



Rep. Kevin Boyle

A message from the chair

In January last year I was appointed to serve as Democratic Chairman of the House State Government Committee. The committee has an extremely important role in shaping a sound working government – one that protects people and ensures their constitutional rights.

The committee has always been busy. My role as Democratic Chairman is to take the lead in ensuring the voice of the Democratic Caucus and its lawmakers are heard when bills are being considered.

The abrupt entrance of COVID-19 and the movement to guarantee voting rights and access has resulted in an even greater need to put the committee to work.

Over the past year and a half, I led the Democratic members of our committee in passing good legislation that was signed into law, such as:

- No-excuse, mail-in voting.
- Giving people more time to register to vote before an election (15 days from 30).
- Moving the PA primary election to June 2 to keep people safe during the COVID-19 health crisis.

I also spent much time leading the fight to stop attempts by the Majority Party to override Gov. Wolf's COVID-19 mitigation plan and strip his ability to address the crisis, which would have resulted in all people – children, workers, elderly in nursing homes – to go back to pre-coronavirus practices, such as congregating in large groups, unmasked; the loss of federal coronavirus relief dollars; and no requirements for the personal protective equipment needed to keep people safe at work.

While we may not have had the majority vote, we did have a voice, and we used it loudly to expose the political games being played while a deadly virus spread through our nation.

This newsletter contains highlights of the committee's work, as well as information on how the laws we enacted are being applied.

If you have questions about my committee work or need help with any state-related program, issue or service, please contact my office. I'm here to serve you.

Kevin J. Boyle

Whether debating in the House Chamber or leading my caucus in State Government Committee meetings, I have spent all spring and summer speaking on behalf of my Democratic colleagues and you on legislation affecting voting rights and the spread of COVID-19 in Pennsylvania.

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STATE GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE REPORT

COMMITTEE ACTION

Several bills related to voting and addressing COVID-19 were debated and voted on in the State Government Committee this spring and summer. Some I proudly championed, others I stood firmly against. Here are a few:

COVID-19 testing in nursing homes (HB2543)

The State Government Committee passed legislation that would require the Pennsylvania Department of Health to ensure all employees and residents in PA's long-term care facilities are tested for COVID-19.

Long term care facilities serve about 123,000 residents and employ about 143,000 people. Unfortunately, the coronavirus severely impacted our senior population in Pennsylvania. In May 2020, the PA Department of Health reported that about 68% of all COVID-19-related deaths occurred in the state's long-term care facilities.

It is very easy for asymptomatic COVID-19 carriers to bring the virus into healthcare facilities without proper testing and tracing. Allowing untested, asymptomatic healthcare workers and long-term care facility residents to continue having contact with one another allows the disease to be passed unknowingly between them. Under Pennsylvanians are at an increased risk of death or serious complications from COVID-19, so the State Government Committee is dedicated to finding every solution we can to protect them.

Reopen PA with clear science and guidance (HB 2549)

I voted against legislation that would add a "green plus" phase to the governor's color-coded, three-phased system of reopening. The bill does not provide a definition on what "green plus" means, but instead sets extremely vague criteria such as a county seeing "no significant increase in COVID-19 cases" and "sufficient medical assets are available" and "sufficient testing." The motive and intentions of this bill were too unclear for me to comfortably vote in favor of it.

Disasters deserve action, not politics (SB 1166)

I voted against legislation pushed through the House and Senate that would prohibit state government from responding quickly and effectively to COVID-19 or any type of future disaster. This bill would make a change to Pennsylvania's constitution which would limit the governor's powers on extending a disaster emergency declaration now and in the future. The Majority Party rammed this through committee and then the full legislature without ever holding a public hearing and by using an archaic rule to shut down debate in the

chamber. This is an amendment to change our constitution and should never be rushed through the process. Throughout the debate, I kept thinking about the Three Mile Island partial meltdown in 1979 and how the response from any governor for any disaster on that scale would be hindered by this amendment.

This legislation proposes that the governor come to the General Assembly 21 days into an emergency and have legislators deliberate and likely filibuster on whether to continue an emergency declaration. When our state is fighting against any natural disaster or emergency, time is of the essence, and we shouldn't prevent our chief executive and Health Department from utilizing all the tools at their disposal to protect people's health.



No room for politics in global health crisis

Majority Party legislator's inflammatory remarks should be stricken

In my letter to you on Page 1, I talk about political games that are being played by some in Harrisburg during this pandemic in order to prop themselves up or rile others. There is no room for playing politics while thousands of Pennsylvanians and hundreds of thousands of Americans get sick and die.

During a State Government Committee meeting in May, Republican Rep. Chris Dush of Jefferson County likened Governor Wolf and his administration's response to the COVID-19 pandemic to the Nazi Party of 1930s and 40s Germany. He compared people trying to save millions of lives in a pandemic to the people who mass murdered millions of Jewish people and others based on their ethnicity.

His remarks were incomprehensible and evil, and I was deeply troubled that no Republican member of the committee joined me in condemning them. I called upon GOP leadership to repudiate these disturbing comments made by Rep. Dush and strike them from the record. I have yet to receive a response.

