

PENNSYLVANIA ELECTION CODE - OMNIBUS AMENDMENTS

Act of Mar. 27, 2020, P.L. 41, No. 12

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Session of 2020

No. 2020-12

SB 422

AN ACT

Amending the act of June 3, 1937 (P.L.1333, No.320), entitled "An act concerning elections, including general, municipal, special and primary elections, the nomination of candidates, primary and election expenses and election contests; creating and defining membership of county boards of elections; imposing duties upon the Secretary of the Commonwealth, courts, county boards of elections, county commissioners; imposing penalties for violation of the act, and codifying, revising and consolidating the laws relating thereto; and repealing certain acts and parts of acts relating to elections," in preliminary provisions, further providing for definitions; in county boards of elections, further providing for powers and duties of county boards; in ballots, further providing for forms of ballots, printing ballots, numbers; in electronic voting systems, further providing for forms, for election day procedures and the process of voting and for post election procedures; in preparation for and conduct of primaries and elections, further providing for manner of applying to vote, persons entitled to vote, voter's certificates, entries to be made in district register, numbered lists of voters, challenges and for deadline for receipt of valid voter registration application; in voting by qualified absentee electors, further providing for applications for official absentee ballots, for approval of application for absentee ballot, for absentee and mail-in electors files and lists, for official absentee voters ballots, for envelopes for official absentee ballots, for delivering or mailing ballots, for voting by absentee electors, for canvassing of official absentee ballots and mail-in ballots and for public records and repealing provisions relating to violation of provisions relating to absentee voting; in voting by qualified mail-in electors, further providing for qualified mail-in electors, for applications for official mail-in ballots, for approval of application for mail-in ballot, for official mail-in elector ballots, for envelopes for official mail-in ballots, for voting by mail-in electors and for public records and repealing provisions relating to violation of provisions relating to mail-in voting; providing for Pennsylvania Election Law Advisory Board; in penalties, further providing for violations of provisions relating to absentee electors ballots; providing for emergency provisions for 2020 general primary election; and making a related repeal.

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

Section 1. Section 102(a.1) and (z.6) of the act of June 3, 1937 (P.L.1333, No.320), known as the Pennsylvania Election Code, added October 31, 2019 (P.L.552, No.77), are amended and the section is amended by adding a subsection to read:

Section 102. Definitions.--The following words, when used in this act, shall have the following meanings, unless otherwise clearly apparent from the context:

\* \* \*

(a.1) ["Canvass" includes] **The word "canvass" shall mean the gathering [the] of ballots after the [election] final pre-canvass meeting and the counting, computing and tallying of the votes reflected on the ballots.**

\* \* \*

(q.1) **The word "pre-canvass" shall mean the inspection and opening of all envelopes containing official absentee ballots or mail-in ballots, the removal of such ballots from the envelopes and the counting, computing and tallying of the votes reflected on the ballots. The term does not include the recording or publishing of the votes reflected on the ballots.**

\* \* \*

(z.6) The words "qualified mail-in elector" shall mean a qualified elector [who is not a qualified absentee elector.]. **The term does not include a person specifically prohibited from being a qualified absentee elector under section 1301.**

Section 2. Section 302(p) of the act is amended to read:

Section 302. Powers and Duties of County Boards.--The county boards of elections, within their respective counties, shall exercise, in the manner provided by this act, all powers granted to them by this act, and shall perform all the duties imposed upon them by this act, which shall include the following:

\* \* \*

(p) A county board of elections shall not pay compensation to a judge of elections who wilfully fails to deliver by two o'clock A. M. on the day following the election envelopes; supplies, including all uncast provisional ballots; and returns, including all provisional ballots [and absentee ballots] cast in the election district **and statements signed under sections 1306 and 1302-D.**

Section 3. Section 1004 of the act, amended October 31, 2019 (P.L.552, No.77) and November 27, 2019 (P.L.673, No.94), is amended to read:

Section 1004. Form of Ballots; Printing Ballots[; Numbers].--From the lists furnished by the Secretary of the Commonwealth under the provisions of sections 915 and 984, and from petitions and papers filed in their office, the county election board shall print the official primary and election ballots in accordance with the provisions of this act: Provided, however, That in no event, shall the name of any person consenting to be a candidate for nomination for any one office, except the office of judge of a court of common pleas, the Philadelphia Municipal Court or the office of school director in districts where that office is elective or the office of justice of the peace be printed as a candidate for such office upon the official primary ballot of more than one party. All ballots for use in the same election district at any primary or election shall be alike. [They shall be at least six inches long and four inches wide, and shall have a margin extending beyond any printing thereon. They shall be printed with the same kind of type (which shall not be smaller than the size known as "brevier" or "eight point body") upon white paper of uniform quality, without any impression or mark to distinguish one from another, and with sufficient thickness to prevent the printed matter from showing through. All the ballots for the same election district shall be bound together in books of fifty, in such manner that each ballot may be detached and

removed separately. The ballots for each party to be used at a primary shall be bound separately.]

Section 4. Sections 1109-A(a)(2), (b) and (e) and 1112-A(b)(2), (3) and (4) of the act, amended October 31, 2019 (P.L.552, No.77), are amended to read:

Section 1109-A. Forms.--(a) \* \* \*

(2) The pages placed on the voting device shall be of sufficient number to include, following the listing of particular candidates, the names of candidates for any nonpartisan offices and any measures for which a voter may be qualified to vote on a given election day.[, provided further that for municipal, general or special elections, the first ballot page shall list in the order that such political parties are entitled to priority on the ballot, the names of such political parties.]

