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**Sen. Polsky and Rep. Diamond File Bills to Safeguard
Legislative Representation and Ensure Access to Vote-By-Mail
Ballots for All Floridians**

Tallahassee, FL – Today, State **Senator Tina Polsky** and State **Representative Ben Diamond** announced the filing of [SB 1586](#) and [HB 1217](#), respectively, to improve the state’s framework for filling legislative vacancies as well as to streamline and simplify the process by which Floridians may request vote-by-mail ballots. The companion bills seek to ensure that voters are not left without representation when vacancies occur, as is currently the case for more than 700,000 residents of Congressional District 20 due to the historically protracted special election timeline imposed by **Governor Ron DeSantis** after the death of **Congressman Alcee Hastings**. The legislation outlines sensible guidelines requiring special elections be scheduled in a reasonable and timely manner. Both bills also amend provisions of last year’s [SB 90](#), which is now law, by allowing Floridians to request a vote-by-mail ballot upon registering to vote and continue voting by mail in all elections without repeated and onerous requests to participate.

Announcing **SB 1586**, **Senator Polsky** said, “The hundreds of thousands of people residing in Congressional District 20 and vacant State Senate and House districts deserve representation in Washington and Tallahassee. Despite the requests and capabilities of local Supervisors of Elections, Governor DeSantis has purposefully chosen to postpone both federal and state-level elections for many months longer than necessary. As a result, residents will have gone nine months without a voice in the United States House of Representatives – the longest period of time ever for such a vacancy. They will also be disadvantaged during this year’s annual State Legislative Session in Tallahassee, where the winners of the special elections scheduled for March 8th will be eligible to serve for only three of the full 60 days. This is a clear and obvious attempt to make partisan gains through disenfranchisement and obstruction.

It is a stain on the American system of representative government which SB 1586 aims to scrub clean.”

Representative Diamond said, "Our freedom to vote is fundamental to our democracy. As lawmakers, and as Americans, it is our responsibility to ensure our fellow citizens have a voice in their government. Voters of every political ideology have embraced vote-by-mail for decades. SB90 has created new restrictions on this popular voting method, which place a disproportionate burden on those who already face more significant challenges when exercising their right to vote – voters of color, seniors, and people with disabilities. Ahead of the 2022 elections, we must ensure all eligible Florida voters have a fair opportunity to cast their ballot.”

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