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## **Keystone Votes Urges Lawmakers to Ensure Elections are Fully Funded**

**HARRISBURG (June 9, 2022)** --- One of the state's leading and most respected voices when it comes to modernizing Pennsylvania's elections wants lawmakers to ensure that elections officials have the resources necessary to administer elections.

The House State Government Committee this week voted to advance legislation that would bar counties from pursuing or accepting outside funding for elections activities. Senate Bill 982 is now positioned for a full vote in the House.

Keystone Votes urges lawmakers to provide more resources for county election operations in advance of any vote. Funding is critical for the commonwealth and counties to have safe, secure, efficient elections and is also critical to advance other reform measures that would make the election process more convenient and easier to access for all eligible voters, especially communities of color.

"Elections are the foundation of our democracy, and we need to do more to ensure elections workers have all the resources they need, especially since the General Assembly continues to add new --- and in some cases --- burdensome requirements," said Deidre Lesesne, Development Coordinator for The Voter Empowerment, Education & Enrichment Movement. "Banning counties from accepting third-party funds to help administer elections without any corresponding funding mechanism is a disservice to elections officials and Pennsylvania's voters."

Introduced by Sen. Lisa Baker (R-Luzerne), S.B. 982 was passed by the Senate in April.

The nonpartisan Keystone Votes coalition is calling on lawmakers to advance commonsense bipartisan reform measures, including:

- **Same-day voter registration.** Same-day voter registration eliminates the state's arbitrary deadline and makes it possible for residents to register when they are most engaged. Same-day voter

registration also ensures that all residents have their voices heard by enabling real-time corrections to inaccurate voter rolls.

- **Early in-person voting.** 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 voters with challenging work schedules or family situations the chance to choose the time that works best for them.
- **Funding for safe, secure, efficient elections.** The state needs to increase poll worker pay and provide more resources for county election operations so that they can purchase and implement electronic poll books to improve election security and accuracy by relying on real-time data.
- **Automatic voter registration.** Through simple, technical enhancements to existing databases, the state should streamline efforts so eligible residents who interact with government programs or agencies can register to vote online or have their existing registration information updated automatically, unless they actively decline.
- **Improving language access.** Pennsylvania's strength is its diversity. The state must establish and expand best practices for language access in counties that are not under Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act to serve the growing number of residents whose first language not English and/or who have a lower proficiency in English.

These are the bipartisan election reform issues that matter most to eligible voters in Pennsylvania. Tackling these issues would help to make the election process more convenient and easier to access for all eligible votes to ensure their voices are heard.

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*Keystone Votes is a nonpartisan coalition comprising 42 advocacy and community organizations across the state working to make elections more convenient and easier to access for ALL Pennsylvania voters. More: [www.keystonevotes.org](http://www.keystonevotes.org).*