

On behalf of Unity NY, Embold Research conducted a survey among 1667 registered voters in New York State,¹ including an oversample of 547 unaffiliated voters, to better understand voters perceptions of electoral reform in the state of New York.

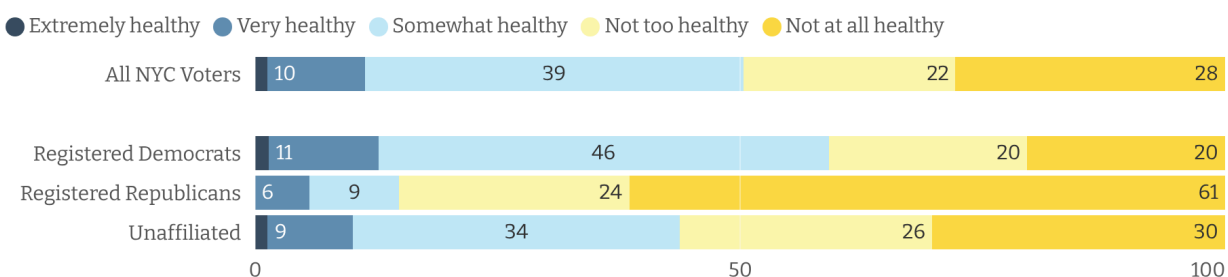
Within this survey, Embold Research gathered responses from 561 New York City voters, across all political affiliations. This research found both notable dissatisfaction with New York's current political system and election process, coupled with a strong interest in election reform. In particular, New York city voters demonstrate strong, bi-partisan support for the adoption of open primaries that allow all registered voters to participate and for changes in signature requirements for independent candidates to equalize ballot access.

Baseline Perceptions

Few voters in New York City believe the state's political system to be in good health. Just 11% of voters say that their state's political system is "extremely" or "very healthy." Half believe it is not healthy and an additional 39% believe it is only "somewhat healthy." Non-democratic voters are much more pessimistic: 56% of unaffiliated voters and 85% of registered Republicans believe New York's political system to be unhealthy, compared to just 41% of registered Democrats. Still, the plurality of New York City democrats only believe the system to be "somewhat healthy" (46%).

EMBOLD research

In your opinion, how healthy is the political system in New York?



¹On behalf of Unite NY, Embold Research surveyed 1667 registered voters (including an oversample of 547 unaffiliated voters) in the state of New York from June 12-18, 2026.. Respondents were recruited via dynamic online sampling and SMS text-to-web sampling to attain a sample reflective of the electorate. Post-stratification weighting was performed on age, gender, ethnicity, education, region, party registration, and 2024 presidential vote. Weighting parameters are based on the demographic composition of registered voters, based on available voter file data. The modeled margin of error is +/- 2.6%.

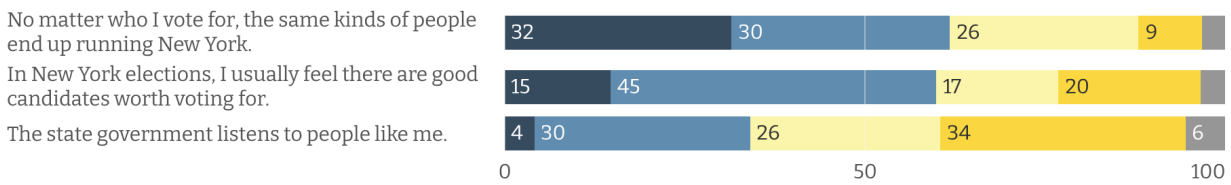
New Yorkers across the political spectrum feel unheard in the electoral process. A majority of voters (62%) agree with the statement, “No matter who I vote for, the same kinds of people end up running New York,” including over half of registered Democrats (56%) and overwhelming majorities of unaffiliated voters (66%) and registered Republicans (87%). A similar majority (60%) disagrees with the statement, “The state government listens to people like me.”

Notably, six in 10 voters feel that there are good candidates to vote for in New York elections. This sentiment is largely driven by registered democrats in the City (68% agree). Meanwhile, unaffiliated voters are split on the statement, “In New York elections, I usually feel there are good candidates worth voting for” – 47% agree with the statement and 47% disagree. Republicans largely disagree (68%).

EMBOLD research

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about state politics in New York?

