

A woman with long, wavy grey hair is seen from behind, raising her right fist in a crowd. The scene is set outdoors at sunset, with the sun low on the horizon, creating a warm, golden glow. Other people are visible in the background, some holding signs, suggesting a protest or rally. The overall atmosphere is one of solidarity and activism.

Common Cause

PENNSYLVANIA

Know the Rules
Protect the Vote

Jill Greene, Common Cause Pennsylvania
Jamie Perrapato, Promote the Vote PA

Common Cause PA Mission

Our mission: Common Cause is a nonpartisan, grassroots organization dedicated to upholding the core values of American democracy. We work to create open, honest, and accountable government that serves the public interest; promote equal rights, opportunity, and representation for all; and empower all people to make their voices heard in the political process.

*Common Cause Education Fund is a 501(c)(3) organization..
Common Cause is a 501(c)(4) organization.*

The Threat Landscape in Pennsylvania

Since 2020, Pennsylvania has been in the cross-hairs of those who won't accept election results when they lose.

Pennsylvania Supreme Court Rejects GOP Suit Over Mail Ballots

The week-old suit was brought by state legislator Mike Kelly, a Republican, who claimed the state's mail-in voting laws were unconstitutional.

By Marc Levy • Published November 28, 2020 • Updated on November 28, 2020 at 8:20 pm

Pa. Commonwealth Court tosses no-excuse mail ballot law; appeal expected quickly

Gov. Tom Wolf has pledged to appeal the ruling to the state Supreme Court, which recent history suggests will reverse the decision.

By Katie Meyer • January 28, 2022

Election season court fights have cost Pa. taxpayers nearly \$4M and counting

BY ELIZABETH HARDISON AND STEPHEN CARUSO • JANUARY 31, 2021 7:37 AM

Pa. Supreme Court upholds no-excuse mail voting ahead of midterms

By Stephen Caruso of Spotlight PA and Angela Couloumbis of Spotlight PA | Aug. 2, 2022

ELECTION 2020

Trump wants Supreme Court to overturn Pa. election results

President Trump's campaign says it has filed a new petition with the Supreme Court as it continues its unprecedented efforts to overturn the results of the election.

By Associated Press, Jill Colvin and Marc Levy • December 20, 2020

Inquirer.com

After Trump team calls them 'cowards' and 'traitors,' state GOP leaders urge Congress to reject Pa. election results

Declining to do so themselves, 64 state House Republicans asked Pennsylvania's congressional delegation in Washington to block the awarding of its 20...

Dec 4, 2020

ELECTIONS

Republican lawsuits over overseas and military voting hit setbacks in 3 swing states

UPDATED OCTOBER 29, 2024 • 9:34 PM ET

HEARD ON MORNING EDITION

Hansi Lo Wang

U.S. Supreme Court reverses Pennsylvania mail voting law decision

Pennsylvania's top-ranking elections official said the decision wa guidance to counties about how to handle such ballots would be

Pennsylvania's mail-in voting law survives constitutional challenge by GOP lawmakers

Pa. Supreme Court finds state Constitution did not limit General Assembly's power to make the law

BY PETER HALL • AUGUST 2, 2022 2:30 PM

Rejecting GOP plea, Supreme Court lets Pennsylvania count contested provisional ballots

Politics Nov 2, 2024 2:19 PM EDT

Home > Alert > PA Governor Shapiro and Maryland Attorney General sue over mail-in ballot decision

PA Governor Shapiro and Maryland Attorney General sue over mail-in ballot decision

Fri, August 28, 2026 by Anthony Panasiewicz

The Threat Landscape in Pennsylvania

- Interruptions to election day voting
- Interruptions to mail voting
(including early on-demand)
- Interruptions to vote counting
- Failure to certify on time
- Safety issues
- Federal interference

Election Administration in Pennsylvania

- 67 counties, 67 boards of elections
 - 67 Buckets of Chaos
- Decentralized system
- Counties have a lot of leeway when administering elections



Know Your Rights



Your Rights: Voting In-Person



- Check your voter registration at vote.pa.gov
- You have the right to vote privately and independently
- You have the right to assistance if you need it
- You have the right to vote free from harassment, intimidation, & electioneering
- You have the right to cast a provisional ballot if you need one.

Your Rights: Voting In-Person

- If you are in line when the polls close, you have the right to vote
- Your vote can only be challenged by a **poll worker, a poll watcher, or another voter**
- If you are incarcerated pre-trial or for a misdemeanor, or have been released after serving a felony sentence and you're registered, you can vote (may need to reregister)
- Call the 866-OUR-VOTE hotline with any problems or concerns



How to Protect Your Mail Ballot

- Make sure you're registered/update your registration
- Request your ballot early
- Follow the instructions!
- Return your ballot early
- Return your ballot directly to your county elections office, either by using a ballot drop box (if available) or over the counter



Your Rights: Vote by Mail

- Notice and cure policies vary by county
- Drop boxes and satellite elections office policies also vary by county
- You have the right to cast a provisional ballot if your mail ballot is rejected



Who is at the polls?



