

**Voye, David**

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, October 20, 2021 12:49 PM  
**To:** # Board of Elections  
**Subject:** Poll watchers

Warning! This email was sent from an external source. Please be sure you recognize the sender and use caution when clicking on links and/or opening attachments.

At the primary, we had issue with poll watchers that didn't have the correct signatures on their forms in West Mifflin district 21. There was a man that bullied his way in to argue about it and after contacting several of you by phone he bullied the woman at the other end of the phone to allow them to be there. They were also electioneering. Please make it clear that this is not acceptable and don't let misogynistic old men bully these women at the poll places. I have no issue telling this man where to stick it - as I have had issue with him when I was the Democratic chair woman for district 16 in West Mifflin. (He is why I chose not to run again) This man is the head of the Democratic committee in WM and is a total jerk. Give me the authority to kick his butt out and I will. I don't want any issues where they get what they want illegally. It isn't fair to those that follow their due diligence and have correct signatures and follow the rules. We MUST stop the MAGA mentality at the local levels everywhere.

Thank you,  
Christy Kozar

[Sent from the all new AOL app for iOS](#)

**Voye, David**

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**From:** nancy.scialabba@verizon.net  
**Sent:** Wednesday, October 20, 2021 3:20 PM  
**To:** # Board of Elections  
**Subject:** Board of Elections meeting - comments/concerns

Warning! This email was sent from an external source. Please be sure you recognize the sender and use caution when clicking on links and/or opening attachments.

Hello

I will be watching this meeting and I would like to make comment

As you know we have numerous people that are still claiming FALSELY that the election of Nov 2020 was stolen

Now they are up to no good!

Audit the Vote PA ladies have posted on their Telegram site – asking for people who are going to be Judge of Election for the Nov 2021 election to contact them..

My question is WHY – what are they trying to do, what are they trying to ask for ? I do not trust them

I will be Judge of Election for my location in Shaler and if any of them come in – I would immediately call your office to report them, but this request of theirs seems very questionable

I am willing to speak to the board if possible.

Thank You

Nancy Scialabba  
1215 Anderson Road  
Pittsburgh, PA 15209  
412-302-9493

**Voye, David**

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**From:** Melissa Ragona <blindobject@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, October 20, 2021 1:23 PM  
**To:** # Board of Elections  
**Subject:** RE: MASKS should be required to vote

Dear Board of Election Members:

Below is a recent quote (October 2021) from County Health Director Dr. Bogen — which states that Pittsburgh continues to have 350 to 400 new COVID-19 cases per day (see below). This is alarming – especially because very few people in Pittsburgh are wearing masks in any public spaces. And, as we know the mask mandate for PA was lifted on June 28 2021. Thus, this leaves many, many people vulnerable to COVID exposure/infection — even if they themselves decide to mask up (this mostly protects others from transmission from the mask-wearer)—in terms of voting, in person, on November 2, 2021.

I would like to know what the Board of Elections is doing to insure the safety of in-person voters and, to urge them, to garner the support of the governor in order to put a face-covering mandate in place for in-person voting. Pittsburgh is not out-of-the-woods in terms of the steady numbers of COVID cases in this city (350-400 a day). Indeed, I find it dangerous and irresponsible that mask-covering mandates have been lifted in this city.

"Following trends from the past month, Allegheny County continued to average 350 to 400 new COVID-19 cases per day over the past week, County Health Director Dr. Bogen said at a Wednesday briefing."

<https://www.publicsource.org/important-info-on-coronavirus-preparation-in-allegheny-county/>

Sincerely,  
Melissa Ragona

**Voye, David**

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, October 21, 2021 5:28 PM  
**To:** # Board of Elections  
**Subject:** Comments for BOE October 22, 2021

Warning! This email was sent from an external source. Please be sure you recognize the sender and use caution when clicking on links and/or opening attachments.

Comments for Allegheny County Board of Elections, (October 22, 2021, Meeting)

I would like you to address concerns being expressed about outside funding influencing election operations. To conduct the 2021 elections, what funding in any form has Allegheny County taken to fund any aspect of election from non-Allegheny County sources of funding? This would include, state, Federal, and non-profit and private philanthropy sources. What obligations did Allegheny County inherit with the funding? What did or what plans does the Allegheny Elections Division have to spend the money?

