



Testimony of Susan Gobreski, Board Director for Government Policy
Pennsylvania State Senate, State Government Committee
SB 878
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The work of the League of Women Voters is always informed by foundational principles, beginning with the understanding that voting is a fundamental citizen right that must be guaranteed. For over a century, the League of Women Voters has fought to protect the rights of eligible voters and expand access for those who have been left out of our democratic process.

To that end, LWVPA supports effective election laws that ensure that elections are accessible, transparent, fair, secure and promote universal voter participation, and provide voters with meaningful choices when they go to the polls.

(note about Oregon all mail voting)

Principles:

- Every qualified elector voting, e.g. voter centered: this means that voting should be made easier, more accessible, more convenient, with more “consumer” choices that are clear.
- The system must be designed to succeed, and must be funded to do so.

Commend effort to pursue solutions that have broad agreement and require government to make things easy for the voter, instead of asking voters to make things easier for government.

As an organization that pursues principles over partisanship, we also want to appreciate any and all sincere attempts to find common ground and solve problems. As a mother, I know that the desire to get your way at the expense of others, to give oneself an advantage, or to use power to do so is destructive. I am grateful that the young women I have raised have learned that lesson, and I continue to believe that is attainable at the macro level as well.

We also want to emphasize that there is a body of knowledge about best practices that can inform our work. Appreciate the continuing effort to allow voters to register as close to election day as possible, for example.

Finally - profound thanks to the County officials and poll workers who make this work. Pennsylvania owes them all a standing ovation for the work they do all the time. You can hear their commitment to make things work, even in the face of inadequate resources. They talk about



running 2 elections - multiple systems. We want to support much of what they are asking for, and believe that any differences are in services of the same goals.

Our priorities:

- Fixing, not ending, the mail ballot application list. Fixes could include:
 - Re-naming it to annual
 - Or changing it to permanent
 - Mail postcards
 - Mail applications to every voter, at least every two years
 - Or at least to every voter who has used it in the past 2 elections
 - Allow people to opt in when they register
 - Allow people to check their status and change it
 - provide a ticker so they know they can change it
 - Improving the users online experience - registration, confirmation
 - Improving the online tracking system - which will also reduce how hard it is to identify dupes
- Continuing access of dropboxes - making them available, affordable, easy to use
 - Widely used in other places; no reason to believe that these proposed measures are necessary
 - Creating costs and additional administrative responsibilities and work
- Preventing disenfranchisement of people who are not dead
 - Use 4 pieces of information for match
 - Notify
 - Provide a cure process
 - Stop 14 days before election
- Pre-canvass period
 - Ensure adequate time for cure. 29 states have a statewide cure process, and several Federal courts have said that notice and an opportunity to cure are constitutionally required to guarantee voters procedural due process
 - No voter disenfranchised for a technical issue
 - The three days period seems like throwing a bone. It seems like what the counties want and what the voters want and deserve, what organizations with expertise are advising are aligned, so why would the legislature stand in the way?
 - One additional note: election day should be the last day to CAST ballots; not the day we are entitled to results. Fast counting is desirable, but not essential. Qualified electors being able to participate is *essential.*
- Live stream - concerns about implementation and cost and opportunity for something else to go wrong
- Early or over the counter voting and start actual early voting asap



- Tied to funded electronic poll books - again - the voters shouldn't have to do the work of figuring it out here, the government should.
- Reduce voter confusion - about when they can do what
- Continued work to provide training and support for poll workers to ensure that they are able to meet the responsibilities and protect the rights of voters.

Closing

In closing - the issue in Pennsylvania is too few people voting, not too many. Every barrier keeps someone from voting. We do that as a matter of trade-offs but we need to take that responsibility in mind.

Thanks to the members of the League, many of whom bring expertise to this in addition to their experience as voters and working with other voters; the Voting Rights Lab and PA Budget and Policy Center who provided policy analysis.

We thank the legislature again for moving Pennsylvania forward with the adoption of Act 77 which vastly improved voter access and modernized our elections.