

1 **DEMOCRATIZE BALLOT ACCESS IN NEW YORK ELECTIONS**

2 Whereas, voter turnout in New York elections on state and local levels is among the
3 lowest of all states, particularly among young voters, minority voters, voters with lower
4 educational achievement and naturalized citizens,ⁱ and the state ranked dead last among states in
5 the 2010 mid-term election;ⁱⁱ and

6 Whereas, low voter turnout by voting district is highly correlated with the incidence of
7 low-income, impoverished and minority households, and this is especially the case in off-year
8 and mid-term elections, resulting in elections tilted in favor of candidates supported by older,
9 non-minority and higher-income voters; and

10 Whereas, the consequence of the asymmetry in voter participation and turnout among
11 groups with these characteristics has resulted in the election of fewer pro-labor, progressive
12 candidates who will pursue legislation beneficial to working class and minority constituencies;
13 and

14 Whereas, improving low voter turnout among these groups in New York is hindered by
15 the absence of election rules and procedures which would improve access, including early
16 voting, voting by mail, and same-day registration; and

17 Whereas, since the recent decision of the Supreme Court overturning sections of the
18 Voting Rights Act, legislatures of various states have succeeded in repealing or limiting
19 measures that facilitate voting, such as early voting and voting by mail, and imposing measures
20 that hinder voting, such as requiring voters to produce a valid photo ID; and

21 Whereas, the absence of these measures in states such as New York has been used in
22 court cases in states such as North Carolina as a rationale for eliminating same-day registration
23 and limiting early voting; therefore be it

24 **RESOLVED, that NYSUT join in a campaign for voting rights reform in New York**
25 **City and State that would have the effect of maximizing voter turnout by allowing for early**
26 **voting, voting by mail, and same-day registration, and by removing other deterrents to**
27 **voting; and be it further**

28 **RESOLVED, that NYSUT join or support organizations committed to improving**
29 **voter participation in New York, including the Professional Staff Congress and the New**
30 **York State Coalition for Voter Participation and Fair Elections (which includes The**
31 **Brennan Center for Justice, Citizen Action, NYPIRG, Common Cause, Citizens Union, the**
32 **League of Women Voters, Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund,**
33 **NAACPLDF, and other voting rights organizations).**ⁱⁱⁱ

ⁱ NYC Campaign Finance Board Voter Assistance Advisory Committee,
http://www.nycctfb.info/PDF/issue_reports/WhoVotes.pdf, (Who Votes? Voter Turnout in New York City:
June 11, 2012).

ⁱⁱ Sam Roberts, “New York State Ranks Last for Voter Turnout,” http://cityroom.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/11/16/new-york-state-ranks-last-for-voter-turnout/?_php=true&_type=blogs&_r=0, (City Room: November 16, 2010).

ⁱⁱⁱ “Campaign Partners,” <http://fairelectionsny.org/campaign-partners/>, (Fair Elections for New York: 2013).