

# Modernizing the Vote

## Pennsylvania's New Voting Reforms

In October 2019, the Pennsylvania General Assembly passed and Governor Wolf signed into law legislation (S.B. 421, Act 77) to make voting more convenient and secure. The new law is the most significant improvement to Pennsylvania's elections in more than 80 years. The bipartisan law takes effect for the April 2020 primary election and makes Pennsylvania a national leader with voter-friendly election reforms.

The law created a new option to vote by mail up to 50 days before an election and be placed on a list to permanently receive a ballot application by mail. It also provided more time to register to vote and authorized a \$90 million bond to help counties fund the purchase of new voting systems with a paper trail that strengthens the security of our elections.

Improving and modernizing the opportunity to vote increases turnout. According to a 2016 U.S. Government Accountability Office report, providing more days to register to vote and no-excuse mail-in ballots increased voter participation by more than 4 percent. That is nearly 250,000 votes in Pennsylvania.

### MORE WAYS TO VOTE

#### No excuse mail-in voting

The law creates a new option to vote by mail without providing an excuse, which was previously required for voters using absentee ballots. Pennsylvania joins 31 other states and Washington, D.C., with mail-in voting that removes barriers to elections.

#### Permanent mail-in and absentee ballot list

Voters can request to receive applications for mail-in or absentee ballots for all primary, general and special elections held in a given year. Counties will mail applications to voters on the list by the first Monday of each February. Voters who return an application will receive ballots for each election scheduled through the next February. Pennsylvania is the 12th state to provide voters with the automatic option.

#### Learn more and apply for mail-in voting at:

[www.montcopa.org/754/Absentee-and-Mail-In-Voting](http://www.montcopa.org/754/Absentee-and-Mail-In-Voting)

[www.votesPA.com/applymailballot](http://www.votesPA.com/applymailballot)

### MORE ACCESSIBLE ELECTIONS

#### 50-day mail-in voting period

All voters can request and submit their mail-in or absentee ballot up to 50 days before the election, which is the longest vote-by-mail period in the country.

#### 15 more days to register to vote

The deadline to register to vote is extended to 15 days from 30 days before an election. Cutting the previous deadline by half enables more people to participate in elections. Pennsylvanians now have more time to register to vote than 24 other states thanks to this new, voter-friendly deadline.

#### Extends mail-in and absentee submission deadlines

Voters can submit mail-in and absentee ballots until 8 p.m. on Election Day. The previous deadline was 5 p.m. on the Friday before an election, which was the most restrictive in the country. Pennsylvanians submitted 195,378 absentee ballots in 2018, but 8,162 – more than 4 percent – missed the deadline and were rejected. The national average is only 2 percent.

**2020 Primary Election: April 28**

**2020 General Election: Nov. 3**

Please contact my office if you have a question about Pennsylvania's new voting reforms or any state-related matter.



State Representative • 150th Legislative District

## Joe Webster

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