>The bill amends law regarding election procedures to integrate the use of electronic poll books for preparing registration records, entering a voter’s party registration, approving signatures, challenging voter registration, filing reports on challenges, assisting voters with disabilities, concealing facsimile signatures, recording changes in name or address, and processing special federal voters and votes by court order. The law is set to take effect on January 1st following the date of its passage.</p>	<p>The Assembly budget bill is very similar to the executive proposal, with the following changes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Requires SBOE to promulgate procedures ensuring registration records are available in case electronic poll books cease to function (38-C).</li> <li>-In §11, modifies Chapter 6 of the Laws of 2019 so that the legislation is consistent with recent changes in elections law.</li> <li>-Takes effect immediately provided that amendments to Election Law 8-302(3)(e)(ii), which involve technical changes to affidavit ballot procedures, take place on the same date.</li> </ul>	<p>The Senate <a href="#">budget resolution</a> states, “The Senate modifies the Executive proposal authorizing the use of electronic poll books. The Senate has already passed this proposal and believes it should be enacted into law.”</p> <p>The bill referenced by the Senate budget resolution is <a href="#">Sen. Myrie’s bill</a> (S.508-A), which recently passed in the Senate, and is identical to the Assembly’s proposal.</p>	<p><b>Reinvent Albany supports legislation providing for electronic poll books, which will ensure more accurate voting records and ease the implementation of early voting.</b></p> <p>Reinvent Albany believes the Board of Elections should be required, when approving devices, to consider how well devices can reflect handwritten signatures provided on voter registration forms, as too great a disparity may prevent a voter from being allowed to cast their ballot if their eligibility is challenged. We also believe registration records should be made available in case poll books malfunction, as provided in the Senate’s and Assembly’s proposals.</p>

<b>Funding for voting reforms (not including SBOE operations)</b>	\$0.	\$34 Million total, with \$27 million for electronic poll books and \$7 million for “early voting and other voting reforms.” The budget summary states under Aid to Localities: “The Assembly provides \$27 million in grants to counties for the costs of purchasing electronic poll books and on demand ballot printers to support the implementation of early voting.” It adds under Capital Projects: “The Assembly provides \$7 million to offset county costs associated with early voting and other voting reforms that were enacted into law in January 2019.”	\$10 Million for “early voting and other voting reforms.” The budget resolution under Aid to Localities (S.1503-B) states: “The Senate provides \$10 million in funding for early voting and other voting reforms.” It’s possible that this is intended to include electronic poll books, but the funds would fall well short of what is needed.	<b>Reinvent Albany supports adequately funding early voting and electronic poll books.</b>  We support the Assembly’s proposal on e-poll books because it is the only one adequate to the costs of e-poll books. The lowest estimate available, from <a href="#">a report by Citizens Union</a> , is \$14.9 million for implementing e-poll books statewide. The Election Commissioners Association, however, believes that implementation could cost between \$31 and \$43 million (see testimonies by Commissioners <a href="#">Darlene Harris</a> and <a href="#">Dustin Czarny</a> ). None of the proposals are likely sufficient to fund early voting, which CU estimates will cost \$12.5 million in the first year.
<b>SBOE operations</b>	\$11.56 Million. The release of \$6.1 million is contingent on the passage of campaign finance reforms. Of those funds, \$1.5 million is dedicated to overseeing receipts, expenditures, and compliance in a public campaign finance	\$14.64 Million (adds 3.09 million to the Executive Budget). From <a href="#">budget summary</a> under State Operations: “The Assembly provides \$14.64 million, an increase of \$3.09 million to maintain current operations at the State Board of Elections ... The	\$14.56 Million (adds \$3 million to Executive Budget). <a href="#">From budget resolution</a> under Aid to Localities (S.1503-B): “The Senate modifies the Executive All Funds recommendation of \$11.56 million as follows: - Provides \$3 million in additional	In addition to funding early voting and electronic poll books, <b>Reinvent Albany supports funding the State Board of Elections so it can encourage compliance and adequately enforce Election Law.</b>

	system, and \$4.6 to regulating an elections program.	Assembly does not include an Executive proposal to make the release of \$6.1 million of operating funds contingent on the passage of various campaign finance reforms.”	operating funds for the agency.”	This includes continuing to modernize its CAPAS (Candidate Petition Administration System) and FIDAS (Financial Disclosure Administration System) to make campaign finance reporting easy and publicly accessible. The Board is facing a \$3 million cut in the Executive Budget. Without those funds, the SBOE will not be able to continue with modernizing its technology.
<b>All funds for elections-related proposals</b>	\$11.56 Million.	\$48.65 Million. “The Assembly provides an All Funds appropriation of \$48.65 million, an increase of \$37.09 million over the Executive proposal.”	\$24.56 Million.	<p><b>Reinvent Albany supports a budget allocation of \$58.1 million</b>, with \$14.6 million dedicated to costs for the Board of Elections (as recommended by the Assembly), \$31 million for implementation of electronic poll books (the most conservative estimate of the ECA), and \$12.5 million for early voting reforms (as recommended by Citizens Union).</p> <p>The additional funding in the Assembly’s and Senate’s one-house budgets will be essential for implementing the many voting reforms being passed this year. Lawmakers</p>

				should not hold back in delivering the proper funding to these efforts—many of them will save costs in coming election cycles, and underfunding could lead to poor implementation and ultimately endanger the reforms.
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