\* \* \*

(b) Ballot labels shall be printed in plain clear type [in black ink], of such size and arrangement as to fit the construction of the voting device; and they shall be printed [on clear white material or on material of different colors to identify different ballots or parts of the ballot and in primary elections to identify each political party.] **in a manner prescribed by the Secretary of the Commonwealth to identify different ballots or parts of a ballot and in primary elections to identify each political party.**

\* \* \*

(e) In primary elections, the Secretary of the Commonwealth shall [choose a color for each party eligible to have candidates on the ballot and a separate color for independent voters. The ballot cards or paper ballots and ballot pages shall be printed on card or paper stock of the color of the party of the voter and the appropriate party affiliation or independent status shall be printed on the ballot card or at the top of the paper ballot and on the ballot pages.] **prescribe a method to ensure that the elector votes the correct ballot.**

\* \* \*

Section 1112-A. Election Day Procedures and the Process of Voting.--\* \* \*

(b) In an election district which uses an electronic voting system which utilizes paper ballots or ballot cards to register the votes, the following procedures will be applicable for the conduct of the election at the election district:

\* \* \*

(2) At primary elections, the voter shall vote for the candidates of his choice for nomination, according to the number of persons to be voted for by him, for each office by making a cross (X) or check (✓) mark or by making a punch or mark sense mark in the square opposite the name of the candidate **or by otherwise indicating a selection associated with the candidate**, or he may so [mark the write-in position provided on the ballot for the particular office] **indicate on the ballot that the voter is electing to write in the name of a person for the particular office**, and[, in the space provided therefor on the ballot and/or ballot envelope, write] **insert** the identification of the office in question and the name of any person not already [printed on the ballot for that office] **listed as a candidate for that office**, and such [mark] **indication** and [written] insertion shall count as a vote for that person for such office.

(3) At all other elections, the voter shall vote for the candidates of his choice for each office to be filled, according to the number of persons to be voted for by him for each office,

by making a cross (X) or check (✓) mark or by making a punch or mark sense mark in the square opposite the name of the candidate, **or by otherwise indicating a selection associated with the candidate**, or he may so [mark the write-in position provided on the ballot for the particular office] **indicate on the ballot that the voter is electing to write in the name of a person for the particular office**, and[, in the space provided therefor on the ballot and/or ballot envelope, write] **insert** the identification of the office in question and the name of any person not already [printed on the ballot for that office] **listed as a candidate for that office**, and such [mark] **indication** and [written] insertion shall count as a vote for that person for such office.

(4) If he desires to vote for the entire group of presidential electors nominated by any party or political body, he may make a cross (X) or check (✓) or punch or mark sense mark [in the appropriate space opposite] **or otherwise indicate a selection associated with** the names of the candidates for President and Vice-President of such party or body. If he desires to vote a ticket for presidential electors made up of the names of persons nominated by different parties or political bodies, or partially of names of persons so in nomination and partially of names of persons not in nomination by any party or political body, or wholly of names of persons not in nomination by any party or political body, he shall insert[, by writing or stamping,] the names of the candidates for presidential electors for whom he desires to vote [in the blank spaces provided therefor] on the write-in ballot under the title of the office "Presidential Electors". In case of a question submitted to the vote of the electors, he may make a cross (X) or check (✓) or punch or mark sense mark [in the appropriate square opposite] **or otherwise indicate a selection associated with** the answer which he desires to give.

\* \* \*

Section 5. Section 1113-A(i) of the act is amended to read:  
Section 1113-A. Post Election Procedures.--\* \* \*

(i) In the event that district tabulation of votes is not provided for by the voting system, it shall be the responsibility of the county board of elections to make available to the public at the central tabulating center, the election results for each election district. [It shall be the further duty of the county board of elections to post such results in each election district no later than 5:00 p.m. of the second day following the election.]

\* \* \*

Section 6. Section 1210(a.4)(1) of the act, amended October 31, 2019 (P.L.552, No.77), is amended to read:

Section 1210. Manner of Applying to Vote; Persons Entitled to Vote; Voter's Certificates; Entries to Be Made in District Register; Numbered Lists of Voters; Challenges.--\* \* \*

(a.4) (1) At all elections an individual who claims to be properly registered and eligible to vote at the election district but whose name does not appear on the district register and whose registration cannot be determined by the inspectors of election or the county election board shall be permitted to cast a provisional ballot. Individuals who appear to vote shall be required to produce proof of identification pursuant to subsection (a) and if unable to do so shall be permitted to cast a provisional ballot. An individual presenting a judicial order to vote shall be permitted to cast a provisional ballot. [An elector who appears to vote on election day having requested

an absentee ballot or mail-in ballot and who is not shown on the district register as having voted an absentee ballot or mail-in ballot shall be permitted to cast a provisional ballot.]

\* \* \*

Section 7. Section 1231(c)(2) of the act, added October 31, 2019 (P.L.552, No.77), is amended and the section is amended by adding a subsection to read:

Section 1231. Deadline for Receipt of Valid Voter Registration Application.--\* \* \*

(c) \* \* \*

[(2) No applications shall be received as follows:

(i) On Sundays.

(ii) On holidays.

(iii) On the day of the election.

(iv) During the fifteen days next preceding each general, municipal and primary election except as provided under subsection (b).]

\* \* \*

(e) (1) An applicant whose voter registration application is timely received under subsection (b) or (c) shall be deemed a registered elector of the county immediately upon acceptance of the voter registration application by the commission under 25 Pa.C.S. § 1328(c)(1) or (2) (relating to approval of registration applications), and the commission shall enter the elector's registration information in the general register, with the elector's unique identification number entered as his or her SURE registration number.

(2) Notwithstanding 25 Pa.C.S. § 1328(b)(2), if under subsection (b) or (c) an applicant timely presents his or her own application for voter registration under 25 Pa.C.S. § 1322 (relating to in-person voter registration), the commission shall immediately examine the application pursuant to 25 Pa.C.S. § 1328(a) and shall, while the applicant waits, promptly decide on said application by either accepting it, rejecting it or forwarding it pursuant to 25 Pa.C.S. § 1328(b) and, if accepted, process the application in accordance with 25 Pa.C.S. § 1328(c).

