

**IN THE SUPREME COURT OF PENNSYLVANIA**

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**No. 149 MM 2020**

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**IN RE: NOVEMBER 3, 2020 GENERAL ELECTION**

**PETITION OF KATHY BOOCKVAR,  
SECRETARY OF THE COMMONWEALTH,**

**BRYAN CUTLER, SPEAKER OF THE PENNSYLVANIA HOUSE OF  
REPRESENTATIVES, KERRY BENNINGHOFF, MAJORITY LEADER  
OF THE PENNSYLVANIA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,**

**Proposed-Intervenor Respondents.**

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**PETITION TO INTERVENE BY SPEAKER OF THE PENNSYLVANIA  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES BRYAN CUTLER AND  
MAJORITY LEADER OF THE PENNSYLVANIA  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES KERRY BENNINGHOFF**

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**CHALMERS & ADAMS LLC**

Zachary M. Wallen

Pa. ID No. 309176

301 South Hills Village Drive

No. LL200-420

Pittsburgh, PA 15241

*Counsel for Proposed-Intervenor  
Respondents Speaker of the Pennsylvania  
House of Representatives Bryan Cutler and  
Majority Leader of the Pennsylvania House  
of Representatives Kerry Benninghoff*

Proposed Intervenors, Bryan Cutler, Speaker of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives, and Kerry Benninghoff, Majority Leader of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives (collectively, “House Leaders”), by and through their undersigned counsel, hereby move to intervene as respondents in the above-captioned proceeding under Rule 2328 of the Pennsylvania Rules of Civil Procedure.

In support of this Petition, the House Leaders submit a:

- (1) Memorandum of Law in Support of Petition to Intervene by Speaker of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives Bryan Cutler and Majority Leader of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives Kerry Benninghoff, which is filed contemporaneously herewith;
- (2) Proposed Preliminary Objection and supporting Memorandum of Law, which the House Leaders will file in this action if permitted to intervene, are attached as **Exhibit “A”**;
- (3) Proposed Order, granting this Petition, is attached as **Exhibit “B”**;
- (4) Verifications, affirming the truth of the factual statements set forth in this Petition, are attached as **Exhibit “C”**.

**WHEREFORE**, the House Leaders respectfully request that the Court **GRANT** this Petition to Intervene and allow the House Leaders to intervene as respondents in this action.

Dated: October 7, 2020

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Zachary M. Wallen

Zachary M. Wallen

Pa. ID No. 309176

**CHALMERS & ADAMS LLC**

301 South Hills Village Drive

No. LL200-420

Pittsburgh, PA 15241

*Counsel for Proposed-Intervenor  
Respondents Speaker of the Pennsylvania  
House of Representatives Bryan Cutler and  
Majority Leader of the Pennsylvania House  
of Representatives Kerry Benninghoff*

# EXHIBIT A

**NOTICE TO PLEAD**

**Petitioners: You are hereby notified to file a written response to the enclosed Preliminary Objection within thirty (30) days from service hereof, or a judgment may be entered against you.**

**/s/ Zachary M. Wallen**

**Zachary M. Wallen  
Counsel for Proposed-Intervenor  
Respondents**

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OF THE PENNSYLVANIA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,**

**Proposed-Intervenor Respondents.**

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**PRELIMINARY OBJECTION OF PROPOSED-INTERVENOR  
RESPONDENTS SPEAKER OF THE PENNSYLVANIA HOUSE OF  
REPRESENTATIVES BRYAN CUTLER AND MAJORITY LEADER OF  
THE PENNSYLVANIA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES KERRY  
BENNINGHOFF**

---

**CHALMERS & ADAMS LLC**

Zachary M. Wallen

Pa. ID No. 309176

301 South Hills Village Drive

No. LL200-420

Pittsburgh, PA 15241

*Counsel for Proposed-Intervenor  
Respondents Speaker of the Pennsylvania  
House of Representatives Bryan Cutler and  
Majority Leader of the Pennsylvania House  
of Representatives Kerry Benninghoff*

Proposed-Intervenor Respondents, Speaker of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives, Bryan Cutler, and Majority Leader of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives, Kerry Benninghoff (collectively, “the House Leaders”), file this Preliminary Objection to explain that this Court should uphold the House’s policy decisions in the drafting of the Election Code, including the recent bipartisan enactment of Act 77 of 2019 made in conjunction with the Senate and the Executive Branch, and dismiss the Application for Invocation of King’s Bench Power to Declare Proper Construction of Election Code (**Exhibit 1**).

### **PRELIMINARY STATEMENT**

1. The Pennsylvania General Assembly has worked in a bipartisan fashion in conjunction with the Governor to modernize Pennsylvania’s Election Code.

2. The Petitioner, while not questioning that commitment to free and fair elections, or making a direct constitutional challenge to any particular statute, seeks to have this Court adopt a tortured interpretation of the Election Code to read it as disallowing county election boards from using voters’ signatures as one of the methods for voter identification.<sup>1</sup>

3. This interpretation would be in clear contravention of the plain meaning of the Election Code and legislative intent, and in opposition to a long history of the

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<sup>1</sup> Given this position, it is curious that modifications to this signature-verification provision were not included in Governor Wolf’s Executive Order than he issued on the eve of the June Primary election. Executive Order 2020-02, available at <https://www.oa.pa.gov/Policies/eo/Documents/2020-02.pdf>.

Commonwealth's County Election Boards using voters' signatures to verify their identities. Indeed, signature matching is used throughout the election process—from nomination petitions to in person voter identification.

4. To disregard signatures in the absentee/mail-in context would give rise to an absurd result, that would undoubtedly give rise to constitutional challenges on equal protection grounds, based on the disparate treatment of in-person and mail-in voters.

5. In addition to the constitutional harm of disregarding the plain meaning of a statute intended to maintain the integrity of Pennsylvania's elections, the Secretary's interpretation of the statute would lead to absurd conclusions. For example, even if Jane Doe's mail-in ballot was mailed back to the county board of elections with a clear signature of "Richard Roe" on it, per the Secretary's Petition and guidance, a county board of elections would be legally obligated to ignore the obvious discrepancy and count the ballot. This absurd conclusion shows the obvious flaws of the Secretary's attempts to circumvent clear and coherent statutory provisions.

6. For those reasons, this Court should sustain the House Leaders' preliminary objection and summarily dismiss the Petition with prejudice.



## I. FACTUAL BACKGROUND

7. Petitioner filed a petition with this Court this past Sunday, October 4, 2020, seeking a judicial declaration that “(1) county election officials may not reject absentee or mail-in applications or refuse to count voted absentee or mail-in ballots based on a subjective perception of signature variation; and (2) absentee and mail-in ballots and the applications for those ballots may not be challenged by third-parties at any time based on signature comparison.” *Petition* at p. 25.

8. This suit was brought as the Pennsylvania General Assembly has been passing bipartisan legislation that has greatly *expanded* the ability of Pennsylvania’s voters to vote by mail, starting with Act 77 of 2019.

9. The Legislative and Executive branches have worked hard over the past year to create a series of bipartisan election reforms, starting with Act 77 of 2019.

10. Pennsylvania has traditionally only allowed absentee voting by those with a statutorily defined excuse to do so, such as physical disability or absence from one’s municipality on Election Day. *See* 25 P.S. § 3146.1. For someone to vote absentee, the voter would have had to provide a permissible reason to do so, and the voter would have been provided with an absentee ballot that would have had to be returned by the voter no later than 5:00 p.m. on the Friday before the election.

11. In addition to allocating \$90 million to ensuring that Pennsylvanians could vote securely on modern voting machines, Act 77 of 2019 created a new

category of “no excuse” mail-in voting. 2019 Pa. Legis. Serv. Act 2019-77 (S.B. 421) (West). These no excuse mail-in voters now do not have to provide the traditional reason to vote by mail, can request those ballots later in the process than was previously possible, and are able to return their ballots several days later than had been traditionally been allowed—8:00 p.m. on Election Day. *Id.* The traditional voting options remain available—voters may still choose to request an absentee ballot if they have a statutorily permitted reason for doing so, or vote in-person on Election Day. *See* 25 P.S. § 3146.1; 25 P.S. § 3031.12.

12. The General Assembly continues to monitor the COVID-19 situation and stands ready to enact all further measures as may be required to ensure that the Commonwealth continues to have free and fair elections.

## **II. PRELIMINARY OBJECTION**

### **A. FIRST PRELIMINARY OBJECTION: Demurer (Pa. R. Civ. P. 1028(a)(4))**

13. House Leaders hereby incorporate all foregoing paragraphs as if they were fully set forth herein.

14. Petitioner incorrectly seeks a declaratory judgment to resolve a pretextual controversy where no meaningful dispute exists. As such the House Leaders’ demurrer must be sustained.

15. Petitioner’s action is not styled as a constitutional challenge, but instead Petitioner argues that the plain text of the Election Code should be read differently

from its plain meaning, and that this Court needs to assume King’s Bench jurisdiction to issue a declaratory judgment that the Election Code does not provide for signature-matching or to allow challenges based on the signature on the declaration. *Petition* at p. 25.

16. Here, the Secretary’s contentions are in plain error, and as such, the House Leaders’ demurrer should be sustained.

17. This Court has long acknowledged that the duties and responsibilities of a county board of elections “are not limited to those of a humanized adding machine . . . the Board is charged with discretionary responsibilities . . .” *Appeal of McCracken*, 88 A.2d 787, 788 (Pa. 1952).

18. “[T]he Election Code delegates extensive powers and authority to county election boards, including rulemaking authority to guide voting machine custodians, elections officers and electors and power to investigate election frauds, irregularities and violations of the law. . .” *Nutter v. Dougherty*, 921 A.2d 44, 60 (Pa. Commw. Ct. 2007), *aff’d*, 938 A.2d 401 (Pa. 2007).

19. As noted in *Boord v. Maurer*, 22 A.2d 902, 904 (Pa. 1941):

The Election Code makes the County Board of Election more than a mere ministerial body. It clothes it with quasi-judicial functions, for Section 304 of the Code provides that: ‘Each county board of elections may make regulations, not inconsistent with this act or the laws of this Commonwealth, to govern its public sessions, and may issue subpoenas, summon witnesses, compel production of books, papers, records and other evidence, and fix the time and place for hearing any matters relating to the administration and conduct of primaries and

elections in the county under the provisions of this act.’

