

The 2026 New York State Legislative session is underway and here are the results of the Winter 2025 constituent survey. The ideas expressed in the responses will help guide my decisions in Albany and I appreciate your participation and thoughtful responses. It is important to note that the concerns or support raised in the responses may not necessarily reflect language that is in the bill that is being surveyed on. For example, in certain responses some concerns were raised that are actually addressed in the legislation. The responses are the opinions of constituents.

The level of participation this year was lower than previous years; we received 355 total responses including 224 electronic and 131 paper responses. For reference, last year we received 396 responses.

Please keep in mind that your input is always welcome year-round and you should always feel free to reach out to my office with any thoughts or comments.

If you have any questions, or wish to discuss these items further, please feel free to email me at [mcdonaldj@nyassembly.gov](mailto:mcdonaldj@nyassembly.gov) or call my office at 518-455-4474.

Thank You and Happy New Year!

John T. McDonald III, RPh  
Member of Assembly

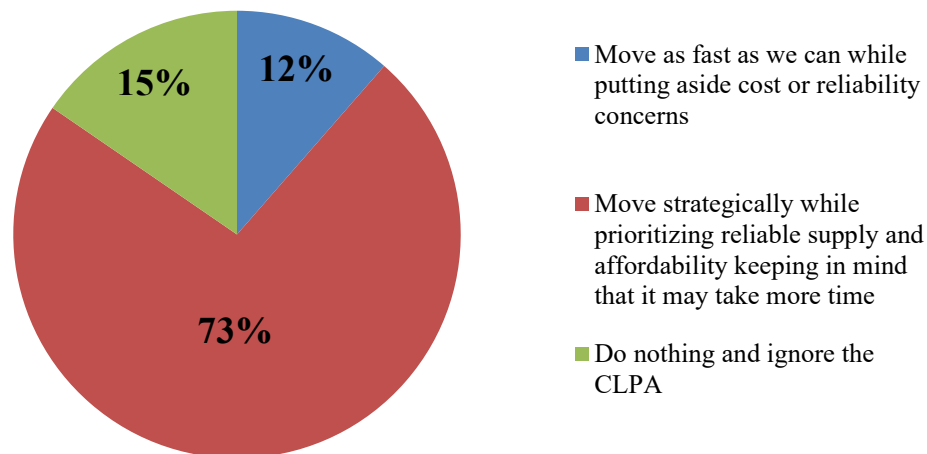
**Question 1:** It is clear that affordability remains a concern for most, I want to know where the State should be prioritizing funding for your family. When considering how to allocate the State's financial resources, what are your three highest priorities for the state budget?

**Out of the 325 constituents that responded to this question, please see below for the three highest budget priorities that came up most often:**

1. Affordable housing options and programs
2. Subsidized healthcare and affordable prescriptions and services
3. Stabilize rising grocery and utility costs

**Question 2:** As we continue to see the impacts of climate change, discussions have been ongoing as to what the next steps are beyond the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act ("CLCPA") that was enacted into law in 2019 and how to fund the objectives of the law. The pandemic and resulting inflation have had major impacts on costs of materials and construction. Considering these new circumstances, there are concerns raised about whether we can adhere to pre-2020 goals and timelines. Concerns have also been raised by some as to which costs will be passed down to consumers (the proposed bills do not require nor specify this), questions around the rebates for low- to moderate-income ratepayers, and general questions as to how the legislation will be implemented in practice, including labor provisions. Understanding that it is not possible to explain the various components of complicated bills, what approach do you think is best to help meet the goals of the CLCPA, as well as shift our energy source from fossil fuel to renewable energy?

**What approach do you think is best to help meet the goals of the CLCPA as well as shift our energy source from fossil fuel to renewable energy?  
(out of 350 constituents)**



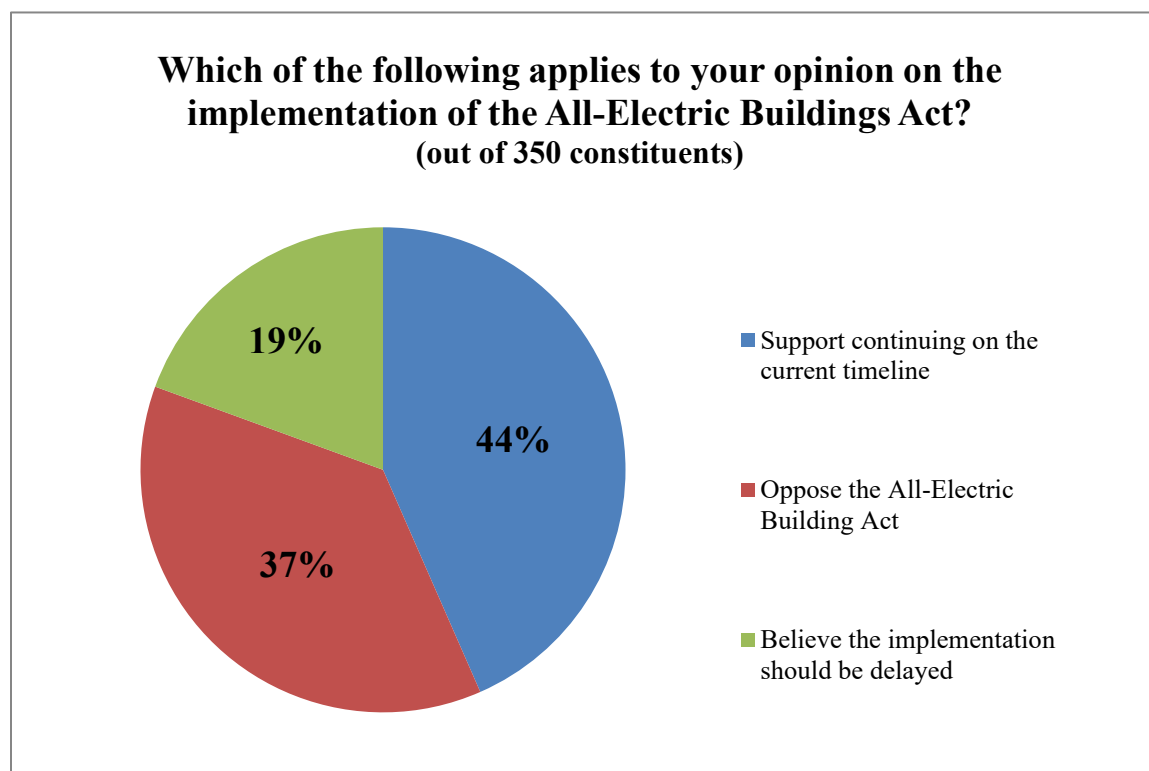
*Among constituents who explained their answer, the most frequently expressed concern about meeting the goals of the CLCPA was the potential financial burden that transitioning from fossil fuels to green energy might have on consumers, including higher electricity rates and the cost of installing and operating technologies such as solar panels and EVs.*