Thank you.

Robert Howard  
Marshall Township

229 Seasons Drive, Wexford, PA 15090

**Voye, David**

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, October 21, 2021 9:22 PM  
**To:** # Board of Elections  
**Subject:** Written comments for October 22nd meeting

Warning! This email was sent from an external source. Please be sure you recognize the sender and use caution when clicking on links and/or opening attachments.

Good afternoon.

As I am unable to attend in person, I wish to have the following written comments entered into the record.

The ability for any voter in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to avail themselves of a mail-in ballot has been, for the most part, an overwhelmingly positive development. However, there is room for improvement. As such, I submit the following recommendations to this board:

The day after I mailed back my ballot, I received an automated text message from the department of state with a reminder to affix postage when mailing one's ballot. The text concluded by noting that "two stamps may be required" due to the number of races in the 2021 election. I had only affixed one stamp to the envelope containing my ballot and while I received confirmation soon after that the singular stamp was sufficient, my ballot having arrived safely at the Elections office, this moment of concern brought once more into sharp relief for me that no voter in Allegheny County - or, for that matter the entirety of Pennsylvania - should be required to use a stamp to mail back their ballot.

Elections materials are paid for via taxes and to require a voter to pay anything beyond that could very well be considered a poll tax. As this board should be aware, Section 1 of the 24th Amendment to the United States Constitution reads as follows: "The right of citizens of the United States to vote in any primary or other election for President or Vice President, for electors for President or Vice President, or for Senator or Representative in Congress, shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or any State by reason of failure to pay any poll tax or other tax." While this addressed poll taxes on the federal level, the 1966 Supreme Court decision in *Harper v. Virginia State Board of Elections* confirmed that the prohibition on poll taxes applied to all elections, citing the Equal Protection Clause (Section One) of the 14th Amendment.

The solution to not running afoul of established law within this nation's core legal document is obvious: provide every voter who has requested to vote by mail with a postage-paid envelope within which to return their ballot. Any excuse for not doing this - the county doesn't wish to pay for postage, that one could choose to vote in person, or drop off one's mail-in ballot at the elections office - are spurious. The right to vote is sacrosanct, being the foundation upon which the tenet that legitimate government only exists via consent of the governed is built. As such it is a moral imperative that any barrier to the enfranchisement of any voter must be removed. Providing a postage-paid envelope to every citizen who votes by mail is a simple solution to prevent many potential problems; Allegheny County should begin doing so in time for the 2022 primary election. To decline such is, at best silly and at worst, suspicious.

My other recommendation involves the "secrecy envelope" currently included with mail-in ballots. Quite frankly, this envelope is unnecessary. Ballot security and secrecy may be more simply and cost-effectively achieved by using return envelopes (which, I'll once more mention should be postage paid) with a printed security pattern on their interior. This will reduce paper waste and, more importantly, prevent voter disenfranchisement should one forget the secrecy envelope and mail in a "naked ballot."

To conclude, mail-in voting is a wonderful option which is an overall net positive for elections but with minor tweaks it could be made even better. I once again recommend the discontinuation of the extraneous "secrecy envelope" and the refinement of the return envelope to be postage-paid with a printed security pattern on its interior.

Thank you for your time.

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Seth Warren

**Voye, David**

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**From:** ~~Ron Bandes~~  
**Sent:** Friday, October 22, 2021 11:17 AM  
**To:** # Board of Elections  
**Cc:** Executive; DeMarco, Samuel; Hallam, Bethany  
**Subject:** Public comment for October 22, 2021 meeting of Allegheny County Board of Elections

Warning! This email was sent from an external source. Please be sure you recognize the sender and use caution when clicking on links and/or opening attachments.

Thank you for this opportunity to have my brief comments read into the public record. I hope that you will do so while online with the public, not afterwards which deprives me of having my comment be actually public.

I have four brief comments:

First, I recommend that public notices be posted on AlleghenyVotes.com and Allegheny Alerts, not just in newspapers. Newspapers are 18th century technology. There is no good reason not to use 21st century technology, especially when it is already in place for the County, in order to help our citizens stay informed. It is unreasonable to expect people to check the notices columns in a newspaper every day in order to find the small number of notices issued by the Department of Elections.

