

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 2839 Session of
1994

INTRODUCED BY PERZEL, MAY 23, 1994

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT, MAY 23, 1994

AN ACT

1 Amending the act of June 3, 1937 (P.L.1333, No.320), entitled
2 "An act concerning elections, including general, municipal,
3 special and primary elections, the nomination of candidates,
4 primary and election expenses and election contests; creating
5 and defining membership of county boards of elections;
6 imposing duties upon the Secretary of the Commonwealth,
7 courts, county boards of elections, county commissioners;
8 imposing penalties for violation of the act, and codifying,
9 revising and consolidating the laws relating thereto; and
10 repealing certain acts and parts of acts relating to
11 elections," further providing for voting by qualified
12 absentee electors, for election returns and for appeals of
13 county board decisions.

14 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
15 hereby enacts as follows:

16 Section 1. Article XIII of the act of June 3, 1937
17 (P.L.1333, No.320), known as the Pennsylvania Election Code, is
18 repealed.

19 Section 2. The act is amended by adding an article to read:

20 ARTICLE XIII

21 Voting by Qualified Absentee Electors

22 Section 1301. Qualified Absentee Electors.--

23 (a) The following persons shall be entitled to vote by an

1 official absentee ballot in any election held in this
2 Commonwealth in the manner hereinafter provided:

3 (1) Any qualified elector who is or who may be in the
4 military service of the United States regardless of whether at
5 the time of voting he is present in the election district of his
6 residence or is within or without this Commonwealth and
7 regardless of whether he is registered or enrolled;

8 (2) Any qualified elector who is a spouse or dependent
9 residing with or accompanying a person in the military service
10 of the United States if at the time of voting the spouse or
11 dependent is absent from the county of his residence and the
12 elector has been registered or enrolled according to law or is
13 entitled under the act of March 30, 1937 (P.L.115, No.40), known
14 as "The First Class City Permanent Registration Act," or the act
15 of April 29, 1937 (P.L.487, No.115), known as "The Permanent
16 Registration Act for Cities of the Second Class, Cities of the
17 Second Class A, Cities of the Third Class, Boroughs, Towns, and
18 Townships," to absentee registration prior to or concurrently
19 with the time of voting;

20 (3) Any qualified elector who is or who may be in the
21 service of the Merchant Marine of the United States if at the
22 time of voting he is absent from the county of his residence if
23 the elector has been registered or enrolled according to law or
24 is entitled under "The First Class City Permanent Registration
25 Act" or "The Permanent Registration Act for Cities of the Second
26 Class, Cities of the Second Class A, Cities of the Third Class,
27 Boroughs, Towns, and Townships" to absentee registration prior
28 to or concurrently with the time of voting;

29 (4) Any qualified elector who is a spouse or dependent
30 residing with or accompanying a person who is in the service of

the Merchant Marine of the United States if at the time of voting the spouse or dependent is absent from the county of his residence and the elector has been registered or enrolled according to law or is entitled under "The First Class City Permanent Registration Act" or "The Permanent Registration Act for Cities of the Second Class, Cities of the Second Class A, Cities of the Third Class, Boroughs, Towns, and Townships" to absentee registration prior to or concurrently with the time of voting;

(5) Any qualified elector who is or who may be in a religious or welfare group officially attached to and serving with the armed forces if at the time of voting he is absent from the county of his residence if the elector has been registered or enrolled according to law or is entitled under "The First Class City Permanent Registration Act" or "The Permanent Registration Act for Cities of the Second Class, Cities of the Second Class A, Cities of the Third Class, Boroughs, Towns, and Townships" to absentee registration prior to or concurrently with the time of voting;

(6) Any qualified elector who is a spouse or dependent residing with or accompanying a person in a religious or welfare group officially attached to and serving with the armed forces if at the time of voting the spouse or dependent is absent from the county of his residence and if the elector has been registered or enrolled according to law or is entitled under "The First Class City Permanent Registration Act" or "The Permanent Registration Act for Cities of the Second Class, Cities of the Second Class A, Cities of the Third Class, Boroughs, Towns, and Townships" to absentee registration prior to or concurrently with the time of voting;

1 (7) Any qualified elector who expects to be or is outside
2 the territorial limits of the several states of the United
3 States and the District of Columbia because his duties,
4 occupation or business require him to be elsewhere during the
5 entire period the polls are open for voting on the day of any
6 election or who is or who may be a civilian employe of the
7 United States outside the territorial limits of the several
8 states of the United States and the District of Columbia,
9 whether or not the elector is subject to civil-service laws and
10 5 United States Code § 5101 et seq. and whether or not paid from
11 funds appropriated by the Congress, if at the time of voting the
12 elector is absent from the county of residence and the elector
13 has been registered or enrolled according to law or is entitled
14 under "The First Class City Permanent Registration Act" or "The
15 Permanent Registration Act for Cities of the Second Class,
16 Cities of the Second Class A, Cities of the Third Class,
17 Boroughs, Towns, and Townships" to absentee registration prior
18 to or concurrently with the time of voting;

19 (8) Any qualified elector who is a spouse or dependent
20 residing with or accompanying a person who expects to be or is
21 outside the territorial limits of the several states of the
22 United States and the District of Columbia because his duties,
23 occupation or business require him to be elsewhere during the
24 entire period the polls are open for voting on the day of any
25 election or who is a spouse or dependent residing with or
26 accompanying a person who is a civilian employe of the United
27 States outside the territorial limits of the several states of
28 the United States and the District of Columbia, whether or not
29 the person is subject to civil service laws and 5 United States
30 Code § 5101 et seq. and whether or not paid from funds

appropriated by the Congress, if at the time of voting the spouse or dependent is absent from the county of his residence and the elector has been registered or enrolled according to law or is entitled under "The First Class City Permanent Registration Act" or "The Permanent Registration Act for Cities of the Second Class, Cities of the Second Class A, Cities of the Third Class, Boroughs, Towns, and Townships" to absentee registration prior to or concurrently with the time of voting;

(9) Any qualified war veteran elector who is bedridden or hospitalized due to illness or physical disability if he is absent from this Commonwealth or county of his residence and unable to attend his polling place because of the illness or physical disability regardless of whether he is registered and enrolled;

(10) Any qualified registered and enrolled elector who expects to be or is absent from the county of his residence because his duties, occupation or business require him to be elsewhere during the entire period the polls are open for voting on the day of any election;

(11) Any qualified registered and enrolled elector who because of illness or physical disability is unable to attend his polling place or operate a voting machine and secure assistance by distinct and audible statement as required in section 1218 of this act;

(12) Any qualified registered and enrolled elector who is a spouse or dependent accompanying a person employed in the service of the Commonwealth or in the service of the Federal Government within the territorial limits of the several states of the United States and the District of Columbia in the event the duties, profession or occupation of the person require him

1 to be absent from this Commonwealth or county of his residence;

2 (13) Any qualified elector who is a county employe who
3 cannot vote due to duties on election day relating to the
4 conduct of the election; or

5 (14) Any qualified elector who will not attend a polling
6 place because of the observance of a religious holiday.