*Other concerns from constituents include concerns about the ability for the grid to handle the additional load and the pace in which implementation should take place.*

**Question 3:** Starting in 2026, most new construction of buildings in New York that are seven stories or less must be built to use electric heat and appliances. This will also apply to larger commercial buildings with 100,000 square feet or more of conditioned floor area (bigger businesses) due to the implementation of the All-Electric Buildings Act. There are various exemptions to the law as well to address concerns that were raised:

- Some industries like restaurants, hospitals and doctors' offices, factories, and agricultural buildings will be automatically exempt from these requirements.
- Existing buildings will not be impacted by these new requirements, even if they're being repaired or renovated. If you build an addition on your house, you can still use gas if you want.
- Existing gas appliances can also be replaced with new gas appliances.
- Waivers will be available for new construction projects if the local utility or municipality can't provide reliable service within a reasonable timeframe.
- People can still use fuel-generated power sources, like emergency generators, as backup and standby power systems.

Which of the following applies to your opinion on the implementation of the All-Electric Buildings Act?

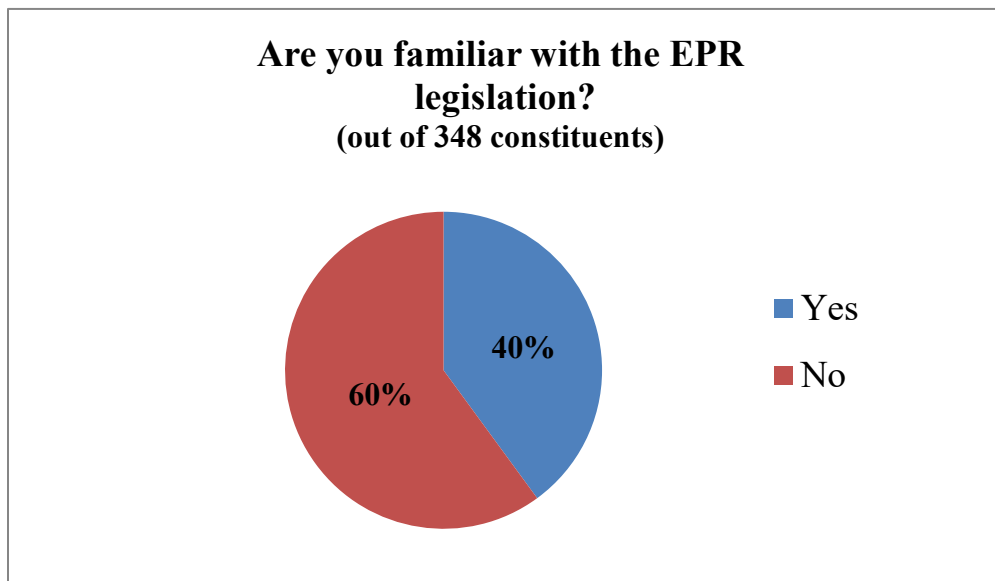


*Constituents who supported continuing the current timeline for the All-Electric Buildings Act referenced the significant benefit to climate change and environmental health. A smaller percentage of individuals supported the Act due to electric appliances being healthier and safer.*

*Those who opposed the implementation or believed that it should be delayed cited the potential increases in electrical and heating costs and reinforced the sentiment that the grid infrastructure may not be able to reliably handle the additional load.*

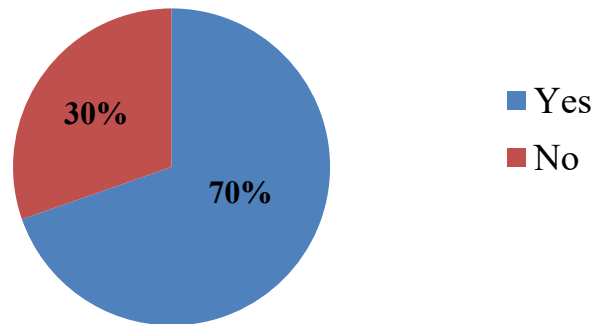
**Question 4:** The Packaging Reduction and Recycling Infrastructure Act (A.1749 Glick) (known as extended producer responsibility or “EPR”) is a proposed environmental bill that would require producers (person or companies that create the products) of consumer packaging and paper products to pay to recycle these materials. Producers are prohibited from selling or distributing any covered materials in New York unless they have an approved producer responsibility plan. The program will also create a funding mechanism to cover the costs of the program or cover the cost of a municipality for participating in the program. The funding program will be structured in a way that includes incentives to reward producers for product designs that reduce waste, increases the recyclability of the product, and removes toxics in packaging. Charges will also be adjusted based on the post-consumer recycled content rate of the covered material.