● Strongly agree ● Somewhat agree ● Somewhat disagree ● Strongly disagree ● Not sure



There is bipartisan interest in changing how voting works and who can run for office in state and local elections. Sixty-four percent of voters believe that New York should change the rules for how voting works in state and local elections at least “somewhat.” A similar proportion (63%) believes at least some, if not a lot, of changes should be made for who can run for office at the state and local level.

EMBOLD research

To what extent, if at all, do you think New York should change the rules it uses for...?

● A lot ● Somewhat ● Very little ● Not at all



Ranked Choice Voting

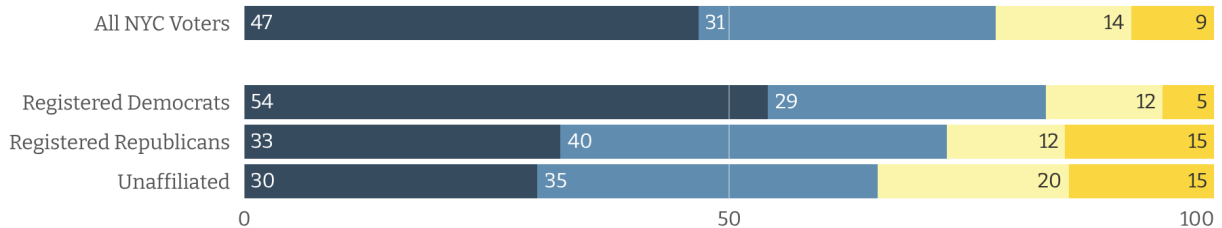
Though ranked choice voting has been used in mayoral elections since 2021, there are still knowledge gaps. Most New York City voters (77%) are at least somewhat familiar with ranked choice voting, including 47% who are “very familiar.” However, this familiarity of

ranked choice voting is largely led by registered Democrats in the city, 83% of whom are familiar, and just 5% are “not at all familiar” with ranked choice voting. In contrast, 65% of unaffiliated voters are familiar with ranked choice voting, while 20% are “not that familiar” and 15% are “not at all familiar” with it.

EMBOLD research

How familiar are you with ranked choice voting?

● Very familiar ● Somewhat familiar ● Not that familiar ● Not at all familiar



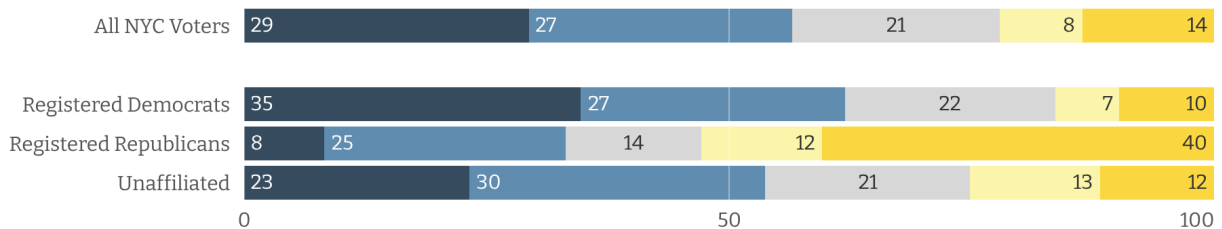
Expanding ranked choice voting to elections across New York wins majority support from voters in New York City. Over half (56%) of voters support the use of a ranked choice voting system for New York State elections, while just 22% oppose and 21% neither support nor oppose. Support for ranked choice voting is not a single party issue: 54% of voters unaffiliated with any party support the use of ranked choice voting.

EMBOLD research

Ranked choice voting lets voters rank candidates in the order they prefer, or just pick one candidate like usual. If no candidate gets more than half of the votes, the candidate with the fewest votes is removed. Voters who ranked that candidate first have their votes go to their second choice instead. This continues until one candidate gets more than half the votes.

Would you support or oppose using a ranked choice voting system for elections in New York?

● Strongly support ● Somewhat support ● Neither support nor oppose ● Somewhat oppose ● Strongly oppose

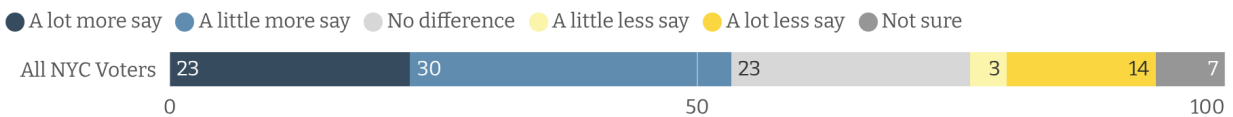


Majorities of New York City voters (53%) believe that ranked choice voting would give voters like them more say in who gets elected. Just 18% of voters believe it would give voters like them less say, and 23% say that it would make no difference. Majorities of both registered Democrats (57%) and unaffiliated voters (54%) believe that ranked choice voting would increase their say in who gets elected.

