

7/25/2022

Luzerne County Council,

I am writing, once again in order to express my opinion on the issue of Drop Boxes for upcoming elections. I was distressed to read that once again there is an attempt to subvert the use of mail in/ drop box voting in Luzerne County. The 2020 State Supreme Court ruling makes clear that it is within the purview of County Boards to utilize this method. Nowhere in the ruling does it stipulate that such use is restricted by the pandemic. The proposed ordinance is an attempt to restrict the vote in the upcoming General election. What follows is a reiteration of a number of points I made in March of this year on this issue.

I am a retired Government and Economics teacher having taught for 30 years at Hazleton High School, and then Hazleton Area High School. Throughout my career I taught my students, who were typically Seniors, that they had a civic responsibility to vote. In my opinion there is no more important element in a Democratic society than participation through the vote.

I firmly believe that the key to a functional democracy is full citizen participation in the election process. It is, thus incumbent on those who are charged with the responsibility of setting election standards to do all in their power to provide a system which makes participation as easy and accessible as possible. Our Democracy is at its best with full participation. Every effort should be made to make voting more accessible, not less. There are simply no valid arguments to limit voter access via the use of mail in and drop box voting. I reiterate, the higher the rate of participation, the more reflective those elected are of the will of the people. It makes sense. If you survey 100 people on a subject it will not result in as representative a result than if you survey 1,000, or 5,000. Bottom line, the larger the sample, the more reflective the result of the opinion of the population. There is no evidence that mail in/ drop box voting is in any way unreliable or subject to fraud. Such arguments are easy to make but lacking in concrete evidence. There are numerous fail safe elements which ensure the validity and integrity of every ballot cast. I would submit that this ongoing attack on the Integrity of the system and those charged in administration of it may be the reason that Luzerne County finds it impossible to attract and retain election professionals.

I urge the members of the Council to do the right thing. Restricting or in any way making it more difficult to vote is anti democracy. Making voting easier, not more difficult is the right thing to do. No one running for elected office should be afraid to have people vote. Nor should those charged with the election process use their position to suppress the vote in any way.

Please support mail voting and the use of drop boxes for all future elections.

Respectfully,

Bob Stevens
Retired Teacher