



# DISABILITY RIGHTS

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## NEW YORK

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### New York's Protection & Advocacy System and Client Assistance Program

## Becoming a Better Informed Voter

### Why should I become a better informed voter?

It's important to learn about the issues and candidates before voting. An informed voter is better able to use his or her vote to express their concerns and advocate for what they care about. Having an understanding of who the candidates are and where they stand on the issues helps you make informed voting decisions and use your vote more effectively.

### How can I become a better informed voter?

- **Know what is on the ballot.** Depending on the election, your ballot can include multiple contests and candidates, including people running for President, U.S. Senate, U.S. House, State Assembly, State Senate, City Council, and other offices. You also may be asked to vote on ballot measures, which involve issues that need to be approved or rejected by voters. You can learn about what is on your ballot and the candidates competing for each position by visiting [vote411.org](http://vote411.org). This site also provides information about the authorities and responsibilities associated with each office.
- **Watch debates and attend forums.** Debates and forums give candidates the opportunity to communicate with the public about where they stand on policy issues and what they plan to do once they are elected. Forums often give voters the opportunity to participate by asking questions. You can learn about upcoming debates and forums by visiting [vote411.org](http://vote411.org).
- **Spend time learning about candidates, their positions, and records.** You can find information by visiting the following sites:
  - [Votessmart.org](http://Votessmart.org)
  - [C-span.org](http://C-span.org)

### How can I stay informed about disability issues?

- **Follow #CripTheVote.** #CripTheVote is a nonpartisan campaign to engage both voters and politicians in discussion about disability issues in the United States. You can follow the campaign at [www.facebook.com/CripTheVote/](http://www.facebook.com/CripTheVote/).

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- **Follow Rooted in Rights.** Rooted in Rights produces videos and social media campaigns on disability rights issues. You can access its content at [rootedinrights.org](http://rootedinrights.org).

### **How can I stay involved between elections?**

- **Become a self-advocate with the Self Advocacy Association of NY (SAANYS):** SAANYS has regional self-advocacy groups throughout the state, which help to educate individuals with developmental disabilities on their rights and opportunities. Find your regional group by visiting [sanys.org](http://sanys.org).
- **Become a self-advocate with the Autistic Self Advocacy Network (ASAN):** ASAN is a self-advocacy organization of Autistic people. ASAN works on public policy advocacy, the development of Autistic cultural activities, and leadership trainings for Autistic self-advocates. To get involved, visit [autisticadvocacy.org](http://autisticadvocacy.org).
- **Join YOUTH POWER!;** This organization works with youth with disability ages 12-24 to provide peer to peer mentoring and opportunities for advocacy. You can learn more by visiting [youthpowerny.org](http://youthpowerny.org).
- **Connect with your local Independent Living Center:** Independent Living Centers (ILCs) provide services to New Yorkers with all disabilities, including workshops and seminars on disability issues, disability laws, and the Independent Living philosophy. You can contact your local Independent Living Center to learn about upcoming workshops and advocacy opportunities. A searchable list of ILCs is available at [www.acces.nysed.gov/vr/indepent-livingcenters](http://www.acces.nysed.gov/vr/indepent-livingcenters).