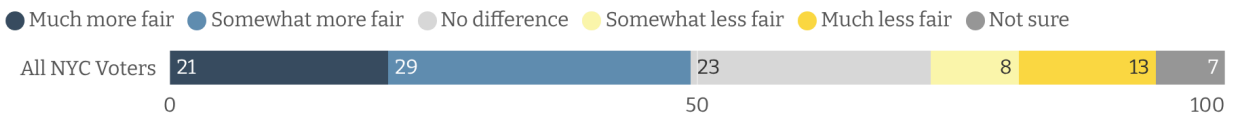
Just under half (49%) of New York City voters believe that ranked choice voting would make elections more fair. This sentiment is largely driven by registered Democrats in New York City, 53% of whom believe it would make elections more fair. A significant portion of unaffiliated voters (48%) feel similarly. In contrast, just 33% of registered Republicans believe that ranked choice voting would increase election fairness, while the plurality (48%) of republicans believe it would decrease fairness.

EMBOLD research

If ranked choice voting was used in New York, do you think it would give voters like you more say, less say, or not make a difference in who gets elected?



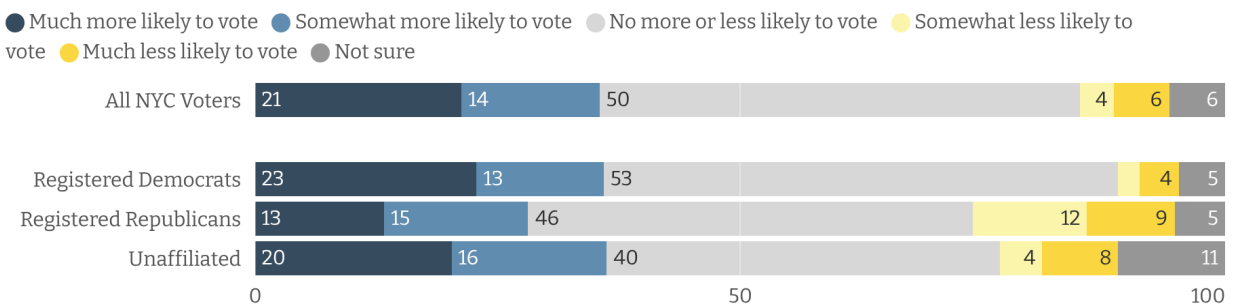
If ranked choice voting was used in New York, do you think it would make elections more fair, less fair, or not make a difference?



Half of voters report that their voting patterns would be unchanged by ranked choice voting, while an additional third say it would increase their likelihood to vote. Just 9% say they would be less likely to vote, and 6% or unsure. Notably, one in five registered Republicans say they would be less likely to vote in ranked choice voting were to be implemented in New York elections, at a much higher rate than their Democratic or unaffiliated counterparts.

EMBOLD research

If ranked choice voting were used in New York's elections, would you be more or less likely to vote?

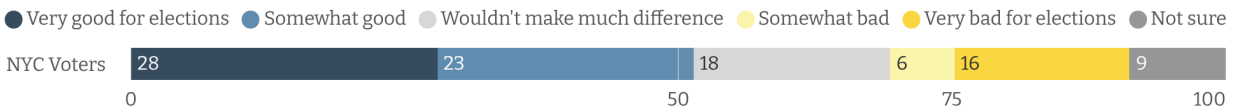


Just over half of New York City voters believe that ranked choice voting would be a good thing for statewide elections (51%) based on how it has worked in their city. Twenty-two

percent believe it would be bad for statewide elections, and 27% believe it would not make a difference or are unsure. Majorities of Democrats (58%) and nearly half of unaffiliated voters (49%) believe ranked choice voting would be a good thing for statewide elections.

EMBOLD research

As you may know, New York City has used ranked choice voting in its local elections in 2021 and 2025. Thinking about how it has worked there, do you think ranked choice voting would be good or bad for statewide elections?



