

**Comments for submission to the Senate State Government Committee from Mercer
County Director of Elections Jeff Greenburg
July 23, 2020**

Honorable Chairman DiSanto and members of the committee, thank you for allowing me the opportunity to speak to you today. While there is no shortage of important issues, I've decided to focus on what I believe are the most critical issues to resolve before the November election:

1. Pre-canvass period must be extended with penalties provided for any county that leaks results prior to 8 p.m. Election Day. Three weeks would be preferable. This change would enable many counties to report results election night or even the next day at the latest. While there would still be some outliers, most would be in position to accomplish this with the extended deadline.
2. The absentee/mail deadline as it currently stands is only setting up voters who apply at the deadline – and counties – for failure. It must be extended one week at a minimum one way or the other. Moving it to match the 15-day voter registration deadline would be ideal administratively for counties, but understand the objections that might come. The other option is to extend the receipt deadline to meet military deadlines (post-marked day before election and received no later than 7th day after the election). The ability to finalize counts is obviously different depending on which direction PA goes.
3. Eliminate the geographic restrictions on poll workers permanently. It's painfully obvious that it's going to be difficult to fill slots in the fall and as they continue to age this problem will only worsen. The virus has exposed a weakness we were aware of for many years, but has accelerated the decline in our numbers.
4. Continue the emergency declaration that would give counties the flexibility to identify suitable and safe in-person voting locations. Counties can't wait to learn whether we will have enough workers/locations. We should conduct outreach to our workers and locations no later than August and be able to finalize those no later than September.

Four areas of focus for absentee/mail ballots:

1. Privacy/secrecy envelopes. These missing envelopes accounted to 1.8 percent of our total ballots counted and overall 48 percent of the ballots that were rejected. Lawsuits might help settle this issue, but legislation would be better if PA wants to change this. Counties did not all do this the same in June.
2. Late ballots (tied to deadline point above). Second largest category of rejected ballots (34 percent)
3. Undeliverable ballots. Third largest category that was unexpectedly caused by voter data entry errors primarily on online applications.
4. Continue the Constitutional process to officially eliminate "absentee" voting so that there is only "mail" voting. This is very confusing for voters and is unnecessary.

The first three categories accounted for 96.5 percent of our rejected ballots and rejected ballots accounted for about 3.7 percent of our total ballots cast. Don't know if other counties had similar numbers, but wouldn't be surprised if they were close.