



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Ray Murphy
P: 215-847-2503
E: rmurphy@pavoice.org

Senate Begins 2020 Election Review

HARRISBURG (March 15, 2021) – The [Senate Special Committee on Election Integrity and Reform](#) today began its review of the 2020 election, convening its first hearing with three panels that included Colorado, Utah and Florida election officials who discussed a range of issues and how they compare to existing and new laws in Pennsylvania.

Many of the hearing topics, including vote centers, vote-by-mail systems, ballot accuracy and voter registration procedures, are included in the comprehensive reform plan that Keystone Votes developed to modernize Pennsylvania’s election process and enhance voter engagement and security.

“Regardless of political affiliation --- regardless of where you live in America --- all of us want the same thing: safe, secure, modern elections that are fair, accurate and accessible to all,” said Ray Murphy, state coordinator for Keystone Votes, a nonpartisan coalition comprising 42 civil rights, civil liberties and good government groups working in all 67 Pennsylvania counties.

“Election reform remains a priority in Pennsylvania, more than four months after the 2020 General Election, and that’s a good thing,” Murphy continued. “For as many accomplishments as we have made over the last couple of years, we still have a great deal of work to do to ensure Pennsylvania voters experience 21st century security and access at the ballot box.”

The commonwealth enacted Act 77 of 2019, which ushered in sweeping changes such as vote-by-mail, and then Act 12 of 2020, which made temporary changes to how elections are run to ensure public health during the pandemic. Keystone Votes is urging the General Assembly and administration to continue its bipartisan work.

Among the coalition’s recommendations:

Improve Vote-by-Mail Process

- Extend **pre-canvassing** to allow counties to begin processing ballots prior to Election Day—pre-canvassing isn't vote counting—and establish a better voter notification process to enable simple mistakes to be fixed and **ensure ballots are completed accurately.**
- Allow mail-in ballots to be counted if they are postmarked by Election Day **but arrive at the county election office after Election Day.**
- Allow the “**National Change of Address Form**” to serve as an update for voter registration and vote by mail.

Modernize Process to Enhance Security, Voter Access

- Allow **early in-person voting** to 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.
- Permit **same-day voter registration**, as most residents do not become engaged in elections until the final weeks, when campaigns reach their peak.
- Establish **vote centers**, giving voters the chance to cast a ballot whether they are by their home, job, school or anywhere that is convenient, and relieve county pressure on poll worker recruitment.

Provide Funding to Support Secure, Efficient Operations

- Ensure counties have the funds for **satellite election offices** that provide convenient voter registration services and mail-in and absentee ballot application processing and voting.
- Provide funding to help counties purchase and implement **electronic poll books** to improve election security and accuracy by relying on real-time data.

Besides the Senate hearing, the House State Government Committee is convening a series of hearings, as is the Pennsylvania Election Law Advisory Board, established under Act 12. As part of his proposed 2021-22 General Fund budget presentation, Gov. Tom Wolf called for additional reforms like same-day voter registration and proposed funding to help counties purchase and implement equipment such as e-poll books.

For Keystone Votes' full legislative agenda, please visit www.KeystoneVotes.org.

* * * * *

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.