7 (b) The words "qualified absentee elector" shall not be
8 construed to include persons confined in a penal institution or
9 a mental institution nor shall "qualified absentee elector" in
10 any way be construed to include a person not otherwise qualified
11 as a qualified elector in accordance with the definition set
12 forth in section 102(t) of this act.

13 Section 1302. Applications for Official Absentee Ballots.--

14 (a) The following provisions shall apply to qualified
15 electors as defined in subsection (a)(1) through (8) of section
16 1301:

17 (1) Any qualified elector may apply at any time before an
18 election for an official absentee ballot in person, on any form
19 supplied by the Federal Government, or on any official county
20 board of elections form addressed to the Secretary of the
21 Commonwealth or the county board of elections of the county in
22 which his voting residence is located.

23 (2) The application shall contain the following information:
24 Home residence at the time of entrance into actual military
25 service or Federal employment, length of time a citizen, length
26 of residence in Pennsylvania, date of birth, length of time a
27 resident of voting district, voting district if known, party
28 choice in case of primary, name and, for a military elector, his
29 stateside military address, FPO or APO number and serial number.
30 Any elector other than a military elector shall in addition

specify the nature of his employment, the address to which ballot is to be sent, relationship where necessary and other information as may be determined and prescribed by the Secretary of the Commonwealth. When the application is received by the Secretary of the Commonwealth it shall be forwarded to the proper county board of elections.

(3) The application of any qualified military elector, as defined in subsection (a)(1) of section 1301, for an official absentee ballot in any election may not be made over the signature of any person other than the qualified elector or an adult member of his immediate family, as required in subsection (a)(2) of section 1301.

(4) The application of any qualified elector for an official absentee ballot in any election shall be signed by the applicant.

(b) The following provisions shall apply to bedridden or hospitalized veteran electors as defined in subsection (a)(9) of section 1301:

(1) Any qualified bedridden or hospitalized veteran absent from the county of residence and unable to reach the polling place because of such illness or physical disability, regardless of whether the veteran is registered or enrolled, may apply at any time before any election for an official absentee ballot on any official county board of elections form.

(2) The application shall contain the following information: Residence at the time of becoming bedridden or hospitalized, length of time a citizen, length of residence in Pennsylvania, date of birth, length of time a resident in voting district, voting district if known, party choice in case of primary, name and address of present residence or hospital at which

1 hospitalized. When the application is received by the Secretary
2 of the Commonwealth, it shall be forwarded to the proper county
3 board of elections.

4 (3) The application for an official absentee ballot for any
5 election shall be made on information supplied over the
6 signature of the bedridden or hospitalized veteran as required
7 in subsection (a)(2) of section 1301.

8 (c) The following provisions shall apply to qualified
9 electors defined in subsection (a)(10) through (14) of section
10 1301:

11 (1) Any qualified registered elector may apply to the county
12 board of elections of the county in which the elector's voting
13 residence is located for an official absentee ballot. The
14 application shall be made upon an official application form
15 prepared by the county board of elections.

16 (2) The application of an elector shall be signed by the
17 applicant and shall include the surname and given name or names
18 of the applicant, occupation, date of birth, length of time a
19 resident in voting district, voting district if known, place of
20 residence, post office address to which ballot is to be mailed,
21 the reason for the absence and other information as shall make
22 clear to the county board of elections the applicant's right to
23 an official absentee ballot.

24 (3) The application of any qualified registered elector who
25 is unable to attend the polling place on the day of any election
26 because of illness or physical disability shall be signed by the
27 applicant and shall include surname and given name or names of
28 the applicant, occupation, date of birth, residence at the time,
29 length of time a resident in voting district, voting district if
30 known, place of residence, post office address to which ballot

1 is to be mailed, date of application and other information as
2 shall make clear to the county board of elections the
3 applicant's right to an official ballot. In addition, the
4 application of such electors shall include a declaration stating
5 the nature of their disability or illness, and the name, office
6 address and office telephone number of their attending
7 physician. However, in the event any elector entitled to an
8 absentee ballot under this subsection is unable to sign the
9 application because of illness or physical disability, the
10 elector shall be excused from signing upon making a statement
11 which shall be witnessed by one adult person in substantially
12 the following form: I hereby state that I am unable to sign my
13 application for an absentee ballot without assistance because I
14 am unable to write by reason of my illness or physical
15 disability. I have made or have received assistance in making my
16 mark in lieu of my signature.

17(Mark)

18(Date)

19

20(Complete Address of Witness)(Signature of Witness)

21 (4) Any qualified registered elector, who is unable because
22 of illness or physical disability to attend the polling place on
23 the day of any election or operate a voting machine and state
24 distinctly and audibly that he is unable to do so as required by
25 section 1218 of this act may, with the certification by an
26 attending physician that the elector is permanently disabled and
27 physically unable to attend the polls or operate a voting
28 machine and make the distinct and audible statement required by
29 section 1218 appended to the application hereinbefore required,
30 be placed on a permanently disabled absentee ballot list file.

1 An absentee ballot application shall be mailed to every person
2 on the permanently disabled absentee ballot list file for each
3 election so long as the elector does not lose voting rights by
4 failure to vote as otherwise required by this act. The person
5 shall not be required to file a physician's certificate of
6 disability with each application as required in clause (3) of
7 this section but the person must submit a written statement
8 asserting continuing disability every four years in order to
9 maintain eligibility to vote under the provisions of this
10 subsection. Should any person lose a disability, the person
11 shall inform the county board of elections of the county of
12 residence.

13 Section 1303. Absentee Ballot Applications.--

14 (a) An application for an absentee ballot shall be made on
15 an official application form prepared by the county board of
16 elections in a manner prescribed by the Secretary of the
17 Commonwealth.

18 (1) Application forms shall be made freely available to the
19 public at county boards of elections offices, municipal
20 buildings and at other locations designated by the Secretary of
21 the Commonwealth.

22 (2) No written application or individual request shall be
23 necessary to receive an application form.

24 (3) The county board of elections shall number, in
25 chronological order, the applications for an official absentee
26 ballot. The number shall also appear on the official absentee
27 ballot for the qualified elector. The numbers shall appear
28 legibly and in a conspicuous place. Before the ballots are
29 distributed, the number on the ballot shall be torn off by the
30 county board of elections. This number information shall be made

a part of the Registered Absentee Voters File and the Military, Veterans and Emergency Civilian Absentee Voters File provided in section 1306.

(4) Copies of all completed applications for official absentee ballots shall be retained by the county board of elections.

(b) The application shall state, in boldface type, that a voter who receives an absentee ballot pursuant to section 1301 and who, on election day, is capable of voting at the appropriate polling place must void the absentee ballot and vote in the normal manner at the appropriate polling place.