20. In the context of absentee and mail-in ballots, the county boards of elections are charged with maintaining the integrity of the process through its “quasi-judicial” functions. *Id.*

21. A touchstone principle of Pennsylvania election policy is that “the spirit and intent of our election law . . . requires that a voter cast his ballot alone, and that it remain secret and inviolate.” *In re Canvass of Absentee Ballots of Nov. 4, 2003 General Election*, 843 A.2d 1223, 1230 (Pa. 2004). This principle is codified by statute in 25 P.S. § 3058, which states that “[n]o voter shall be permitted to receive any assistance in voting unless . . . he has a physical disability.” This extends to absentee and mail-in balloting where “the elector shall, in secret, proceed to mark the ballot. . .” 25 P.S. § 3146.6(a).

The absentee or mail-in voter shall:

then fold the ballot, enclose and securely seal the same in the envelope on which is printed, stamped or endorsed ‘Official Election Ballot.’ This envelope shall then be placed in the second one, on which is printed the form of declaration of the elector, and the address of the elector’s county board of election and the local election district of the elector. **The elector shall then fill out, date and sign the declaration printed on such envelope.** Such envelope shall then be securely sealed and the elector shall send same by mail, postage prepaid, except where franked, or deliver it in person to said county board of election.

*Id.* (emphasis added); *see also* 25 P.S. § 3150.16(a) (providing for the identical procedure for mail-in voters).

22. When the ballots are returned, the county board of elections must **“examine the declaration on the envelope of each ballot . . . and shall compare the information thereon with that contained in the ‘Registered Absentee and Mail-in Voters File,’ the absentee voters’ list and/or the ‘Military Veterans and Emergency Civilians Absentee Voters File.’”** 25 P.S. § 3146.8(g)(3) (emphasis added). The declaration includes a signature as provided by 1306 and 1306-D of the Election Code.

23. “All absentee ballots which have not been challenged under section 1302.2(c) and all mail-in ballots which have not been challenged under section 1302.2-D(a)(2) and that have been verified under paragraph (3) shall be counted and included with the returns of the applicable election district.” 25 P.S. § 3146.8(g)(4).

24. The Statutory Construction Act of 1972, Pa.C.S. § 1501 *et seq.*, directs that the object of all interpretation and construction of statutes is to ascertain and effectuate the Legislature’s intent. 1 Pa.C.S. § 1921(a); *Chanceford Aviation Properties, LLP v. Chanceford Twp. Bd. of Supervisors*, 923 A.2d 1099, 1104 (Pa. 2007). Generally, the best indicator of legislative intent is the plain language of the statute. *Walker v. Eleby*, 577 Pa. 104, 842 A.2d 389, 400 (2004). In construing statutory language, “[w]ords and phrases shall be construed according to rules of grammar and according to their common and approved usage[.]” 1 Pa.C.S. § 1903(a).

25. When the words of a statute are clear and unambiguous, there is no need to look beyond the plain meaning of the statute “under the pretext of pursuing its spirit.” 1 Pa.C.S. § 1921(b); *Commonwealth v. Conklin*, 587 Pa. 140, 897 A.2d 1168, 1175 (2006). Only “[w]hen the words of the statute are not explicit” may a court resort to the rules of statutory construction including those provided in 1 Pa.C.S. § 1921(c); *Chanceford*, 923 A.2d at 1104. The statute must “be construed, if possible, to give effect to all its provisions,” so that no provision is reduced to mere surplusage. 1 Pa.C.S. § 1921(a); *Walker*, 842 A.2d at 400. Finally, it is presumed “[t]hat the General Assembly does not intend a result that is absurd, impossible of execution or unreasonable.” 1 Pa.C.S. § 1922(1).

26. Here, the Secretary is asking for this Court to ignore the plain meaning of the statutory provisions, ignoring the Commonwealth’s long history of using voters’ signatures in the voting process.

27. Should this Court adopt the Secretary’s interpretation of these procedures, the county board of elections would be required to ignore obvious discrepancies in declarations and count ballots that should not otherwise be counted, in clear contravention of the language contained in the Election Code.

28. The Election Code uses signature-matching by the county boards of elections and the Department of State as a key component of its efforts to identify voters. For example, signature-matching is one of the key components of vetting

signatures on nomination petitions and papers. 25 P.S. § 2868; 25 P.S. § 2937. Indeed, signature-matching is the key component of identifying in-person voters. 25 P.S. § 3050.

29. In addressing election policy, “the judiciary should act with restraint, in the election arena, subordinate to express statutory directives. Subject to constitutional limitations, the Pennsylvania General Assembly may require such practices and procedures as it may deem necessary to the orderly, fair, and efficient administration of public elections in Pennsylvania.” *In re Guzzardi*, 99 A.3d 381 (Pa. 2014).

30. “Election laws will be strictly enforced to prevent fraud . . . .” *Appeal of James*, 105 A.2d 64, 65 (Pa. 1954). A court “cannot simply ignore substantive provisions of the Election Code. . . . [S]o-called technicalities of the Election Code are necessary for the preservation of secrecy and the sanctity of the ballot and must therefore be observed—particularly where, as here, they are designed to reduce fraud.” *In re Canvass of Absentee Ballots of Nov. 4, 2003 General Election*, 843 A.2d 1223, 1234 (Pa. 2004).

31. This Court just upheld the importance of strictly enforcing the technical requirements concerning mail-in ballots last month in the *Pennsylvania Democratic Party* case. *Pennsylvania Democratic Party v. Boockvar*, \_\_\_ A.3d \_\_\_, 2020 WL 5554644 (Pa. 2020). In Count III of its petition, the petitioners in that case sought

“to require that the Boards contact qualified electors whose mail-in or absentee ballots contain minor facial defects resulting from their failure to comply with the statutory requirements for voting by mail, and provide them with an opportunity to cure those defects.” *Id.* at \*19.

32. Interestingly, “the Secretary oppose[d] Petitioner’s request for relief in this regard. She counters that there is no statutory or constitutional basis for requiring the Boards to contact voters when faced with a defective ballot and afford them an opportunity to cure defects.” *Id.* “The Secretary further notes that . . .the Free and Equal Elections Clause . . . cannot create statutory language that the General Assembly chose not to provide.” *Id.*

33. This Court concluded that “the Boards are not required to implement a ‘notice and opportunity to cure’ procedure for mail-in and absentee ballots that voters have filled out incompletely or incorrectly. Put simply, as argued by the parties in opposition to the requested relief, Petitioner has cited no constitutional or statutory basis that would countenance imposing the procedure Petitioner seeks to require (*i.e.*, having the Boards contact those individuals whose ballots the Boards have reviewed and identified as including ‘minor’ or ‘facial’ defects—and for whom the Boards have contact information— and then afford those individuals the opportunity to cure defects until the UOCAVA deadline).” *Id.* at \*20.

34. In his concurrence, Justice Wecht clearly indicated that he was opposed to the *policy* of signature-matching, but he acknowledged that as the operative law, adding that the *Pennsylvania Democratic Party* “case offers no challenge to such



inherently subjective bases for disqualifying ballots, I do not view today’s Opinion as foreclosing the possibility of relief in a future case seeking the opportunity to address circumstances in which a subjective, lay assessment of voter requirements as to which reasonable minds might differ stands between the elector and the tabulating machine.” *Pennsylvania Democratic Party v. Boockvar*, \_\_\_ A.3d \_\_\_, 2020 WL 5554644 \*34 (Pa. 2020) (J. Wecht concurring).

35. Indeed, Justice Wecht noted a series of cases where courts had addressed constitutional challenges to signature-matching, and his “hope that the General Assembly would revisit the issue and consider furnishing such a procedure on its own initiative, this Court has the prerogative to address this problem if it proves worthy upon closer examination.” *Id.* \*35.

36. Again, no constitutional claim is before the Court—only one of statutory interpretation.

37. Curiously, the Secretary (along with the House Leaders) recently opposed a constitutional challenge to mail-in and absentee ballot signature verification procedures in the *NAACP-PSC* case. *NAACP Pennsylvania State Conference v. Boockvar*, No. 364 MD 2020 (Pa. Commw. Ct. 2020). In the *NAACP-PSC* case, the petitioner sought a multitude of election relief, including that the Court direct the Secretary to “provid[e] adequate guidance to election officials when verifying mail ballots through signature matching and require notice and an

opportunity to cure a mail ballot flagged for signature mismatch. . .” *NAACP Pennsylvania State Conference v. Boockvar*, No. 364 MD 2020, Petition for Review (Pa. Commw. Ct. filed June 18, 2020) **(Exhibit 1)**.

38. After a thorough evidentiary hearing, Judge Brobson denied the petitioner’s application for a preliminary injunction, and subsequently sustained the preliminary objections of the Respondents, including Secretary Boockvar, in the form of a demurrer. *NAACP Pennsylvania State Conference v. Boockvar*, No. 364 MD 2020, Memorandum Opinion (Pa. Commw. Ct. filed September 11, 2020) **(Exhibit 2)**; *NAACP Pennsylvania State Conference v. Boockvar*, No. 364 MD 2020, Order (Pa. Commw. Ct. filed September 11, 2020) **(Exhibit 3)**.

39. As the Secretary herself noted in her Memorandum of Law in support of her preliminary objections in the *NAACP-PSC* case, “the question presented by Petitioner’s lawsuit is not whether the reforms would be good public policy; it is whether the Court can require their implementation, in derogation of the Election Code and *as a matter of constitutional law*, based on the facts alleged in the Petition. As a matter of law, the answer is no. Accordingly, the Court should sustain Respondents’ Preliminary Objections and dismiss the Petition.” *NAACP Pennsylvania State Conference v. Boockvar*, No. 364 MD 2020, Respondents’ Brief in Support of Preliminary Objections to Petitioner’s Petition for Review (Pa. Commw. Ct. filed August 13, 2020) (emphasis in original) **(Exhibit 4)**.

39. Here, it is neither a question of public policy nor constitutional law, but solely a matter of statutory interpretation of a straightforward statute.