Section 8. Sections 1302(e.1) and (i)(1), 1302.2(c) and (e) and 1302.3(a), amended October 31, 2019 (P.L.552, No.77), are amended to read:

Section 1302. Applications for Official Absentee Ballots.--\* \* \*

(e.1) Any qualified registered elector who is unable because of illness or physical disability to attend his polling place on the day of any primary or election or operate a voting machine and state distinctly and audibly that he is unable to do so as required by section 1218 of this act may **at any time request**, with the certification by his attending physician that he is permanently disabled[,] and physically unable to attend the polls or operate a voting machine and make the distinct and audible statement required by section 1218 appended to the application hereinbefore required, **to be placed on a permanently disabled absentee ballot list file.** An absentee ballot application shall be mailed to every such person otherwise eligible to receive one, by the first Monday in February each year, **or within forty-eight hours of receipt of the request, whichever is later**, so long as he does not lose his voting rights by failure to vote as otherwise required by this act. Such person shall not be required to file a physician's certificate of disability with each application as required in subsection (e) of this section. Should any such person lose his disability he shall inform the county board of elections of the

county of his residence. An absentee ballot application mailed to [a voter] **an elector** under this section, which is completed and timely returned by the [voter] **elector**, shall serve as an application for any and all primary, general or special elections to be held in the remainder of that calendar year and for all special elections to be held before the third Monday in February of the succeeding year. **The transfer of a qualified registered elector on a permanently disabled absentee ballot list from one county to another county shall only be permitted upon the request of the qualified registered elector.**

\* \* \*

(i) (1) Application for official absentee ballots shall be on physical and electronic forms prescribed by the Secretary of the Commonwealth. The application shall state that an elector who [receives and votes] **applies for** an absentee ballot pursuant to section 1301 shall not be eligible to vote at a polling place on election day[.] **unless the elector brings the elector's absentee ballot to the elector's polling place, remits the ballot and the envelope containing the declaration of the elector to the judge of elections to be spoiled and signs a statement subject to the penalties of 18 Pa.C.S. § 4904 (relating to unsworn falsification to authorities) to the same effect.** Such physical application forms shall be made freely available to the public at county board of elections, municipal buildings and at such other locations designated by the secretary. Such electronic application forms shall be made freely available to the public through publicly accessible means. No written application or personal request shall be necessary to receive or access the application forms. Copies and records of all completed physical and electronic applications for official absentee ballots shall be retained by the county board of elections.

\* \* \*

Section 1302.2. Approval of Application for Absentee Ballot.--

\* \* \*

(c) The county board of elections, upon receipt of any application of a qualified elector required to be registered under the provisions of preceding section 1301, shall determine the qualifications of such applicant by verifying the proof of identification and comparing the information set forth on such application with the information contained on the applicant's permanent registration card. If the board is satisfied that the applicant is qualified to receive an official absentee ballot, the application shall be marked "approved." Such approval decision shall be final and binding, except that challenges may be made only on the ground that the applicant [did not possess the qualifications of an absentee] **was not a qualified elector.** Such challenges must be made to the county board of elections prior to [the applicable deadline for the absentee ballots to be received, as provided in section 1308(g)]. When so approved, the registration commission shall cause an absentee voter's temporary registration card to be inserted in the district register on top of and along with the permanent registration card. The absentee voter's temporary registration card shall be in the color and form prescribed in subsection (e) of this section:

Provided, however, That the duties of the county boards of elections and the registration commissions with respect to the insertion of the absentee voter's temporary registration card of any elector from the district register as set forth in section 1302.2 shall include only such applications and

emergency applications as are received on or before the first Tuesday prior to the primary or election. In all cases where applications are received after the first Tuesday prior to the primary or election and before eight o'clock P.M. on the day of the primary or election, the county board of elections shall determine the qualifications of such applicant by verifying the proof of identification and comparing the information set forth on such application with the information contained on the applicant's duplicate registration card on file in the General Register (also referred to as the Master File) in the office of the Registration Commission and shall cause the 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 section 1302.3, subsection (b).] **five o'clock p.m. on the Friday prior to the election: Provided, however, That a challenge to an application for an absentee ballot shall not be permitted on the grounds that the elector used an application for an absentee ballot instead of an application for a mail-in ballot or on the grounds that the elector used an application for a mail-in ballot instead of an application for an absentee ballot.**

\* \* \*

[(e) 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."]

\* \* \*

Section 1302.3. Absentee and Mail-in Electors Files and Lists.--[(a) The county board of elections shall maintain at its office a file containing the duplicate absentee voter's temporary registration cards of every registered elector to whom an absentee ballot has been sent. Such duplicate absentee voter's temporary registration cards shall be filed by election districts and within each election district in exact alphabetical order and indexed. The registration cards and the registration cards under section 1302.3-D so filed shall constitute the Registered Absentee and Mail-in Voters File for the Primary or Election of (date of primary or election) and shall be kept on file for a period commencing the Tuesday prior to the day of the primary or election until the day following the primary or election or the day the county board of elections certifies the returns of the primary or election, whichever date is later. Such file shall be open to public inspection at all times subject to reasonable safeguards, rules and regulations.]

\* \* \*

Section 9. Section 1303(a) and (e), amended October 31, 2019 (P.L.552, No.77) and November 27, 2019 (P.L.673, No.94), are amended to read:

Section 1303. Official Absentee Voters Ballots.--(a) In districts in which ballots are used, the ballots for use by such absentee electors under the provisions of this act shall be the official ballots printed in accordance with sections 1002 and 1003: Provided, however, That the county board of elections when [detaching] **preparing** the official ballots for absentee electors shall be required to track the name of the applicant to which a ballot is being sent. The county board of elections shall also be required to print, stamp or endorse [in red color] upon such official ballots the words, Official

Absentee Ballot. Such ballots shall be distributed by such boards as hereinafter provided.

\* \* \*

(e) The official absentee voter ballot shall state that [a voter] **an elector** who receives an absentee ballot pursuant to section 1301 and whose **voted** ballot is not timely received **by the commission** and who, on election day, is capable of voting at the appropriate polling place may only vote on election day by provisional ballot[.] **unless the elector brings the elector's absentee ballot to the elector's polling place, remits the ballot and the envelope containing the declaration of the elector to the judge of elections to be spoiled and signs a statement subject to the penalties under 18 Pa.C.S. § 4904 (relating to unsworn falsification to authorities) to the same effect.**

Section 10. Section 1304 of the act is amended to read:

Section 1304. Envelopes for Official Absentee Ballots.--

The county boards of election shall provide two additional envelopes for each official absentee ballot of such size and shape as shall be prescribed by the Secretary of the Commonwealth, in order to permit the placing of one within the other and both within the mailing envelope. On the smaller of the two envelopes to be enclosed in the mailing envelope shall be printed, stamped or endorsed the words "Official [Absentee] **Election** Ballot," and nothing else. On the larger of the two envelopes, to be enclosed within the mailing envelope, shall be printed the form of the declaration of the elector, and the name and address of the county board of election of the proper county. The larger envelope shall also contain information indicating the local election district of the absentee voter. Said form of declaration and envelope shall be as prescribed by the Secretary of the Commonwealth and shall contain among other things a statement of the electors qualifications, together with a statement that such elector has not already voted in such primary or election. The mailing envelope addressed to the elector shall contain the two envelopes, the official absentee ballot, lists of candidates, when authorized by section 1303 subsection (b) of this act, the uniform instructions in form and substance as prescribed by the Secretary of the Commonwealth and nothing else.[: Provided, however, That envelopes for electors qualified under preceding section 1301, subsections (a) to (h), inclusive, shall have printed across the face of each transmittal or return envelope two parallel horizontal red bars, each one-quarter inch wide, extending from one side of the envelope to the other side, with an intervening space of one-quarter inch, the top bar to be one and one-quarter inches from the top of the envelope and with the words "Official Election Balloting Material via Air Mail" between the bars; that there be printed, in the upper right corner of each such envelope in a box, the words "Free of U. S. Postage, Including Air Mail;" that all printing on the face of each such envelope be in red, and that there be printed in red, in the upper left corner of each such envelope, the name and address of the county board of elections of the proper county or blank lines for return address of the sender:

Provided further, That the aforesaid envelope addressed to the elector may contain absentee registration forms where required, and shall contain detailed instructions on the procedures to be observed in casting an absentee ballot as prescribed by the Secretary of the Commonwealth, together with return envelope upon which is printed the name and address of the registration commission of the proper county, which envelope



shall have printed across the face two parallel horizontal red bars, each one-quarter inch wide, extending from one side of the envelope to the other side, with an intervening space of one-quarter inch, the top bar to be one and one-quarter inches from the top of the envelope and with the words "Official Election Balloting Material via Air Mail" between the bars; that there be printed in the upper right corner of each such envelope in a box the words "Free of U. S. Postage, Including Air Mail," and, in the upper left corner of each such envelope, blank lines for return address of the sender; that all printing on the face of each such envelope be in red.]

Section 11. Sections 1306(a) introductory paragraph and (b), 1308(g) and 1309(c) of the act, amended or added October 31, 2019 (P.L.552, No.77), are amended to read:

Section 1306. Voting by Absentee Electors.--(a) Except as provided in paragraphs (2) and (3), at any time after receiving an official absentee ballot, but on or before eight o'clock P.M. the day of the primary or election, the elector shall, in secret, proceed to mark the ballot only in black lead pencil, indelible pencil or blue, black or blue-black ink, in fountain pen or ball point pen, and then fold the ballot, enclose and securely seal the same in the envelope on which is printed, stamped or endorsed "Official [Absentee] **Election** Ballot." This envelope shall then be placed in the second one, on which is printed the form of declaration of the elector, and the address of the elector's county board of election and the local election district of the elector. The elector shall then fill out, date and sign the declaration printed on such envelope. Such envelope shall then be securely sealed and the elector shall send same by mail, postage prepaid, except where franked, or deliver it in person to said county board of election.

\* \* \*

(b) (1) Any elector who receives and votes an absentee ballot pursuant to section 1301 shall not be eligible to vote at a polling place on election day. The district register at each polling place shall clearly identify electors who have received and voted absentee ballots as ineligible to vote at the polling place, and district election officers shall not permit electors who voted an absentee ballot to vote at the polling place.

(2) An elector who requests an absentee ballot and who is not shown on the district register as having voted the ballot may vote by provisional ballot under section 1210(a.4)(1).

**(3) Notwithstanding paragraph (2), an elector who requests an absentee ballot and who is not shown on the district register as having voted the ballot may vote at the polling place if the elector remits the ballot and the envelope containing the declaration of the elector to the judge of elections to be spoiled and the elector signs a statement subject to the penalties under 18 Pa.C.S. § 4904 (relating to unsworn falsification to authorities) in substantially the following form:**

**I hereby declare that I am a qualified registered elector who has obtained an absentee ballot or mail-in ballot. I further declare that I have not cast my absentee ballot or mail-in ballot, and that instead I remitted my absentee ballot or mail-in ballot and the envelope containing the declaration of the elector to the judge of elections at my polling place to be spoiled and therefore request that my absentee ballot or mail-in ballot be voided.**

**(Date)**

(Signature of Elector).....(Address of Elector)  
(Local Judge of Elections)

\* \* \*

Section 1308. Canvassing of Official Absentee Ballots and Mail-in Ballots.--\* \* \*

(g) (1) (i) An absentee ballot cast by any absentee elector as defined in section 1301(a), (b), (c), (d), (e), (f), (g) and (h) shall be canvassed in accordance with this subsection if the ballot is cast, submitted and received in accordance with the provisions of 25 Pa.C.S. Ch. 35 (relating to uniform military and overseas voters).

(ii) An absentee ballot cast by any absentee elector as defined in section 1301(i), (j), (k), (l), (m) and (n), an absentee ballot under section 1302(a.3) or a mail-in ballot cast by a mail-in elector shall be canvassed in accordance with this subsection if the absentee ballot or mail-in ballot is received in the office of the county board of elections no later than eight o'clock P.M. on the day of the primary or election.

**(1.1) The county board of elections shall meet no earlier than seven o'clock A.M. on election day to pre-canvass all ballots received prior to the meeting. A county board of elections shall provide at least forty-eight hours' notice of a pre-canvass meeting by publicly posting a notice of a pre-canvass meeting on its publicly accessible Internet website. One authorized representative of each candidate in an election and one representative from each political party shall be permitted to remain in the room in which the absentee ballots and mail-in ballots are pre-canvassed. No person observing, attending or participating in a pre-canvass meeting may disclose the results of any portion of any pre-canvass meeting prior to the close of the polls.**