Section 1304. Date of Application for Absentee Ballot.--

(a) Applications for absentee ballots unless otherwise specified shall be received in the office of the county board of elections not earlier than fifty (50) days before the election and not later than 5 o'clock P.M. of the first Tuesday prior to the day of any election.

(b) In the event any elector otherwise qualified who is so physically disabled or ill on or before the first Tuesday prior to any election that the elector is unable to file an application or who becomes physically disabled or ill after the first Tuesday prior to any election and is unable to appear at the polling place or any elector otherwise qualified who because of the conduct of business, duties or occupation will necessarily be absent from the county of residence on the day of the election, which fact was not and could not reasonably be known to the elector on or before the first Tuesday prior to any election, shall be entitled to an absentee ballot at any time prior to 2 o'clock P.M. on the day preceding any election upon execution of an emergency application in the form prescribed by

1 the Secretary of the Commonwealth. A challenge to an emergency
2 application or ballot may be made at any time prior to 2 o'clock
3 P.M. on the day preceding the election.

4 (1) In the case of an elector who is physically disabled or
5 ill on or before the first Tuesday prior to an election or
6 becomes physically disabled or ill after the first Tuesday prior
7 to an election, such emergency application shall contain a
8 supporting affidavit from the attending physician stating that
9 due to physical disability or illness the elector was unable to
10 apply for an absentee ballot on or before the first Tuesday
11 prior to the election or became physically disabled or ill after
12 that period.

13 (2) In the case of an elector who is necessarily absent
14 because of the conduct of business, duties or occupation under
15 the unforeseen circumstances specified in this subsection, the
16 emergency application shall contain a supporting affidavit from
17 the elector stating that because of the conduct of business,
18 duties or occupation the elector will necessarily be absent from
19 the county of residence on the day of the election which fact
20 was not and could not reasonably be known to the elector on or
21 before the first Tuesday prior to the election.

22 Section 1305. Approval of Application for Absentee Ballot.--

23 (a) The county board of elections, upon receipt of an
24 application filed by a qualified elector who is entitled to an
25 absentee ballot under section 1301, shall ascertain from the
26 information on the application, district register or from any
27 other source that the applicant possesses all the qualifications
28 of a qualified elector. If the board is satisfied that the
29 applicant is qualified to receive an official absentee ballot,
30 the application shall be marked approved. The approval decision

1 shall be final and binding except that challenges may be made
2 only on the ground that the applicant did not possess
3 qualifications of an absentee elector. Challenges must be made
4 to the county board of elections prior to 5 o'clock P.M. on the
5 first Friday prior to the election. When so approved, the county
6 board of elections shall cause the applicant's name and
7 residence (and at a primary, the party enrollment) to be
8 inserted in the Military, Veterans and Emergency Civilians
9 Absentee Voters File as provided in subsection (b) of section
10 1306. However, no application of any qualified elector in
11 military service shall be rejected for failure to include on the
12 application any information if the information may be
13 ascertained within a reasonable time by the county board of
14 elections.

15 (b) The duties of the county boards of elections and the
16 registration commissions with respect to the insertion of the
17 absentee voter's temporary registration card of any elector from
18 the district register as set forth in this section shall include
19 only the applications and emergency applications as are received
20 on or before the first Tuesday prior to the election. In all
21 cases where applications are received after the first Tuesday
22 prior to the election and before 5 o'clock P.M. on the first
23 Friday prior to the election, the county board of elections
24 shall determine the qualifications of the applicant by comparing
25 the information set forth on the application with the
26 information contained on the applicant's duplicate registration
27 card on file in the General Register (also referred to as the
28 Master File) in the office of the Registration Commission and
29 shall cause the name and residence (and at primaries, the party
30 enrollment) to be inserted in the Military, Veterans and

Emergency Civilian Absentee Voters File as provided in subsection (b) of section 1306. In addition, the local district boards of elections shall, upon canvassing the official absentee ballots under section 1315, examine the voting check list of the election district of the elector's residence and satisfy itself that the elector did not cast any ballot other than the one properly issued under the absentee ballot application. In all cases where the examination of the local district board of elections discloses that an elector did vote a ballot other than the one properly issued under the absentee ballot application, the local district board of elections shall thereupon cancel the absentee ballot and the elector shall be subject to the penalties as set forth under this act.

(c) In the event that any application for an official absentee ballot is not approved by the county board of elections, the elector shall be notified immediately to that effect with a statement by the county board of the reasons for the disapproval. If an application is rejected because it is incomplete, a copy of the original application shall be maintained by the county board.

(d) The absentee voter's temporary registration card shall be in duplicate and the same size as the permanent registration card, in a different and contrasting color to the permanent registration card, and shall contain the absentee voter's name and address and shall conspicuously contain the words "Absentee Voter." The card shall also contain the affidavit required by subsection (a) of section 1313.

Section 1306. Absentee Electors Files and Lists.--

(a) The county board of elections shall maintain at its office a file containing the duplicate absentee voter's

1 temporary registration cards of every registered elector to whom
2 an absentee ballot has been sent. These duplicate absentee
3 voter's temporary registration cards shall be filed by election
4 districts and within each election district in exact
5 alphabetical order and indexed. The registration cards so filed
6 shall constitute the Registered Absentee Voters File for the
7 Election of (date of election) and shall be kept on file for a
8 period commencing the Tuesday prior to the day of the election
9 until sixty (60) days following the election. In the event of an
10 election-related challenge or contest, the file shall be
11 maintained for five (5) years following the election. The file
12 shall be open to public inspection at all times subject to
13 reasonable safeguards, rules and regulations.

14 (b) The county board of elections shall post in a
15 conspicuous public place at its office a master list arranged in
16 alphabetical order by election districts setting forth the name
17 and residence, and at primaries, the party enrollment, of (1)
18 every military elector to whom an absentee ballot is being sent,
19 each such name to be prefixed with an "M"; (2) every bedridden
20 or hospitalized veteran outside the county of his residence who
21 is not registered and to whom an absentee ballot is being sent,
22 each such name to be prefixed with a "V"; and (3) every
23 registered elector who has filed an application for an absentee
24 ballot too late for the extraction of the original registration
25 card and to whom a ballot is being sent and every qualified
26 elector who has filed the application for an absentee ballot and
27 is entitled, under the act of March 30, 1937 (P.L.115, No.40),
28 known as "The First Class City Permanent Registration Act," or
29 the act of April 29, 1937 (P.L.487, No.115), known as "The
30 Permanent Registration Act for Cities of the Second Class,

1 Cities of the Second Class A, Cities of the Third Class,
2 Boroughs, Towns, and Townships," to absentee registration prior
3 to or concurrently with the time of voting, each such name to be
4 prefixed with a "C." This list shall be known as the Military,
5 Veterans and Emergency Civilians Absentee Voters File for the
6 Election of (date of election) and shall be posted for a period
7 commencing the Tuesday prior to the day of the election until
8 the day following the election or the day on which the county
9 board of elections certifies the returns of the election,
10 whichever date is later. The file shall be open to public
11 inspection at all times subject to reasonable safeguards, rules
12 and regulations. This posted list shall not contain any military
13 address or references to any military organization. Upon written
14 request, the county board shall furnish a copy of such list to
15 any candidate or party county chairman.

