



STATE REPRESENTATIVE

Kevin Boyle

Democratic Chairman, *House State Government Committee*

Fall 2019

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The good & the bad with the new Election Reform Law

I believe voters in Pennsylvania should have the option to cast a straight-party ballot on Election Day. Earlier this year, Senate Bill 48 was drafted to provide much-needed funding to counties to upgrade voting machines, but it included language that would eliminate straight-party voting on the new machines.

As the Democratic Chairman of the House State Government Committee, I fought S.B. 48 while it was in the committee, and I fought it and voted against it in the House Chamber. Thankfully, Gov. Tom Wolf vetoed the bill after it passed the House and the Senate.

I again fought to keep straight-party voting as an option in another piece of legislation that ultimately passed both chambers and the governor signed into law. While the new Election Reform Law does not provide the option of straight-party voting, it does expand access to voters across the commonwealth. It will allow Pennsylvanians to vote-by-mail in a safe, secure and reliable manner. People can also register to vote 15 days before an election and apply for an absentee ballot, no questions asked.

The new law provides \$4 million to help Pennsylvania

promote an accurate and complete census. By making sure people are counted, the census outcome will determine how more than \$675 billion in federal funds will be distributed, including funding for new roads, better health care, and more support for citizens and better schools.

Despite the good things offered in the Election Reform Law, I believe the lack of straight-ticket voting is a bad thing. This could have a negative impact on voter turnout. Voting is about choices, yet the law took away Pennsylvanians' choice to vote straight ticket. Some positive changes could have still been done without removing this voting option.

Eliminating the convenience of straight-ticket voting will have a much heavier impact on working-class voters, who have limited time to wait in line to cast their ballots. The right to vote should not limit how people cast their ballot.

While I certainly applaud the positive aspects of the Election Reform Law, I believe eliminating the straight-party voting option was bad policy. I hope it can make its return on ballots in the near future.



REAL ID REMINDER

Beginning Oct. 1, 2020, a REAL ID-compliant driver's license or ID card, or a U.S. Passport or Military ID, will be necessary to board a domestic commercial flight or enter a secure federal facility.

To obtain a REAL ID-compliant driver's license or ID card, you will need to bring all of the following documentation to a full-service Driver's License Center:

- ☐ Proof of identity (original birth certificate with a raised seal, or a valid U.S. Passport)
- ☐ a Social Security card
- ☐ Proof of all legal name changes (marriage license or court order from applicable county's family court)
- ☐ Two proofs of current, physical PA address (unexpired PA license or ID and a no-more-than-90-day-old bank statement or utility bill with the same name and address)

The closest full-service Driver's License Center location is:
2904 S. 70th St.
Philadelphia, PA 19142

PennDOT is advising customers who want REAL ID-compliant licenses or ID cards to apply as soon as possible.

More information for REAL ID can be found at www.dmv.pa.gov/REALID/.

Advocating for high-speed internet access for all

In this day and age, it's hard to imagine not having access to the internet. Believe it or not, there are portions of Pennsylvania still without it.

Luckily, there is legislation that would expand the availability of high-speed internet service in underserved and unserved parts of the commonwealth. House Bill 305 made its way through the House State Government Committee, unanimously passed in the House and is now in the Senate.

The bill would direct the Department of General Services to conduct an inventory of all state department, agency, commission and institution-owned communication towers, poles, buildings and facilities. This would leverage state-owned assets for supplying high-speed broadband internet to those areas that need it. H.B 305 is part of a legislative package with two additional measures that are pending further action.

House Resolution 63 would direct the Joint State Government Commission to conduct an audit of – and investigation into – the compliance by non-rural telecommunications carriers with previously enacted broadband telecommunications laws. It is in the Consumer Affairs Committee.

House Resolution 64 would establish a bipartisan, bicameral commission to provide recommendations to deploy broadband services. It is currently in the State Government Committee.



Public hearing on impact of election legislation

The House State Government Committee held a public hearing in June to discuss various pieces of election legislation. Many of these bills are currently sitting in the committee awaiting action.

These bills hit on a variety of issues impacting the election process in the commonwealth, including:

- ☐ Permitting independent voters to cast their ballots in primary elections
- ☐ Offering curbside voting and permanent absentee ballots for people with disabilities
- ☐ Extending the absentee ballot deadline
- ☐ Automatically sending absentee ballots to voters who are on the permanent absentee ballot list
- ☐ Same-day voter registration and automatic voter registration to people who access any state service
- ☐ Early voting and voting by mail (now part of Election Reform Law)
- ☐ Authorizing two-hour paid time off to cast a ballot

The committee also discussed legislation that would make candidates and their campaign contributions more transparent. During the hearing, one of my Democratic colleagues explained that in current Pennsylvania statute, there is a requirement that a lantern be a source of light at polling places. Clearly, our Election Code is antiquated and should be rewritten, since the last time it was done was in 1937!

