



House & Senate Election Reform Proposals

June 15, 2021 — Pennsylvania legislative Republicans, who control both chambers of the General Assembly, are attempting to make major changes to the state's election rules. **There are some good things in both plans.**

But considering the provisions that limit equal access to the ballot and create barriers to our freedom to vote, **members of our coalition currently oppose both [H.B. 1300](#) and the [Senate Special Committee on Election Integrity and Reform plan](#).**

Making it harder to register to vote:

- Move the voter registration deadline further back from the current 15-day deadline. (As context, 12,755 Democrats and 18,583 Republicans registered to vote for the first time in the two to three weeks before the 2020 election.) **This also takes us further away from same-day voter registration.**

Making it harder to vote by mail:

- Move the deadline for requesting mail-in ballots to two weeks before Election Day, instead of one week, as it is now.
- Require signature verification for mail-in ballots.
- Eliminate the permanent mail voting list. (The Senate proposal does not actually say it should be removed, but it flags this as a problem.)

Making it harder to vote in person:

- Require every voter to present identification at the polls.
- Eliminate in-person absentee early voting at county election offices. (This is only in the House bill.)
- Limit the use of drop boxes. (This is only in the House measure.)

Making it harder to count votes:

- In certain circumstances, if an "excess" of votes are found to be errant, then the county Board of Elections can toss out the results from an entire precinct, although there is no clear definition of what "excess" equals. (This is only in the House measure.)

Finding bipartisan agreement:

There is no way that all of these bad provisions can make it into law. **Small change is better than no change at all**, so before lawmakers go home for the summer, hopefully the General Assembly can move on these three things where there is wide agreement across the aisle:

- Electronic poll books.
- Increased poll worker pay and more resources in general for county election operations.
- Allow counties to start processing mail-in ballots two weeks before Election Day, so that voters have a chance to correct any simple mistakes AND so that we can know who won the election hours or days, not weeks, after the election is over.