16 (c) Not less than five (5) days preceding the election, the
17 county board of elections shall prepare a list for each election
18 district showing the names and post office addresses of all
19 voting residents thereof to whom official absentee ballots shall
20 have been issued. This list shall be known as the Absentee
21 Ballot Application List. Each list shall be prepared in
22 duplicate, shall be headed "Persons in (give identity of
23 election district) to whom absentee ballots have been issued for
24 the election of (date of election)," and shall be signed by him
25 not less than four days preceding the election. The county board
26 of elections shall post the original of each list in a
27 conspicuous place in the office of the county board of elections
28 and see that it is kept so posted until the close of the polls
29 on election day. The duplicate of each list shall be delivered
30 to the judge of election in the election district in the same

1 manner and at the same time as are provided in this act for the
2 delivery of other election supplies, and it shall be the duty of
3 the judge of election to post the duplicate list in a
4 conspicuous place within the polling place of his district and
5 see that it is kept so posted throughout the time that the polls
6 are open. Upon written request, the county board of elections
7 shall furnish a copy of such list to any candidate or party
8 county chairman.

9 Section 1307. Official Absentee Voters Ballots.--

10 (a) In districts in which ballots are used, the ballots for
11 use by absentee electors under the provisions of this act shall
12 be the official ballots printed in accordance with sections 1002
13 and 1003. However, the county board of elections when detaching
14 the official ballots for absentee electors shall be required to
15 indicate on the stub of each ballot so detached the name of the
16 applicant to which that precise ballot is being sent. The county
17 board of elections shall also be required to remove the numbered
18 stub from each ballot and shall thereupon print, stamp or
19 endorse in red color upon the official ballots the words,
20 Official Absentee Ballot. The ballots shall be distributed by
21 the boards as provided under this act.

22 (b) In districts in which voting machines are used and in
23 those districts in which paper ballots are used and the county
24 board of elections therein do not print official absentee
25 ballots in accordance with sections 1002 and 1003, the ballots
26 for use by such absentee electors under the provisions of this
27 act shall be prepared sufficiently in advance by the county
28 board of elections and shall be distributed by the boards as
29 provided under this act. Ballots shall be marked Official
30 Absentee Ballot but shall not be numbered and shall otherwise be

1 in substantially the form for ballots required by article ten of
2 this act which form shall be determined and prescribed by the
3 Secretary of the Commonwealth.

4 (c) In districts in which electronic voting systems are
5 utilized, the absentee ballot may be in the form of a ballot
6 card which shall be clearly stamped on its face "Absentee
7 Ballot."

8 (d) In cases where there is not time to print on the ballots
9 the names of the various candidates, the county board of
10 elections shall print special write-in absentee ballots which
11 shall be in substantially the form of other official absentee
12 ballots except that the special write-in absentee ballots shall
13 contain blank spaces only under the titles of the offices in
14 which electors may insert the names of the candidates for whom
15 they desire to vote, and in these cases the county board of
16 elections shall furnish to electors lists containing the names
17 of all the candidates named in nomination petitions or who have
18 been regularly nominated under the provisions of this act, for
19 the use of the electors in preparing their ballots. Special
20 write-in absentee ballots also shall include all constitutional
21 amendments and other questions to be voted on by the electors.

22 (e) The official absentee voter ballot shall state that a
23 voter who receives an absentee ballot pursuant to section 1301
24 and who, on election day, is capable of voting at the
25 appropriate polling place must void the absentee ballot and vote
26 in the normal manner at the appropriate voting place.

27 Section 1308. Envelopes for Official Absentee Ballots.--

28 (a) The county board of elections shall provide two
29 additional envelopes for each official absentee ballot, of such
30 size and shape as shall be prescribed by the Secretary of the

1 Commonwealth, in order to permit the placing of one within the
2 other and both within the mailing envelope. On the smaller of
3 the two envelopes to be enclosed in the mailing envelope shall
4 be printed, stamped or endorsed the words "Official Absentee
5 Ballot," and nothing else. On the larger of the two envelopes,
6 to be enclosed within the mailing envelope, shall be printed the
7 form of the declaration of the elector, and the name and address
8 of the county board of elections of the proper county. The
9 larger envelope shall also contain information indicating the
10 local election district of the absentee voter. The form of
11 declaration and envelope shall be as prescribed by the Secretary
12 of the Commonwealth and shall contain among other things a
13 statement of the electors qualifications, together with a
14 statement that the elector has not already voted in the
15 election. The mailing envelope addressed to the elector shall
16 contain the two envelopes, the official absentee ballot, lists
17 of candidates, when authorized by subsection (b) of section
18 1307, the uniform instructions in form and substance as
19 prescribed by the Secretary of the Commonwealth and nothing
20 else.

21 (b) (1) Envelopes for electors qualified under subsection
22 (a)(1) to (8) of section 1301, inclusive, shall have printed
23 across the face of each transmittal or return envelope two
24 parallel horizontal red bars, each one-quarter inch wide,
25 extending from one side of the envelope to the other side, with
26 an intervening space of one-quarter inch, the top bar to be one
27 and one-quarter inches from the top of the envelope and with the
28 words "Official Election Balloting Material via Air Mail"
29 between the bars. There shall be printed, in the upper right
30 corner of each envelope in a box, the words "Free of U. S.

1 Postage, Including Air Mail." All printing on the face of each
2 envelope shall be in red, and there shall be printed in red, in
3 the upper left corner of each such envelope, the name and
4 address of the county board of elections of the proper county or
5 blank lines for return address of the sender.

6 (2) The envelope addressed to the elector may contain
7 absentee registration forms where required and shall contain
8 detailed instructions on the procedures to be observed in
9 casting an absentee ballot as prescribed by the Secretary of the
10 Commonwealth, together with a return envelope upon which is
11 printed the name and address of the registration commission of
12 the proper county, which envelope shall have printed across the
13 face two parallel horizontal red bars, each one-quarter inch
14 wide, extending from one side of the envelope to the other side,
15 with an intervening space of one-quarter inch, the top bar to be
16 one and one-quarter inches from the top of the envelope and with
17 the words "Official Election Balloting Material via Air Mail"
18 between the bars. There shall be printed in the upper right
19 corner of each such envelope in a box the words "Free of U. S.
20 Postage, Including Air Mail," and, in the upper left corner of
21 each such envelope, blank lines for return address of the
22 sender. All printing on the face of each envelope shall be in
23 red.

