File #:	Res 1377-2020	**Version:** *	**Name:**	Allow eligible voters to request an absentee ballot if they are concerned that voting in person during a pandemic or state of emergency could expose themselves or others to a public health risk. (A.10271/S.8015-A)	
Type:	Resolution		**Status:**	Filed (End of Session)	
			In control:	Committee on Governmental Operations	
On agenda:	7/28/2020				
Enactment date:			**Enactment #:**		
Title:	Resolution calling on the New York State Legislature to pass and the Governor to sign A.10271/S.8015-A, which would allow eligible voters to request an absentee ballot if they are concerned that voting in person during a pandemic or state of emergency could expose themselves or others to a public health risk.				
Sponsors:	Public Advocate Jumaane Williams, Margaret S. Chin				
Indexes:					
Attachments:	1. Res. No. 1377, 2. July 28, 2020 - Stated Meeting Agenda with Links to Files, 3. Hearing Transcript - Stated Meeting 7-28-20, 4. Minutes of the Stated Meeting - July 28, 2020				

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
7/28/2020	*	City Council	Introduced by Council	
7/28/2020	*	City Council	Referred to Comm by Council	
12/31/2021	*	City Council	Filed (End of Session)	

Res. No. 1377

Resolution calling on the New York State Legislature to pass and the Governor to sign A.10271/S.8015-A, which would allow eligible voters to request an absentee ballot if they are concerned that voting in person during a pandemic or state of emergency could expose themselves or others to a public health risk.

By The Public Advocate (Mr. Williams) and Council Member Chin

Whereas, During these unprecedented times of the Coronavirus ("COVID-19") global pandemic, the United States has been promoting social-distancing and banning public gatherings in order to promote public safety; and

Whereas, Numerous states in the union have postponed or cancelled primaries in response to the COVID-19 pandemic; and

Whereas, These states include, but are not limited to; New York, Connecticut, Kentucky, New Jersey,

and Pennsylvania; and

Whereas, In order to prevent such postponements in New York State elections, the State should broaden its use of absentee ballots to include cases when a state of emergency has been issued due to a communicable disease; and

Whereas, According to the United States Centers for Disease Control, the elderly and people with existing health conditions like heart disease, lung disease, or diabetes are at greater risk of serious illness or death if they contract COVID-19; and

Whereas, Voters, especially those deemed as high-risk individuals who are trying to limit their potential exposure or others' exposure to a communicable disease, should not have to decide between protecting their health and exercising their civic duty; and

Whereas, Currently, New York State's law permits the request of an absentee ballot if an individual: (i) will be absent from their county of residence or New York City on the day of the election; (ii) are unable to appear at the polling place due to illness, physical disability, or care-taking responsibilities for someone who is ill or disabled; (iii) are a resident or patient at a veteran health administration hospital; or (iv) are currently being held in jail; and

Whereas, These restrictive criteria do not accommodate individuals who are concerned that voting in-person would pose risk to their own or others' health; and

Whereas, A.10271, introduced by New York State Assemblymember Michael Blake, and S.8015-A, introduced by New York State Senator Alessandra Biaggi, seek to amend the New York State Election Law ("Election Law") by allowing voters who are concerned about voting in-person due to an ongoing public health risk to request an absentee ballot; and

Whereas, A.10271/S.8015-A would amend the definition of "illness" in the Election Law to include the spread or potential spread of any communicable disease during a declared state of emergency; and

Whereas, A.10271/S.8015-A would help ensure that voters feel secure performing their civic duty and

create a safer social environment for all individuals; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls on the New York State Legislature to pass and the Governor to sign A.10271/S.8015-A, which would allow eligible voters to request an absentee ballot if they are concerned that voting in person during a pandemic or state of emergency could expose themselves or others to a public health risk.

WJH
LS 14457
4/15/20