Open Primaries

Just under 6 in 10 New York City voters (57%) accurately identify that independent voters cannot participate in primary elections. Twenty-two percent incorrectly say that independent voters can vote in New York primaries, and 20% admit to being unsure. Awareness of unaffiliated voter access to current primaries is consistent across party registration.

EMBOLD research

Primary elections determine which candidates will appear on the ballot in the general election in November. Based just on what you know, are independent voters allowed to participate in primary elections?



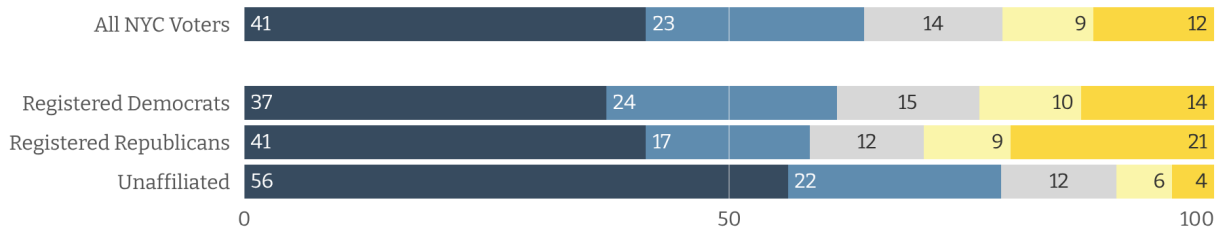
Nearly two thirds (64%) of voters support the use of an open primary system in New York, including an overwhelming majority of unaffiliated voters. Majorities of both registered Democrats (61%) and Republicans (58%) support adopting an open primary system in which any registered voter can participate. Unaffiliated voters are the most supportive of this change: 78% say they support open primaries, including 56% who “strongly support” them.

EMBOLD research

New York currently uses a closed-primary system, where only registered Democrats can vote in Democratic primaries and only registered Republicans can vote in Republican primaries. Voters who are not registered with either party cannot vote in any primary election. Some other states use open primary systems that allow all voters, including those not registered with a party, to participate.

Would you support or oppose adopting an open primary system in New York, in which any registered voter could participate?

● Strongly support ● Somewhat support ● Neither support nor oppose ● Somewhat oppose ● Strongly oppose



Majorities of voters, regardless of party registration, believe that open primaries would give voters like themselves more say in who gets elected. Similar proportions of Democrats (54%) and Republicans (57%) believe that open primaries would give voters like them more say. Just over 7 in 10 unaffiliated voters believe the same. Similarly, 56% of voters believe that primary elections would make New York elections more fair. Unaffiliated voters (68%) are the most likely to feel that open primaries would increase election fairness.

Voters report increased or unchanged motivation to participate in primaries if open primaries were adopted. Just over half of New York City voters (52%) say they would be more likely to vote in primaries if New York adopted an open primary system, and an additional 40% say their participation would not change either way. Only 4% are discouraged from voting by the adoption of open primaries.

EMBOLD research

If open primary elections were used in New York, do you think it would give voters like you more say, less say, or not make a difference in who gets elected?

● A lot more say ● A little more say ● No difference ● A little less say ● A lot less say ● Not sure



If open primary elections were used in New York, do you think it would make elections more fair, less fair, or not make a difference?

● Much more fair ● Somewhat more fair ● No difference ● Somewhat less fair ● Much less fair ● Not sure

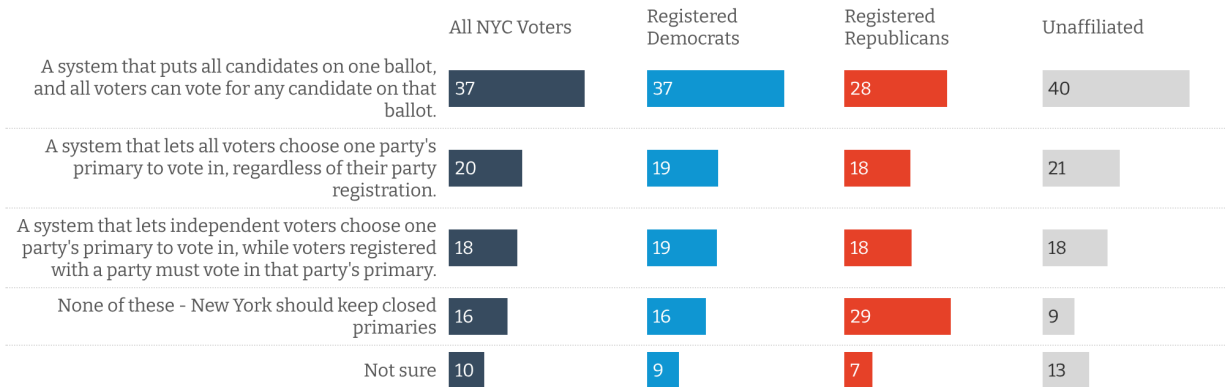


When given the choice, New York City voters display a preference toward an open primary system that puts all candidates on a single ballot. One in 5 voters prefer a system that