40. As the Pennsylvania Election Code has always placed a heavy emphasis on signature verification to confirm identity, and clearly does so here with absentee and mail-in ballots, the House Leaders' demurrer should be sustained and the Petition dismissed with prejudice.

WHEREFORE, for the reasons above, the House Leaders respectfully request that this Court sustain their Preliminary Objection in the nature of a demurer and dismiss this action with prejudice.

Dated: October 7, 2020

Respectfully submitted,

*/s/ Zachary M. Wallen*

Zachary M. Wallen

Pa. ID No. 309176

**CHALMERS & ADAMS LLC**

301 South Hills Village Drive

No. LL200-420

Pittsburgh, PA 15241

*Counsel for Proposed-Intervenor  
Respondents Speaker of the Pennsylvania  
House of Representatives Bryan Cutler and  
Majority Leader of the Pennsylvania House  
of Representatives Kerry Benninghoff*

## **CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE**

I hereby certify that this filing complies with the provisions of the Public Access Policy of the Unified Judicial System of Pennsylvania: Case Records of the Appellate and Trial Courts that require filing confidential information and documents differently than non-confidential information and documents.

*/s/ Zachary M. Wallen*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
*Counsel for Proposed-Intervenor  
Respondents Speaker of the Pennsylvania  
House of Representatives Bryan Cutler and  
Majority Leader of the Pennsylvania House  
of Representatives Kerry Benninghoff*

Dated: October 7, 2020

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Proposed-Intervenor Respondents.

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**[PROPOSED] ORDER**

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Now, this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2020, upon consideration of the Preliminary Objection filed by Speaker of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives Bryan Cutler and Majority Leader of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives Kerry Benninghoff, it is hereby **ORDERED, ADJUDGED, and DECREED** that the Preliminary Objection is **SUSTAINED**. The Application for Invocation of King's Bench Power to Declare Proper Construction of Election Code in the above action is hereby dismissed with prejudice.

**SO ORDERED BY THE COURT:**

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# **EXHIBIT 1**

**IN THE SUPREME COURT OF PENNSYLVANIA  
MIDDLE DISTRICT**

**No.** \_\_\_\_\_

**IN RE NOVEMBER 3, 2020 GENERAL ELECTION**

Petition of: Kathy Boockvar, Secretary of the  
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

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**APPLICATION FOR INVOCATION OF KING'S BENCH POWER TO  
DECLARE PROPER CONSTRUCTION OF ELECTION CODE**

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Daniel T. Brier  
Donna A. Walsh  
MYERS, BRIER & KELLY, LLP  
425 Spruce Street, Suite 200  
Scranton, PA 18503

J. Bart DeLone  
Howard G. Hopkirk  
Michael J. Scarinci  
PENNSYLVANIA OFFICE OF  
ATTORNEY GENERAL  
15<sup>th</sup> Floor, Strawberry Square  
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Daniel T. Donovan  
Michael A. Glick  
Susan M. Davies  
KIRKLAND & ELLIS LLP  
1301 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20004

Counsel for Petitioner Kathy Boockvar,  
Secretary of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

I. INTRODUCTION ..... 1

II. FACTUAL BACKGROUND ..... 3

III. BASIS FOR EXERCISE OF KING'S BENCH POWERS ..... 10

IV. ARGUMENTS FOR DECLARATORY RELIEF ..... 15

CONCLUSION ..... 25



**TABLE OF AUTHORITIES**

**CASES**

*In re Avellino*, 690 A.2d 1138 (Pa. 1997) ..... 11

*In re Bruno*, 101 A.3d 635 (Pa. 2014) ..... 11, 12

*Com. v. Mazzetti*, 44 A.3d 58 (Pa. 2012) ..... 21

*Com. Office of Admin. v. Pa. Labor Rels. Bd.*, 916 A.2d 541 (Pa. 2007)..... 16

*Commonwealth v. Johnson*, 26 A.3d 1078 (Pa. 2011) ..... 21

*Commonwealth v. Williams*, 129 A.3d 1199 (Pa. 2015), *petition for cert. filed*,  
No. 19-1265 (U.S. Apr. 27, 2020)..... 11, 12

*Crossey v. Boockvar*, No. 108 MM 2020, 2020 WL 5554582 (Pa. Sept. 17,  
2020)..... 1, 8

*Democracy N. Carolina v. N. Carolina State Bd. of Elections*, --- F. Supp. 3d ---,  
2020 WL 4484063 (M.D.N.C. Aug. 4, 2020) ..... 24

*Democratic Exec. Comm. of Fla. v. Detzner*, 347 F. Supp. 3d 1017  
(N.D. Fla. 2018) ..... 24

*Dep't of Env't Prot. v. Cumberland Coal Res.*, 102 A.3d 962 (Pa. 2014) ..... 16

*Fagan v. Smith*, 41 A.3d 816 (Pa. 2012) ..... 14

*Fonner v. Shandon, Inc.*, 724 A.2d 903 (Pa. 1999) ..... 21

*Frederick v. Lawson*, --- F. Supp. 3d ---, 2020 WL 4882696 (S.D. Ind.  
Aug. 20, 2020)..... 23, 24

*Friends of Danny De Vito v. Wolf* 227 A.3d 872 (Pa. 2020) ..... 11

*Johnson v. Fankell*, 520 U.S. 911 (1997)..... 14

<i>League of Women Voters v. Commonwealth</i> , 178 A.3d 737 (Pa. 2018).....	13
<i>Lurie v. Republican Alliance</i> , 192 A.2d 367 (Pa. 1963) .....	22
<i>Martin v. Kemp</i> , 341 F. Supp. 3d 1326 (N.D. Ga. 2018).....	24
<i>Mohamed v. Com., Dep’t of Transp.</i> , 40 A.3d 1186 (Pa. 2012) .....	22
<i>Pa. Democratic Party v. Boockvar</i> , A.3d ---, No. 133 MM 2020, 2020 WL 5554644 (Pa. Sept. 17, 2020).....	1, 3, 8, 13
<i>Pa. Gaming Control Bd. v. City Council of Phila.</i> , 928 A.2d 1255 (Pa. 2007).....	14
<i>R.R. Comm’n of Tex. v. Pullman Co.</i> , 312 U.S. 496 (1941) .....	15
<i>Richardson v. Tex. Sec. of State</i> , SA-19-cv-00963-OLG (W.D. Tex. Sept. 8, 2020), appeal docketed, No. 20-50774 (5th Cir. Sept. 10, 2020) .....	23, 24
<i>Saucedo v. Gardner</i> , 335 F. Supp. 3d 202 (D.N.H. 2018) .....	23
<i>Self Advocacy Sols. N.D. v. Jaeger</i> , --- F. Supp. 3d ---, 2020 WL 2951012 (D.N.D. June 3, 2020) .....	24
<i>Shambach v. Bickhart</i> , 845 A.2d 793 (Pa. 2004).....	22
<i>Wardius v. Oregon</i> , 412 U.S. 470 (1973).....	14

### **STATUTES**

U.S. Const. Art. II, § 1, cl. 2.....	14
Pa. Const. Art. I, § 5 .....	2
Pa. Const. Art. V, § 2(a) .....	11
Pa. Const. Art. V, § 2(c) .....	11

25 Pa. C.S. § 1301(a).....	18
25 P.S. § 2602(q.1).....	19
25 P.S. § 2602(z.5)(3).....	17
25 P.S. § 3050(a.3)(2).....	21
25 P.S. § 3050(d).....	21
25 P.S. § 3146.2.....	16
25 P.S. § 3146.2b.....	7, 16
25 P.S. § 3146.2c.....	19
25 P.S. § 3146.2c(c) .....	19
25 P.S. § 3146.6.....	16
25 P.S. § 3146.8.....	7, 21
25 P.S. § 3146.8(d).....	7
25 P.S. § 3146.8(g).....	19, 22
25 P.S. § 3146.8(g)(1.1) .....	19, 22
25 P.S. § 3146.8(g)(2) (2019).....	18
25 P.S. § 3146.8(g)(3) .....	7, 19, 20
25 P.S. § 3146.8(g)(4) .....	7, 18, 20
25 P.S. § 3146.8(g)(4)(i) .....	8
25 P.S. § 3146.8(g)(4)(ii) .....	8

25 P.S. § 3146.8(g)(4)(iii) .....	8
25 P.S. § 3150.12(a) .....	16
25 P.S. § 3150.12(b)(1) .....	16
25 P.S. § 3150.12(b)(2) .....	16
25 P.S. § 3150.12b.....	7, 19
25 P.S. § 3150.12b(a) .....	17
25 P.S. § 3150.12b(a)(1) .....	18
25 P.S. § 3150.12b(a)(2) .....	18, 20
25 P.S. § 3150.12b(a)(3) .....	18, 22
25 P.S. § 3150.12(c) .....	16
25 P.S. § 3150.12(f).....	17
25 P.S. § 3150.12(g)(2) .....	17
25 P.S. § 3553.....	17
1 Pa. C.S. § 1921(a) .....	16
1 Pa. C.S. § 1921(b) .....	16
42 Pa. C.S. § 502 .....	10, 11
42 Pa. C.S. § 7531 <i>et seq.</i> .....	10

## I. INTRODUCTION

Thousands of Pennsylvania voters will be disenfranchised in violation of the Free and Fair Elections Clause if arbitrary signature comparisons and challenges to signature variations are allowed to be used as a basis for rejecting absentee and mail-in ballots. Such procedures have no grounding whatsoever in the Election Code.

Impelled by the responsibilities of her office, Secretary of the Commonwealth Kathy Boockvar applies to this Court to resolve a first-impression statutory construction issue concerning provisions in the Election Code governing mail-in voting. The Court's September 17, 2020 rulings in *Pa. Democratic Party v. Boockvar*, --- A.3d ---, No. 133 MM 2020, 2020 WL 5554644 (Pa. Sept. 17, 2020), and *Crossey v. Boockvar*, No. 108 MM 2020, 2020 WL 5554582 (Pa. Sept. 17, 2020), resolved different statutory interpretation questions relating to, *inter alia*, use of ballot drop boxes and the validity of ballots returned without secrecy envelopes. Since those rulings, new disputes have arisen concerning proper interpretation of the statutory procedures governing ballot applications and canvassing of voted ballots and, specifically, whether the Election Code permits or requires county election officials to reject applications or refuse to count voted ballots based on a subjective signature analysis. As detailed below, the Election Code does not require or permit county election officials to reject applications or refuse to count voted ballots based on alleged signature inconsistency, nor does the Code permit third-party challenges

based on signature analysis. For this reason, Secretary Boockvar seeks a judicial declaration from this Court directing that absentee and mail-in ballots cannot be challenged or invalidated based on signature comparison or an alleged or perceived signature variance.

