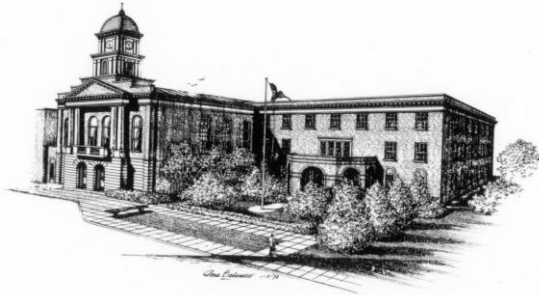


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March 23, 2021

I have been the chairman of the Snyder County Board of Commissioners since 2008. During that time, I have also served as the chairperson of our elections board in the years that I was not on the ballot. I was asked to serve as the co-chair of the County Commissioner's Association of Pennsylvania Elections Reform Committee in 2016. I have been actively involved in many discussions about elections in Pennsylvania since that time. I also had the privilege to serve on the Joint State Government Commission's Advisory Committee on Voting Technology in 2016 and 2017. Since 2016, many of the county's discussions about election reform have revolved around how we can make it easier for voters to vote and easier for elections directors to administer elections. The CCAP Elections Reform Committee had a long list of many items that could achieve many of these items. In October of 2019, I was asked to join Governor Wolf for the signing of Act 77, the first real set of reforms for elections in eight decades. This was only the third time I had ever been asked to join a Governor for a bill signing. I was excited to attend.

Now, less than two years later, I can honestly say that any excitement I experienced then has since turned to disappointment. I'm sorry we tried to do such broad reaching changes all at once and especially in a presidential election year. The uncertainty that would be in the minds of many voters could not have been expected. I believe much of this uncertainty came out of the many changes with which voters had to deal.

The main challenge is the handling of mail-in ballots. While expanding convenience for some voters, mail in ballots also created a huge unfunded mandate for counties by way of drastically increased staff time required to fulfill the many demands of mail-in ballots. In hindsight, the legislature should have just taken the time to change the Constitution and allow the voters to approve a true mail-in ballot instead of the end run around created by Act 77. In Snyder County we have one fulltime elections director and one fulltime voter registration person. Since Act 77 was passed, our workload has now required an additional part time person and countless employees from other departments to forgo their normal duties and help our elections staff. We also contracted with a former elections director to work with us as a consultant, and we utilized community service volunteers to help sort, stuff, and stamp ballot envelopes and pre-canvass ballots on election day. This all equates to thousands of extra hours we would not have needed prior to Act 77 being passed.

Since Act 77 is more than likely here to stay, counties can help to restore voter's faith in the election system by allowing counties to have results out on election night. The only way to make this happen is to give us more time to pre-canvass. Even with all the volunteer staff I have just mentioned, our county would not have

been able to report our results on election night without the help of our \$11,000 letter opener and our \$54,000 DS450 central tabulator machine, which we purchased before the November election.

Another challenge for counties involves the deadline of ballots. One way to allow Pennsylvania's county elections offices to do their jobs more efficiently is to move the deadline to apply for mail-in ballots back to fifteen days before the election. The current seven-day window, which was approved in Act 77, does not give our staffs enough time to process ballot applications, get those ballots out to the voters, and then receive the ballots before the 8:00 PM election night deadline. This is a problem even without the slowdown we've all experienced in the past six months with the postal service delays. This also caused a great many voters to have to go to their polling place to surrender their mail-in ballot and vote a new ballot in person. If this is the outcome of Act 77 seven-day deadline, we've just defeated the purpose of a mail-in ballot. Now we've made the election process more paperwork intensive, more frustrating for the voter, more work for the elections staff, lengthy wait times for all in person voters, and more opportunity for confusion for our poll workers. In addition, we've created more reasons for some voters to cast a provisional ballot "just to make sure".

By making the mail-in ballot deadline coincide with the voter registration deadline, this will benefit voters by providing more time for their ballot to get from the county to them and back again. This also allows counties the necessary time to make sure the poll books are as current as possible for all the voters who applied for a mail-in ballot.

All in all, counties know how to do their job in running a safe and secure election. If the legislature wants election results on election night, like most citizens do, it's important to remember to have commissioners and elections directors at the table as any election related legislation is being considered. I thank you for including me in this discussion.

Thank you,

Joseph Kantz

Chairman, Snyder County Commissioners