

From: [Carole Shearer](#)
To: [Luzerne County Council Meeting Public Comments](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL]: Luzerne County Council 8/22/22 ordinance hearing and regular meeting - request to read this email at both
Date: Tuesday, August 23, 2022 2:12:02 PM

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August 22, 2022

Members of the Luzerne County Council,

I submit this email to you in reference to both the Council Ordinance Hearing and Regular Meeting to be held tonight, Tuesday August 22, 2022, and formally request that it be read prior to voting at both the ordinance hearing and the general meeting.

I ask the Luzerne County Council to reject the proposed ordinance restricting the use of drop boxes. Decisions to implement and manage the use of drop boxes is the purview of the Board of Elections, which is a nonpartisan entity focused on the needs of citizens. **The County Council is a partisan political body that does not have the authority, under the Luzerne County Home Rule Charter, to issue an ordinance governing the administration of an election.** Council members have not relied on official procedure to justify their actions.

By passing the proposed ordinance, the Council creates voter confusion and potentially violates the civil rights of its citizens. We are less than three months out from the date of the General Election. Enacting this ordinance now would invariably run afoul of federal law, which prohibits such election changes so late in a cycle. The end result would be litigation, creating a **huge waste** of your fellow taxpayers' hard earned money. And, for what? Nothing more than clearly partisan political theatre and overreach.

Some on council have argued that they are not banning drop boxes, rather they are seeking to prohibit their placement on county property or their handling by paid employees of the county. **So, your proposed "legal workaround" appears to be to ban any county employee from moving/installing/de-installing a drop-box and/or placing one on county property.** If the ordinance passes and is found to be legal, theoretically a sheriff's deputy could still collect ballots from a dropbox, but

could be fired (as a county employee) for placing or removing the dropbox at its specified location. **If this issue is about security then this makes no logical sense.** If council is concerned about securing drop boxes, why would they seek to create conditions that place their location and supervision outside of the control of county government—including their own authority?

I am disgusted with the amount of time and effort that has been spent on just this one manufactured issue. In the 2020 election, widespread rumors of “voter fraud” turned out to be a nothingburger. This appears to be more of the same diversion of time and effort from legitimate county business. Your constituents would be better served if you spent more of Council's time:

- 1) Tackling local infrastructure issues and flood management;
- 2) Allocating **unspent Covid-19 relief funds** to local businesses and communities who **desperately** need them to counteract the economic effects of the pandemic;
- 3) Preventing the elimination of local essential services such as EMS and police, due to underfunding.

I am a voter and I support the ability of all citizens to use drop boxes. The ability to utilize one to assure my vote is counted has served me well, when I have found it necessary to be out of the area on election day to deal with family issues; placing my ballot in a drop box prior to election day before I left the area. It serves those who work 7 - 7 on election day. It serves **many** others whom you may not even know or care to find out about. The ability to procure and use mail-in voting via drop boxes should be a right, not a challenge. The County Council must reject this ordinance and protect the voting rights of every citizen by keeping drop boxes accessible throughout the county.

Respectfully submitted,
Carole Shearer
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Butler Township District 04

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