**Question 4A:** Are you familiar with the EPR legislation?



**Question 4B:** Do you support passing the EPR into law?

**Do you support passing the EPR into law?**  
(out of 336 constituents)



*The three most common arguments in support of EPR were:*

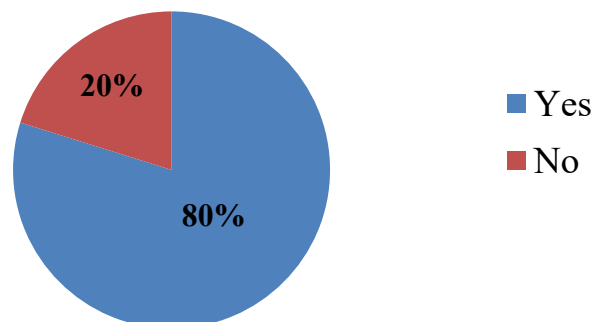
- *The EPR reduces plastic waste, toxins, microplastics, and landfill volume; protects ecosystems and public health*
- *Holds manufacturers accountable for packaging, incentivizes sustainable product design, encourages recycling innovation.*
- *Encourages less packaging, reuse, and recycling, long-term environmental and economic benefits.*

*Those who do not support the passage of EPR into law are concerned about:*

- *Concerns that producer fees will be passed onto customers, raising product prices.*
- *The policy is too complicated and places a regulatory burden on businesses while being difficult to implement statewide.*
- *Believe it is unnecessary regulation or anti-business, especially for small businesses.*

**Question 5:** Expanded bottle bill. There is a proposal for a bill (A.6543 Glick) that would expand the type of beverages eligible for a deposit and redemption under the current Bottle Bill and raise the deposit refund value from five cents to ten cents. The bill also expands the list of eligible items for deposit, including juice, coffee, tea, cider, and expanded wine products. Do you support passing an expanded bottle bill into law?

**Do you support passing an expanded bottle bill into law?**  
(out of 352 constituents)



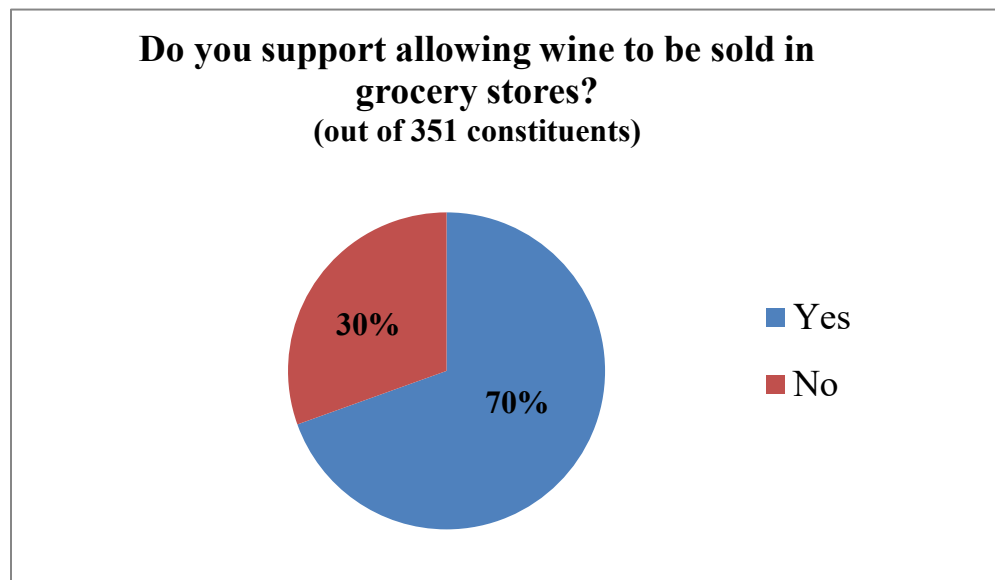
*The three most common arguments in support for the Expanded Bottle Bill include:*

- *Larger deposits and more beverage types encourage consumers to return bottles/cans.*
- *Reduces litter, landfill waste, and increases recovered recyclable materials.*
- *Higher handling fees stabilizes small businesses and provides income opportunities for individuals*

*The two most common arguments in opposition to the Bottle Bill include:*

- *Raising deposits adds upfront expense, hitting low- and middle-income households hardest.*
- *Some fear returnable items still end up in landfills; plastics often not recycled properly.*

**Question 6:** There is a proposal (A.1328-A Hunter) to allow wine to be sold in grocery stores, do you support allowing wine to be sold in grocery stores?



*Among those who supported the sale of wine in grocery stores, the three most common arguments in support were:*

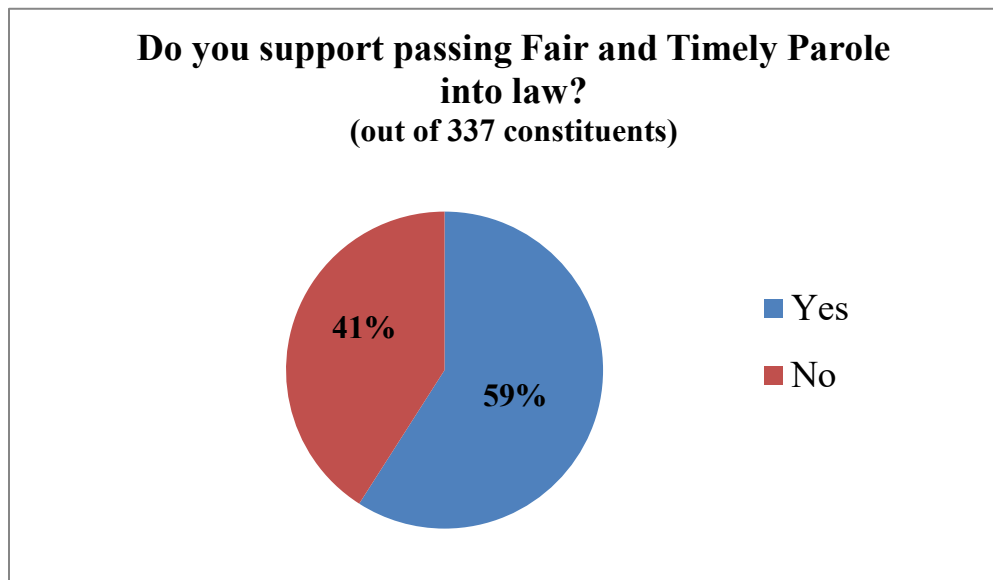
- *The convenience for consumers; the ability to only have to shop at one store.*
- *Most states allow wine in grocery stores; NY is an outlier. Expands consumer choice, increases market competition, may lower prices.*
- *Creates new revenue streams, supports independent grocers, expands visibility for NY wine producers, adds tax revenue.*