Second, the Equipment Chain-of-Custody form used by pollworkers and the Department of Elections is fundamentally flawed. The only people signing this form are the pollworkers and full-time staff of the Department of Elections. This ignores that the voting equipment is in the custody of polling-place hosting organizations for about five days before an election, and some days afterward. In fact, the weakest link in the chain-of-custody is with these organizations that store our equipment for many days, often in unlocked areas such as loading docks, and usually without supervision.

Third, I appreciate the great strides that the Department of Elections has made in the transparency of elections, such as with the installation of video cameras and large monitors for observers to watch the canvass of ballots. Much more could be done, both for on-site observers and for public who are not present at these events. It is time to move from a policy of "we do what the law requires, no less and no more" to a mindset of continually asking the question, "what else can we do to be more transparent?" such as is done in Colorado.

Fourth, now that we've had our second incident of serious problems with the printing of balloting materials by outside firms, it is time to appoint a Quality Control person to the Department of Elections, who has no other responsibilities. This person needs the authority to ensure that identified quality issues are addressed, perhaps as a Deputy Director.

Thank you for all your hard work. It is more important than ever to instill confidence in the electorate that our elections are fair and reliable. This is accomplished with transparency and education. Let's all work together to achieve this.

Sincerely,  
Ron Bandes  
President, VoteAllegheny

## Comments to the Board of Elections for the Oct. 22, 2021 meeting

*From William Towne*

Greetings! I come before you today to raise some concerns about County elections administration. As an opening matter, I'd like to thank you for announcing that today's meeting will be live-streamed online. This is something I'd requested in prior public comments and it is appreciated.

First, I would like to raise some issues regarding secrecy envelopes for postal voters. Implementation decisions by the county mean that these envelopes serve only to disenfranchise rather than actually provide ballot privacy. Three examples serve to demonstrate:

- (1) Though privacy envelopes lined with opaque hash patterns have long been used for business and personal correspondence purposes, the County chooses to use see-through "secrecy" envelopes. The better solution is widely available from office supply providers and even dollar stores; it seems unlikely that the Elections Division staff are unaware of this technology being available. All contracts for postal ballot preparation, and in-house work done at the County, should specify and use privacy envelopes. In this election, the RFP specified that envelopes were to be provided by the County; this is clearly a County decision.
- (2) The county has no procedures for mixing up the envelopes after they have been removed from declaration envelopes, though this was a required part of the procedure when we counted postal ballots at the precinct. If a County employee wishes to know how anybody voted, they can simply remember where that person's ballot envelope is in the stack after removal from the declaration envelope, including moving it to an easier-to-remember place such as the beginning or end of a set. The Elections Division should have and follow procedures to mix up envelopes in batches as large as feasible before opening the secrecy envelopes. Even better, we should return to the procedure of having postal ballots counted in-precinct at the end of the day, by feeding them into the ballot scanners after in-person polls close and included with election-night precinct totals (that was one of the justifications touted for our latest selection of voting equipment!). A return to the old procedures would also increase observability and simplify issues around voters wishing to void prior choices which may have been coerced or compelled; removing our practical defense against that deals a blow to election integrity.
- (3) In the current election, the County is printing voter-identifying barcodes on the secrecy envelopes in at least some cases, with the voter name and 9-digit identifying number unique to the ballot and this election. According to state law and county procedures, those voters ballots are supposed to be thrown out because the secrecy envelope contains voter-identifying information. Through this, the County is actively disenfranchising some voters (and not others). Even if the County disregards state law and its own procedures to count those ballots, the voters don't have secret ballot as the PA constitution nominally guarantees ([Article 7 § 4](#)). This should not be tolerated. While the County claims it's a relatively small number of ballots, this election includes municipal races where a small number of ballots can make a big difference in some races, especially in cases where there are no candidate names on the ballot (e.g. for election officers!).

It appears the County is blaming #3 on the vendor, which raises further questions about how the vendor was screened and selected. The RFP and information about the mandatory pre-bid meeting do not appear to have been made publicly available and the 150 mile radius requirement in combination with



other requirements (especially on experience) seems to severely limit the pool of potential bidders, making the RFP appear as if a vendor had been selected prior to the issuance of the tailored RFP. The RFP was also not even proofread, concluding that “The County will purchase BALLOT PRINTING [sic] AND MAILING – 2021 GENERAL ELECTION as needed during the contract period.”

