

# Proposal for Constitutional Amendment: Implementing Nonpartisan Elections in New York State

By Ralph Yozzo - Friday, April 11, 2025

## Introduction:

The current electoral system in New York State, dominated by a two -party structure and enshrined within the state constitution, restricts ballot access and perpetuates partisan gatekeeping. This proposal seeks to amend the New York State Constitution to establish a nonpartisan election system, fostering a more inclusive and representative democracy.

## Proposed Amendment:

1. **Constitutional Revision:** Amend the relevant sections of the New York State Constitution to remove references to the two -party dominant commissioner of elections.
2. **Implementation of Nonpartisan Elections:** Replace the current system with a nonpartisan electoral framework. This can be achieved through:
  - A completely nonpartisan system, where all candidates appear on the ballot without party affiliation.
  - An expanded multi -party system, ensuring representation beyond the two dominant parties, potentially including a five -party structure.
3. **Election Administration:** Establish a nonpartisan or multi -partisan electoral commission, replacing the current two -party structure, to administer elections fairly and impartially.

## Objectives:

This amendment aims to achieve the following objectives, as outlined in the New York City Charter Revision Commission's exploration of nonpartisan elections:

- **Broaden Ballot Access:** Ensure that all candidates, regardless of party affiliation, have equal opportunities to compete for public office.
- **Reduce Party Gatekeeping:** Diminish the exclusionary power of political party leaders in the electoral process, promoting a more open and competitive environment.
- **Maintain Party Influence:** Preserve the rights of candidates to associate with political parties outside of the ballot and the rights of parties to endorse

candidates, in accordance with First Amendment protections.

### **Rationale:**

The current two -party system creates barriers to entry for independent and third - party candidates, limiting voter choice and potentially disenfranchising significant portions of the electorate. A nonpartisan or expanded multi -party system would:

- Promote greater electoral competition.
- Increase voter engagement and participation.
- Enhance the responsiveness of elected officials to the needs of all constituents.
- Increase the representation of diverse viewpoints.

### **Supporting References:**

- The general concept of the need for change:  
<https://g.co/gemini/share/0f8b8dc0a258>
- The New York City Charter Revision Commission report, which provides a framework and justification for nonpartisan elections:  
[https://www.nyc.gov/assets/charter/downloads/pdf/nonpartisan\\_elections.pdf](https://www.nyc.gov/assets/charter/downloads/pdf/nonpartisan_elections.pdf)

### **Conclusion:**

This constitutional amendment represents a significant step towards a more democratic and inclusive electoral process in New York State. By removing the constraints of the two -party system, we can create a fairer and more representative government that reflects the diverse needs and interests of all New Yorkers.