There can be no doubt that this statutory construction issue is of immediate public importance. Applications for absentee and mail-in ballots are being processed right now and voters will soon be returning their voted ballots. Rejection of applications for or voted mail-in or absentee ballots based on signature matching is not only not permitted by the Election Code, but also poses a grave risk of disenfranchisement on an arbitrary and wholly subjective basis and without advance warning, notice or an opportunity to be heard. A final definitive ruling from this Court is critical to fulfilling the Constitutional guarantee of a “free and equal” election and “the free exercise of the right of suffrage.” Pa. Const. Art. I, § 5.

Accordingly, Secretary Boockvar respectfully urges this Court to exercise its King’s Bench jurisdiction to quickly and conclusively resolve this statutory construction issue in advance of the general election by declaring that (1) county election officials may not reject applications or refuse to count voted ballots based on a subjective perception of signature variation and (2) absentee and mail-in ballots and the applications for those ballots may not be challenged by third-parties based on signature comparison at any time.

## II. FACTUAL BACKGROUND

The introduction of mail-in voting in the Commonwealth has spawned substantial litigation in state and federal courts seeking various forms of declaratory and injunctive relief.<sup>1</sup> To resolve the then-extant disputes and enable election officials to properly prepare for the upcoming election, Secretary Boockvar filed an application for exercise of extraordinary jurisdiction in this Court on August 16, 2020 requesting that the Court resolve discrete issues of statutory construction relating to implementation of mail-in voting.

On September 17, 2020, this Court issued its Opinion in *Pa. Democratic Party v. Boockvar* which resolved the specific statutory construction issues that had been raised by the Secretary. In his concurrence, Justice Wecht noted that the issues presented did not involve “subjective assessments” of ballot validity, “such as signature mismatches assessed by poll workers with no training or expertise in matching signatures.” 2020 WL 5554644 at \*34. Justice Wecht observed that “[s]ignature comparison is a process fraught with the risk of error and inconsistent application, especially when conducted by lay people” and that “enforcement of such

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<sup>1</sup> Those cases include: *Michael Crossey, et al. v. Kathy Boockvar*, 108 MM 2020 (Pa.); *Pa. Democratic Party v. Kathy Boockvar*, 407 MD 2020 (Pa. Cmwlth. Ct.); *NAACP Pa. State Conference v. Boockvar, et al.*, No. 364 MD 2020 (Pa. Cmwlth. Ct.); *Donald J. Trump for President, Inc. v. Philadelphia County Bd. of Elections, et al.*, No. 200902035 (Phila. Cty. CCP); *Donald J. Trump for President, Inc., et al. v. Kathy Boockvar, et al.*, No. 2:20-cv-966 (W.D. Pa.); *League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania, et al. v. Kathy Boockvar, et al.*, No. 20-3850 (E.D. Pa.).

requirements presents risks of inconsistency and arbitrariness that may implicate constitutional guarantees . . . , including due process and equal protection principles.”

*Id.* Justice Wecht added that the Court’s September 17, 2020 ruling would not foreclose “the possibility of relief in a future case seeking the opportunity to address circumstances in which a subjective, lay assessment of voter requirements as to which reasonable minds might differ stands between the elector and the tabulating machine.” *Id.*

Less than a week after Justice Wecht noted the limits of this Court’s September 17, 2020 ruling, the plaintiffs in *Donald J. Trump for President, Inc., et al. v. Kathy Boockvar, et al.*, No. 2:20-cv-966 (W.D. Pa.), filed a Second Amended and Supplemental Complaint in the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Pennsylvania repudiating Justice Wecht’s analysis by alleging that the Election Code “*does* authorize County Election Boards to set aside and challenge returned absentee and mail-in ballots that contain signatures which do not match the voters’ signatures in their permanent voter registration records.” 2d Am. Compl. ¶ 182 (emphasis added). The amended federal pleading seeks a preliminary and permanent injunction requiring county election boards to “verify the identification of the registered voter of an absentee or mail-in ballot by comparing the signature information on the absentee or mail-in ballot to the information contained on the voter’s permanent registration card.” *Id.* at pp. 80-81.



Undeterred by Judge Ranjan’s announcement on September 23, 2020 that the district court would again abstain from addressing state law questions, including questions concerning verification of signatures on ballot applications,<sup>2</sup> the plaintiffs in *Trump for President* pressed ahead and filed a motion for summary judgment on October 1, 2020 in the Western District seeking an order declaring that Secretary Boockvar’s interpretation—that the Election Code does not permit county election officials to reject absentee or mail-in ballot applications or voted absentee or mail-in ballots based on signature analysis or comparison—conflicts with the Election Code. In furtherance of their campaign to suppress absentee and mail-in voting, the plaintiffs in *Trump for President* are urging the Western District to require that Secretary Boockvar “advise all . . . county boards of elections that they are permitted, authorized, and required under the Pennsylvania Election Code to both reject absentee and mail-in ballot applications and to set aside and/or challenge voted

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<sup>2</sup> By Orders dated September 23, 2020, Judge Ranjan abstained from deciding the plaintiff’s claims involving unsettled issues of state law, including “claims regarding verification of in-person, mail-in ballot applications” under the *Pullman* doctrine. *See* Sept. 23, 2020 Memorandum Order (ECF No. 459) & Order (ECF No. 460). (Copies of the Orders are attached as Exhibits A and B.) Plaintiffs filed their Second Amended Complaint the same day including new claims for relief advancing their (incorrect) view that signature analysis and comparison is mandated by the Election Code. Secretary Boockvar continues to argue in the Western District that the district court should abstain from deciding the merits of any of plaintiffs’ claims relating to first-impression questions of state law concerning statutory grounds for challenging or rejecting absentee and mail-in ballots and ballot applications.

absentee or mail-in ballots based on an analysis that the signature on the application or voted ballot does not match the signature on the voter's permanent registration record.”<sup>3</sup>

Similar to the theory espoused by the plaintiffs in *Trump for President*, Speaker of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives Bryan Cutler, through a member of his staff, wrote to Secretary Boockvar on September 21, 2020 to demand that she make “100% clear to the counties” that the “Pennsylvania Election Code most certainly **does** authorize the county board of elections to set aside returned absentee or mail-in ballots based solely on signature analysis by the county board of elections.”<sup>4</sup> Further, the Committee on State Government of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives resolved on September 28, 2020 to create a new panel on “Election Integrity” to investigate, *inter alia*, guidance provided by the Department of State regarding the regulation and conduct of the 2020 general election.<sup>5</sup> The resolution, which passed on party lines, claims that formal guidance to county boards

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<sup>3</sup> Copies of plaintiffs’ motion for summary judgment with proposed order (ECF No. 503) and supporting brief (ECF No. 505) are attached as Exhibits C and D, respectively.

<sup>4</sup> A copy of the September 21, 2020 email is attached as Exhibit E.

<sup>5</sup> *See* House Resolution No. 1032, Session of 2020 (available at <https://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/legis/PN/Public/btCheck.cfm?txtType=PDF&sessYr=2019&sessInd=0&billBody=H&billTyp=R&billNbr=1032&pn=4432> (last visited October 4, 2020)).

issued by Secretary Boockvar concerning pre-canvassing and canvassing of absentee and mail-in ballots “include[s] clearly erroneous information” concerning signature analysis and resulted in “confusion among county officials.”<sup>6</sup>

The guidance referenced in the Committee on State Government resolution was issued by Secretary Boockvar on September 11, 2020 to further the uniform application and implementation of new procedures in the Election Code relating to mail-in voting. The Election Code includes an entirely new procedure detailing how absentee and mail-in ballots are to be processed and counted and specifically limits the grounds on which those ballots may be challenged. *See* 25 P.S. § 3146.8. That section directs that county boards shall meet no earlier than 7:00 am on election day to pre-canvass absentee and mail-in ballots in accordance with the following procedures:

- Ballots cast by persons who died prior to election day should be set aside, 25 P.S. § 3146.8(d), (g)(3);
- The voter declaration on the ballot envelope should be examined and the information on the envelope—the voter’s name and address—should be compared to the names and addresses on the lists of approved absentee and mail-in electors, 25 P.S. § 3146.8(g)(3);
- Ballots which have been challenged under 25 P.S. § 3146.2b or 25 P.S. § 3150.12b on the grounds that the voter is not qualified to vote should be set aside, 25 P.S. § 3146.8(g)(4);

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<sup>6</sup> *Id.* at p.3.

- All other absentee and mail-in ballots should be opened so as not to destroy the executed voter declaration, 25 P.S. § 3146.8(g)(4)(i);
- Inner envelopes with text or markings that identify the elector or the elector’s party or candidate preference should be set aside, 25 P.S. § 3146.8(g)(4)(ii); and
- All other ballots should be counted, 25 P.S. § 3146.8(g)(4)(i)-(iii).

Consistent with the responsibilities of her office, Secretary Boockvar detailed these statutory requirements in her formal guidance to county election officials dated September 11, 2020.<sup>7</sup> Among other things, the September 11, 2020 guidance directs county election officials to follow these statutory steps when pre-canvassing absentee and mail-in ballots and concludes that “[t]he Pennsylvania Election Code does not authorize the county board of elections to set aside returned absentee or mail-in ballots based solely on signature analysis by the county board of elections.”

Secretary Boockvar issued additional guidance on September 28, 2020 to formally advise county election officials of this Court’s rulings in *Pa. Democratic Party v. Boockvar* and *Crossey v. Boockvar* and to update and correct prior guidance that was inconsistent with the Court’s rulings, including guidance regarding the

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<sup>7</sup> The document titled “Guidance Concerning Examination of Absentee and Mail-in Ballot Return Envelopes” is available at <https://www.dos.pa.gov/VotingElections/OtherServicesEvents/Documents/Examination%20of%20Absentee%20and%20Mail-In%20Ballot%20Return%20Envelopes.pdf> (last visited October 4, 2020).

treatment of ballots that are not enclosed within their secrecy envelopes.<sup>8</sup> The September 28, 2020 guidance further advises county election boards that the Election Code does not permit county election officials to reject applications or voted ballots based solely on signature analysis.