(2) The county board of elections shall meet no earlier than the close of polls on the day of the election and no later than the third day following the election to begin canvassing [the] absentee ballots and mail-in ballots [received under this subsection and subsection (h)(2).] **not included in the pre-canvass meeting. The meeting under this paragraph shall continue until all absentee ballots and mail-in ballots received prior to the close of the polls have been canvassed. The county board of elections shall not record or publish any votes reflected on the ballots prior to the close of the polls. The canvass process shall continue through the eighth day following the election[.] for valid military-overseas ballots timely received under 25 Pa.C.S. § 3511 (relating to receipt of voted ballot). A county board of elections shall provide at least forty-eight hours' notice of a canvass meeting by publicly posting a notice on its publicly accessible Internet website. One authorized representative of each candidate in an election and one representative from each political party shall be permitted to remain in the room in which the absentee ballots and mail-in ballots are canvassed. [Representatives shall be permitted to challenge any absentee elector or mail-in elector in accordance with the provisions of paragraph (3).]**

(3) When the county board meets to **pre-canvass or canvass** absentee ballots and mail-in ballots under [paragraph] **paragraphs (1), (1.1) and (2)**, the board shall examine the declaration on the envelope of each ballot not set aside under subsection (d) and shall compare the information thereon with that contained in the "Registered Absentee and Mail-in Voters File," the absentee voters' list and/or the "Military Veterans and Emergency Civilians Absentee Voters File," whichever is

applicable. If the county board has verified the proof of identification as required under this act and is satisfied that the declaration is sufficient and the information contained in the "Registered Absentee and Mail-in Voters File," the absentee voters' list and/or the "Military Veterans and Emergency Civilians Absentee Voters File" verifies his right to vote, the county board shall [announce the name of the elector and shall give any candidate representative or party representative present an opportunity to challenge any absentee elector or mail-in elector upon the ground or grounds: (i) that the absentee elector or mail-in elector is not a qualified elector; or (iii) that the absentee elector was able to appear personally at the polling place on the day of the primary or election during the period the polls were open in the case his ballot was obtained for the reason that he was unable to appear personally at the polling place because of illness or physical disability. Upon challenge of any absentee elector, as set forth herein, the board shall mark "challenged" on the envelope together with the reasons therefor, and the same shall be set aside unopened pending final determination of the challenge according to the procedure described in paragraph (5).] **provide a list of the names of electors whose absentee ballots or mail-in ballots are to be pre-canvassed or canvassed.**

(4) All absentee ballots [and mail-in ballots not challenged for any of the reasons provided in] **which have not been challenged under section 1302.2(c) and all mail-in ballots which have not been challenged under section 1302.2-D(a)(2) and that have been verified under** paragraph (3) shall be counted and included with the returns of the applicable election district as follows:

(i) The county board shall open the envelope of every unchallenged absentee elector and mail-in elector in such manner as not to destroy the declaration executed thereon.

(ii) If any of the envelopes on which are printed, stamped or endorsed the words "Official [Absentee] **Election** Ballot" [or "Official Mail-in Ballot"] contain any [extraneous marks or identifying symbols,] **text, mark or symbol which reveals the identity of the elector, the elector's political affiliation or the elector's candidate preference,** the envelopes and the ballots contained therein shall be set aside and declared void.

(iii) The county board shall then break the seals of such envelopes, remove the ballots and [record the votes.] **count, compute and tally the votes.**

(iv) **Following the close of the polls, the county board shall record and publish the votes reflected on the ballots.**

(5) [With respect to the challenged ballots, they] **Ballots received whose applications have been challenged and ballots which have been challenged** shall be placed unopened in a secure, safe and sealed container in the custody of the county board until it shall fix a time and place for a formal hearing of all such challenges, and notice shall be given where possible to all absentee electors and mail-in electors thus challenged and to every individual who made a challenge. The time for the hearing shall not be later than [five (5)] **seven (7)** days after the [date of the challenge] **deadline for all challenges to be filed.** On the day fixed for said hearing, the county board shall proceed without delay to hear said challenges, and, in hearing the testimony, the county board shall not be bound by the Pennsylvania Rules of Evidence. The testimony presented shall be stenographically recorded and made part of the record of the hearing.

(6) The decision of the county board in upholding or dismissing any challenge may be reviewed by the court of common pleas of the county upon a petition filed by any person aggrieved by the decision of the county board. The appeal shall be taken, within two (2) days after the decision was made, whether the decision was reduced to writing or not, to the court of common pleas setting forth the objections to the county board's decision and praying for an order reversing the decision.

(7) Pending the final determination of all appeals, the county board shall suspend any action in canvassing and computing all challenged ballots received under this subsection irrespective of whether or not appeal was taken from the county board's decision. Upon completion of the computation of the returns of the county, the votes cast upon the challenged official absentee ballots that have been finally determined to be valid shall be added to the other votes cast within the county.

\* \* \*

Section 1309. Public Records.--\* \* \*

(c) The county board shall compile the records listed under subsection (b) and make the records publicly available upon request within forty-eight hours **of the request**.

Section 12. Section 1331 of the act is repealed:

[Section 1331. Violation of Provisions Relating to Absentee Voting.--(a) Except as provided in subsection (b), any person who shall violate any of the provisions of this act relating to absentee voting shall, unless otherwise provided, be subject to the penalties provided for in section 1850 of this act.

(b) Any person who knowingly assists another person who is not a qualified absentee elector in filling out an absentee ballot application or absentee ballot commits a misdemeanor of the third degree.]

Section 12.1. Sections 1301-D(a), 1302-D(f) and (g), 1302.2-D(a)(2), (3), (4) and (5), (b) and (d) and 1302.3-D of the act, added October 31, 2019 (P.L.552, No.77), are amended to read:

Section 1301-D. Qualified mail-in electors.

(a) General rule.--[The following individuals] **A qualified mail-in elector** shall be entitled to vote by an official mail-in ballot in any primary or election held in this Commonwealth in the manner provided under this article.[:

(1) Any qualified elector who is not eligible to be a qualified absentee elector under Article XIII.

(2) (Reserved).]

\* \* \*

Section 1302-D. Applications for official mail-in ballots.

\* \* \*

(f) Form.--Application for an official mail-in ballot shall be on physical and electronic forms prescribed by the Secretary of the Commonwealth. The application shall state that a voter who [receives and votes] **applies for** a mail-in ballot under section 1301-D shall not be eligible to vote at a polling place on election day[.] **unless the elector brings the elector's mail-in ballot to the elector's polling place, remits the ballot and the envelope containing the declaration of the elector to the judge of elections to be spoiled and signs a statement subject to the penalties under 18 Pa.C.S. § 4904 (relating to unsworn falsification to authorities) to the same effect.** The physical application forms shall be made freely available to the public at county board of elections, municipal buildings and at other locations designated by the Secretary of the Commonwealth. The

electronic application forms shall be made freely available to the public through publicly accessible means. No written application or personal request shall be necessary to receive or access the application forms. Copies and records of all completed physical and electronic applications for official mail-in ballots shall be retained by the county board of elections.