*In turn, among those who oppose wine in grocery stores, the three most common concerns expressed were:*

- *Increased competition may reduce sales and put independent/local wine and liquor stores out of business.*
- *Easier access could lead to more minors obtaining alcohol and potential social problems.*

- *Some feel wine should remain in specialty stores; no pressing consumer need, concerns about over-commercialization of alcohol.*

**Question 7:** There is a bill proposed that is referred to as “Fair and Timely Parole.” This bill (A.127 Weprin) would require the Parole Board to release people to community supervision when their minimum period of incarceration has been served unless there is a clearly articulated current public safety reason to keep them in prison. At subsequent board appearances, there would be a presumption of release unless the board determines by a preponderance of evidence that an inmate is unlikely to avoid violating the law and that his or her release poses an unreasonable public safety risk. Do you support passing Fair and Timely Parole into law?

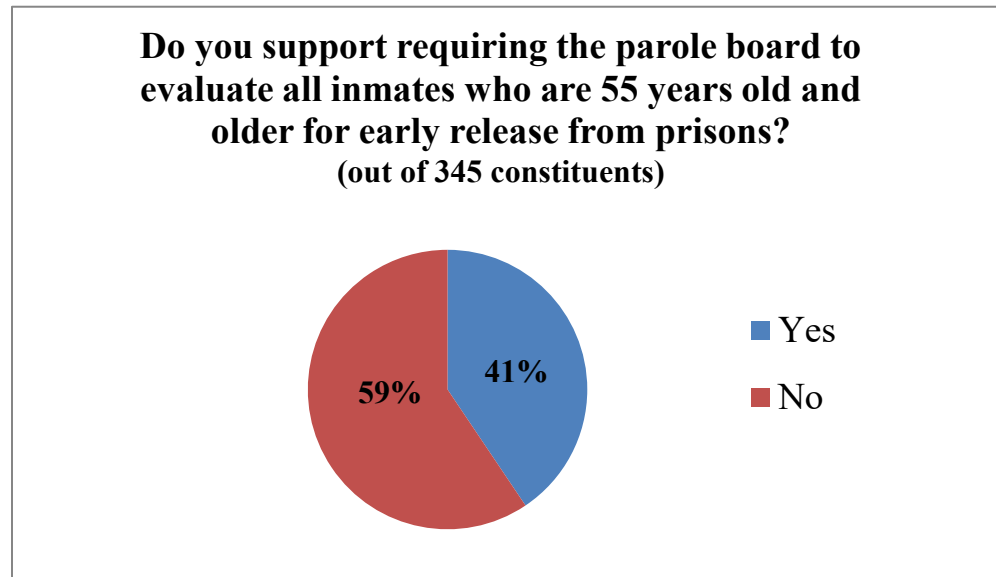


*Those who support the passage of Fair and Timely parole explain that prisoners who have served minimum sentences, particularly for nonviolent offenses, should have a clear path to release. They believe that it would encourage engagement in rehabilitation programs and support reintegration into society. Others also believe that it would reduce unnecessary incarceration costs, address overcrowding, and allows resources to be redirected to community support, education, and rehabilitation programs while standardizing parole decisions.*

*However, a sizeable portion of constituents oppose Fair and Timely parole because they say it threatens public safety, undermines accountability for criminal behavior, and raises concerns about appropriate supervision of parolees after release.*

**Question 8:** There are groups who are advocating for legislation (A.514 Davila) known as Elder Parole that would require a Parole Board hearing for elderly New York incarcerated people, irrespective of the nature of the crime that they were convicted of, who are 55 years of age and older (due to the common perception that many incarcerated persons experience “accelerated aging”) and have served at least 15 years of a sentence. If parole is denied, they would automatically receive another Parole Board hearing within 24 months for reconsideration. Do

you support requiring the parole board to evaluate all inmates who are 55 years old and older for early release from prisons who have served at least 15 years of a sentence?



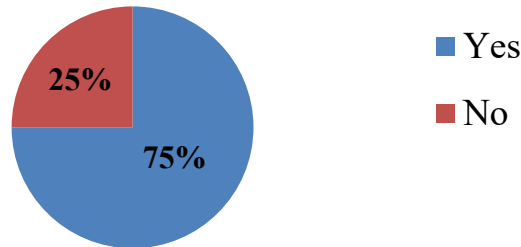
*Those who support the passage of elder parole explain that older inmates are statistically less likely to reoffend. Individuals also state that caring for elderly prisoners is expensive; releasing those who have served long sentences could reduce taxpayer burden and allow resources to be redirected to rehabilitation and social support.*

*The majority of constituents, however, oppose elder parole. Many feel age alone is not a guarantee of safety; even older inmates can commit serious crimes, so release may endanger communities. Many opponents stress that violent or heinous crimes (e.g., murder, sexual assault) should never be eligible for early release and could force parole consideration “irrespective of the crime,” undermining existing parole discretion and potentially weakening deterrence.*

**Question 9:** Migrants and asylum seekers are currently unable to seek expedited work authorizations from the federal government. An asylum seeker is someone who is seeking protection from danger in his or her home country. Asylum seekers cannot apply for protection until they arrive in the United States. Crossing an international border for asylum is not illegal and the asylum process can take years to complete. Allowing expedited work permits would allow asylum seekers to address some of the workforce challenges that businesses in NYS are facing and would allow them to obtain Individual Taxpayer Identification Numbers (ITIN) to allow them to pay NYS income taxes. Some have proposed allowing a temporary state work permit system, even though the authority to grant the permits is considered a federal authority. Do you support NYS legislation to allow asylum seekers to work in New York State and allow them to obtain tax ID numbers and pay NYS income taxes?