We need to ensure that our election process in Pennsylvania is fair and transparent for everyone.



Voting made easier with absentee ballots, no excuse voting

As the Democratic Chairman of the House State Government Committee, I am always advocating for making the voting process easier in Pennsylvania. That includes providing the opportunity to vote for those who cannot make it to the polls on election days.

Pennsylvania has launched an online application that allows registered voters to obtain an absentee ballot.

Previously, the only option for completing an absentee ballot application was through mail or hand-delivery to a county election office.

This undoubtedly quickens the application process and makes it more accessible for thousands of voters.

You can also now 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.

For more information on voting by absentee ballot, visit **www.votespa.com**.



Policy hearing on hospital closures

When Hahnemann University Hospital announced in the summer that it was closing, I requested a House Democratic Policy Committee hearing to discuss what more the state could do to address the impact to the community and public health when a hospital plans to close.

During the hearing, we also discussed Jefferson University Hospital entering negotiation agreements for the potential sale of Fox Chase Cancer Center, which has since gone through. Fox Chase Cancer Center is in my district and is among the few facilities across the country devoted to cancer treatment, ranking 21st among the nation's top 50 hospitals for cancer care by U.S. News & World Report.

Public hearing on redistricting

The House State Government Committee held a public hearing on redistricting in September with a packed house. This is expected to be the first of several hearings that the committee will have on this topic.

We heard testimony from experts from across the country and from here in Pennsylvania, including the National Conference of State Legislatures, the California Citizens Redistricting Commission, Fair Districts PA and the Committee of Seventy.

The committee learned that in most states, redistricting commissions are linked to their legislatures. Only Arizona and California created commissions by voter initiatives and not legislative action. In California, every line in the redistricting map was drawn in open, public forums rather than a secret backroom process. This poll found that voters approved the maps using this process by a margin of two-to-one.

We also heard that the people of Pennsylvania object to legislative leaders undermining the principle of one-person, one-vote, and that new mapping and data mining technologies have made it increasingly possible for unequal maps to be drawn.

The Pennsylvania Redistricting Reform Commission delivered its final report to the governor and leaders of the General Assembly on Aug. 29, and it includes the commission's findings and a recommended process for redistricting. It was based on the commonwealth's current redistricting processes, survey reforms in other states, and hearing the thoughts, opinions and concerns of voters across Pennsylvania.

The General Assembly has the power to pass redistricting reform in Pennsylvania in time before the next round of redrawing maps takes place. There are two pieces of legislation (H.B. 22 and H.B. 23) that would move us closer to reform. Voters in the commonwealth want districts to be fair and reflect their communities, and we owe it to them to make that happen.





Office of the
PHILADELPHIA
CITY COMMISSIONERS

Philadelphia's New Voting System Simple & Secure



Security: The system has been certified by both the Federal EAC and the Pennsylvania Department of State. As part of the state certification, the system was sent to an independent security consultant for security and penetration testing. Tests were done to ensure that election results, media used, reports, and audit logs were protected from attempts to decrypt, manipulate, or corrupt election data. The system also meets requirements written by the Office of Innovation and Technology security experts. The hardware, election media, and ballots are secured with lock and key and security seals.

Fully ADA-Compliant: Accommodates the full range of human diversity, including physical, perceptual and cognitive abilities. Screen is adjustable for both standing and seated voters. An accessible keypad equipped with braille and the ability to use rocker panel and Sip-and-Puff devices allows voters with disabilities to make selections, to verify their ballot, and cast their votes at the same machines used by all voters.



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Call to end gun violence

Following the mass shootings in Dayton, Ohio, and El Paso, Texas, I joined some of my Democratic colleagues to call for a special session of the House and Senate to address gun violence in Philadelphia and across Pennsylvania.

Just weeks after our news conference, Gov. Wolf took some action. He signed an executive order to create a special council on gun violence with members from state departments and advisory committees, establish the Office of Gun Violence Prevention and the Division of Violence Prevention that would enforce oversight and data sharing, create initiatives to reduce gun violence and combat mass shootings and prevent domestic violence-related shootings and suicides.

While this is a great first step, it's not enough. We as lawmakers and leaders must pass commonsense gun safety reform. We owe it to all those whom we can save who are not yet victims of gun violence, but who could be if we don't act.

Great National Night Out in Fox Chase

Thanks to everyone who came out for my annual National Night Out event in Fox Chase. It was a great opportunity for families to enjoy activities, games, free food, entertainment and to meet and talk with local law enforcement.

Prior to the event, people were able to participate in a Community Bike Ride with the 2nd and 7th Police Districts.

I am already looking forward to next year's event!

