



MEMO OF SUPPORT

S617 (Myrie)

Mandates Training for NY Local Elections Commissioners and Key Staff

December 1, 2023

TITLE OF BILL

An act to amend the election law, in relation to mandatory training curriculum for election commissioners and key staff of boards of elections.

SUMMARY OF PROVISIONS

Section 1 adds a new §3-213 to Election Law to provide that county elections commissioners and other key staff shall complete a training course within six months of their first appointment, then annually thereafter. The curriculum shall be established by the state board, in consultation with county commissioners. It shall not exceed 30 hours for the first training, and 3 hours for subsequent annual trainings. The state board shall provide the training and may do so in a recorded online seminar. When county commissioners fail to comply, the state board shall send a letter to the local legislature and county party chair notifying them of the delinquency.

Section 2 states that the bill takes effect 180 days after being signed into law.

STATEMENT OF SUPPORT

Reinvent Albany supports this legislation because we believe it will result in better-run elections in New York State.

NY boards of election are [notorious patronage mills](#), and local boards in particular are often staffed and run by unqualified members of county political parties. The consequences of this were on full display in November 2020, when incompetence at the Oneida County Board of Elections led to a race not being decided until February 2021 – [the last](#) of 435 seats in the U.S. House of Representatives to be called. Eventually, both Oneida County commissioners [resigned](#).

Requiring commissioners and top staff to complete training will ensure that, at a minimum, county BOE leadership knows the basics of elections administration. We urge the Legislature to pass the bill, and the Governor to sign it.