



**2022 House State Government Hearing  
April 6, 2022  
Testimony of Deputy Secretary of Elections and Commissions  
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Pennsylvania Department of State  
2022 Primary Election Preparations**

Chairman Grove, Chairman Conklin, and members of the House State Government Committee:

Good morning. Thank you for the invitation to appear before the Committee to discuss the Department of State's preparations ahead of the 2022 Primary Election.

The Department of State works year-round with county elections offices, county commissioners, vendors, other state agencies, and federal partners to administer and ensure safe, fair, and accessible elections in the Commonwealth. As you all are aware, the calendar and timeline for the 2022 primary election were modified and compressed under the Pennsylvania Supreme Court's orders. New congressional and legislative maps were implemented quickly and the nomination petition circulation and filing period was shortened. The Department had to work swiftly and comprehensively to update resources and election materials. The Department has been scheduling help-desk support hours for county and DOS staff to ensure counties can resolve any technical or procedural issues or questions that may arise. The Department has been working diligently, and we can assure you that we are prepared for the 2022 primary election.

We are not actively revising existing guidance; however, should legislative action or court decisions require us to do so, we stand ready to educate the counties immediately.

The Department does want to identify important efforts to improve parts of the process which will simplify the work of counties. The Department recently implemented an enhancement to the SURE system to support walk-in ballot requests, also known as counter-voting transactions, in response to concerns we heard from county offices. The updated feature will allow county staff to use a label printer to immediately print a unique ballot label for a voter who requests an absentee ballot or mail-in ballot in person and directly issue them a ballot, rather than requiring the ballot to be processed in a batch through a standard SURE printer. This will cut down on voters' wait time when applying for a mail-in ballot in person.

Additionally, the Department is moving forward with modernization of the SURE system. The first phase of the new SUREVote system will be in beta testing for the primary election. Phase 1 is election-night reporting (ENR) and election management. Recently, the Department has been testing the new SUREVote system alongside the existing legacy SURE system as we work to implement Phase 1 of transitioning to the new system. The Department tested the election management module during the second half of February with the assistance of seven counties: Bradford, Dauphin, Erie, Lancaster, Lehigh, Lycoming, and Philadelphia.

In early March, the Department gathered counties to receive feedback on the testing and training processes. Counties' feedback was constructive and yielded a few enhancements. The production environment of the election management module was

deployed on March 15, 2022. The Department trained counties on the election management module on March 18, 2022. Phase 1 continues with configuring and ordering the races, candidates, and ballot questions.

ENR is the next module scheduled for delivery from the SUREVote vendor. Department and county user acceptance testing began on April 1, 2022. The Department will conduct statewide mock elections and logic and accuracy testing throughout April and May to identify and remedy potential errors that could affect the reporting of election results. During these exercises, counties will test uploading result files and review the results posted to the ENR site. The Department expects final delivery of the module toward the end of the month.

Under the new system, ENR will provide interactive maps that users can click to view contest results, with color coding based on each county's reporting status (e.g., yellow for mail ballot reporting). There will be icons for users to select various reporting categories to view, such as federal and judicial contest results, and a tool to track specific contests of interest. The ENR site will report election results by county, including the required reporting groups of election day ballots, mail ballots, and provisional ballots. Information on results reported by precinct will also be available.

The SUREVote vendor will compare the number of eligible voters by county from the statewide list of registered voters against the number of ballots cast in the ENR module. The vendor will also push the configured election reporting structure from SUREVote to the ENR module, where the configuration will be proofed by both county and state users to ensure accuracy.

The Department is also monitoring external issues which might impact the primary election. We are in ongoing communication with county boards of elections to identify and resolve any changing needs or concerns brought about by supply chain issues and changes to the election calendar. We have encouraged counties to work with their vendors and our staff as far in advance of the primary as possible, and we are monitoring the availability of supplies with state contractors used by the Commonwealth and county agencies.

The Department, the 67 counties and their respective boards of elections, vendors, and other Commonwealth agencies are hard at work preparing for the 2022 primary election and the transition to the new SUREVote election management system. We are happy to answer any questions you may have about our plans and procedures. Thank you for your time and attention and the opportunity to appear before you.