prefers multiple party primaries and allow voters to decide which one primary to participate in. An additional 18% prefer a semi-open primary, that only allows independent voters to choose which primary to vote in.

EMBOLD research

If New York adopted a primary system that let all voters participate, which of the following would you prefer?

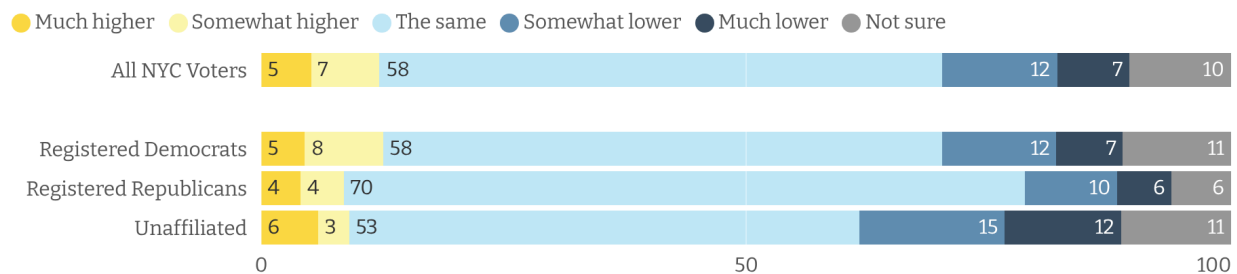


Ballot Access

Nearly 6 in 10 (58%) New York City voters believe that independent candidates should have the same signature requirements as major party candidates. An additional 19% believe that independent candidates should have lower signature requirements, while just 12% believe that the signature requirement should be higher for independents. Strong majorities of voters across party registration believe that signature requirements should be the same across the board. Unaffiliated voters are also more likely to believe that independent candidates should actually face lower requirements (27%).

EMBOLD research

To get on the ballot for state offices in New York, such as Governor, candidates need to collect a certain number of signatures from voters. In your opinion, should the number of signatures required for independent candidates to get on the ballot be higher, lower, or the same as for major party candidates?



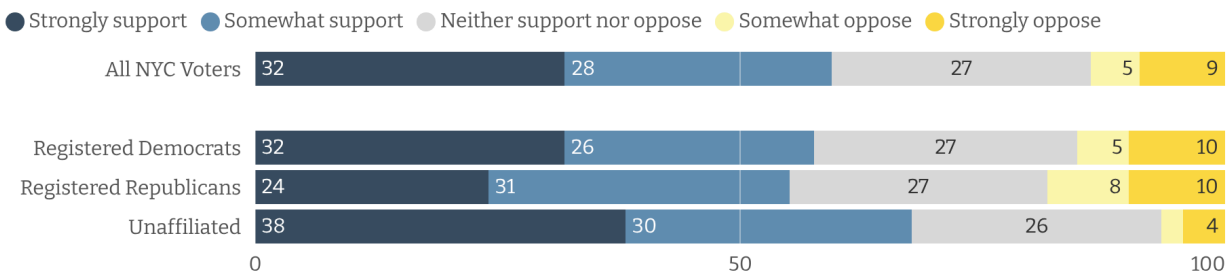
There is majority, bi-partisan support for lowering the signature requirement for independent candidates to match that of major-party candidates. Fifty-nine percent of

voters support lowering the signature requirement for independent candidates, while just 14% oppose and 27% neither support nor oppose. Support for this reform is particularly strong among unaffiliated voters: 68% support and just 7% oppose it.

EMBOLD research

To get on the ballot as an independent candidate for governor or president in New York, a person needs to collect at least 45,000 signatures. Before 2020, only 15,000 signatures were needed. Since the required number of signatures has increased, no independent candidates have appeared on the ballot for these offices.

