



**Testimony presented by One PA  
before the House Democratic Policy Committee  
at 11 a.m. Thursday, Feb. 2, 2023, in Pittsburgh  
regarding Early Voting & Same-Day Registration**

Chairman Bizarro, members of the Committee: Thank you for providing an opportunity to One PA to participate in this hearing and testify about the ongoing bipartisan efforts to modernize Pennsylvania's electoral process.

One PA is a multiracial, intergenerational, and multi-issue membership organization. Our members are workers, students, parents, seniors, people with disabilities, and retirees excited to learn, collaborate, and build power together. One PA works within a broad coalition of labor, faith, and students' organizations fighting to make powerful changes that transform our communities. **Nowhere is that engagement more important than in making sure voting is more convenient and easier to access for all eligible voters in our communities.**

We appreciate all the work this committee and other lawmakers and the administration in Harrisburg are doing to modernize our election process and protect the integrity of a system that already works well and ensures all voices are heard and every vote counts.

Even after sweeping reforms put in place with Act 77 of 2019 and Act 12 of 2020, election reform issues remain top of mind and Pennsylvania still lags the vast majority of states when it comes to making sure that all voters --- rural, suburban, and urban, as well as Republican, Democrat, and Independent --- can count on 21st century convenience and security at the ballot box.

We are encouraged by ongoing discussions related to election reform and want to focus our remarks on two specific policies that need attention: **early in-person voting and same-day voter registration.** We believe these bipartisan reforms truly would modernize our elections and make the commonwealth's election process more convenient and easier to access for all eligible Pennsylvania voters, especially for communities of color.

At One PA, we work with Pennsylvania voters before, during, and after every election, and our members continue to hear and see firsthand what voters need. Despite deep divisions on some policies, there remains the potential for broad agreement on several issues that will help to ensure every voter can freely, easily, and conveniently access the polls to have their voices heard and their votes count.

There is no reason every voter should have to vote on one specific day. Allowing **early in-person voting** would relieve congestion at polling locations and give our community members with challenging work schedules or family situations the chance to choose the time that works best for them. This is also a great option for seniors, especially those who use wheelchairs or walkers, allowing more time to accommodate their needs.

The states that have adopted some form of early voting --- roughly two-thirds of all states, Red and Blue alike --- have shown us that it works best when it runs over at least two weeks, allows people to vote at night and on weekends to accommodate voters' varied schedules, and is offered at locations throughout each county to make it convenient for all voters.

When it comes to locations for early voting, locations need to be accessible by public transit to ensure fuller access, close to nursing homes and long-term care facilities, as well as state hospitals, accessible to rural areas, and on or close to college campuses. And when we talk about early voting, we mean voting on machines and not voting in person via mail-in ballot. We believe this would reduce errors and enhance security.

With reforms in Act 77, Pennsylvania changed the deadline for voters to register to vote or update their registration from 30 days to 15 days before an election in order to participate in that election. That bipartisan reform was a big step forward --- but it's not enough. Pennsylvania should allow **same-day voter registration**. Currently, the District of Columbia and some two dozen states currently permit any qualified resident to register to vote and cast a ballot on Election Day.

Most citizens become interested and engaged in elections in the final weeks before Election Day, when campaigns reach their peak. Campaigns know this, which is why during those final weeks before an election, voters are flooded with ads, phone calls and door-knocking.

Same-day voter registration eliminates the state's arbitrary deadline and makes it possible for residents to register when they're most engaged. Same-day voter registration also ensures that all residents have their voices heard by enabling real-time corrections to inaccurate voter rolls. Many voters lose their eligibility merely because they moved. This

is particularly problematic for seniors moving into retirement communities or veterans and working people who move often.

With same-day registration, voters can update registration records or register at their polling place before casting their votes. Again, with e-poll books, the technology is already widely available to ensure this process, as with all other reforms, is convenient, seamless and secure.

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Every Pennsylvanian has an important stake in the outcome of our elections. None of them should be penalized by a system that creates barriers to voting. None of them should be excluded because of work schedules or family commitments or other personal challenges. At One PA, we firmly believe that our democracy works best when all citizens participate and when election rules are nonpartisan. Authorizing early in-person voting and same-day voter registration is one way to do that and ensure that voting is more convenient and easier to access for all eligible voters in Pennsylvania.

Thank you for your time and attention.

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