**Do you support NYS legislation to allow asylum seekers to work in New York State and allow them to obtain tax ID numbers and pay NYS income taxes?**  
(out of 344 constituents)



*Among that support legislation that would provide asylum seekers to work in New York State and expressed the following:*

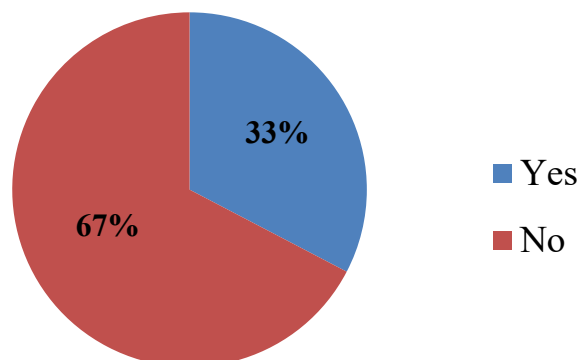
- *Asylum seekers fill critical labor shortages (hospitals, farms, service sector), pay taxes, contribute to state revenue, and reduce reliance on social programs.*
- *People fleeing danger deserve the chance to support themselves and their families; work restores dignity, self-sufficiency, and faster integration into communities.*
- *Legal work allows oversight, reduces underground employment, limits exploitation, and may reduce incentives for crime while asylum seekers are waiting for case resolution.*

*Among constituents that oppose allowing asylum seekers to work in New York State claimed:*

- *Many feel immigration and asylum are federal responsibilities; NYS stepping in may conflict with federal law or create legal challenges.*
- *Fear that programs could be exploited by people who are not legitimate asylum seekers, potentially increasing illegal immigration or overburdening state resources*
- *Some worry that migrants may displace U.S. citizens in jobs, drive wages down, or strain housing and social services.*

**Question 10:** Has your opinion on immigration and undocumented workers changed since January 2025 related to increased U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) raids and enforcement actions?

**Has your opinion changed since January?**  
(out of 346 constituents)



*It is important to note that that the chart above does not reflect individuals who do or do not support ICE and their actions. Answers reflect whether or not an individual's opinions have changed.*

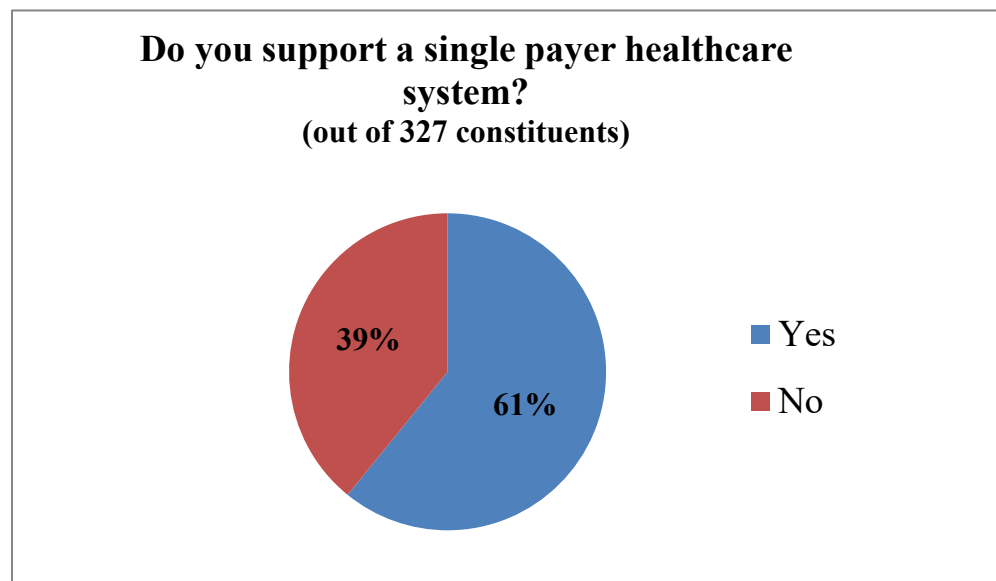
*The top 3 most common reasons why constituents currently support ICE enforcement are:*

- *Ensures compliance with federal laws and discourages illegal entry.*
- *Targets individuals with criminal records to reduce risk to communities.*
- *Helps monitor and remove individuals who pose security threats.*

*The top 3 most common reasons why constituents currently oppose ICE are:*

- *Deportations separate families and can cause trauma.*
- *Enforcement may unfairly target certain communities or individuals.*
- *Deporting workers harms local economies and businesses that rely on immigrant labor.*

**Question 11:** There is a bill (A.1466 Paulin) proposing a single payer healthcare system in New York. The legislation proposes to pay for the program through a progressive payroll tax for individuals and business. There would also be a graduated tax on income. Those with taxable incomes of \$50,000 or less would be exempt if enrolled in Medicare, those with taxable incomes of \$25,000 or less would be exempt overall. Taxes would be scaled up as enrollment grows. The federal government would need to grant a waiver to use federal funds for a single payer plan as well, which makes a program contingent on the waiver being granted. Do you support a single payer (Medicare-for-all) healthcare system?



