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Chairman Wayne Langerholc Jr.  
Senate of Pennsylvania  
Special Committee on Election Integrity & Reform

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Good morning Chairman Langerholc and distinguished Committee members.

I am the Honorable Paul D. López, Clerk and Recorder of the City and County of Denver, Colorado's capital city. Colorado is widely recognized to be the Gold Standard for voting in the country.

Colorado's groundbreaking House Bill 1303 passed while I was serving as a City Councilman in 2013; however, Denver played a vital role in drafting the landmark voting bill. We continue to innovate using 1303 as a model.

The Denver Elections Division has hosted election officials from all over the world to see how we do what we do.

Before HB-1303 reforms went into place, we had early voting in grocery stores and had to find more than 200 polling place locations for every election. Denver has many historic buildings, so finding locations that met HAVA and ADA accessibility standards was undoubtedly a challenge. Due to safety concerns, we moved away from schools, which traditionally were some of the most accessible locations. Voters frequently went to the wrong polling place, which led to scores of provisional ballots cast.

Now, fast forward to the present. For jurisdictions that encountered some bumps while implementing mail ballot-based elections in 2020, do not be too hard on yourselves. Colorado arrived at this solution after a decade-long, data-driven head start. We did not try to stand up mail ballot voting in a matter of months.

In the early 1990s, Colorado allowed absentee voting with an excuse. In the early 2000s, voters could cast mail ballots in some non-partisan elections like municipal and school board elections. Those ballots were mailed automatically. However, mail ballots had to be requested for partisan elections, which led to confusion amongst voters.

The fact that data showed more and more voters were requesting mail ballots coupled with our desire to minimize voter confusion put Colorado on the path to HB-1303.

Some of the critical components of HB-1303 are as follows:

- Ballots automatically mailed to voters
- Preservation of in-person voting option
- 24-hour ballot drop boxes under 24/7 video surveillance
- Residency requirement changed from 30 days in the precinct to 22 days in the state, driving the use of provisional ballots down to less than 1%
- Allowed proactive use of USPS National Change of Address data to keep accurate voter rolls

Of course, when jurisdictions move to mail balloting, this change may drive calls from voters wondering where their ballots are. In 2009, the Denver Clerk and Recorder's Office created BallotTRACE, allowing voters to track their ballots the same way you might follow a package. Voters receive text messages or emails, depending on preference, letting them know where their ballot is from the moment it leaves the printer to when my office accepts it for counting.

Informing voters how these processes work and providing robust signature verification training for your judges is incredibly important. In Denver, we have a former FBI Forensic Handwriting Analyst train our signature verification judges, most of whom are veterans of the process.

Transparency and communication are vital to instilling voter confidence in the mail ballot system, especially given the national narrative in 2020. We use social media, videos of our ballot processes, and a 24/7 live video feed on our website so that everyone can observe and witness how we conduct transparent and bipartisan operations.

We also use video to bring voters inside our pre-election Logic and Accuracy Test and our post-election Risk Limiting Audit. Denver had these processes in place long before the 2020 election cycle.

By forging strong partnerships with a broad coalition of external partners, my office has fostered great communication lines and gained additional eyes and ears in the community. We work with other elected officials, political parties, the senior community, voters with disabilities, language minority communities, organized labor, the League of Women Voters, America Votes, New Era Colorado, our Spanish-language advisory committee, high schools, college campuses, and local and national media outlets to get trusted information into the hands of voters.

I am immensely proud to have created a Communications and Engagement team tasked with providing accurate information to voters and ensuring that those in underserved areas have access to trusted election information regardless of zip code, socioeconomic status, language, or technological ability. We use good old-fashioned boots on the ground community engagement to inform voters about our processes and to provide Denver residents the information they need.

We recommend keeping your community informed at every step of the election process, especially when implementing new ideas, technologies, etc. Voter education cannot be a once-a-year effort.

I respect the Committee's wish to keep testimonies brief, and I look forward to answering any questions the Committee may have. Thank you, Chairman Langerholc and distinguished members, for the opportunity to address you today.