MAKE VOTING EASIER AND SECURE

The right to vote is the bedrock of our democracy, a right women and African-Americans had to fight hard for to achieve equality. Right now, there's a battle between those suggesting measures to restrict who votes in order to suppress an expanded electorate and those who want to improve access to voting for all Americans. I am committed to improving access and am working in my role as Chairman of the State Government Committee to advance several bills that would bring voting into the way we live and work in the 21st Century.

Here are a few.

Early Voting – Allow people to vote up to a month in advance of the scheduled Election Day at designated locations. This is already happening in 40 other states.

The Ballot Comes to You – Have poll workers bring ballots to the vehicles of seniors, people with disabilities or temporary injuries who go to the polling place but cannot make it inside.

Your Vote Shouldn't Cost Your Job – Require employers to offer paid or no-fault unpaid leave for workers to get to their polling place to cast a ballot.

Show Up and Vote – Increase voter turnout by allowing same-day voter registration. Voters could register at their polling place on election day, instead of requiring preregistration weeks in advance.

Future Voters – Energize young voters to take part by getting them preregistered at age 16 or 17 and reminding them about voting at age 18.

Learn more about registering to vote, applying for your mail-in ballot and finding your polling place at www.votespa.com, or reach out to my office if you have any questions.

2020 GENERAL ELECTION IMPORTANT DATES

- OCT 19** Last day to register to vote for the general election.
register.votesPA.com
- OCT 27** Last day to apply for a mail-in or absentee ballot.
votesPA.com/ApplyMailBallot
- NOV 3** Voted mail-in and absentee ballots must be received by the county by 8pm.
votesPA.com/County
- NOV 3** General election day. Polls are open from 7am to 8pm.
votesPA.com/Polls

VotesPA.com



YOUR VOICE AND YOUR VOTE MATTERS

New voting options are the result of work by House State Government Committee

Vote by mail on Nov. 3 

Apply for a mail-in ballot now to stay safe during the COVID-19 health crisis

More Pennsylvanians are choosing to vote by mail than ever before due to the COVID-19 pandemic, so it's crucial that our elections system is prepared to handle the increased number of mailed ballots in November. As Democratic Chairman of the House State Government Committee, I have turned my focus on ensuring that elections are able to happen safely, securely,  without spreading COVID-19 through unnecessary and avoidable crowds.

I oversaw the legislation which enabled every Pennsylvania voter to cast their primary election ballot from the safety and security of their homes, in the same manner through which many Pennsylvanians have voted previously under the  absentee Ballot provisions of our state's constitution.

You can apply for your mail-in ballot online at www.VotesPA.com or call my office and we'll send you a hard-copy paper application. You also may request to have an application mailed to you by the County Board of Elections, by calling (215) 686-3469.

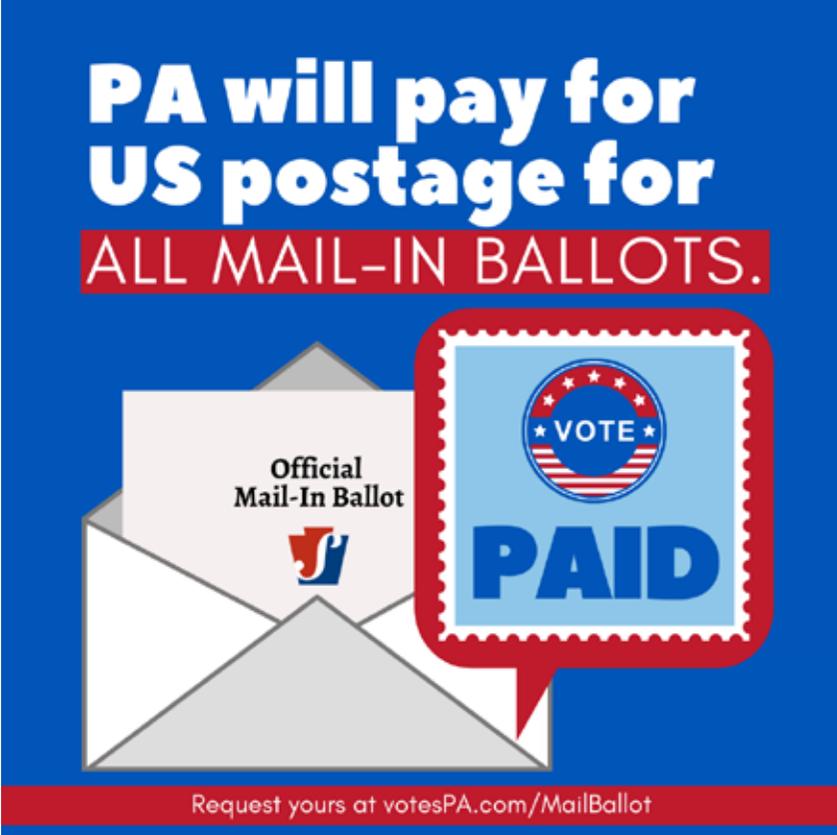
You've completed your ballot, now what?

