

NEW YORK STATE

PRIMARY ELECTION GUIDE

OVERVIEW

New Yorkers face a lot of big, local political choices this year, many of which will come up on primary day [Thursday, September 13](#). It is critical that we all participate in these consequential decisions.

From immigration and net neutrality to the future of transportation and promoting tech literacy, New York lawmakers will address a lot of important topics in the coming years. Our community cares about these consequential policy issues—both because they impact our members' bottom lines and, just as importantly, because they directly impact our state's ability to thrive and ensure that all New Yorkers have a chance to benefit from the growing tech ecosystem. While differences may always exist between voters, we must universally agree that apathy is not an option. For the sake of attracting talent, creating growth, and having an impact, it's imperative we all get involved in the process.

In the following pages, you'll find information on how to register and vote, the importance of primaries and New York's historical struggles to turn out the vote, what to do if you've missed any dates, as well as the key races and candidates featured in this year's election.

NEW YORK STATE'S LOW TURNOUT

29%

During New York's previous general state election, voter turnout was incredibly low. In all, only [29 percent of eligible voters](#) cast ballots, giving New York the third lowest turnout in the United States that year!

In the 2016 Presidential Election, New Yorkers once again showed up in embarrassingly low numbers — with only [57 percent of eligible voters](#) making it out to the polls. Only seven states had worse showings.

Such low numbers are largely a reflection of New York State's draconian voting policies. Despite billing itself as the most progressive state in America, the truth is several barriers to participation still exist in New York. These include the facts that automatic voter registration does not exist, early voting is not permitted, absentee ballot requests must be submitted in paper form, and that there is no same day registration. To read more about proposals to fix voting in New York State, head [here](#) or [here](#).

HOW AND WHERE TO VOTE

In order to vote in this year's primaries, you must have registered by August 24, 2018. If you registered to vote in past elections—federal, state, or local—you should be all set.

To [check your registration status and to see where you are supposed to vote](#), head over to the New York State Board of Elections [portal](#).

[This year's primary elections are on September 13](#) and you've got a whole 15 hours to make it happen! Polling sites in New York City will be open from 6am to 9p.

FORGOT TO REGISTER?

If you did not register in time for the primary, make sure to register as soon as possible for the general election on November 6. This date will also include the all-important midterm elections for Congress. To register, be sure to send in your [forms](#) by October 12.

TAKING VOTING SELFIES

Unfortunately, you [cannot](#) take a selfie while voting — making voting booths some of the only selfie-free locations in the city. If you are looking for respite from hoards of selfie snapping tourists, then head out to vote!

For those ardent selfie snapping voters out there, fret not because you can still take pictures afterwards wearing your chic “[I Voted Sticker](#).” Be sure to post on social media letting your friends know you voted and that they should too. [\(ICYMI: voting in state primaries is probably one of the coolest things you can do 🕶\)](#)

OFFICES UP FOR ELECTION

Next week’s primary will allow New Yorkers to vote for party nominees across several races ahead of November’s general election. These include governor, lieutenant governor, attorney general, comptroller, and members of the state senate and assembly. The list goes on, and while some offices carry more visibility than others, the truth is all of these positions are incredibly important. These officials have the power to impact the day-to-day lives of New Yorkers and the state’s business environment. Below we outline each office holder’s role and their potential impact on the tech community.



[Governor](#)



[Lt. Governor](#)



[Attorney General](#)



[State Senate](#)



[State Assembly](#)



Governor

Duties: The head of the executive branch and the highest ranking elected official in the state. The governor has the final say in state legislation, is in charge of state government agencies, and proposes the state budget each year. The state budget for the previous fiscal year was \$168.3 billion. This budget greatly impacts public services, the progress of infrastructure development, public safety, and general government agency operations.