People You Should Know



An Election Protection Field Program
volunteer

People You Should Know



Poll Monitor



Poll Worker

An employee of the
county elections office

People You Should Know



Poll Monitor



Poll Worker



Poll Watcher

A representative of a
candidate or a political party
watching the election

Who's who in the polling place?

Who's who in the polling place?

Judge of Elections

- Elected
- Receives the ballot box from the County
- Swears in Election Officers
- Supervises the polling place Ensures that precinct results are securely delivered to the county

Majority & Minority Inspectors

- Elected
- Opening and closing polling place
- Post signs and set up material
- Checking voter registration documents
- Signing in voters
- Supervising clerks

Clerk

- Appointed (one by each Inspector)
- Assist inspectors
- Verify and check in voters
- Record names of voters
- Present ballots to voters

Machine Inspector

- Appointed by Board of Elections
- Sets up voting machines
- Instructs voters on how to use voting machines
- Confirms machines are shut down and secured after polls close

Who else can be in the polling place?

Who else can be in the polling place?

Poll watchers

- Works for candidate or party
- Credentialed by county
- Must be registered voter in the county
- May stay outside balloting area
- May keep a list of voters, inspect the voter list, challenge a voter's identity or residency

Voters

- Only while voting
- Must leave when done voting

Constables

- Elected officer of a municipality
 - Deputies can be appointed
- Duties are to:
 - Serve writs, warrants, bail pieces, etc.
 - Preserve the peace during elections
- Can be removed

Law Enforcement Awareness

In Pennsylvania, a police officer—whether uniformed or not—may NOT be within 100 feet of a polling place. The only exceptions to this rule are:

- An officer is personally voting.
- The polling location is located in a building that also houses a police station.
- A police officer is serving a warrant.
- A police officer was called to clear a path to the polling place or to calm a disturbance.

If reporting issues, please provide details like agency, number of personnel, vehicles, etc.



Intimidation or Threats of Violence

Voter intimidation can take many forms

- Aggressive electioneering (even outside the electioneering zone)
- Challenging the eligibility of a lot of voters in one polling location
- Misinformation about elections, taking pictures or videos, following voters to their cars, etc.

Intimidation or Threats of Violence

Report intimidation or threats immediately to the 866-OUR-VOTE hotline

- **DO NOT ENGAGE IN CONFLICT**
- It is important to acknowledge peoples' feelings – don't dismiss them
- But do not engage in conversations about candidates, stay focused on the importance of voters having their votes heard and their votes counted.

Electioneering

- Means to actively take part in the activities of an election campaign
- No electioneering within **10 feet** of polling place
- Includes poll workers wearing partisan clothing or possessing partisan branded materials, handing out materials, etc.



A Word About Election Swag

Voters in PA are permitted to wear political shirts, buttons, hats, etc. while in line to vote. After they vote, they must leave the electioneering zone immediately.

Poll workers are not permitted to wear any politically branded clothing, hats, buttons, jewelry, or have any politically branded materials like pens, water bottles, clip boards, etc.



Protecting Pennsylvania's Elections: The Election Protection Program





Who We Are

Nonpartisan

The largest *non-partisan*, nonprofit voter service coalition in the county.

Community Volunteers

Tens of thousands of volunteers recruited every year to serve in their communities as poll monitors

National and state-level

Over 300 national partners and over 60 in-state organizations

Our Purpose



Identify and respond to conditions that may prevent a voter from casting their ballot and having that vote counted

ELECTION PROTECTION

HOTLINE

866-OUR-VOTE

ENGLISH : 866-687-8683

SPANISH **888-VE-Y-VOTA**

888-839-8682

ARABIC **844-YALLA-US**

844-925-5287

ASIAN* **888-API-VOTE**

LANGUAGES 888-274-8683

*BENGALI, CANTONESE, HINDI, URDU, KOREAN, MANDARIN, TAGALOG, VIETNAMESE

The Hotlines

- Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under Law (English)
- NALEO Education Fund (Spanish)
- Arab American Institute (Arabic)
- API PA and Asian Americans Advancing Justice (Asian languages)

Most Common Election Day Questions and Problems

Basic Voter Questions

Voter ID

Disability Access

Electioneering & Voter Intimidation

Voting Equipment Problems

Ballot Issues

Language Access

Poll Monitors



Assist Voters

- Answer questions
- Advocate for voters

Gather Data

- Observe conditions
- Talk to voters

Report Issues

- Flag issues
- Call hotline

The Command Center

Organizational leads monitoring calls to the 866-OUR-VOTE hotline and managing field teams (poll monitors), comms, and responses to problems and threats



How can Election Protection work in your communities?

- Promote the 866-OUR-VOTE hotline
- Share accurate, reliable election information
- Volunteers!
 - Poll monitors
 - Designated Agents
 - Drivers



@commoncausepa

VOLUNTEER WITH



ELECTION PROTECTION