In Board of Elections meetings around the 2020 General Election, concerns were raised about the screening of the mailing company involved in that election. In response to questions from the Board, the Elections Division explained that Midwest Direct had been selected through the PA COSTARS contracting program, vetted elsewhere in the state with Allegheny County piggybacking on another contract. However, this is not correct. According to public records, Allegheny County never had a contract with Midwest Direct and instead made payment through a middleman called RBM Consulting (which has a principal address in Omaha, NE but is at the same time described as being based in Minnesota). The Elections Division did have a PA COSTARS piggyback contract with RBM Consulting, but it was specifically for RBM to run ballot printers physically located at the Elections Division warehouse, with no mention of vote-by-mail preparation.

At a subsequent Board of Elections meeting, Ms. Hallam repeatedly asked about financial adjustments for the approximately 29,000 cases where voters received ballots for the wrong precinct. She asked if the county had been reimbursed for the funds spent on those bad packages and for the labor component of county staff time involved with the response to voter inquiries and voter confusion that resulted. Repeatedly, the Elections Division answered that there had been a full reimbursement, specifically including a labor component. However, this is also not correct. According to public records provided by the Elections Division, the County paid three fee components for each postal ballot: the absentee ballot, the insert, and “VBM mailing & service,” only the last of which was refunded for the erroneous ballots. There was also an adjustment for labor expenses but it went in the opposite direction, with the County paying thousands of dollars in weekend labor costs for work that the vendor presumably could have gotten done earlier had they not had to spend time on investigating and recovering from their error. This totals approximately \$12K plus the value of all the county staff hours spent on fielding questions and handling voter confusion which was NOT returned to the county despite the public false statements of the Elections Division to the Board of Elections.

The vendor, Midwest Direct, flew a Trump 2020 flag over its headquarters while preparing and sending those ballots to Allegheny County voters, including the disenfranchising error of sending incorrect-precinct ballots to some voters but not others. This vendor also kept a list of voter identity and a corresponding individual-voter-identifying six-digit number printed in human and machine-readable forms on the bottom of postal ballots, allowing the voter to later be connected with their ballot selections, and may have made this information available to their favored campaign for possible enforcement of that campaign’s high personal loyalty standards. According to very limited public explanations, this code (which the Elections Division claims violates the PA constitution’s guarantee of privacy in voting) was used to prevent the issue it wasn’t actually used to prevent, casting serious doubts on those explanations as accurately representing the true purpose or use of the codes.

I have spent a large number of hours and dollars this year attempting to follow up on the details of that through public records requests. The Elections Division has stonewalled and committed clear violations

of the public records laws and its obligations under them, including its obligations to respond to requests in a timely manner as specified in the law, conduct a good-faith search for records upon receipt of a request as described by Supreme and Commonwealth Court decisions, only claim extensions in limited circumstances for conditions that actually exist, issue reasons for its denials in writing prior to the period to appeal, contact contractors who may hold responsive records, certify responses, and timely provide evidence to the Office of Open Records sworn under penalty of perjury. Some of the statements contained in the Division's arguments & affidavits for the prevention of public records disclosure contain provably false assertions, and it is really not a good look for the County to have its top elections officials lying to state officials in order to prevent disclosure of public records related to the cover-up of its own claimed violation of voters' constitutional rights in a hotly contested election. This should not continue to be tolerated in the way that it apparently is!

Based on the Elections Division's multiple false statements especially to the Board of Elections about how last year's general election vote-by-mail contract was handled, I recommend that the Board not blindly accept answers from the Elections Division to its questions related to the current general election, but rather follow up to find out the truth and institute some penalties for lying to the Board and the public. The Board being aware of these issues but not taking action will not look good in the next wave of attempts to discredit election results: the record demonstrates the Board's tolerance of dishonesty.