Importance to tech: The governor can play a major role in setting the stage for tech development throughout the state. The governor often drives economic development initiatives and the adoption of innovative technologies within government agencies. The governor also has a lot of control over the direction and management of our state's transit systems. A well-functioning transit system is integral to the tech community and vital for attracting the best talent to our state.

This year's race: In the Democratic Primary, there are two candidates competing: [Andrew Cuomo](#) and [Cynthia Nixon](#). There is no Republican Primary for governor, with [Marc Molinaro](#) having already secured the nomination.



Lieutenant Governor

Duties: The second ranking officer in the executive branch. The lieutenant governor is the president of the state senate and can cast a vote to break a tie in the body. The lieutenant governor is also in charge of the executive branch upon the governor's absence from the state, and succeeds the governor in the event of death, resignation, or impeachment. Traditionally, the lieutenant governor has been a key advocate for the governor's agenda and works in a supportive manner. However, there is nothing in the state constitution requiring the lieutenant governor to act in such a way.

Importance to tech: Many lieutenant governors have taken on duties and goals assigned to them by the governor. In New York this has historically included fostering business development and innovation. From their prominent position, the lieutenant governor can also advocate for issues relevant to the tech community, something they will likely do in the years to come.

This year's race: In the Democratic Primary, there are two candidates competing: [Kathy Hochul](#) and [Jumaane Williams](#). There is no Republican Primary for lieutenant governor, with [Julie Killian](#) having already secured the nomination.



Attorney General

Duties: The head legal officer in the state in charge of overseeing the government's law department. The attorney general is tasked with protecting state business affairs (including consumers, wage-earners, business, and investors), public health, the environment, civil rights, and more.

Importance to tech: The attorney general carries a lot of influence on New York's tech scene. From patent law to regulatory precedent, the office plays a major role deciding the tone and scope of our state's tech policy. Tech:NYC recently partnered with WeWork and Axios to host an [Attorney General Forum on Tech](#) where the candidates running for the democratic nomination discussed their positions on all things tech.

This year's race: In the Democratic Primary there are four candidates: [Tish James](#), [Zephyr Teachout](#), [Sean Patrick Maloney](#), and [Leecia Eve](#). There is no Republican Primary for Attorney General, with [Keith Wofford](#) having already secured the nomination.



State Legislature

Duties: There are two chambers in the state legislature: the Senate and the Assembly. The Senate is higher chamber and the Assembly is the lower chamber. The legislature is responsible for creating laws, raising/lowering taxes, negotiating the state budget, and much more. State legislators also offer services to help constituents navigate government services.



Importance to tech: The state legislature can propose laws that impact innovation and business operations in the state. In the last session, the legislature expressed interest in a wide range of tech issues, a few being: cryptocurrency, cybersecurity, encryption, telehealth, and privacy.

This year's race: There are 63 seats in the Senate. All of these seats are up for election this year. Last session, Republicans maintained control of the senate through a power-sharing agreement with a group of Democrats. This independent group of Democrats rejoined the mainline Democratic caucus late in the session, resulting in a virtual tie and gridlock in the body. These eight Democrats are now facing primary challenges. In addition to these challenges, there are another three Democratic primaries to watch. In the Republican Primary, the lone competitive race is in [District 8](#). Make sure to [check](#) your Senate district and check [here](#) and [here](#) to learn more about which races are competitive.

There are 150 seats in the Assembly. All of the seats are up for election this year. There are about 30 contested elections on the Democratic side and under 10 contested elections on the Republican side. To see more about the individual races, click [here](#).

The State Assembly is a Democratic stronghold and will likely remain so after this year's general election. Many are predicting that there will be a Democratic wave in the general election for State Senate. This potential wave coupled with the end of the independent Democrats would result in a Democratic majority in the Senate, which has only happened twice since the second World War. It would also mean there is a high likelihood for the executive branch and both chambers of the legislature to be ruled by the same party.

FURTHER RESOURCES

- [NY1 Election Center](#)
- [Curbed Election Guide](#)
- [A Preview of Your Ballot](#)