



The Honorable Kathy Hochul
Governor of New York State
Via Email

12/02/2025

Re: Urging Signature of S590A (Krueger)/A3665A (Simone) – Ending Mayoral Referenda
“Bumping” Power

Dear Governor Hochul,

We write to urge you to sign S590A (Krueger)/A3665A (Simone) into law. This legislation repeals the provisions of the Municipal Home Rule Law that allow mayors across the state to prevent local referendum questions from appearing on the ballot by establishing a charter revision commission – commonly known as “bumping.”

The mayoral ability to block referenda questions was established in the 1960s as a temporary solution to a specific political conflict in New York City. However, its application is statewide, and we believe it was not intended to grant mayors the unlimited power to control what gets on and off the ballot.

In reality, however, mayors have used this power to block proposals brought by both citizen-led petitions and city council-established charter commissions simply because they disagreed with them politically.

This gamesmanship is undemocratic, contributes to voter cynicism, adds confusion, and favors the executive over its co-equal branch of government and public ballot initiatives. Instead of fostering collaboration between the different branches for the public interest, this authority incentivizes the abuse of power to gain political wins and raises practical obstacles to the public getting items on the ballot directly.

This bill ensures the charter revision process serves the public, and restores that basic democratic notion of equal access to the ballot, which is intended to allow New York’s cities to change and evolve in response to ideas from more than just one office holder.

We believe this bill is an opportunity for you to foster more democracy and empower the public during a time when law and liberty is being threatened from coast to coast. Thank you for your consideration and please sign S590A/A3665A into law.

Sincerely,

Grace Rauh,
Executive Director
Citizens Union

John Kaehny,
Executive Director
Reinvent Albany

Susan Lerner,
Executive Director
Common Cause/NY

Michael Sisitzky,
Assistant Policy Director
New York Civil Liberties Union (NYCLU)

Murad Awawdeh,
President & CEO
New York Immigration Coalition

David Siffert,
Legal Director
Surveillance Technology Oversight Project