(g) Permanent mail-in voting list.--

(1) Any qualified registered elector may request to be placed on a permanent mail-in ballot list file **at any time during the calendar year**. A mail-in ballot application shall be mailed to every person otherwise eligible to receive a mail-in ballot application by the first Monday in February each year **or within 48 hours of receipt of the request, whichever is later**, so long as the person does not lose the person's voting rights by failure to vote as otherwise required by this act. A mail-in ballot application mailed to [a voter] **an elector** under this section, which is completed and timely returned by the [voter] **elector**, shall serve as an application for any and all primary, general or special elections to be held in the remainder of that calendar year and for all special elections to be held before the third Monday in February of the succeeding year.

(2) The Secretary of the Commonwealth may develop an electronic system through which all qualified electors may apply for a mail-in ballot and request permanent mail-in voter status under this section, provided the system is able to capture a digitized or electronic signature of the applicant. A county board of elections shall treat an application or request received through the electronic system as if the application or request had been submitted on a paper form or any other format used by the county.

**(3) The transfer of a qualified registered elector on a permanent mail-in voting list from one county to another county shall only be permitted upon the request of the qualified registered elector.**

Section 1302.2-D. Approval of application for mail-in ballot.

(a) Approval process.--The county board of elections, upon receipt of any application of a qualified elector under section 1301-D, shall determine the qualifications of the applicant by verifying the proof of identification and comparing the information provided on the application with the information contained on the applicant's permanent registration card. The following shall apply:

\* \* \*

(2) The approval decision shall be final and binding, except that challenges may be made only on the grounds that the applicant [did not possess the qualifications of a mail-in] **was not a qualified** elector.

(3) Challenges must be made to the county board of elections prior to [the applicable deadline for the mail-in ballots to be received, as provided in section 1308(g).] **five o'clock p.m. on the Friday prior to the election: Provided, however, That a challenge to an application for a mail-in ballot shall not be permitted on the grounds that the elector used an application for a mail-in ballot instead of an application for an absentee ballot or on the grounds that the elector used an application for an absentee ballot instead of an application for a mail-in ballot .**

(4) When approved, the registration commission shall cause a mail-in voter's [temporary registration card] **record** to be inserted in the district register [on top of and along

with the permanent registration card] **as prescribed by the Secretary of the Commonwealth.**

[(5) The mail-in voter's temporary registration card shall be in the color and form prescribed under subsection (d).]

(b) Duties of county boards of elections and registration commissions.--The duties of the county boards of elections and the registration commissions with respect to the insertion of the mail-in voter's [temporary registration card of any elector from the district register as provided under this section] **record** shall include only the applications as are received on or before the first Tuesday prior to the primary or election.

\* \* \*

[(d) Temporary registration card.--The mail-in 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 mail-in voter's name and address and shall conspicuously contain the words "Mail-in Voter."]  
[Section 1302.3-D. Mail-in electors files and lists.

The county board of elections shall maintain at its office a file containing the duplicate mail-in voter's temporary registration cards of every registered elector to whom a mail-in ballot has been sent. The duplicate mail-in voter's temporary registration cards shall be filed by election districts and within each election district in exact alphabetical order and indexed. The registration cards filed shall be included in the Registered Absentee and Mail-in Voters File for the Primary or Election of (date of primary or election) under section 1302.3(a).]

Section 13. Section 1303-D(a.1) and (e), amended or added October 31, 2019 (P.L.552, No.77) and November 27, 2019 (P.L.673, No.94), are amended to read:  
Section 1303-D. Official mail-in elector ballots.

\* \* \*

(a.1) Duties of county boards of elections.--The county board of elections, when [detaching] **preparing** the official ballots for mail-in voters, shall be required to indicate on [the stub of each detached ballot the name of the applicant to which that precise ballot is being sent.] **the voter's record the identification number of specific ballot envelope into which the voter's ballot is inserted.** The county board of elections shall also [remove the numbered stub from each ballot and shall] print, stamp or endorse [in red color] on the official ballots the words, "Official Mail-in Ballot." The ballots shall be distributed by a board as provided under this section.

\* \* \*

(e) Notice.--The official mail-in voter ballot shall state that a voter who receives a mail-in ballot under section 1301-D and whose **voted** mail-in ballot is not timely received may only vote on election day by provisional ballot[.] **unless the elector brings the elector's mail-in ballot to the elector's polling place, remits the ballot and the envelope containing the declaration of the elector to the judge of elections to be spoiled and signs a statement subject to the penalties of 18 Pa.C.S. § 4904 (relating to unsworn falsification to authorities) to the same effect .**

Section 14. Sections 1304-D(a), 1305-D, 1306-D(a) and (b) and 1307-D(c) of the act, added October 31, 2019 (P.L.552, No.77), are amended to read:  
Section 1304-D. Envelopes for official mail-in ballots.

(a) Additional envelopes.--The county boards of election shall provide two additional envelopes for each official mail-in ballot of a size and shape as shall be prescribed by the Secretary of the Commonwealth, in order to permit the placing of one within the other and both within the mailing envelope. On the smaller of the two envelopes to be enclosed in the mailing envelope shall be printed, stamped or endorsed the words "Official [Mail-in] **Election** Ballot," and nothing else. On the larger of the two envelopes, to be enclosed within the mailing envelope, shall be printed the form of the declaration of the elector and the name and address of the county board of election of the proper county. The larger envelope shall also contain information indicating the local election district of the mail-in voter.

\* \* \*

Section 1305-D. Delivering or mailing ballots.