The Secretary's guidance is faithful to the letter and spirit of the Election Code which does not require or permit signature comparison or permit challenges to or rejection of voted mail-in and absentee ballots based on alleged or perceived signature variations. Although the Election Code does not require or permit any form of signature analysis or signature matching, as explained above, the Trump Campaign and Republican National Committee persist in advocating that county election officials must analyze voters' signatures and must reject ballot applications and voted ballots if a voter's signature does not match his or her signature in the voting record. Lack of a definitive ruling from this Court on the proper interpretation of the Election Code will lead to dissension and disputes when ballots are pre-canvassed beginning on November 3, 2020.

The election is now just over four weeks away. Ballots have been finalized and county election boards are in the process of reviewing absentee and mail-in

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<sup>8</sup> The document titled "Guidance Concerning Civilian Absentee and Mail-in Ballot Procedures" is available at <https://www.dos.pa.gov/VotingElections/OtherServicesEvents/Documents/DOS%20Guidance%20Civilian%20Absentee%20and%20Mail-In%20Ballot%20Procedures.pdf> (last visited October 4, 2020).

ballot applications and sending out ballots to absentee and mail-in voters. It is expected that more than 2.5 million Pennsylvanians will cast votes by mail in the November 3, 2020 general election. To avoid confusion, to ensure transparency and, most importantly, to prevent qualified voters from being disenfranchised based on arbitrary, standardless and non-statutory grounds, Secretary Boockvar seeks a declaratory judgment under the Declaratory Judgments Act, 42 Pa. C.S. § 7531 *et seq.*, clarifying and confirming that the Election Code does not authorize or permit county election boards to reject voted absentee or mail-in ballots or ballot applications based on signature analysis and does not authorize or permit challenges to applications or voted ballots based on alleged or perceived signature variances. This application seeks final rulings from the highest court in the Commonwealth on these time-sensitive and novel questions of pure state law.

### **III. BASIS FOR EXERCISE OF KING’S BENCH POWERS**

This Court has authority under its King’s Bench power to declare the correct interpretation of the Election Code, 42 Pa. C.S. § 502, and should exercise that authority to make clear that analysis of signatures on absentee and mail-in applications and ballots is not statutorily required and that such ballots cannot be challenged or rejected based on signature comparisons.

King’s Bench authority is properly exercised “to review an issue of public importance that requires timely intervention by the court of last resort to avoid the

deleterious effects arising from delays incident to the ordinary process of law.” *Friends of Danny DeVito v. Wolf*, 227 A.3d 872, 884 (Pa. 2020) (quoting *Commonwealth v. Williams*, 129 A.3d 1199, 1205-06 (Pa. 2015)), *petition for cert. filed*, No. 19-1265 (U.S. Apr. 27, 2020); *see also In re Bruno*, 101 A.3d 635, 670 (Pa. 2014). This authority derives from Article V, Section 2 of the Pennsylvania Constitution which provides, in relevant part, that the Supreme Court “shall be the highest court of the Commonwealth and in this court shall be reposed the supreme judicial power of the Commonwealth.” Pa. Const. Art. V, § 2(a). Article V, Section 2 further provides that the Supreme Court “shall have such jurisdiction as shall be provided by law.” *Id.* § 2(c). The General Assembly codified this authority as follows: “The Supreme Court shall have and exercise the powers vested in it by the Constitution of Pennsylvania, including the power generally to minister justice to all persons and to exercise the powers of the court, as fully and amply, to all intents and purposes, as the justice of the Court of King’s Bench, Common Pleas and Exchequer, at Westminster, or any of them, could or might do on May 22, 1722.” 42 Pa. C.S. § 502.

This Court is authorized to “exercise King’s Bench powers over matters where no dispute is pending in a lower court.” *Friends of Danny DeVito*, 227 A.3d at 884; *see also Williams*, 129 A.3d at 1206; *In re Avellino*, 690 A.2d 1138, 1140 (Pa. 1997). Further, the exercise of King’s Bench authority is not limited by prescribed forms of

procedure or to actions of a particular nature, but rather the Court may employ any type of process necessary for the circumstances. *Williams*, 129 A.3d at 1206. “[T]he power of King’s Bench allow[s] the Court to innovate a swift process and remedy appropriate to the exigencies of the event.” *In re Bruno*, 101 A.3d at 672. “In exercising King’s Bench authority, [the Court’s] ‘principal obligations are to conscientiously guard the fairness and probity of the judicial process and the dignity, integrity, and authority of the judicial system, all for the protection of the citizens of this Commonwealth.’” *Williams*, 129 A.3d at 1206 (quoting *In re Bruno*, 101 A.3d at 675).

As with the issues raised in Secretary Boockvar’s previous application, this election dispute presents an issue of significant public concern and requires immediate judicial resolution. Given the immense demand for mail-in voting at the primary and the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, more than 2.5 million registered electors are expected to cast their votes by mail-in or absentee-ballot for the general election. In the Western District litigation and elsewhere, it is now being advocated (incorrectly) that the Election Code not only allows but *requires* county election officials to compare voter signatures and permit ballots to be challenged and rejected based on layperson signature analysis. Secretary Boockvar’s contrary guidance has been attacked as “clearly erroneous information” and some counties indicated they may employ some form of signature analysis. As a result, despite Secretary



Boockvar's best efforts to ensure correct and uniform application of the Election Code, it remains very likely that ballots will be improperly and unlawfully rejected in the upcoming election based on subjective and arbitrary signature comparisons not authorized by the Election Code if this Court does not resolve this matter.

Prompt resolution of this dispute by this Court is critically necessary to clarify the law and prevent arbitrary disenfranchisement of qualified voters. As Justice Wecht acknowledged, lay signature analysis presents risk of error and inconsistent application. *Pa. Democratic Party v. Boockvar*, 2020 WL 5554644 at \*34. And, because the Election Code does not include or require a procedure for comparing signatures, it also does not require that voters be afforded notice and an opportunity to cure before their absentee or mail-in ballots are rejected due to any perceived signature variations. Without a definitive ruling from this Court that the Election Code does not permit ballots to be challenged or rejected on this basis, it is very likely that voters will be arbitrarily and unlawfully disenfranchised.

Because the elective franchise is at stake, this issue goes to the heart of our democracy and necessarily implicates the public interest. The right to vote and have that vote properly counted is "the most central of democratic rights." *League of Women Voters v. Commonwealth*, 178 A.3d 737, 741 (Pa. 2018). As detailed below, the Election Code itself clearly delimits the grounds on which applications and ballots may be rejected and clearly demonstrates the right to the declaratory relief

sought here. Lack of a definitive declaration from this Court as to which ballots may lawfully be challenged or rejected will lead to spurious attempts to undermine the legitimacy of the election. Accordingly, this election dispute is unquestionably of immediate public interest and falls squarely within this Court's King's Bench powers. *See, e.g., Fagan v. Smith*, 41 A.3d 816 (Pa. 2012) (per curiam) (exercising King's Bench jurisdiction and ordering Speaker of Pennsylvania House of Representatives to issue writs of election for special elections to fill vacancies in legislative districts); *Pa. Gaming Control Bd. v. City Council of Phila.*, 928 A.2d 1255, 1264 n.6 (Pa. 2007) (invoking King's Bench jurisdiction as alternative ground to review challenge to submission of ballot question).

The critically important state law election issue presented here should be finally settled by this Court in advance of the general election. The U.S. Constitution assigns to the states primary responsibility for determining the manner of selecting Presidential electors, U.S. Const. Art. II, § 1, cl. 2, and this Court is the ultimate expositor of state law, *see Johnson v. Fankell*, 520 U.S. 911, 916 (1997) ("Neither this Court nor any other federal tribunal has any authority to place a construction on a state statute different from the one rendered by the highest court of the State."); *Wardius v. Oregon*, 412 U.S. 470, 477 (1973) ("It is, of course, true that the Oregon courts are the final arbiters of the State's own law"). Consequently, a final determination from this Court clarifying the grounds for challenging and rejecting

applications and voted ballots is critical to ensuring that votes cast by qualified Pennsylvanian electors are properly counted. Judge Ranjan has recognized on several occasions that state law issues should be resolved by Pennsylvania state courts and Secretary Boockvar filed a motion for summary judgment yesterday in the Western District urging that court to abstain pursuant to *R.R. Comm'n of Tex. v. Pullman Co.*, 312 U.S. 496, 500 (1941). For the same reasons that the district court should abstain from construing statutory procedures in the Election Code in the first instance, this Court should resolve these important state law questions as soon as possible.

This important election issue merits invocation of King's Bench powers.

#### **IV. ARGUMENTS FOR DECLARATORY RELIEF**

The Election Code is clear and unambiguous with respect to the grounds on which absentee and mail-in ballot applications may be rejected and the grounds on which voted absentee and mail-in ballots may be challenged. Signature comparison is not one of those grounds. This Court should issue a declaratory judgment that absentee and mail-in ballot applications and voted ballots cannot be challenged or rejected based on perceived or alleged signature variations.

The Election Code imposes a rigorous and comprehensive application process for absentee and mail-in electors that does not include signature analysis.<sup>9</sup> With respect to mail-in ballots, the Election Code directs that, to apply for a ballot, a qualified elector must fill out and return an application form with the elector's name, address, date of birth, voting district and length of time residing in the voting district. 25 P.S. § 3150.12(a), (b)(1)-(2).<sup>10</sup> The application form includes a declaration that must be completed by the applicant verifying his or her eligibility to vote and the truthfulness of the information supplied on the application, unless the elector is unable to sign due to illness or physical disability. 25 P.S. § 3150.12(c).<sup>11</sup> The

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<sup>9</sup> The polestar of statutory construction is “to ascertain and effectuate the intention of the General Assembly.” 1 Pa. C.S. § 1921(a). “The best indication of legislative intent is the language used in the statute.” *Com., Office of Admin. v. Pa. Labor Rels. Bd.*, 916 A.2d 541, 547-48 (Pa. 2007). “[W]hen the words of a statute are clear and unambiguous,” that is the end of the inquiry. *Dep’t of Env’t Prot. v. Cumberland Coal Res.*, 102 A.3d 962, 975 (Pa. 2014); *see also* 1 Pa. C.S. § 1921(b).

