September 9, 2021

Allegheny County Board of Elections
County Office Building
542 Forbes Avenue, Room 604
Pittsburgh PA 15219

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The Allegheny County Pro-Voter Agenda
A guide for ensuring the freedom to vote

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When it comes to our elections, Allegheny County voters want a transparent process we can trust, free from needless barriers. No matter who we are or how we vote, every eligible voter in Allegheny County must have the freedom to vote to elect leaders who govern in our interests and make the promise of our democracy real for us all.

To uphold an inclusive democracy that welcomes every voter's chance to participate, pro-voter policies are needed that ensure integrity, equity, and transparency in our elections. The ability to meaningfully participate in our democracy is a civil rights issue. And the freedom to vote must be safeguarded, no exceptions.

There are strong and ready solutions to many of our most significant voting problems. Allegheny County has the opportunity to be a consistent leader in how elections are run in the Commonwealth. To do this, officials must commit to implementing consistent policies and procedures for each and every election designed to minimize voter confusion, maximize voter access, and engender voter trust.

Therefore, we call on elections officials to adopt the following common sense pro-voter policies, which protect and strengthen the freedom to vote for Allegheny County voters by making sure that attempts to create barriers to voting are stopped in their tracks:
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 Allegheny County must adopt a Pro-Voter Agenda that includes:

1. ***Accessible ballot drop boxes*** - including purchasing and equitably distributing ballot drop boxes in outdoor locations with 24-hour access. Drop boxes provide safe, convenient, and secure return of mail ballots. Access to these drop boxes should be equitable, and meet the needs of Black and Brown voters, voters with disabilities, limited English proficiency voters, and other historically disenfranchised communities.

2. ***Expanded early voting sites*** - permanently creating and using multiple early voting sites with hours that include evenings and weekends, as well as offer voter registration options. Early voting sites help reduce the levels of Election Day administration. The location of these sites should be accessible to Black and Brown voters, voters with disabilities, limited English proficiency voters, and other historically disenfranchised communities.

3. ***Fully-staffed polling places*** - with trained election workers, finalized at least two (2) weeks prior to each and every election, so that no voter needs to wait in a long line to cast a ballot.

4. ***Election information mailed to all voters*** - which includes the locations of ballot drop boxes, early voting sites, and polling places. This information should be sent each and every election no less than one month prior to Election Day.

5. ***The freedom to vote - in the language voters speak*** - Officials must make voting materials available in multiple languages including critical information about polling places and early voting sites. [U.S. census data](#) (2015-2019) shows that 7.5% of people age 5+ in Allegheny County speak a language other than English at home. Demographics predict a continued increase in the population of limited English proficiency (LEP) citizens who call Allegheny County home. Thus, election administrators must begin to proactively prepare to expand language accommodations to meet the needs of this growing electorate.

6. ***Robust public meeting schedule*** - establish a permanent public election board meeting schedule that meets at least two (2) times per quarter; and begin to publicize election plans at least two (2) months prior to each and every election.

7. ***Funding that protects the freedom to vote*** - continue to advocate for increased resources from state and county officials to fund elections and meet the needs of voters as outlined above. Additionally, explore more innovative streams of revenue from vetted and trusted non-governmental sources (i.e. foundations, third-party organizations, etc.).

By offering voters accessible options to vote, consistent information, transparent decision making, and well resourced election administration, the Pro-Voter Agenda will enshrine proactive policies that deliver the promise of American democracy to all residents of our county. Ultimately, elections officials work for the voters. Elections administered without these solutions will result in a lack of continuity between elections, create barriers for residents of our county, and fail to serve Allegheny County voters.

The Pro-Voter Agenda helps give Allegheny County voters an equal voice in the decisions that shape our future and ensures that our elections are fair, free, and accessible for years to come. The Allegheny County Elections Board must listen to their community and implement the Pro-Voter Agenda into their current and future election plans.

The undersigned,

1Hood
African American Chamber of Commerce of Western PA
All Voting is Local PA
Alliance for Police Accountability

Black Political Empowerment Project (B-PEP)
Black Voters Matter Fund
Black Women for Positive Change
Keystone Votes
One PA
Pittsburgh Coalition of Black Trade Unionists
Pittsburghers for Public Transit
Planned Parenthood Pennsylvania Advocates
PUMP
Take Action Mon Valley
The Pennsylvania Joint Board of Workers United, SEIU
The Pittsburgh Chapter of the Links Incorporated
Voter Empowerment Education & Enrichment Movement Pittsburgh
Wake Up the Vote
West End P.O.W.E.R.

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