*The top three most common reasons constituents support a single payer healthcare system is because they believe the following:*

- *Healthcare is a right that everyone deserves access to.*
- *It would lower overall costs for everyone by reducing profit incentives and simplifying billing.*

- *It provides equity by ensuring all residents of the state, including the most vulnerable, have health coverage.*

*The top three most common reasons constituents oppose a single payer healthcare system is because they believe the following:*

- *Government inefficiency would cause poorly managed healthcare with long wait times and reduced quality of care for patients.*
- *Higher taxes would be required to fund a single payer system.*
- *Coverage may be inconsistent if implemented at a state level rather than at the federal level.*

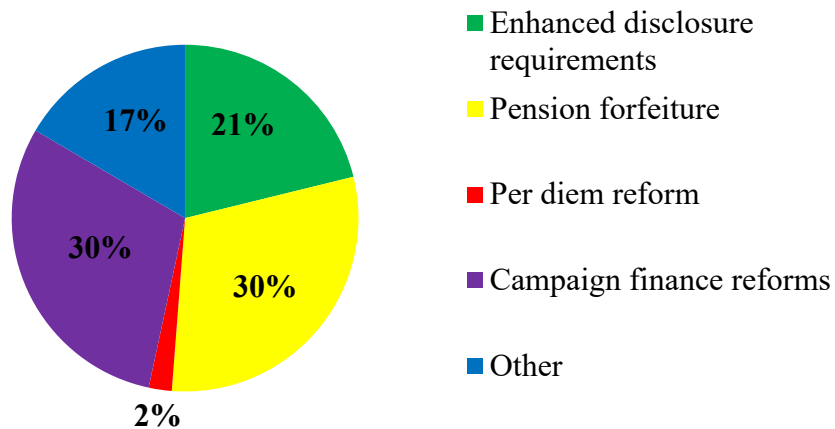
**Question 12:** Many families struggle to find affordable and reliable childcare, and childcare centers struggle to retain staff due to salary constraints. What do you think would be helpful to address the current childcare crisis?

**Out of 291 constituents that answered this question, please see below for the top five proposals that came up most often:**

- 1. Childcare Affordability:** Constituents asked for increased access and lowered costs for childcare through subsidies, child tax credits, or employer supported childcare.
- 2. Reduce Burden to Taxpayer:** Constituents responded that subsidized childcare in a scarce market is driving up costs to the state and taxpayers. Those constituents responded with concern over budget effects from expanding funding.
- 3. Support Childcare Workforce:** Constituents proposed government support to the workforce to alleviate the burden of the shortage. Those constituents believe educational programs, raised minimum wages in the industry, and improved working conditions will address the shortage.
- 4. Reduce Regulations:** Constituents asked for reduced regulations in the industry that they say are burdensome. Those constituents believe that reducing excessive licensing, zoning, and reporting requirements will reduce administrative costs and make childcare more affordable.
- 5. Expand Availability:** Constituents believe that integrating childcare with workplaces and schools will increase availability and flexibility for parents. Those constituents request universal pre-K and expanded afterschool programs.

**Question 13:** Despite additional charges of corruption in politics, there has been little progress in the way of meaningful ethics reform. What, in your opinion, is the most important ethics reform measure that New York should enact? Select one option only.

**What in your opinion is the most important ethics reform measure that New York should enact?**  
(out of 326 constituents)

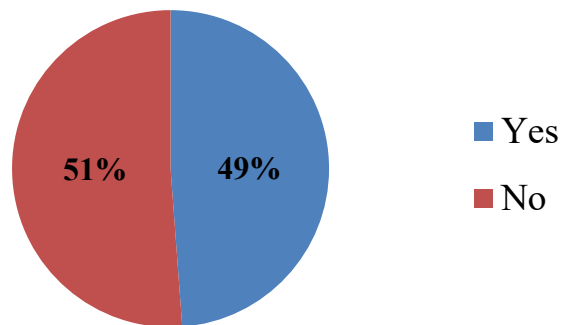


*The most common responses given for those that chose other were comprehensive reform or all of the above, term limits, and reforms to oversight mechanisms.*

*When answering why, constituents overwhelmingly responded that money is the biggest cause of corruption in the state. Many cited high donation limits for Super PACs, weak punishments for convicted officials, and a lack of transparency into the government in general.*

**Question 14:** Term Length—Currently, New York State legislators are elected to a two-year term. Would you support a constitutional amendment that would increase in the length of a term to four years?

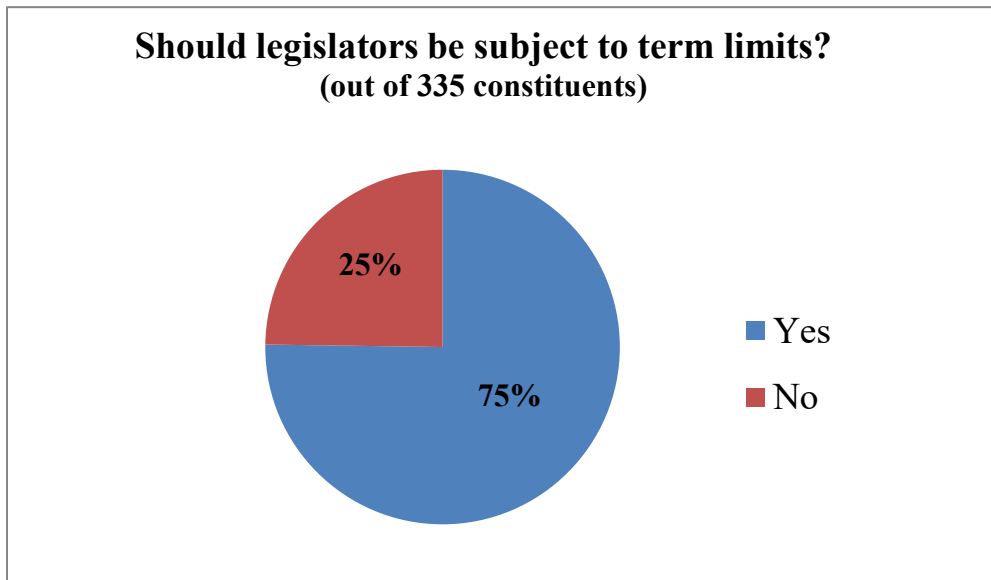
**Do you support increasing legislator term length?**  
(out of 340 constituents)



