



Fighting Voter Suppression in PA

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Coalition for Racial Equity and Social Justice

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Recent Pennsylvania Elections Law Changes

In recent years, there have been two key pieces of legislation signed into law that have altered the legal landscape of Pennsylvania's elections: **Act 77** (2019) and **Act 12** (2020).

Act 77 introduced a variety of changes into PA election law, including:

- No-excuse absentee/mail voting up to 50 days prior to Election Day
- Allowing voters to select to be placed on a permanent mail-in ballot application list
- Providing funds to counties to implement voting machines with paper trails
- Extending the mail-in/absentee ballot submission deadline to 8 pm on Election Day. The deadline had previously been 5 pm on the Friday before Election Day.
- Eliminating straight party ticket voting

In January 2022, Act 77 was invalidated by a 3-2 decision of the Commonwealth Court but is being appealed to the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania. While the decision is under appeal, the provisions of Act 77 remain in place.

Act 12 enacted several emergency provisions for the 2020 primaries

- Act 12 provisions are geared towards conducting the election successfully and safely amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.
- In addition, Act 12 amended the PA Election Code to allow for pre-election day canvassing of mail-in and absentee ballots and election day canvassing of those ballots received after the final pre-canvass meetings. Providing funds to counties to implement voting machines with paper trails
- Act 12 also laid out a process whereby an absentee/mail-in ballot voter can instead vote in person on Election Day by surrendering their mail ballot there, at their polling place, and then voting in person.
- Finally, Act 12 established a Pennsylvania Election Law Advisory Board, consisting of legislative leaders and citizens appointed by the governor, to study PA election law and propose statutory and regulatory changes in a report each fiscal year.

Legislative Proposals

There is currently only one legislative proposal that could increase voting rights in PA while there are several that could prevent people from voting/reduce voter turnout.

Legislative Proposal That Could Increase Voting Rights in PA (2021-2022)

H.B. 2090

- This bill would allow for early voting measures and same day voter registration.

Legislative Proposals That Could Prevent People From Voting/Reduce Voter Turnout in PA (2021-2022)...

S.B. 402

- This bill would repeal no-excuse mail-in voting here in PA.

H.B. 195

- This bill would repeal no-excuse mail-in voting here in PA.

H.B. 25

- This bill would repeal no-excuse mail-in voting here in PA.

Legislative Proposals That Could Prevent People From Voting/Reduce Voter Turnout in PA (2021-2022) continued

S.B. 422

- This bill would require 1 form of photo voter ID or 2 forms of non-photo voter ID at the polling place to vote.

H.B. 853

- This bill would require 1 form of photo voter ID or 2 forms of non-photo voter ID at the polling place to vote.

H.B. 1800

- This bill is touted as an election modernization and integrity bill but includes provisions which requires photo voter ID and signature verification – a practice that fails to account for legitimate reasons a person's signature may not match the signature on a voter's identification card such as illness, age, or physical ability.

What can we do about it?

Voter suppression seeks to reduce the participation and power of citizens in the operation of government. The best way to counteract it is to get involved—to participate and wield power.

There are a variety of ways that citizens can get involved:

- You can contact and get involved with civic organizations in PA like the League of Women Voters, Keystone Votes, and the Committee of Seventy.
- You can find out who your state Representatives and Senators are, and then call their offices to voice your opposition to voter suppression. You can also call the offices of legislative leaders in the PA Senate and in the PA House.
- You can also write letters to the editors and op-eds in support of voting rights, and then submit them to state and local newspapers like The Pennsylvania Capital-Star, Philadelphia Inquirer, Philadelphia Citizen, Morning Call, Patch, The Intelligencer, The Times-Herald, WHYY, and many others.



Almost 50 years ago, I gave a little blood on that bridge in Selma, Alabama, for the right to vote. I am not going to stand by and let the Supreme Court take the right to vote away from us. ... You must get out there and push and pull and make America what America should be for all of us. We must say to the Congress, ‘Fix the Voting Rights Act!’”

- Representative John Lewis

Links to Resources

On the next slide you will be able to link out to the Acts, Legislative Proposals, and resources mentioned in this presentation.

Use the links below to access the information and resources

- [League of Women Voters](#)
- [Keystone Votes](#)
- [Committee of Seventy](#)
- [Find your state Representatives and Senators](#)
- [The PA Senate](#)
- [The PA House](#)
- [Act 77](#)
- [Act 12](#)
- [H.B. 2090](#)
- [S.B. 402](#)
- [H.B. 195](#)
- [H.B. 25](#)
- [S.B. 422](#)
- [H.B. 853](#)
- [H.B. 1800](#)

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