Further, the non-secrecy of ballot choices does not appear to be getting fixed absent any large public pressure to do so. The RFP for the current election specifies that "Vendor shall be required to utilize bar codes to ensure accuracy of the appropriate ballot being sent to the correct voter." There is no requirement specified for following the PA Constitution in making the ballots not individually identifiable per voter. The specified requirement should be removed and replaced by one explicitly prohibiting voter-specific markings on ballots or secrecy envelopes, because the as-stated requirement could so easily be interpreted to require that ballots include codes uniquely identifying each voter. To preserve the privacy right nominally guaranteed by the Constitution, the ballots should not contain any information more specific than the municipality, ward, precinct, precinct split (if applicable), and party (the latter only in a primary), which is already encoded in the timing marks going down the side of the page, used by the optical scanners in determining how to interpret votes. Machine-readable codes limited to this information can still be matched in a database against the database / data file noting which ballot each voter should receive. Based on the County's past record for marking ballots individually in a way that ties voters' identity to their choices, I do not think that there should be any codes on the ballot which are intended as machine-readable which are not readily human-readable. In my view, this should even extend to the code embedded in the timing marks; mailing and counting scanners should be able to read the text on the ballot identifying the municipality, ward, precinct, and split/party (if applicable) which is also printed largely and clearly enough for a human to read. A font which facilitates optical character recognition (OCR) can make this easier, but OCR technology has gotten pretty good and is much more appropriate for this setting.

As an additional concern, the Elections Division does not have any written procedures regarding the remaking of ballots which cannot be scanned, though it is a process they have been observed conducting. Keeping all these procedures oral-only hinders the ability of observers to determine if

procedures are being followed, reduces the likelihood that proper procedures are actually being followed, and poses a risk of liability for future issues especially with turnover or staff unavailability (which the Elections Division repeatedly claims it has in response to all public records requests, regardless of timing!), as elections divisions all across the country are losing staff and institutional knowledge. Further, observations of ballot remaking in Delaware County PA and elsewhere were quickly circulated as evidence of fraud by “Stop the Steal” and related groups<sup>1</sup>, helping discredit election results and leading to threats of violence against elections officials. Such outcomes are completely unnecessary and unhelpful. The County could help avoid such outcomes here by having, publishing, and observably following good procedures for the remaking of ballots. These procedures should specify in detail the circumstances under which ballots are and are not remade, the procedure for remaking the ballots, details about which votes/races are and are not copied over to a remade ballot, a procedure for ensuring that this process is readily observable by party + candidate-appointed observers and members of the public, and a recordkeeping procedure that prevents the original ballot from being counted in addition to the remade ballot. Mr. DeMarco has made requests for more team efforts and cross-party observability, but those requests have apparently been consistently ignored. The county staff members responsible for remaking ballots should review this written procedure at the start of each canvass.

On a separate topic, I hope the Board addresses the pollworker staffing and communication issues previously raised, where multiple districts had Judges and Inspectors of Election who did not know they would be in that role even 24 hours prior, and did not have appropriate training. How many appointed pollworkers were not informed of their role and/or assigned polling place until less than 3 days before the start of the election, and how many pollworkers in any role did not receive training? What is being done to reduce hours-long lines faced by Judges of Elections at the end of already-long election days? As the pandemic continues but fall arrives, will those lines be outdoors or indoors in this coming election?

I would also like to point out that the Board has generally not responded to my prior comments by e-mail despite assuring public assurance of such responses being announced at the meetings and not complied with its own transparency goals or obligations regarding transparency around meetings. I also support Ms. Hallam’s request for more frequent Board of Elections meetings, so the Board can possibly address issues like those raised above before it is too late in each election cycle. Currently the Board delegates far too much of its authority to a Division which has demonstrated it is not trustworthy in its reports to the Board and public. I would also hope that the Board would not certify results of this election prior to the tabulation of write-in votes as it appears to have done in the primaries.

I am also concerned about the inaccuracy of total vote counts disagreeing between the multiple systems that record that information, where the number of phantom or missing ballots is even more concerning when broken down by voting type (e.g. in person/mail-in/absentee/provisional). We should be more consistently & accurately tracking how many people voted in each election.

Finally, I encourage the Board to integrate with the USPS’s Intelligent Mail Barcode tracking system for election mail and investigate implementation of ranked-choice voting with the option to rank as many positions as there are candidates. Thank you for your work.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.factcheck.org/2020/11/viral-video-doesnt-show-fraud-by-election-workers-in-pa/>