24 Section 1309. Delivering or Mailing Ballots.--

25 (a) An absentee ballot shall only be delivered to an elector
26 by mail or obtained directly by an elector who appears at the
27 office of the county board of elections. An elector who obtains
28 an absentee ballot at the office of the board shall be required
29 to sign an acknowledgment of receipt of the ballot which shall
30 be retained by the board pursuant to subsection (a) of section

1 1306. Delivery by any other means is prohibited and shall result
2 in the ballot being declared void.

3 (b) The county board of elections upon receipt and approval
4 of an application filed by any elector qualified in accordance
5 with the provisions of subsection (a)(1) to (8) of section 1301,
6 inclusive, shall not later than fifty (50) days prior to the day
7 of the primary or not later than seventy (70) days prior to the
8 day of the election mail to such elector who has included with
9 said application a statement that he or she is unable to vote
10 during the regular absentee balloting period by reason of living
11 or performing military service in an extremely remote or
12 isolated area of the world, and not later than forty-five (45)
13 days prior to the day of the primary or election commence to
14 mail to all other such electors as provided for in subsection
15 (a)(1) to (8) of section 1301, inclusive, official absentee
16 ballots or special write-in absentee ballots as prescribed by
17 subsection (d) of section 1307 when official absentee ballots
18 are not yet printed. As additional applications of electors are
19 received, the board shall mail official absentee ballots or
20 special write-in absentee ballots when official absentee ballots
21 are not yet printed to the additional electors within forty-
22 eight (48) hours after approval of their application. If the
23 calling of a special election would make it impossible to comply
24 with the forty-five (45) day mailing requirement of this
25 section, then the county board of elections shall mail absentee
26 ballots or special write-in absentee ballots within five (5)
27 days of the county board's receipt of the information necessary
28 to prepare the ballots.

29 (c) The county board of elections upon receipt and approval
30 of an application filed by any elector qualified in accordance

1 with the provisions of subsection (a)(9) to (14) of section
2 1301, inclusive, shall mail or provide pursuant to subsection
3 (a) official absentee ballots on the second Tuesday prior to the
4 election. As additional applications are received and approved,
5 the board shall mail or provide pursuant to subsection (a)
6 official absentee ballots to the additional electors within
7 forty-eight (48) hours.

8 Section 1310. Notice to County Board of Elections.--

9 (a) At least fifty (50) days prior to a primary, the
10 Secretary of the Commonwealth shall transmit to the county board
11 of elections a list of candidates who have filed a nominating
12 petition with him and who are not known to have withdrawn or
13 been disqualified, conforming, to the extent possible, with the
14 requirements of section 916.

15 (b) At least seventy (70) days prior to an election, the
16 Secretary of the Commonwealth shall transmit to the county board
17 of elections a list, as he knows it to exist at that time, of
18 candidates to be voted on in the county at the election, as well
19 as a copy of all constitutional amendments and other questions
20 to be voted on at the election, together with a statement of the
21 form in which they are to be placed on the ballot, conforming to
22 the extent possible with the requirements of section 984.

23 Section 1311. Voting by Absentee Electors.--

24 (a) At any time after receiving an official absentee ballot,
25 but on or before two o'clock P.M. on the Monday prior to the
26 election, the elector shall, in secret, proceed to mark the
27 ballot only in black lead pencil, indelible pencil or blue,
28 black or blue-black ink, in fountain pen or ball point pen, and
29 then fold the ballot, enclose and securely seal the same in the
30 envelope on which is printed, stamped or endorsed "Official

1 Absentee Ballot." This envelope shall then be placed in the
2 second one, on which is printed the form of declaration of the
3 elector, and the address of the elector's county board of
4 elections and the local election district of the elector. The
5 elector shall then fill out, date and sign the declaration
6 printed on the envelope. The envelope shall then be securely
7 sealed and the elector shall send same by mail, postage prepaid,
8 except where franked, or deliver it in person to the county
9 board of elections at which time the elector shall sign an
10 acknowledgment of personal delivery of the ballot. Return of an
11 absentee ballot to the county board of elections by any other
12 means is prohibited and shall result in the ballot being
13 declared void.

14 (b) Any elector, spouse of the elector or dependent of the
15 elector, qualified in accordance with the provisions of
16 subsection (a)(5), (6), (7) or (8) of section 1301 to vote by
17 absentee ballot as provided, shall be required to include on the
18 form of declaration a supporting declaration in form prescribed
19 by the Secretary of the Commonwealth, to be signed by the head
20 of the department or chief of division or bureau in which the
21 elector is employed, setting forth the identity of the elector,
22 spouse of the elector or dependent of the elector.

23 (c) Any elector who has filed his application in accordance
24 with subsection (c)(3) of section 1302, and is unable to sign
25 his declaration because of illness or physical disability, shall
26 be excused from signing upon making a declaration which shall be
27 witnessed by one adult person in substantially the following
28 form: I hereby declare that I am unable to sign my declaration
29 for voting my absentee ballot without assistance because I am
30 unable to write by reason of my illness or physical disability.

1 I have made or received assistance in making my mark in lieu of
2 my signature.

3 _____(Mark)

4 _____

5 _____(Date)

6 _____

7 _____(Signature of Witness)

8 _____

9 _____(Complete Address of Witness)

10 Section 1312. Procedure to Void Absentee Ballot Status.--

11 (a) In the event that any such elector, excepting an elector
12 in military service or any elector unable to go to his polling
13 place because of illness or physical disability, entitled to
14 vote an official absentee ballot shall be in the county of his
15 residence on the day for holding the election for which the
16 ballot was issued, or in the event any elector shall have
17 recovered from his illness or physical disability sufficiently
18 to permit him to present himself at the proper polling place for
19 the purpose of casting his ballot, the absentee ballot cast by
20 the elector shall be declared void.

21 (b) Any elector referred to in this section who is within
22 the county of his residence must present himself at his polling
23 place and shall be permitted to vote upon presenting himself at
24 his regular polling place in the same manner as he could have
25 voted had he not received an absentee ballot if the elector has
26 first presented himself to the judge of election in his local
27 election district and shall have signed the affidavit on the
28 absentee voter's temporary registration card, which affidavit
29 shall be in substantially the following form:

30 I hereby swear that I am a qualified registered elector who

1 has obtained an absentee ballot, however, I am present in the
2 county of my residence and physically able to present myself at
3 my polling place and therefore request that my absentee ballot
4 be voided.

5 _____
6 _____ (Date) _____ (Signature of Elector)
7 _____
8 _____ (Local Judge of Elections)

9 (c) An elector who has received an absentee ballot under the
10 emergency application provisions of section 1304, and for whom,
11 therefore, no temporary absentee voter's registration card is in
12 the district register, shall sign the aforementioned affidavit
13 in any case, which the local judge of elections shall then cause
14 to be inserted in the district register with the elector's
15 permanent registration card.

16 (d) Notice of the requirements of subsections (a) and (b)
17 shall be printed on the envelope for the absentee ballot.