*Constituents that supported increasing the term length believe it would reduce time spent campaigning allowing for a greater focus on legislation. They believe it would allow for long-term planning and more complex legislation while reducing donor influence and election costs.*

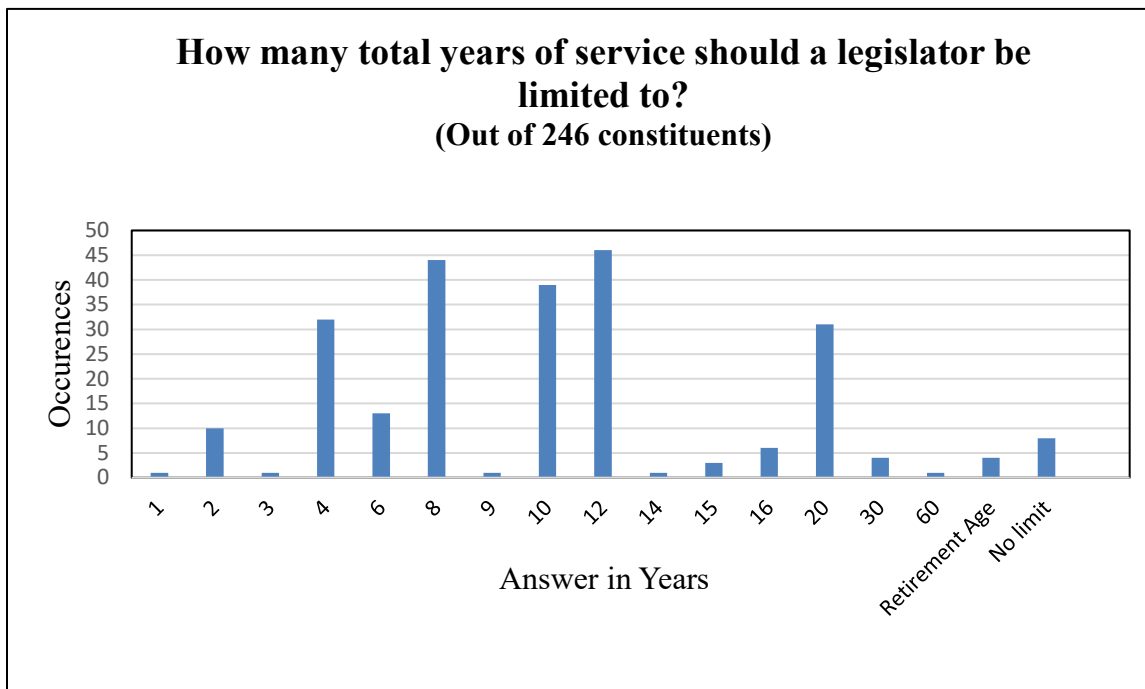
*Constituents that opposed increasing the term length believe it would reduce the accountability voters hold over officials. They believe the shorter term allows voters to vote out bad legislators and forces representatives to be responsive to voters.*

**Question 15: Term Limits**—Currently, New York State legislators are not subject to term limits, which means they can run for an unlimited number of two-year terms. Should legislators be subject to term limits?



*Constituents that support term limits believe they will prevent complacency in career politicians, reduce corruption risk, and regularly bring in fresh perspectives.*

*Constituents that oppose term limits believe experience and institutional knowledge is important, voter decision allows for bad legislators to be removed, and that it preserves stability in government.*



**Question 16:** Supporting small businesses is a priority of mine, and I frequently hear about the need for regulatory reforms to remove onerous burdens on small businesses to allow them to grow and succeed. What do you think is the biggest impediment for small businesses and why? Which specific regulations and reforms should be considered?

