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# Snyder County Board of Commissioners

Court House, P.O. Box 217 • Middleburg, Pennsylvania 17842-0217
(570) 837-4207 • FAX (570) 837-4282

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As a County Commissioner who is actively involved in our elections process, I hear the concerns, complaints, successes and shortfalls of my staff every day.  With the passage of Act 77 and Act 12, our election staff had to deal with more challenges in 2020 than in the past 13 years combined.  That's how long I've been the Chairman of our election board, except, of course, for the years I was running for office.

Snyder County's number of registered voters has grown steadily since the 2016 General Election; however, that increase was nothing in comparison to the vastly increased workload that came with the passage of Act 77 and the mail in ballots.  This change was a huge deal and we could get into that for hours but despite the number of changes counties need to see to the mail in ballot issue to be able to better manage the administration and execution of our future elections, fixing the SURE system should also be one of the utmost priorities.  For this testimony, I also consulted with the elections Registrar in Northumberland County.

Some of the problems that Snyder and Northumberland counties experienced…

1.  Downtime Issues: In the midst of trying to process thousands of mail in and absentee ballots our two fulltime person staff would sometimes have to wait for a couple of hours for the SURE system to allow them to continue.  The folks at the SURE Help Desk, while always pleasant, seemed to be inundated with many issues many of the times they'd call.

2.  Printing Issues:  The SURE system does not allow the user to cancel a print job.  So in Northumberland County's example, if someone in Philadelphia hit print on a large print job but accidentally scrolled over Northumberland County, which is the next in line above Philly, the job would print to Northumberland County.  This then requires the Northumberland County staff to reload paper on what has now been a wasted print job and take the time to notify Philly their job printed in Northumberland County.  This type of issue happened many times in Snyder County also.  It also happened when the Voter Registrar or their staff were printing Voter Registration Cards for newly registered voters.  In this case, you would now have voter registration cards sitting in the wrong county until the error is found.

3.  Alternate Address problems:  When the SURE System pulls the alternate address to send a mail in ballot to instead of the primary address, this can cause the voter's actual ballot to be sent to the wrong address.

4. <u>Blank Precinct Voters</u>: On some occasions, once voters had been assigned a precinct by the Voter Registrar person, the SURE system would change the voter's status to "having no assigned precinct" which would then require manual action to do it all over again.

5. <u>Disappearing Batches</u>: This issue was particularly present with Mail in and Absentee Applications. If a user reviewed a batch without fully completing it, rarely, an issue would occur that would make the batch disappear from the "pending applications" menu and become stuck "in use" by the user, even after they had exited the batch and the system. This had to be overridden by specifically searching for batches "in use" to recover those applications.

6. <u>Imported Batches</u>: The "batches" of new voter registration forms that come to counties from the Department of Transportation often include information that is not completely accurate, normally from input errors of the potential voter (street address, date of birth, spelling of name, etc.). Also, when these batches are imported into the SURE system, they sometimes cause the system to go unresponsive for minutes and other large reports cause the system to crash. The batches from the Department of Health (Deceased Reports) often do not have complete information. For example, if there is more than one John Doe in the county and the batch report does not give a date of birth, election staff members do not know which John Doe has died and then need to do more research to make sure the correct person is stricken from the voter rolls.

7. <u>System Reboots</u>: My staff's terminals would need to be re-booted often. One every few days and the other up to 2 or 3 times per day. This, on top of the system working very slowly on a daily basis, especially when they were working to process thousands of mail in ballots made the job take longer than it should take.

8. <u>Other Issues</u>: My staff had problems with the SURE system showing pending labels for deceased voters. Since we were not sure if it would actually generate labels, we did a three-step manual process to delete the permanent status from the deceased person, pending label and application as a precaution. The other issue that seemed to generate a lot of unnecessary work was that the "Permanent" records in the SURE system were not generating labels for the voter even though we had their application from the Spring Primary and the voter had selected "Annual Mail In Ballot Request." We went through pages of records to try to make sure those who had selected this did indeed have labels and the mail in ballot sent to them. It was random and unexplainable.

   In closing, the very foundation of our democracy hinges on safe and secure elections. The SURE system is a very big part of making sure our voter rolls are accurate. Elections staff being able to access that information in a timely and efficient manner is also crucially important. I applaud Chairman Grove and this committee for hearing those who see the shortfalls of this system on a daily basis and especially the other two gentlemen on this panel who use the system every day.

   Thank you,

   *Joseph Kantz*