18 Section 1313. Assistance in Voting by Certain Absentee
19 Electors.--

20 Any elector qualified to vote an official absentee ballot in
21 accordance with the provisions of subsection (a)(11) of section
22 1301 may receive assistance in voting (1) if there is recorded
23 on the elector's registration card a declaration that the
24 elector has a physical disability which renders the elector
25 unable to see or mark the official absentee ballot, the exact
26 nature of the disability being recorded on the registration
27 card; (2) if the elector requiring assistance submits with the
28 application for an official absentee ballot a statement setting
29 forth the precise nature of the disability which renders the
30 elector unable to see or mark the official absentee ballot and

1 that to the best of the elector's knowledge and belief the
2 elector will still suffer from the physical disability at the
3 time of voting the official absentee ballot. The elector shall
4 acknowledge the same before an officer qualified to take
5 acknowledgment of deeds. Such statement shall be in
6 substantially the following form:

7 Statement of Absentee Elector Requiring Assistance

8 I,, hereby state

9 (Name of voter requiring assistance)

10 that I require assistance in marking the official absentee
11 ballot for the election held,

12 (Date)

13 19..., that will be issued to me for the following reason:

14

15 (Insert nature of disability)

16

17 (Signature or mark of elector)

18

19 (Date of signature or mark)

20 Commonwealth of Pennsylvania:

21 ss

22 County of:

23 On this.....day of....., 19..., before me,
24, the undersigned officer personally
25 appeared....., known to me (or satisfactorily
26 proven) to be the person whose signature or mark appears on the
27 within instrument and acknowledged the same for the purposes
28 therein contained.

29 In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and official
30 seal

1 _____

2 _____ (Title of Officer)

3 Upon receipt of the official absentee ballot, the elector
4 requiring assistance may select an adult person to assist him in
5 voting. The assistance shall be rendered in secret. The adult
6 person rendering the assistance in voting should be required to
7 fill out, date and sign the declaration in a form approved by
8 the Secretary of the Commonwealth, which shall include the
9 reason assistance is required, or substantially in the form as
10 set forth below, as he has caused the elector's ballot to be
11 marked in accordance with the elector's desires and instruction.
12 The declaration form shall be returned to the county board of
13 elections in the mailing envelope addressed to the county board
14 of elections within which the small "official absentee ballot"
15 is returned.

16 Declaration of Person Rendering Assistance

17 I, _____, an adult person

18 (Name of Person rendering assistance)

19 hereby declare that I have witnessed the aforesaid elector's
20 signature or mark and that I have caused the aforesaid
21 elector's ballot to be marked in accordance with the desires
22 and instructions of the aforesaid elector for the following
23 reasons:

24 _____

25 (Nature of Disability)

26 _____

27 (Signature of Person Rendering Assistance)

28 _____

29 (Address)

30 If the elector requires assistance due to blindness, the

declaration shall include a statement as follows: I have read the absentee ballot to the aforesaid elector.

Section 1314. Certain Electors Voting in Districts of Residence.--

(a) Whenever any qualified elector in actual military service is present in the voting district of residence on any primary, special, municipal or general election day and has not already voted in the election, the elector may apply in person at the office of the county board of election of the county of residence and shall then and there execute the application for an official absentee ballot.

(b) Each application shall be in the form and shall contain the information required by this act together with a statement by the applicant that he has not already voted in the election.

The county board of elections shall ascertain from the information on the application or from any other source that such applicant possesses all the qualifications of a qualified elector other than being registered or enrolled. If the board is satisfied that the applicant is qualified to receive an official absentee ballot, the application shall be marked "Approved," subject to the limitations set out in section 1305 of this act. When so approved, the county board of elections shall cause the applicant's name and residence (and at primaries, the party enrollment) to be inserted in the Military, Veterans and Emergency Civilian Absentee Voters File as provided in subsection (b) of section 1306.

(c) Upon receiving an official absentee ballot and envelopes therefor, the elector shall, in secret, in the office of the county board of elections vote the ballot and execute the declaration as prescribed by this act. The elector shall then

1 securely seal the second envelope and hand it to the chief clerk
2 of the county board of elections who shall securely keep same in
3 accordance with the provisions of section 1315.

4 Section 1315. Canvassing of Official Absentee Ballots.--

5 (a) The county boards of elections, upon receipt of official
6 absentee ballots in the envelopes as prescribed, shall safely
7 keep the same in sealed or locked containers. No absentee ballot
8 which is received by the county board of elections later than
9 two o'clock P.M. on the Monday immediately preceding the
10 election may be counted.

11 (b) No later than four o'clock P.M. on Monday prior to any
12 election the county board of elections shall prepare an
13 alphabetical list containing the names and addresses of all
14 electors who have submitted an absentee ballot in each election
15 district. The list shall be known as the Absentee Ballot Return
16 List. The Absentee Ballot Return List shall be made available
17 for public inspection and copying. Ballots returned by electors
18 defined in subsection (a)(1) of section 1301 and in the
19 emergency provisions contained in subsection (b) of section 1304
20 shall be added to the list as practicable.

21 (c) The Absentee Ballot Return List shall be distributed to
22 each election district prior to the opening of the polls on
23 election day. The list shall be posted in a conspicuous place in
24 each election district.

25 (d) The county board of elections may distribute the
26 unopened absentee ballots to the local election district
27 concurrently with the distribution of other election supplies.
28 However, the absentee ballots shall remain in a separate sealed
29 container bearing the following notice printed in boldface type:

30 ABSENTEE BALLOT

1 The law prohibits the opening of any absentee ballot
2 prior to the closing of the polls. Any challenged ballot
3 shall not be opened but shall be returned to the county
4 board of elections. Any person violating this provision
5 of law shall be guilty of a criminal offense subject to a
6 minimum mandatory fine of two hundred fifty (\$250)
7 dollars per ballot.

8 The notice required by this subsection shall be in both
9 English and Spanish where deemed appropriate by the secretary.

10 In no case shall the absentee ballots be distributed later
11 than six o'clock P.M. on election day. The absentee ballot
12 container shall be signed for by the judge of election in the
13 manner prescribed for ballots and other supplies in section
14 1204.

15 (e) Absentee ballots shall be opened and canvassed in each
16 election district without interruption immediately upon the
17 closing of the polls and prior to the canvassing of other
18 ballots.

19 (f) Poll watchers, each candidate, each candidate's attorney
20 and each candidate's authorized representative shall be
21 permitted to be present when the envelopes containing official
22 absentee ballots are opened and canvassed. The results of the
23 canvassing of the absentee ballots shall be included in the
24 tally of all votes and returned to the county board of elections
25 with the returns of that district.

26 (g) (1) In the event that an electronic voting system
27 provides for central tabulations of ballots, absentee ballots
28 shall be opened and deposited in the ballot box without being
29 counted except as to the number of absentee ballots cast. The
30 absentee ballots shall be counted along with the other ballots

1 from the election district at the location and in the manner
2 specified by the county board of elections and provided for by
3 the electronic voting system utilized.