<sup>10</sup> The procedures for applying for and voting absentee ballots are similar and are set forth in separate provisions in the Election Code. *See* 25 P.S. § 3146.2 (Applications for official absentee ballots); 25 P.S. § 3146.2b (Approval of application for absentee ballot); 25 P.S. § 3146.6 (Voting by absentee electors). For convenience, only the mail-in ballot provisions are cited in the body of this application.

<sup>11</sup> The paper application form includes a line for the voter's signature which signifies a declaration that the applicant is “eligible to vote by mail-in ballot at the forthcoming primary or election; . . . and that all of the information which [is] listed on this mail-in ballot application is true and correct.” [https://www.votespa.com/Register-to-Vote/Documents/PADOS\\_mailInapplication.pdf](https://www.votespa.com/Register-to-Vote/Documents/PADOS_mailInapplication.pdf) (last visited October 4, 2020)). The ballot application can also be submitted electronically on a form available at

signed declaration exposes the applicant to criminal penalties if the representations made are false. 25 P.S. § 3553.

Upon receipt of a completed application, the county board of elections must determine the qualifications of the applicant by verifying certain specifically designated “proof of identification” and by comparing “the information provided on the application with the information contained on the applicant’s permanent registration card.” 25 P.S. § 3150.12b(a). “Proof of identification” for purposes of applications to vote by absentee or mail-in ballot is defined in the Election Code as the elector’s driver’s license number, the last four digits of the elector’s Social Security number, a valid-without-photo driver’s license or identification card or other specified form of photo identification. 25 P.S. § 2602(z.5)(3). Under the plain language in the Election Code, identity for purposes of ballot applications is verified through these specified means, not analysis or comparison of signatures. And, for this reason, applications can be completed and submitted electronically. 25 P.S. § 3150.12(f), (g)(2).

If, after reviewing the application, the county election board is “satisfied that the applicant is qualified to receive an official mail-in ballot,” the Election Code

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<https://www.pavoterservices.pa.gov/Pages/VoterRegistrationApplication.aspx> (last visited October 4, 2020). There is no indication on either form that an applicant’s signature may be compared to another signature on file or that an application or subsequently voted ballot may be rejected based on signature comparison.

directs that “the application shall be marked ‘approved,’” 25 P.S. § 3150.12b(a)(1), and “the approval decision shall be final and binding, except that challenges may be made *only on the grounds* that the applicant was not a qualified elector,” 25 P.S. § 3150.12b(a)(2) (emphasis added). In other words, applications may be challenged only where the applicant fails to satisfy the age, citizenship or residency requirements. 25 Pa. C.S. § 1301(a).<sup>12</sup> All such challenges to voter qualifications are required to be made to the county board of elections prior to 5:00 pm on the Friday before the election. 25 P.S. § 3150.12b(a)(3). The Election Code provides for no other opportunity to challenge an absentee or mail-in application or ballot.<sup>13</sup>

The statutory procedure for opening and counting absentee and mail-in ballots likewise makes no provision for signature analysis or for challenging ballots based

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<sup>12</sup> An individual is eligible to vote in Pennsylvania if he or she is at least 18 years of age, has been a citizen of the United States for at least one month and has resided in the Commonwealth and the election district for at least 30 days. 25 Pa. C.S. § 1301(a).

<sup>13</sup> Act 12 of 2020, Act of Mar. 27, 2020, P.L. 41, No. 12, significantly changed the challenge process by removing any opportunity to challenge voted ballots. The legislation that originally allowed mail-in voting, Act 77 of 2019, authorized candidate representatives to assert challenges during pre-canvassing and canvassing. *See* 25 P.S. § 3146.8(g)(2) (2019) (“Representatives shall be permitted to challenge any absentee elector or mail-in elector in accordance with the provisions of paragraph (3).”). The current Section 3146.8(g)(2) omits this language and Section 3146.8(g)(4) instead provides that the only available challenges are challenges to an elector’s qualifications and those challenges must be asserted before canvassing begins. 25 P.S. § 3146.8(g)(4).

on alleged signature variations. The procedures by which absentee and mail-in ballots are pre-canvassed and canvassed is detailed in 25 P.S. § 3146.8(g). Pre-canvassing, which is defined in the Code as “the inspection and opening of all envelopes containing official absentee ballots or mail-in ballots, the removal of such ballots from the envelopes and the counting, computing and tallying of the votes reflected on the ballots,” begins no earlier than 7:00 am on election day. 25 P.S. § 2602(q.1); 25 P.S. § 3146.8(g)(1.1). The Election Code directs that pre-canvassing consists of examining the voter’s declaration on the ballot envelope and comparing the “information” on the envelope—*i.e.* the voter’s name and address—with the names and addresses on the lists of approved absentee and mail-in voters. 25 P.S. § 3146.8(g)(3); 25 P.S. § 3146.2c.<sup>14</sup> These are the only required or permitted examinations.

The Election Code goes on to say that, if the county board of elections has already verified the voter’s proof of identification required by 25 P.S. § 3150.12b—*i.e.* the elector’s driver’s license number, the last four digits of the elector’s Social

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<sup>14</sup> The “information” on the ballot which is required to be compared to the approved mail-in voter list is the voter’s name and address. This is the *only* information in the approved absentee and mail-in voter list which is referenced in 25 P.S. § 3146.8(g)(3). *See* 25 P.S. § 3146.2c(c) (describing “list . . . showing the names and post office addresses of all voting residents . . . to whom official absentee or mail-in ballots have been issued”). Signatures are not provided, reproduced or otherwise included in the list.

Security number, a valid-without-photo driver's license or identification card or other specified form of photo identification—and if the voter declaration on the outer envelope is sufficient and the voter's name and address appear in the lists of approved absentee and mail-in voters, the ballots are required to be counted. 25 P.S. § 3146.8(g)(3), (4). Again, the only exception is for mail-in ballots that were challenged prior to election day and the only basis for challenge is the lack of qualifications to vote. 25 P.S. §§ 3146.8(g)(4); 25 P.S. § 3150.12b(a)(2).<sup>15</sup>

Thus, the Election Code does not require or permit signature analysis when reviewing absentee or mail-in ballot applications and does not allow challenges to or rejection of absentee or mail-in ballots based on perceived signature mismatches. The General Assembly well knows how to draft such provisions. For example, the separate provision on in-person voting directs that, when voters appear to vote, a county election official shall verify identification by “compar[ing] the elector's signature on his voter's certificate with his signature in the district register” and if, “upon such comparison, the signature upon the voter's certificate appears to be

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<sup>15</sup> To be clear, Secretary Boockvar is not advocating that signatures on applications and ballots must be ignored. If, based on examination of a voter's signed declaration, a county elections official in good faith believes the ballot was voted by someone other than the qualified elector who applied for the ballot or is fraudulent, the ballot should be set aside and investigated. But this is very different from suggesting that the Election Code requires county election employees to perform a subjective signature analysis or authorizes rejection of validly cast and voted ballots based on signature variances.



genuine, the elector who has signed the certificate shall, if otherwise qualified, be permitted to vote.” 25 P.S. § 3050(a.3)(2).<sup>16</sup> The omission of such language in the statutory provisions relating to absentee and mail-in ballots is dispositive. “[W]here the legislature includes specific language in one section of a statute and excludes it from another section, the language may not be implied where excluded.” *Com. v. Mazzetti*, 44 A.3d 58, 67 (Pa. 2012) (citing *Fonner v. Shandon, Inc.*, 724 A.2d 903, 907 (Pa. 1999)). That Section 3146.8 does not reference genuine signatures or signature comparison, does not specify any signatures to be compared, does not include standards or guidelines for signature comparison and does not include a process to be followed in the event a signature is questioned can only mean that challenges or rejections based on signature analysis are not statutorily authorized.

The Election Code simply cannot be read as authorizing or permitting absentee or mail-in ballots to be challenged or rejected based on signature analysis. “[A]s a matter of statutory interpretation, although one is admonished to listen attentively to what a statute says; one must also listen attentively to what it does not say.” *Commonwealth v. Johnson*, 26 A.3d 1078, 1090 (Pa. 2011) (citations omitted). Section 3146.8(g) does not say that ballots can be invalidated based on perceived

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<sup>16</sup> A voter whose identity is challenged at the polls is notified immediately and is afforded an opportunity to produce a witness to verify his or her identity. 25 P.S. § 3050(d). No such notice or chance to cure is possible when absentee and mail-in voters are canvassed beginning on the morning of election day.

variances between signatures on the voter’s declaration and other signatures in the voter’s record and such a procedure cannot be implied. *Mohamed v. Com., Dep’t of Transp.*, 40 A.3d 1186, 1194-95 (Pa. 2012) (“[W]here the language of a statute is clear and unambiguous, a court may not add matters the legislature saw fit not to include under the guise of construction.”); *Lurie v. Republican Alliance*, 192 A.2d 367, 370 (Pa. 1963) (“It is not for us to legislate or by interpretation to add to legislation matters which the legislature saw fit not to include.”) (citation omitted).<sup>17</sup>

Even if Section 3146.8(g) were ambiguous with regard to the procedures for canvassing absentee and mail-in ballots—and it is not—this Court should nonetheless declare that ballots cannot be challenged or rejected based on subjective signature variations. The “longstanding and overriding policy in this Commonwealth to protect the elective franchise” requires that the Election Code be “construed liberally in favor of the right to vote.” *Shambach v. Bickhart*, 845 A.2d 793, 798 (Pa. 2004). It would be contrary to the liberal construction in favor of the right to vote to allow candidates and parties to challenge applications and ballots based on extra-statutory and wholly subjective signature examinations.

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<sup>17</sup> It bears reiterating that all challenges are required to be made prior to 5:00 p.m. on the Friday before the election—*i.e.* prior to examination of the voter declaration during pre-canvassing which begins no earlier than 7:00 a.m. on election day. 25 P.S. § 3146.8(g)(1.1); 25 P.S. § 3150.12b(a)(3). In addition to the lack of statutory authority for such challenges, it is not possible to challenge the signature on a voted ballot before pre-canvassing begins on election day.