Your  voted ballot must be RECEIVED by the County Board of Elections no later than 8 p.m. on Election Day. Make sure you mail it back in plenty of time for it to make it there by the deadline.

Or, you can place your voted ballot in one of several no-contact, drop-off boxes that will be available throughout the city.

Such drop-boxes  emptied once a day or more, can be found under camera, lock,  key in front of county election offices authorized via legislation to accept such mail ballots. These drop boxes allow for secure contactless drop-off of completed mail or absentee ballots in their sealed envelopes, with no wait time or risk of person-to-person contact – an important consideration given the current COVID-19 pandemic.

Mail voting is not a new concept for Pennsylvania or the United States. Mail voting began during the Civil War and has expanded and grown since that time. President Trump himself, and many members of his family and administration, have been confirmed as voting by mail regularly. As technology improves, voting by mail has become an eminently transparent, secure process – at least equal in safety and security to ballots cast in-person on  tion day.



PA will pay for US postage for ALL MAIL-IN BALLOTS.

Request yours at votesPA.com/MailBallot

The deadline to request a mail-in ballot is 5 p.m. uesday, Oct. 27

Contact my office for a list of ballot drop-off boxes that will be located throughout the city.

Philadelphia Elections Commission Contacts

Elections

Mr. Garrett Dietz

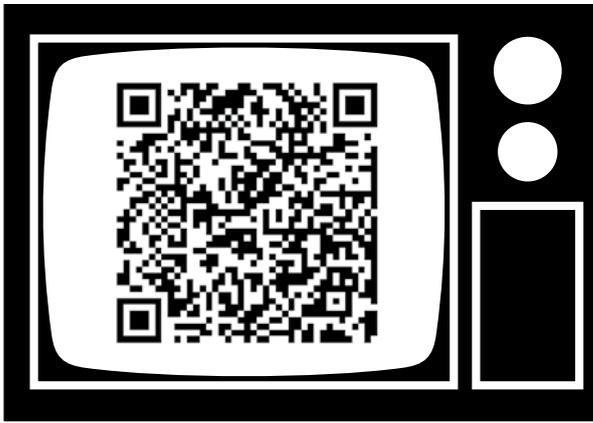
(215) 686-3469

Voter Registration

Mr. Greg Irving

(215) 686-1590





VIDEO COVERAGE

Many State Government Committee meetings and public hearings are streamed live at www.pahouse.com/live. If you miss a meeting while it's happening, I regularly post video clips of the main bill or bills we're addressing.

Scan this code with your smart phone camera to watch short clips of the committee in action, public policy hearings and my thoughts on legislation as it's being debated.

Mask-up Philly!

Health experts have stressed that one of the best ways we can personally prevent the spread of COVID-19 is by wearing a mask in public.

It protects our community from experiencing another painful surge in cases that resulted in the loss of thousands of precious lives in Philadelphia.

- It's a simple way to prevent the spread of this deadly virus when social distancing is not possible.
- It protects your freedoms and daily needs by helping Pennsylvania avoid another shutdown.

Please, mask-up when you leave your home.

When I'm out in public and at work, I wear a mask. Here, I'm taking notes at a public hearing in June on strategies to safely reopen schools while the coronavirus health crisis continues.



STAY UP TO DATE

For the latest on COVID-19 in Pennsylvania, Please check the following resources.

Health Department: health.pa.gov

Philadelphia: www.phila.gov

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: cdc.gov

My website: www.pahouse.com/Boyle

Greater Philadelphia Coronavirus Helpline: 1-800-722-7112

Complete the 2020 Census by Sept. 30!

The census count of U.S. residents helps determine how \$675 billion is spent by the federal government and how Pennsylvania is represented in Congress for the next 10 years.

Our community is in danger of being undercounted, which is bad news for neighborhood schools, public transportation, and assistance programs – since federal funds for these are tied to the census. 

You can help ensure that our community gets our fair share of funding by responding to the census online at www.2020census.gov, by paper or over the phone.

September 30th is the final day to self-respond to the census. 

THE CENSUS COUNTS.

SO DO YOU.



CENSUS COUNTS 2020



STATE REPRESENTATIVE

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INSIDE:

- State Government Committee action
- Important election deadlines
- Improving access to voting

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My office can help you ~~with:~~



- Troubleshoot issues with unemployment claims.
 - Find state and local programs to help you put food on your family's table during this health and economic crisis.
 - Put you in touch with the legal experts on expungement and clearing your record.
 - Apply for the Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program.
 - Find and complete forms for car registrations, special tags, handicap placards, vehicle titles and driver's license needs.
 - Provide information on financial assistance for higher education.
 - Access voter registration and mail-in/absentee ballot applications.
 - Request birth and death certificates.
 - Resolve issues with the Department of Human Services (food stamps, medical and income assistance).
 - Find answers to Pennsylvania income tax questions or problems.
 - Obtain literature ~~of all kinds~~ – bills, regulations, statutes, Pennsylvania maps, senior citizen information.
 - Deal with complaints or questions about utilities and the Public Utility Commission, as well as problems with insurance companies.
- My district office is open by appointment only Monday through Friday. Please call (215) 331-2600 for help with these or other issues.**