4 (2) In the event that an electronic voting system provides
5 for tabulation of votes at the election district, the absentee
6 ballots shall be opened, checked for write-in votes in
7 accordance with section 1113-A and then either hand-counted or
8 counted by means of the automatic tabulation equipment, whatever
9 the case may be.

10 (h) Whenever it shall appear by due proof that any absentee
11 elector who has returned a ballot in accordance with the
12 provisions of this act has died prior to the opening of the
13 polls on the day of the election, the ballot of the deceased
14 elector shall be rejected by the canvassers but the counting of
15 the ballot of an elector thus deceased shall not of itself
16 invalidate any nomination or election.

17 (i) The local election board shall then further examine the
18 declaration on each envelope not so set aside and shall compare
19 the information thereon with that contained in the Registered
20 Absentee Voters File, the Absentee Voter Application List, the
21 Absentee Ballot Return List, the absentee voters' list and the
22 Military Veterans and Emergency Civilians Absentee Voters File.
23 The local election board shall determine that the declaration is
24 sufficient and shall verify the elector's right to vote.

25 Section 1316. Absentee Ballot Challenges.--

26 (a) At any time on election day, a poll watcher, candidate,
27 candidate's attorney or candidate's authorized representative
28 may challenge the ballot of any absentee elector for any of the
29 following reasons:

30 (1) The absentee elector is not a qualified elector;

1 (2) The absentee elector was within the county of his
2 residence on the day of the election during the period the polls
3 were open, except where he was in military service or was unable
4 to appear personally at the polling place because of illness or
5 physical disability; or

6 (3) The absentee elector was able to appear personally at
7 the polling place on the day of the election during the period
8 the polls were open and the ballot was obtained for the reason
9 that he was unable to appear personally at the polling place
10 because of illness or physical disability.

11 (b) Any challenge made pursuant to subsection (a) shall be
12 made to and recorded by the judge of election on the Absentee
13 Ballot Return List together with the reason or reasons therefor.
14 Upon the close of the polls, the judge of election shall unseal
15 the absentee ballot container and mark "Challenged" on the
16 envelope of each challenged ballot with the reason or reasons
17 therefor and the same shall be set aside for return to the
18 county board of elections unopened. Challenged ballots shall not
19 be counted nor included in the tally of votes returned to the
20 county board of elections with the returns of the election
21 district.

22 (c) The local election board shall announce the names of the
23 electors on all remaining unchallenged ballots and shall give
24 any watcher, candidate, candidate's attorney and candidate's
25 authorized representative present an opportunity to challenge
26 any absentee elector for any of the reasons set forth in
27 subsection (a).

28 (d) Any person challenging an application for an absentee
29 ballot or an absentee ballot shall deposit the sum of ten (\$10)
30 dollars with the local election board in challenges made to the

1 local board and with the county board of elections in challenges
2 made to the county for which the person shall be issued a
3 receipt for each challenge made, not to exceed a total of two
4 thousand five hundred (\$2,500) dollars for all challenges. All
5 deposits received pursuant to this subsection shall be refunded
6 if the challenge is sustained or if the challenge is withdrawn
7 within five (5) days after the election. If the challenge is
8 dismissed by any lawful order, then the deposit shall be
9 forfeited. All deposit money received by the local election
10 board shall be turned over to the county board of elections
11 simultaneously with the return of the challenged ballots. The
12 county board shall deposit all deposit money in the general fund
13 of the county.

14 (e) All absentee ballots not challenged for any of the
15 reasons under subsection (a) shall be counted and included with
16 the general return of paper ballots or voting machines.

17 (f) Challenged ballots shall be returned to the county board
18 of elections with the returns of the local election district and
19 placed unopened in a secure, safe and sealed container in the
20 custody of the county board until a hearing on the challenge is
21 held.

22 (g) For purposes of this section, authorization to act as a
23 candidate's representative shall be in writing, signed by the
24 candidate and filed with the judge of elections for
25 recordkeeping purposes.

26 Section 1317. Impoundment.--

27 (a) At any time prior to four o'clock P.M. on election day,
28 the candidate or the candidate's attorney may petition the court
29 of common pleas of the county to impound all completed absentee
30 ballots received by the county board of elections from specified

1 districts.

2 (b) In order to file a petition to impound, a fee of ten
3 (\$10) dollars per ballot, with a minimum of one thousand
4 (\$1,000) dollars and a maximum of five thousand (\$5,000) dollars
5 in cash, as determined by the court, shall be deposited with the
6 court. The fee shall be refunded if the court determines,
7 following review of the absentee ballots by the county board of
8 elections, that the action was not frivolous.

9 (c) The court shall not be bound by technical rules of
10 evidence, including rules regarding hearsay. The court shall
11 advise all witnesses of the provisions of section 8 of Article
12 VII of the Constitution of Pennsylvania.

13 (d) If the court determines that the evidence presented
14 indicates a pattern of unlawful absentee voting, the court shall
15 temporarily impound all absentee ballots received by the county
16 board of elections from specified districts pending an order to
17 the county board of elections to conduct a full review of all
18 ballots in accordance with section 1319. The court shall have
19 the discretion to determine if a pattern of unlawful absentee
20 voting exists; however, twenty-five (25) or more illegally cast
21 absentee ballots shall constitute a pattern of unlawful absentee
22 voting for purposes of impoundment.

23 Section 1318. Canvassing Unchallenged Absentee Ballots.--

24 (a) The local election board shall open the envelope of
25 every unchallenged absentee elector in a manner as not to
26 destroy the declaration executed thereon. All of the envelopes
27 on which are printed, stamped or endorsed the words "Official
28 Absentee Ballot" shall be placed in one or more depositories at
29 one time and the depository or depositories well shaken and the
30 envelopes mixed before any envelope is taken therefrom.

1 (b) If any of these envelopes shall contain any extraneous
2 marks or identifying symbols other than the words "Official
3 Absentee Ballot," the envelopes and the ballots contained
4 therein shall be set aside and declared void.

5 (c) The local election board shall then break the seals of
6 the envelopes, remove the ballots and record the votes in the
7 same manner as district election officers are required to record
8 votes.

9 Section 1319. County Board of Elections Challenge
10 Procedures.--

11 (a) The county board of elections shall fix a time and place
12 for a formal hearing of all challenges and notice shall be given
13 where possible to all absentee electors thus challenged and to
14 every watcher, candidate, candidate's attorney or candidate's
15 authorized representative who made a challenge.

16 (b) The time for the hearing shall be no sooner than two (2)
17 days, but shall not be later than seven (7) days after the date
18 of the challenge. On the day fixed for the hearing, the county
19 board shall proceed without delay to hear challenges.

