

Dear Council Members,

My name is Alison Piatt, and I am writing from Lake Township. I'm writing to discuss the proposed resolution against no excuse mail-in voting and getting rid of drop boxes. I am very concerned the Council has come up with this resolution. This resolution says to all our voters, especially disabled persons, and senior citizens, that instead of making sure ALL members of our community have safe, equal, limitation free access to exercise their right to vote no matter their advanced age, income status, race, color, creed, disability, or sexual orientation, the Council appears to be more concerned about nonexistent voter fraud. No excuse mail-in voting and drop boxes are ways the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania have allowed more people to legally exercise their right to vote, including those who have transit issues, job commitments, childcare needs, and most especially, seniors and people with disabilities.

I am so passionate about this issue because I am a person with disabilities. My disabilities are based in my immune system and musculoskeletal system, so they aren't always seen to the outside viewer, they are "hidden disabilities." As a person with disabilities, I can get an absentee ballot and declare I have a disability each time, but I need to include my physician information. To get a "permanent absentee ballot" it would require my physician to sign off. As many of you may know if you've had forms taken to a doctor before, fees are charged for forms/physician signatures. No excuse mail-in ballots give a person like me a chance to not have to disclose the reason I can't stand in a line for a long time or am at risk to get extremely sick around groups of people because I recently had an infusion that has killed off all my B-cells. I should not have to pay an additional fee due to my medical conditions to send in a physician approval to have a permanent absentee ballot. No excuse mail-in voting makes it a relief to not think about being unwell when I'm exercising my right to vote. I can take my time at home if I'm having a bad day with hand mobility to fill out my ballot and drop it in a drop box at my convenience before Election Day. I am maintaining my health and wellness and exercising my right to vote lawfully. Since I must follow the directions whether I use a drop box or the mail and have my signature match my signature on file, there's no way myself, or any other disabled person can commit voter fraud.

If the Council is looking for ways to improve voting in the Commonwealth with a resolution, perhaps a resolution encouraging early voting like many other states do to cut down on lines so people can go to polling places when there are limitations with just one day of polls open. Perhaps a resolution urging the Commonwealth to make Election Day a holiday. Perhaps making sure eligible voters are not purged from voting rolls or enacting automatic voter registration. These things would help enfranchise more legal voters in our great county and Commonwealth, not seek to limit our fellow Americans from voting.

In summary, creating a partisan resolution under the guise of election security does not represent this citizen of Luzerne County. I would urge the Council to not to pass this resolution since coming out and saying you oppose no excuse mail-in voting, and the elimination of drop boxes is an ableist take and will limit these safe and secure voting options for myself and many other constituents in Luzerne County.

Sincerely,

Alison Piatt, M.A.