The county board of elections, upon receipt and approval of an application filed by a qualified elector under section 1301-D, shall commence to deliver or mail official mail-in ballots as soon as a ballot is certified and the ballots are available. While any proceeding is pending in a Federal or State court which would affect the contents of any ballot, the county board of elections may await a resolution of that proceeding but in any event, shall commence to deliver or mail official [absentee] **mail-in** ballots not later than the second Tuesday prior to the primary or election. For applicants whose proof of identification was not provided with the application or could not be verified by the board, the board shall send the notice required under section 1302.2-D(c) with the mail-in ballot. As additional applications are received and approved, the board shall deliver or mail official mail-in ballots to the additional electors within 48 hours.

Section 1306-D. Voting by mail-in electors.

(a) General rule.--At any time after receiving an official mail-in ballot, but on or before eight o'clock P.M. the day of the primary or election, the mail-in elector shall, in secret, proceed to mark the ballot only in black lead pencil, indelible pencil or blue, black or blue-black ink, in fountain pen or ball point pen, and then fold the ballot, enclose and securely seal the same in the envelope on which is printed, stamped or endorsed "Official [Mail-in] **Election** Ballot." This envelope shall then be placed in the second one, on which is printed the form of declaration of the elector, and the address of the elector's county board of election and the local election district of the elector. The elector shall then fill out, date and sign the declaration printed on such envelope. Such envelope shall then be securely sealed and the elector shall send same by mail, postage prepaid, except where franked, or deliver it in person to said county board of election.

\* \* \*

(b) Eligibility.--

(1) Any elector who receives and votes a mail-in ballot under section 1301-D shall not be eligible to vote at a polling place on election day. The district register at each polling place shall clearly identify electors who have received and voted mail-in ballots as ineligible to vote at the polling place, and district election officers shall not permit electors who voted a mail-in ballot to vote at the polling place.

(2) An elector who requests a mail-in ballot and who is not shown on the district register as having voted may vote by provisional ballot under section 1210(a.4)(1).

(3) Notwithstanding paragraph (2), an elector who requests a mail-in ballot and who is not shown on the district register as having voted the ballot may vote at the polling place if the elector remits the ballot and the envelope containing the declaration of the elector to the judge of elections to be spoiled and the elector signs a statement subject to the penalties of 18 Pa.C.S. § 4904 (relating to unsworn falsification to authorities) which shall be in substantially the following form:

I hereby declare that I am a qualified registered elector who has obtained an absentee ballot or mail-in ballot. I further declare that I have not cast my absentee ballot or mail-in ballot, and that instead I remitted my absentee ballot or mail-in ballot to the judge of elections at my polling place to be spoiled and therefore request that my absentee ballot or mail-in ballot be voided.

(Date)

(Signature of Elector).....(Address of Elector)

(Local Judge of Elections)

\* \* \*

Section 1307-D. Public records.

\* \* \*

(c) Compilation.--The county board shall compile the records listed under subsection (b) and make the records publicly available upon request within 48 hours **of the request.**

Section 14.1. Section 1308-D of the act is repealed:

[Section 1308-D. Violation of provisions relating to mail-in voting.

(a) Penalties.--Except as provided under subsection (b), a person who violates any of the provisions of this act relating to mail-in voting shall, unless otherwise provided, be subject to the penalties provided under section 1850.

(b) Persons not qualified as mail-in voters.--A person who knowingly assists another person who is not a qualified mail-in voter in filling out a mail-in ballot application or mail-in ballot commits a misdemeanor of the third degree.]

Section 15. The act is amended by adding an article to read:

#### ARTICLE XIII-E

#### PENNSYLVANIA ELECTION LAW ADVISORY BOARD

Section 1301-E. Definitions.

The following words and phrases when used in this article shall have the meanings given to them in this section unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:

"Board." The Pennsylvania Election Law Advisory Board established under section 1302-E(a).

Section 1302-E. Pennsylvania Election Law Advisory Board.

(a) Establishment.--The Pennsylvania Election Law Advisory Board is established within the Joint State Government Commission.

(b) Members.--The board shall be comprised of the following members:

(1) The Secretary of the Commonwealth or a designee.

(2) The President pro tempore of the Senate or a designee.

(3) The Minority Leader of the Senate or a designee.

(4) The Speaker of the House of Representatives or a designee.

(5) The Minority Leader of the House of Representatives or a designee.

(6) One member from each congressional district, of whom no more than half may be registered with the same



political party, appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate and which shall include members who:

- (i) represent groups advocating for individuals with disabilities;
- (ii) represent groups advocating for voting rights; and
- (iii) represent county commissioners or county election officials.

(c) Duties.--The board shall have the following duties:

(1) Study this act and identify statutory language to repeal, modify or update.

(2) Collaborate with other agencies and political subdivisions of the Commonwealth to study election-related issues.

(3) Study the development of new election technology and voting machines.

(4) Evaluate and make recommendations on:

(i) improving the electoral process in this Commonwealth by amending this act or through regulations promulgated by the Department of State; and

(ii) implementing best practices identified to ensure the integrity and efficiency of the electoral process in this Commonwealth.

(5) By the end of each fiscal year, publish extensive and detailed findings on the Joint State Government Commission's publicly accessible Internet website and make them available in electronic format to the Office of the Governor and members of the General Assembly.

(d) Quorum.--A majority of appointed members shall constitute a quorum for the purpose of conducting business.

(e) Chairperson and vice chairperson.--The members shall select a member to be chairperson and another member to be vice chairperson.

(f) Transparency and ethics.--The board shall be subject to the following laws:

(1) The act of July 19, 1957 (P.L.1017, No.451), known as the State Adverse Interest Act.

(2) The act of October 4, 1978 (P.L.883, No.170), referred to as the Public Official and Employee Ethics Law.

(3) The act of February 14, 2008 (P.L.6, No.3), known as the Right-to-Know Law.

(4) 65 Pa.C.S. Ch. 7 (relating to open meetings).

(g) Information gathering.--The board may conduct hearings and otherwise gather relevant information and analysis that it considers appropriate and necessary to fulfill its duties.

(h) Reimbursement.--Members of the board shall be reimbursed for reasonable expenses.