**Out of the 261 constituents that answered this question, please see below for the top three proposals suggested:**

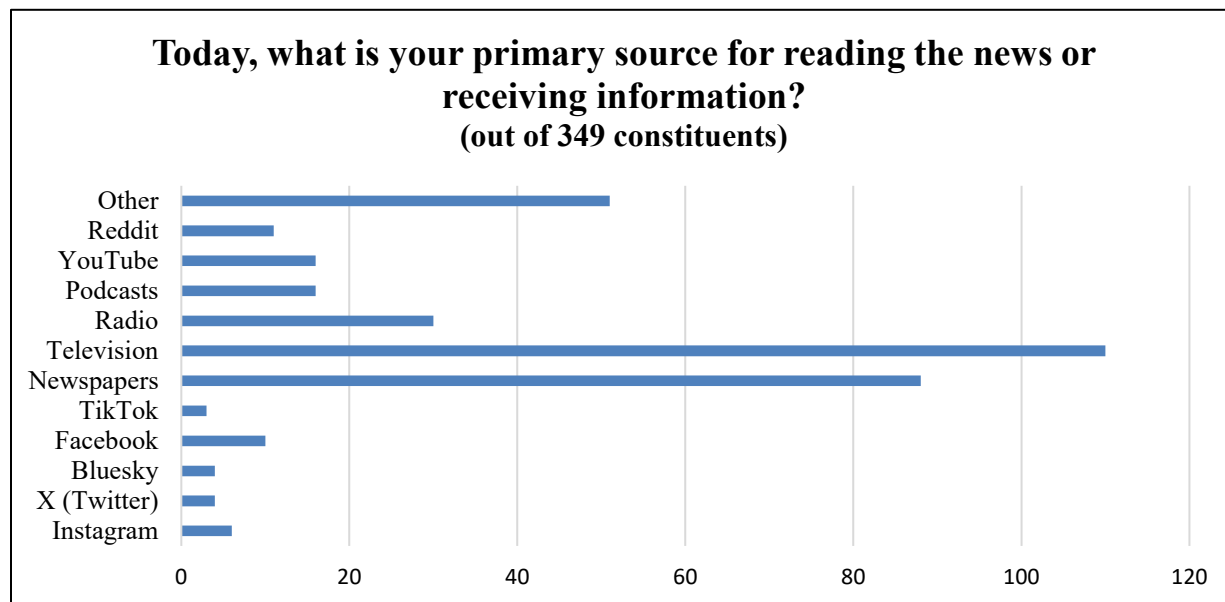
1. **Streamline and simplify regulations:** Constituents point to the complexity and burden of regulations explaining that it causes a diversion of resources that easily overwhelm small business. They suggest a unified system for licensing and compliance, multi-year licensing when possible, and consolidated inspections.
2. **Targeted tax relief and incentives:** Constituents say that small businesses face high taxes and fewer incentives compared to large corporations considering size. They suggest reduced taxes, tax credits for hiring, and funding for small businesses.
3. **Employee-related costs:** Constituents say that the costs to running a small business are too high. They suggest government assistance with employer health insurance and worker's comp, HR support resources, and compliance assistance.

**Question 17:** The unfortunate reality of the opioid/heroin epidemic is that many of us have been touched by it in some shape or form. What obstacles do you see in prevention, treatment, and recovery? What, if any, thoughts do you have on how we can be more effective in battling this growing problem?

**Out of the 276 constituents that answered this question, please see below for the top five proposals suggested:**

1. **Access:** Expand access to treatment and recovery including medication-assisted treatment, residential programs, outpatient care, peer recovery supports, and greater insurance coverage.
2. **Consolidate Services:** Integrate mental health and substance use care through co-location, cross-trained staff, and a unified treatment structure.
3. **Reduce Stigma:** Find ways to address societal judgement to increase the likelihood of seeking help.
4. **Workforce Shortages:** Address the provider and resource shortages that reduce access and level of care.
5. **Address Overprescribing:** Address overprescribing and ease of access to opioids that can fuel initial addiction.

**Question 18:** The world of media has changed rapidly just in the past few decades. Today, what is your primary source for reading the news or receiving information? Please choose just one.



*For those that responded other, the responses included internet search engines, newsletters, and news aggregators.*

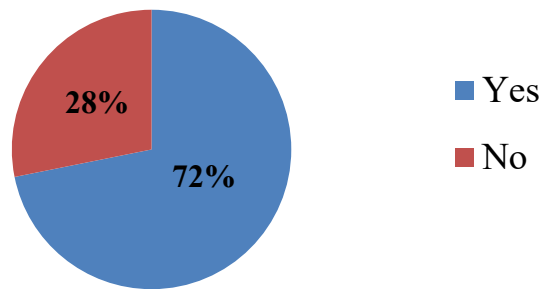
**Question 19:** Which specific source of news do you trust the most? Some examples include: friends on social media, influencers on social media, major news outlets (e.g. ABC, Fox News, MSNBC, CNN), local news (print or digital). Please be as specific as possible.

**Out of the 339 constituents that responded to this question, please see below for the top five most trusted news sources amongst our constituents:**

1. NPR / Public Radio (WAMC, WMHT, PBS)
2. The New York Times
3. Local newspapers / Local TV (Times Union, WNYT, WTEN, Troy Record)
4. Major Broadcast Networks (ABC, NBC, CBS)
5. BBC / Reuters / AP

**Question 20:** New York has faced budget deficits in the past and has lost population in the last few years. In those last few years, personal income tax increased for individuals making more than \$1 million and taxes increased on corporations whose business income was more than \$5 million. Should New York raise taxes on the income of multi-millionaires, billionaires, and tax the assets of the ultra-wealthy to boost revenue for state programs (i.e. Medicaid, Pre-K to K-12 education, transportation, etc.)?

**Should New York raise taxes on the income of multi-millionaires, billionaires, and tax assets of the ultra wealthy to boost revenue?**  
(out of 341 constituents)



*Those that support raising taxes on the ultra wealthy explain that it is fair because there is a greater ability to pay. They believe the revenue will fund greater public services while reducing a growing wealth inequality.*

*Those that oppose taxing the ultra wealthy explain high taxes will push wealthy residents out of the state and thus lowering the state's revenue. They believe existing taxes are already high and are concerned about mismanagement of state funds. They mention that higher taxes will discourage economic development and business growth.*

**Question 21:**

We received 187 responses to the open comment section that asked what issues you thought were most important to be addressed this session. We appreciate your responses. Please see below for the top 5 topics that came up the most often:

**Taxes and Cost of Living:** Constituents are concerned about high property, state, and school taxes. They suggest spending reforms that reduce the burden on middle-class families and businesses.

**Healthcare and Mental Health:** Constituents ask for affordable healthcare, funding for mental health services, and support for seniors and vulnerable populations.

**Public Safety and Crime:** Constituents mention bail reform, stronger repercussions for repeat offenses, increased police presence, illegal immigration enforcement, and safety in communities.

**Environment and Energy Policy:** Constituents are concerned about climate change and ask for a focus on renewable and nuclear energy. Constituents also mention careful implementation including opposition to all-electric mandates as well as the protection of nature and farmlands.

**Government Accountability and Reform:** Constituents ask for increased oversight on government including term limits, reduction of bureaucracy, transparent and efficient use of state funds, and enforcement for corruption.