In addition to violating the plain language in the Election Code and the policy of liberal interpretation in favor of the right to vote, the expedited and full-throated effort by plaintiffs in the *Trump for President* litigation to obtain a federal court order allowing signature challenges gives rise to serious constitutional concerns. As other courts have recognized, signature analysis by laypersons poses significant risk of error and inconsistency. *See, e.g., Richardson v. Tex. Sec. of State*, --- F. Supp. 3d ---, 2020 WL 5367216, at \*23 (W.D. Tex. Sept. 8, 2020) (finding credible expert testimony that laypersons “are more likely to reject signatures provided by same individual than are trained handwriting experts” because “layperson reviewers ‘incorrectly interpret a variation as a difference’”; declaring signature-comparison procedures in Texas statute unconstitutional), *appeal docketed*, No. 20-50774 (5th Cir. Sept. 10, 2020); *Frederick v. Lawson*, --- F. Supp. 3d ---, 2020 WL 4882696, at \*14 (S.D. Ind. Aug. 20, 2020) (finding credible expert testimony concerning variations among signatures, myriad of reasons for such variations and tools that may aid in assessment of genuineness of signatures and performance of signature comparisons; declaring Indiana statutory signature verification requirement unconstitutional); *Saucedo v. Gardner*, 335 F. Supp. 3d 202, 222 (D.N.H. 2018) (entering summary judgment on procedural due process challenge to statute that conveyed “sole, unreviewable discretion to reject ballots due to a signature mismatch”).

Further, the Election Code affords no opportunity for notice to any elector whose signature is questioned and therefore rejection of ballots based on signature analysis would be unreviewable. This implicates due process. *See Richardson*, 2020 WL 5367216, at \*24; *Frederick*, 2020 WL 4882696 at \*15; *Democracy N. Carolina v. N. Carolina State Bd. of Elections*, --- F. Supp. 3d ---, 2020 WL 4484063 (M.D.N.C. Aug. 4, 2020); *Self Advocacy Sols. N.D. v. Jaeger*, --- F. Supp. 3d ---, 2020 WL 2951012 (D.N.D. June 3, 2020); *Martin v. Kemp*, 341 F. Supp. 3d 1326 (N.D. Ga. 2018). And because there are no standards or guidelines in the current Election Code for determining whether signatures match, any signature comparison would necessarily be *ad hoc* and therefore also a potential violation of the equal protection guarantee. *See Frederick*, 2020 WL 4882696 at \*17; *see also Democratic Exec. Comm. of Fla. v. Detzner*, 347 F. Supp. 3d 1017, 1030-31 (N.D. Fla. 2018) (granting preliminary injunction barring enforcement of Florida signature matching procedure and explaining that “[t]he only way such a scheme can be reasonable is if there are mechanisms in place to protect against arbitrary and unreasonable decisions by canvassing boards to reject ballots based on signature mismatches”).

Beyond these serious constitutional concerns, the Election Code cannot reasonably be read as authorizing challenges to applications for or rejection of voted ballots based on perceived signature variations. To allow applications or voted ballots to be challenged or rejected for alleged variances would expose voters to

unjustified risk of disenfranchisement without fair warning, without uniform and clear standards, and without an opportunity to be heard before ballots are rejected. The right to vote is too precious to countenance such risks. The Election Code should be enforced as written and this Court should declare that applications and ballots may not be challenged or rejected based on perceived signature variations.

This Court is, and must be, the final word on this critical dispute.

## **V. CONCLUSION**


This Court should assume jurisdiction over this matter under its King's Bench power and declare that (1) county election officials may not reject absentee or mail-in applications or refuse to count voted absentee or mail-in ballots based on a subjective perception of signature variation and (2) absentee and mail-in ballots and the applications for those ballots may not be challenged by third-parties at any time based on signature comparison.

Dated: October 4, 2020

J. Bart DeLone  
Howard G. Hopkirk  
Michael J. Scarinci  
PENNSYLVANIA OFFICE OF  
ATTORNEY GENERAL  
15<sup>TH</sup> Floor, Strawberry Square  
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Daniel T. Donovan  
Michael A. Glick  
Susan M. Davies  
KIRKLAND & ELLIS LLP  
1301 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20004

Respectfully submitted,



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Daniel T. Brier  
Donna A. Walsh  
MYERS, BRIER & KELLY, LLP  
425 Spruce Street, Suite 200  
Scranton, PA 18503

Attorneys for Petitioner, Kathy Boockvar,  
Secretary of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

# Exhibit A



**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA**

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No. 2:20-cv-966

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DONALD J. TRUMP FOR PRESIDENT, INC., *et al.*,

Plaintiffs

v.

KATHY BOOCKVAR, in her capacity as Secretary of the  
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, *et al.*,

Defendants.

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**MEMORANDUM ORDER**

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**J. Nicholas Ranjan, United States District Judge**

After the Pennsylvania Supreme Court issued its recent decision in *Pennsylvania Democratic Party v. Boockvar*, — A.3d —, 2020 WL 5554644 (Pa. Sept. 17, 2020), this Court lifted the stay it had imposed pursuant to the *Pullman* abstention doctrine and ordered the parties to identify the remaining viable claims and defenses in the case. [ECF 447]. In their notice, Plaintiffs take the position that nearly all their claims remain viable, with a few discrete exceptions. [ECF 448]. Plaintiffs have also sought leave to amend their complaint to add new allegations and a new claim relating to Secretary Boockvar's recent signature-verification guidance. [ECF 451]. Defendants and Intervenors, for their part, suggest that Plaintiffs' claims have been substantially narrowed, if



not outright mooted, and remind the Court that their arguments for dismissal still remain outstanding.

From review of the notices, it appears that Plaintiffs intend to press forward on the following claims:

- (1) Whether Defendants violate the Constitution by using “unmanned” drop-boxes that, according to Plaintiffs, enable unlawful third-party ballot delivery.
- (2) Whether Defendants violate the Constitution through the uneven use of “unmanned” drop boxes that allegedly enable unlawful third-party ballot delivery.
- (3) Whether Defendants violate the Election Code and the Constitution by failing to provide sufficient notice of, or select appropriate sites for, drop-box locations—requirements that apply to “polling places” under the Election Code.
- (4) Whether Defendants violate the Election Code and the Constitution by allowing and counting non-disabled voters’ ballots delivered in-person by purported ballot harvesters or other third-parties.
- (5) Whether Defendants violate the Constitution through uneven allowance and counting of non-disabled voters’ ballots delivered in-person by purported ballot harvesters or other third-parties.
- (6) Whether Defendants violate the Constitution by allowing and counting “naked ballots,” ballots that contain marks and identifying information, and ballots that lack a completed voter declaration.
- (7) Whether Defendants violate the Constitution through uneven allowance and counting of “naked ballots,” ballots that contain marks and identifying information, and ballots that lack a completed voter declaration.

- (8) Whether Defendants violate the Election Code and the Constitution by not “verifying” in-person absentee and mail-in ballot applications unless there is a “*bona fide* objection” to the voter’s qualifications (*i.e.*, does Secretary Boockvar’s January 2020 guidance regarding objections to such applications violate the Constitution).
- (9) Whether Defendants violate the Constitution through uneven approval and verification of in-person absentee and mail-in ballot applications.
- (10) Whether, as applied to the facts of this case, Pennsylvania’s county residency requirement for poll watchers violates the Constitution.
- (11) Whether Secretary Boockvar’s guidance as to provisional, in-person voting by voters who have already obtained mail-in ballots violates the Constitution.
- (12) Whether Secretary Boockvar’s September 11, 2020, guidance regarding signature comparison violates the Constitution by treating in-person voting differently than mail-in voting.

Based on these asserted claims, the notices filed by all parties, Defendants’ pending motions to dismiss, and Plaintiffs’ pending motion for leave to amend their complaint, the Court finds as follows:

**Plaintiffs’ Motion for Leave to Amend.** As noted, Plaintiffs have filed a motion for leave to file a second amended complaint. The Federal Rules require the Court to grant leave to amend “freely when justice so requires.” *See Foman v. Davis*, 371 U.S. 178, 182 (1962) (“Rule 15(a) declares that leave to amend ‘shall be freely given when justice so requires’; this mandate is to be heeded.” (citation omitted)); Fed. R. Civ. P. 15(a). Of course, “freely” does not mean “unlimited.” And Defendants’ concerns about the prejudice that could result from essentially “starting over” at this late date are well-taken. But at the same time, the proposed complaint mostly just adds additional facts and attempts to refine the existing claims. The only new legal theory advanced in the

proposed second amended complaint concerns a claim regarding signature comparison during the canvassing of mail-in ballots.

Given that this is a narrow amendment, the Court believes that undue prejudice to Defendants can be avoided, and the case promptly resolved, by adoption of the disposition plan described in this order. As such, the Court will **GRANT** Plaintiffs' motion for leave to file their second amended complaint. Plaintiffs must do so today, **September 23, 2020**. All Defendants and Intervenors shall answer the complaint by **September 28, 2020**, irrespective of whether they intend to move to dismiss under Rule 12(b) in accordance with the schedule set by this order. In light of the forthcoming amended complaint, Defendants' pending motions to dismiss are hereby **DENIED** as moot.

**Remaining Discovery.** Given the discovery conducted to-date, Plaintiffs' request for an expedited hearing, and the need to resolve this case in a manner that will minimize prejudice to Defendants, ensure the proportionality of discovery, and provide the parties with certainty as far ahead of the general election as possible, the Court hereby **ORDERS** that the parties complete all remaining fact discovery by **September 29, 2020** and imposes the following limits on that discovery:

- (1) Initial disclosures and supplements to initial disclosures must be served.
- (2) No additional written discovery shall be served by any party. All responses to pending discovery requests must be submitted by the fact-discovery deadline.
- (3) No re-deposition of any witness shall be permitted, including regarding Plaintiffs' new signature-comparison claim. This includes Plaintiffs' request for a supplemental deposition of Secretary Boockvar, which is denied.
- (4) By the close of fact discovery and without the need for any formal discovery request, the parties shall produce any operative written signature-

comparison guidance and policies; any written procedures or instructions regarding signature comparison; and any documents that the parties intend to rely on pertaining to this claim or defenses to this claim.

