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## **Keystone Votes Pushes Early In-person Voting in Pa.**

**HARRISBURG (April 8, 2021)** – More needs to be done to modernize Pennsylvania’s election system, including embracing changes to the way people vote, according to the nonpartisan Keystone Votes coalition, one of the state’s leading and most respected voices when it comes to modernizing Pennsylvania’s election process.

Among several initiatives the coalition is advancing to give Pennsylvania voters 21st century convenience and security at the ballot box is **early in-person voting**.

“Times have changed,” said **Ray Murphy, State Coordinator of Keystone Votes**, which comprises 42 civil rights, civil liberties and good government groups working on election modernization in all 67 counties. “There’s no reason every voter should have to vote on one specific day.”

Allowing early in-person voting in Pennsylvania 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.

“Early voting gives people who must work the opportunity to vote. Many people work more than one job, and most will make working a priority instead of voting,” said **Emily Gale, PennFuture's Director of Civic Engagement**. “Early voting has given a voice to those who could not vote because taking time off currently is not an option. Far too long our people have been disenfranchised due to having to vote at the polls only on election day. Early voting allows more people to participate in our Democracy.”

Both the Pennsylvania Election Law Advisory Board, which was established under Act 12 of 2020, and the House State Government Committee convened separately in Harrisburg today. The House hearing marked its eighth in a series to review the 2020 elections, with panelists today focusing on how other states conduct elections.

Early in-person voting is not some novel concept.

In fact, more than two-thirds of states --- Democrat and Republican alike --- allow the practice in some form. Among the 33 states that use it, best practices include running early voting over at least two weeks, allowing people to vote at night and on weekends to accommodate varied schedules, and offering locations throughout counties to make it convenient for all voters.

That practice also aids individuals with disabilities.

“Early voting is important for people with disabilities who often experience barriers at the polls on Election Day,” said **Jennifer Garman, Director of Government Affairs for Disability Rights Pennsylvania**. “It allows voters with disabilities to plan transportation to their polling place and provides additional time to address accessibility concerns if an individual encounters issues such as broken voting equipment or an inaccessible polling place.”

Policies like early in-person voting work, they are cost effective, and they help to ensure safe, transparent elections, Murphy added. Equally as important, they have garnered broad support from Republicans and Democrats alike.

“It’s time for Pennsylvania to join the majority of states by removing barriers and giving voters greater access to cast their ballots at the polls,” Murphy said.

Besides the Pennsylvania Election Law Advisory Board and the House State Government Committee, the Senate Special Committee on Election Integrity and Reform is conducting its own review of the 2020 election.

No policy changes are expected before the May primary.

For Keystone Votes’ full legislative agenda, please visit [www.KeystoneVotes.org](http://www.KeystoneVotes.org).

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***Keystone Votes, a nonpartisan coalition comprising 42 advocacy and community organizations across the state, has been urging the commonwealth to implement reforms that would modernize the state’s election system and update technology to enhance security and accessibility. More at [www.keystonevotes.org](http://www.keystonevotes.org).***