



Senate of Pennsylvania

TO: All Senators

FROM: Senator Edwin B. Erickson *EBC*

DATE: December 8, 2010

SUBJECT: Cosponsorship of Legislation – Vacancies in Election Boards

I plan to reintroduce Senate Bill 289 of 2009, legislation that will amend the Pennsylvania Election Code to change the procedure for filling vacancies in the district election boards.

District election boards are comprised of three elected officials, a judge of election, a majority inspector and a minority inspector. At each polling place, appointed clerks and machine operators also serve. In Delaware County, there are 424 boards for each of the County's polling places. Historically, there is a high rate of turnover for these positions; and under current law, the procedure for filling vacancies before Election Day is time consuming, costly and unnecessarily cumbersome. Under current law, vacancies occurring more than five days prior to Election Day must be filled by appointment by the County Court of Common Pleas after the filing of a petition for appointment, the public posting of notice of the hearing date and a hearing. This procedure usually takes a minimum of 30 days and because of the requirement that the filing occur in Court requires the involvement of an attorney. The current procedure discourages the involvement of interested citizens in filling these vacancies.

My legislation designates the County Board of Elections, rather than the Court of Common Pleas, as the entity with the authority to fill vacancies in district election boards at any time during the year. This will streamline the process to ensure that as few vacancies as possible exist in voting precincts across the Commonwealth. Our current law gives the County Board of Elections this power of appointment but only for the five days preceding Election Day. Appointments occurring this late allow no time for training of new appointees.

If you would like to join me in sponsoring this legislation, please contact Linda Kauffman at 7-1350 or lkauffman@pasen.gov.