20 (c) The county board of elections shall not be bound by
21 technical rules of evidence, including rules regarding hearsay.
22 The county board of elections shall advise all witnesses and
23 participants of the provisions of Article VII, section 8 of the
24 Constitution of Pennsylvania. The board shall hear witnesses
25 presented for each individual challenged ballot and evidence of
26 fraud or illegal activity, whether discovered before or after
27 the election.

28 (d) The testimony presented shall be stenographically
29 recorded and made part of the record of the hearing.

30 (e) The decision of the county board of elections in

1 upholding or dismissing any challenge shall be in writing and
2 may be reviewed by the court of common pleas of the county upon
3 a petition filed by any person aggrieved by the decision of the
4 county board. The appeal must be taken to the court of common
5 pleas no later than two (2) business days after the decision of
6 the board, with the petition setting forth the objections to the
7 county board's decision.

8 (f) No certification of the results of the election by the
9 county board may occur during the two-day appeal period. If an
10 appeal is taken, no certification of the results of the
11 challenged election may occur until the resolution of all
12 appeals or six (6) months from the date of the election,
13 whichever is sooner. However, a court having jurisdiction over
14 an appeal of the decision of the county board may order the
15 certification of the election if it determines that the fraud or
16 other improper conduct or procedure alleged could not have
17 altered the outcome of the election. Following such
18 certification, the appeal may continue as to the fraud or other
19 improper conduct or procedure.

20 (g) Upon the resolution of all appeals or six (6) months
21 from the date of the election, the county board of elections
22 shall complete the computation of the returns for the challenged
23 election. The votes cast upon the challenged official absentee
24 ballots which are upheld shall be added to the other votes cast
25 within the county.

26 (h) In hearing an appeal under this article, the court shall
27 not be bound by the technical rules of evidence, including rules
28 regarding hearsay. The court shall advise all witnesses of the
29 provisions of section 8 of Article VII of the Constitution of
30 Pennsylvania. The court shall admit evidence of fraud or illegal

1 activity, whether discovered before or after the election.

2 (i) The courts of the Commonwealth shall expedite all
3 appeals which come before them under this article.

4 Section 1320. Public Records.--All official absentee
5 ballots, files, applications for absentee ballots and envelopes
6 on which the executed declarations appear, and all information
7 and lists are hereby designated and declared to be public
8 records. All such public records shall be maintained for a
9 period of five (5) years. No candidate or other elector shall be
10 denied access to any public record within the meaning of this
11 section. No information concerning a military elector shall be
12 made public which is expressly forbidden by the Department of
13 Defense.

14 Section 3. Section 1404(f) of the act is amended and the
15 section is amended by adding a subsection to read:

16 Section 1404. Computation of Returns by County Board;
17 Certification; Issuance of Certificates of Election.--

18 * * *

19 (f) As the returns from each election district are read,
20 computed and found to be correct or corrected as aforesaid, they
21 shall be recorded on the blanks prepared for the purpose until
22 all the returns from the various election districts which are
23 entitled to be counted shall have been duly recorded, when they
24 shall be added together, announced and attested by the clerks
25 who made and computed the entries respectively and signed by the
26 members of the county board. At the expiration of five days
27 after the completion of the computation of votes, in case no
28 petition for a recount or recanvass has been filed in accordance
29 with the provisions of this act, [or upon the completion of the
30 recount or recanvass if a petition therefor has been filed

1 within five days after the completion of the computation of
2 votes,] the county board shall certify the returns so computed
3 in said county in the manner required by this act, unless upon
4 appeals taken from any decision, the court of common pleas shall
5 have directed any returns to be revised, or unless in case of a
6 recount, errors in the said returns shall have been found, in
7 which case said returns shall be revised, corrected and
8 certified accordingly. The county board shall thereupon, in the
9 case of elections, issue certificates of election to the
10 successful candidates for all county, city, borough, township,
11 ward, school district, poor district and election offices, and
12 local party offices to be filled by the votes of the electors of
13 said county, or of any part thereof.

14 (g) In the event of any recount, recanvass or other
15 challenge based on fraud or any other violation of this act, the
16 board shall not certify the election for a period of two (2)
17 business days following its determination or ruling on the
18 matter. A decision of the county board of elections may be taken
19 to the court of common pleas of the county within two (2)
20 business days after the decision of the board. If an appeal is
21 taken, no certification of the results of the challenged
22 election may occur until the resolution of all appeals or until
23 the expiration of six (6) months from the date of the election,
24 whichever is sooner. The courts of this Commonwealth shall
25 expedite all appeals and other matters which come before them
26 pursuant to this act.

27 Section 4. Section 1407 of the act, repealed in part April
28 28, 1978 (P.L.202, No.53), is amended to read:

29 Section 1407. Appeals to Court from Decisions of the County
30 Board.--

1 (a) Any person aggrieved by any order or decision of any
2 county board regarding the computation or canvassing of the
3 returns of any primary or election, or regarding any recount or
4 recanvass thereof under sections 1701, 1702 and 1703 of this
5 act, may appeal therefrom within two days after such order or
6 decision shall have been made, whether then reduced to writing
7 or not, to the court of common pleas of the proper county,
8 setting forth why he feels that an injustice has been done, and
9 praying for such order as will give him relief. Upon the payment
10 to the prothonotary of a fee for filing such appeal, a judge of
11 the court shall fix a time and place for hearing the matter in
12 dispute within three days thereafter, of which due notice shall
13 be served, with a copy of such appeal, by the appellant upon a
14 member of the county board whose action is complained of and
15 upon every attorney, watcher or candidate who opposed the
16 contention of the appellant before the county board, and upon
17 any other person that the judge shall direct, at least two days
18 before the matter shall be reviewed by the court. Proof of such
19 notice or the waiver thereof must be filed therein before any
20 appeal is sustained.

21 (b) [The] A court [on an] hearing any action or appeal
22 regarding any election shall have full and broad power and
23 authority to hear and determine all matters pertaining to any
24 fraud [or], error or other act which violates the election laws
25 of this Commonwealth committed in any election district [to
26 which such appeal relates,] and to make such order or decree [as
27 right and justice may require] to create a fair and just
28 resolution. An order under this subsection may include, but
29 shall not be limited to, a recount, the voiding of improperly
30 cast ballots, an award of damages or a new election. Pending

1 [such] an appeal[, the] of the decision of a county board, the
2 board shall suspend any official certification of the votes cast
3 in such election district, in accordance with section 1319(f)
4 and (g). None of the orders or decisions of either the county
5 board or [the] any court [of common pleas] on appeal shall be
6 deemed a final adjudication regarding the results of any
7 [primary or] election, so as to preclude any contest thereof.
8 [No appeal shall be allowed or granted from any order or decree
9 of the court of common pleas made in pursuance of this section.]
10 The court of common pleas, upon any appeal under this section,
11 may compel the appellant or any opposing party, other than the
12 county board, to pay all the witness fees, if any, or other
13 legal costs of the hearing, which costs may be taxed by the
14 prothonotary in the usual manner.

15 Section 5. This act shall take effect in 60 days.