Section 15.1. Section 1853 of the act is amended to read:

Section 1853. Violations of Provisions Relating to Absentee [Electors] and Mail-in Ballots.--If any person shall sign an application for absentee ballot, **mail-in ballot** or declaration of elector on the forms prescribed knowing any matter declared therein to be false, or shall vote any ballot other than one properly issued to [him] **the person**, or vote or attempt to vote more than once in any election for which an absentee ballot **or mail-in ballot** shall have been issued to [him] **the person**, or shall violate any other provisions of Article XIII or Article XIII-D of this act, [he] **the person** shall be guilty of a misdemeanor of the [first] **third** degree, and, upon conviction, shall be sentenced to pay a fine not exceeding [ten thousand dollars (\$10,000)] **two thousand five hundred dollars (\$2,500)**,

or be imprisoned for a term not exceeding [five (5)] **two (2)** years, or both, at the discretion of the court.

If any chief clerk or member of a board of elections, member of a return board or member of a board of registration commissioners, shall neglect or refuse to perform any of the duties prescribed by Article XIII **or Article XIII-D** of this act, or shall reveal or divulge any of the details of any ballot cast in accordance with the provisions of Article XIII **or Article XIII-D** of this act, or shall count an absentee ballot **or mail-in ballot** knowing the same to be contrary to Article XIII **or Article XIII-D**, or shall reject an absentee ballot **or mail-in ballot** without reason to believe that the same is contrary to Article XIII **or Article XIII-D**, or shall permit an elector to cast [his] **the elector's** ballot at a polling place knowing that there has been issued to the elector an absentee ballot, [he] **the elector** shall be guilty of a felony of the third degree, and, upon conviction, shall be punished by a fine not exceeding fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000), or be imprisoned for a term not exceeding seven (7) years, or both, at the discretion of the court.

Section 16. The act is amended by adding an article to read:

**ARTICLE XVIII-B**

**EMERGENCY PROVISIONS FOR 2020 GENERAL PRIMARY ELECTION**

**Section 1801-B. Election officers.**

**(a) Requirement.--**

(1) Except as provided under paragraph (2), and notwithstanding section 402 or any other law of this Commonwealth, an election officer must be a qualified registered elector of the county in which the polling place is located.

(2) An election officer shall not be required to be a qualified registered elector in the election district in which the election officer is appointed.

**(b) (Reserved).**

**Section 1802-B. Polling place.**

**(a) Consolidation of polling places.--**

(1) A county board of elections may, not less than 20 days prior to the election, select and designate as the polling place for an election district any public or private building situated in another election district within the county, notwithstanding if the building is located in an election district which is not immediately adjacent to the boundary of the election district for which the building is to be a polling place.

(2) A polling place may be selected and designated under this subsection without the approval of a court.

(3) Two or more polling places may be consolidated, except that the consolidation of polling places may not result in more than a 60% reduction of polling place locations in the county, except for necessitous circumstances and as approved by the Department of State. Two or more polling places may be located in the same building.

(4) A polling place selected and designated under this subsection must be directly accessible by a public street or thoroughfare.

**(b) Posting.--**A county board of elections shall, not less than 15 days prior to the election under section 1804-B, post in a conspicuous place at the office of the county board of elections, a list of each place at which the election is to be held in each election district of the county. The list shall be available for public inspection at the office of the county

board of elections and posted on the county's publicly accessible Internet website.

**Section 1803-B. Permissible polling place locations.**

(a) **Service.**--Subject to subsection (b) and notwithstanding section 529(a) and (b) or any other law of this Commonwealth, malt or brewed beverages and liquors may be served in a building where a polling place is located during the hours that the polling place is open, except that an election may not be held in a room where malt or brewed beverages or liquors are dispensed.

(b) **Accessibility.**--A polling place under subsection (a) must be accessible from an outside entrance that does not require passageway through the room where malt or brewed beverages or liquors are dispensed.

**Section 1804-B. General primary election.**

(a) **Time.**--Notwithstanding section 603 or any law of this Commonwealth, the general primary election shall occur throughout this Commonwealth on June 2, 2020.

(b) **Calculation.**--The following shall apply:

(1) Except for the deadline relating to the nomination of a candidate under Article IX, any date or deadline in this act, 25 Pa.C.S. Pt. IV (relating to voter registration) or 25 Pa.C.S. Ch. 35 (relating to uniform military and overseas voters) that depends on, or is contingent on, the date of the general primary election, shall be calculated based on the June 2, 2020, date for the general primary election.

(2) Notwithstanding subsection (a), the due date for the sixth Tuesday pre-primary cycle 1 campaign finance report shall be March 17, 2020.

(c) **Nonapplicability.**--This section shall not be construed to apply to the nominating petition process.

(d) **Ballots.**--A ballot for the general primary 2020 which has been purchased, printed or acquired prior to the effective date of this section and shows an election date of April 28, 2020, shall not be deemed to be invalid because of the date.

**Section 1805-B. Expiration.**

**This article shall expire on July 3, 2020.**

Section 17. This act shall apply as follows:

(1) The amendment or addition of the following shall apply to elections occurring on or after June 2, 2020:

- (i) Section 102(a.1), (q.1) and (z.6).
- (ii) Section 1302.2(c).
- (iii) Section 1308(g).
- (iv) Section 1301-D(a).
- (v) Section 1302.2-D(a).

(2) The amendment or addition of the following shall apply to elections occurring on or after November 2, 2020:

- (i) Section 302(p).
- (ii) Section 1302(i)(1).
- (iii) Section 1303(e).
- (iv) Section 1306(b).
- (v) Section 1302-D(f).
- (vi) Section 1303-D(e).
- (vii) Section 1306-D(b).

(3) The amendment or addition of the following shall apply to envelopes and ballots purchased, printed or acquired after the effective date of this section:

- (i) Section 1004.
- (ii) Section 1109-A(b) and (e).
- (iii) Section 1112-A(b)(2), (3) and (4).
- (iv) Section 1303(a).

- (v) Section 1304.
- (vi) Section 1306(a) introductory paragraph.
- (vii) Section 1303-D(a.1).
- (viii) Section 1304-D(a).
- (ix) Section 1306-D(a).

Section 18. Repeals are as follows:

(1) The General Assembly declares that the repeal under paragraph (2) is necessary to effectuate the amendment or addition of section 1231(c)(2) and (e).

(2) 25 Pa.C.S. § 1328(c)(4) and (5) are repealed.

Section 19. This act shall take effect immediately.

APPROVED--The 27th day of March, A.D. 2020.

TOM WOLF