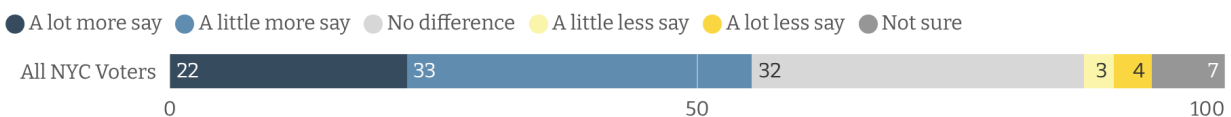
Would you support or oppose lowering the signature requirement for independent candidates so it is the same as for major-party candidates?



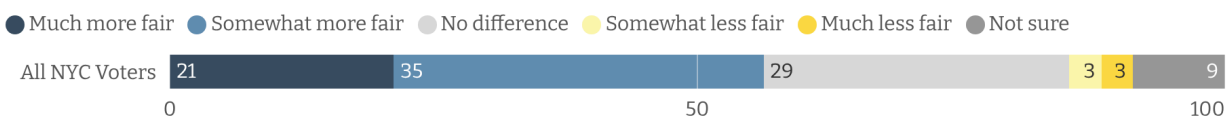
Mirroring perceptions on open primaries, majorities of voters, regardless of party registration, believe that equal signature requirements for all candidates would give voters like themselves more say in who gets elected. Similar proportions of Democrats (52%) and Republicans (50%) believe that lowering signature requirements for independents would give voters like them more say. And just like with open primaries, nearly 7 in 10 unaffiliated voters believe the same (69%). Similarly, 56% of voters believe that equal ballot access would make New York elections more fair, with unaffiliated voters (66%) being the most likely to feel that this reform would increase election fairness.

EMBOLD research

If the rules were changed to create equal access to the ballot for all candidates in New York, do you think it would give voters like you more say, less say, or not make a difference in who gets elected?



If the rules were changed to create equal access to the ballot for all candidates in New York, do you think it would make local elections more fair, less fair, or not make a difference?

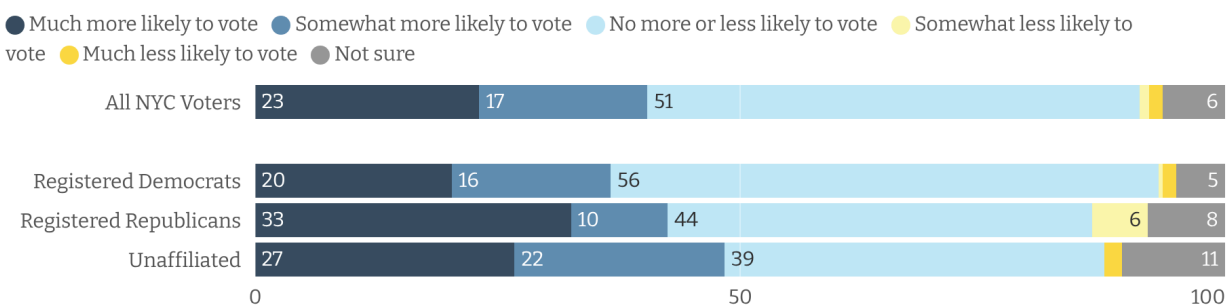


If all candidates had equal access to the ballot in New York, 4 in 10 voters say they would be more likely to vote. An additional 51% of voters say their likelihood to vote would not be

affected by a change in ballot access. Virtually no voters (2%) report being discouraged to vote due to reforms giving all candidates equal access to the ballot.

EMBOLD research

If the rules were changed to create equal access to the ballot for all candidates in New York, would you be more or less likely to vote?



Strategic Messaging on Ballot Access

Messaging in favor of equalizing ballot access outperforms message against it. Just over half (52%) of voters are highly convinced by a message that argues that lowering the signature count for independents gives less well-financed candidates a fair chance to run. This particular support message wins over a majority of registered Republicans (52%) and Unaffiliated voters (67%), and just under half (48%) of Registered democrats. In contrast, only around three in 10 voters find any of the opposition messages highly convincing.

Conclusion

This survey reveals a New York City electorate that is broadly dissatisfied with its political system and receptive to reform. Few voters describe the system as healthy, and majorities across party lines feel that the same kinds of people end up in power regardless of how they vote.

This discontent translates into bipartisan support for an array of election reforms. A majority of voters support expanding ranked choice voting statewide, the adoption of open primaries, and equal ballot access for independent candidates. Throughout, voters associate these changes with greater say in who gets elected and fairer elections.