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Election talks in Harrisburg: It's good the governor & legislature are talking, but is a good-faith compromise really on the table?

HARRISBURG (Sept. 2, 2020) – Keystone Votes, a nonpartisan coalition with members in all 67 counties and a recognized leader in providing voter education to hundreds of thousands of voters across the state, today said the anticipated passage of a House measure (H.B. 2626) that proposes several election reforms is a double-edged sword.

“Bipartisan leadership from the governor and General Assembly to make voting safe and accessible for all eligible voters is good. Partisan gameplaying that changes the rules to favor one party over another is bad,” Keystone Votes coordinator Ray Murphy said. “Enactment of the new vote-by-mail laws last fall was historic. We need that same bipartisan leadership now so counties have enough time to implement the changes properly and voters have enough time to understand the changes fully.”

The General Assembly and administration have been working on changes to the state’s election process for months. Beyond the House action, the Senate last week unveiled its own broad legislative proposal (S.B. 10) to advance reforms in time for the November general election. The governor followed with the administration’s priorities to ensure safe, secure, fair elections.

Negotiations among elected leaders continue.

“Our coalition, which represents hundreds of thousands of voters, has asked the legislature to meet and vote on election changes all summer. Now, they are finally talking, but the proposals on the table take away more from voters than they give,” Murphy said. “We need serious, good-faith negotiations, focused at a minimum on delivering safe and secure election returns as quickly as possible and guaranteeing that in-person voting is a safe and convenient option for all who choose not to vote by mail.

“Any senator or representative who pushes for changes beyond the basics must clearly demonstrate that their idea does not benefit one party more than the other,” he concluded.

The June primary exposed several unique challenges facing the state as it prepares for another election during this pandemic. The Keystone Votes coalition, which comprises 42 civil rights, civil liberties, and good government groups, as well as large civic engagement organizations across the state, prepared its own legislative agenda to fix critical reforms.

Keystone Votes’ agenda can be found at www.KeystoneVotes.org.

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Keystone Votes, a nonpartisan coalition comprising 42 civil rights, civil liberties, and good government groups, as well as large civic engagement organizations with members in all 67 counties. The coalition has been working for years to update Pennsylvania’s election system, help counties buy modern machines, and update technology to enhance security and accessibility before the 2020 elections. More at www.keystonevotes.org.