- (5) The parties may conduct additional fact-witness depositions of witnesses who have not yet been deposed. However, the time limits for depositions previously ordered by the Court (*i.e.*, 30 hours for each side) remain in place, and the clock for those depositions will not be re-set. That means, for example, that if Plaintiffs have already used 25 hours of deposition time during the prior discovery period, they would only have 5 hours to conduct any remaining depositions in this case. The party taking the deposition must “keep the clock,” and recesses do not count against the time.
- (6) No expert discovery shall be permitted at this stage, except that the parties must exchange expert reports that they intend to rely on as part of their summary-judgment submissions; this must be accomplished by **September 30, 2020**.

**Abstention Regarding Drop-Box Notice and Other “Polling Place” Requirement Claims.** The Court will continue to abstain under *Pullman* as to Plaintiffs’ claim pertaining to the notice of drop box locations and, more generally, whether the “polling place” requirements under the Election Code apply to drop-box locations. As discussed in the Court’s prior opinion, this claim involves unsettled issues of state law. *See Trump for President, Inc. v. Boockvar*, — F.3d —, 2020 WL 4920952, at \*12 (W.D. Pa. Aug. 23, 2020) (Ranjan, J.) (“[T]here are two plausible, competing interpretations of the state statute[.]” (citation omitted)).

The fact that the Pennsylvania Supreme Court did not address this issue in its recent decision is immaterial to the abstention analysis. The propriety of *Pullman* abstention does not depend on the existence of parallel state-court proceedings. *See Stoe v. Flaherty*, 436 F.3d 209, 213 (3d Cir. 2006) (“First, the existence of an ongoing state

proceeding is not inherent in the nature of abstention. *Burford*, *Pullman*, and *Thibodaux* abstention, as well as other forms of abstention, apply without regard to the existence of an ongoing proceeding.” (citations omitted)).

Furthermore, Plaintiffs had several avenues to pursue a prompt interpretation of state law after this Court abstained, such as by filing their own state-court lawsuit or appealing this Court’s decision and asking the Third Circuit to certify the question to the Pennsylvania Supreme Court. *See Trump for President, Inc.*, 2020 WL 4920952, at \*18 (“But Plaintiffs have at least three options to obtain substantial relief through speedy resolution of the unsettled state-law questions.”). That they chose not to do either of these things does not mean this Court now must, or even should, deny the state courts the opportunity to resolve this unsettled state-law issue first. As a result, the Court’s basis for abstaining as to this claim remains unchanged.

**Dismissal of “Naked Ballot” and Third-Party Delivery Claims.** The Court finds that no Article III “case or controversy” remains with respect to the claims on which the Pennsylvania Supreme Court effectively ruled in Plaintiffs’ favor on state-law grounds (*e.g.*, illegality of third-party ballot delivery; excluding “naked ballots” submitted without inner-secrecy envelopes). There is no allegation that the Secretary or any other county plans to defy the Supreme Court now that it has conclusively interpreted Pennsylvania law. And even if there was such an allegation, it wouldn’t change the analysis because the Supreme Court’s decision means that state law now affords Plaintiffs a total, unambiguous remedy (*i.e.*, enforcement through state-court proceedings).

Whether couched in terms of ripeness, mootness, a lack of Article III injury-in-fact, or some other doctrine, “where intervening events remove the possibility of harm,” the Court “must not address the now-speculative controversy.” *Presbytery of N.J. of Orthodox Presbyterian Church v. Florio*, 40 F.3d 1454, 1463 (3d Cir. 1994) (cleaned up). All that’s left of these claims is the purely hypothetical possibility that state officials might violate undisputed state law. That’s not enough to justify declaratory or injunctive relief. *See, e.g., Battou v. Sec’y United States*

*Dep't of State*, 811 F. App'x 729, 733 (3d Cir. 2020) (plaintiffs “must show that the chance that the future event will occur is substantial and immediate enough to justify declaratory relief.” (cleaned up)); *Tait v. City Of Phila.*, 410 F. App'x 506, 509 (3d Cir. 2011) (“When a government body promises not to enforce a restriction against a plaintiff, or at all, there is no longer ‘a substantial threat of real harm’ because ‘intervening events have removed the possibility of harm.’” (cleaned up)).<sup>1</sup>

In other words, because there is no reason to believe Defendants plan to violate what they themselves now agree the law requires, Plaintiffs’ claims are premature and speculative. And now that state law has been settled in the direction of prohibiting the conduct Plaintiffs fear, it even seems unlikely that federal claims related to “naked ballots” or third-party “ballot harvesting” will ever materialize. The Court will therefore **DISMISS** these claims as falling outside of its Article III power to adjudicate. *See Cty. of Morris v. Nationalist Movement*, 273 F.3d 527, 533 (3d Cir. 2001) (“[T]he requirement that an action involve a live case or controversy extends through all phases of litigation, including appellate review.” (citations omitted)); *id.* at 534 (dismissing *sua sponte* a case as moot where case concerned “dispute[s] that might arise in connection with future Independence Day activities,” and even though “[b]oth parties urge[d] this court to reach the merits.”).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Indeed, an “injunction” against unlawful conduct already exists—it is “the law” itself, which of course may be enforced in state court.

<sup>2</sup> The Court’s decision to dismiss these claims is bolstered by bedrock principles of constitutional avoidance, which counsel against a speedy hearing on these constitutional claims. Indeed, the “long-standing principle of judicial restraint requires that courts avoid reaching constitutional questions in advance of the necessity of deciding them.” *Lyng v. Nw. Indian Cemetery Protective Ass’n*, 485 U.S. 439, 445 (1988) (citations omitted); *see also Ashwander v. Tennessee Valley Authority*, 297 U.S. 288, 347 (1936) (Brandeis, J., concurring) (“The Court will not pass upon a constitutional question, although properly presented by

**Procedure for Resolving Remaining Claims.**

Upon review of the parties' notices and Plaintiffs' remaining claims, it appears to the Court that the case is amenable to decision, at least in large part, on cross-motions for summary judgment. From the notices that were filed, many of Defendants' and Intervenors' merits and procedural arguments would benefit from a more fulsome evidentiary record—and thus would be more amenable for resolution on summary judgment. Likewise, Plaintiffs' request for declaratory relief appears to be amenable to resolution on summary judgment because, in the end, the claims focus largely on questions of law applied to what appear to be relatively undisputed facts as to what guidance applies and what election procedures are being implemented. Indeed, Plaintiffs have requested that the Court resolve the case through a Rule 57 hearing, which suggests that any factual issues here are relatively undisputed. *See* Fed. R. Civ. P. 57, Advisory Committee Notes (1937) (noting that a declaratory judgment action under Rule 57 “often involves only an issue of law on undisputed or relatively undisputed facts”).

Based on this, and to ensure a speedy, comprehensive, and final disposition of the remaining claims in this case, the Court directs the parties to file cross-motions for summary judgment presenting all arguments for dismissal or judgment under Fed. R. Civ. P. 56.<sup>3</sup> (These briefs will also serve to function as pre-hearing

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the record, if there is also present some other ground upon which the case may be disposed of[.]”).

There is no need for the Court to ponder whether hypothetical conduct by Defendants might violate Pennsylvania law and the Constitution when state law provides a now-unquestioned basis to enjoin county election officials from, for example, counting ballots not enclosed within inner-secrecy envelopes on election day.

<sup>3</sup> The Court would prefer that all Defendants and Intervenors raise their arguments for dismissal through these cross-motion for summary judgment, as opposed to motions to dismiss under Rule 12. That said, to the extent that any Defendant or Intervenor believes that a Rule 12

briefs in the event that a Rule 57 hearing remains necessary on some or all of Plaintiffs' claims, and thus the Court will not require the filing of any separate pre-hearing briefs). The Court will also tentatively schedule a Rule 57 hearing, which will go forward if certain of Plaintiffs' claims cannot be resolved at summary judgment. The following schedule and procedures shall apply:

- (1) The Court hereby directs the parties to file cross-motions in accordance with the following schedule:<sup>4</sup>
  - a. Plaintiffs shall file a motion and supporting brief on **October 1, 2020**. The motion must include a proposed order, which specifically identifies the declarations that Plaintiffs seek.
  - b. Defendants and Intervenors shall file motions for summary judgment/responses to Plaintiffs' motion by **October 3, 2020**.<sup>5</sup>
  - c. Plaintiffs shall file a response to Defendants' and Intervenors' motions/reply in support of their own motion by **October 4, 2020**.
  - d. Defendants and Intervenors shall file a reply in support of their motions by **October 5, 2020**.
- (2) There is no page limit applicable to the parties' cross-motions and briefs.

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motion is necessary or more appropriate, it should raise its Rule 12 arguments in these briefs.

<sup>4</sup> This briefing schedule is patterned after the four-brief briefing schedule for cross-appeals under Federal Rule of Appellate Procedure 28.1.

<sup>5</sup> Unless specified, all Defendants and Intervenors will be deemed to join in the briefs of all other Defendants and Intervenors—there is no need for any Defendant to file a separate “Joinder” or “Motion for Joinder.”



- (3) Insofar as the parties' move for summary judgment, the Court hereby excuses the requirements of Local Rule 56(a). Specifically, the parties need not file separate "concise statements" of material fact or responsive concise statements. Instead, the parties should include a "facts" section in their briefs setting forth a narrative of the facts that the filing party contends are undisputed and material, including any facts which for purposes of the summary judgment motions only are assumed to be true. The parties should cite to a particular pleading, deposition, answer to interrogatory, admission on file or other part of the record supporting each statement of fact in the brief.
- (4) The parties shall each separately prepare an appendix containing any portions of the record that the parties wish to direct to the Court's attention in their briefing. Any appendix that is filed must begin with a table of contents identifying the corresponding exhibit number for each document. When filing these appendices on ECF, the parties must file the table of contents as the "main document" and each document within the appendix must be filed as a separate "exhibit."
- (5) If necessary after the Court decides the parties' cross-motions, an evidentiary hearing under Rule 57 will be held on **October 13 and 14, 2020**, commencing at **9:30 a.m.** each day.

Along with this order, the Court will issue an amended scheduling order with all applicable deadlines, including additional hearing procedures and deadlines related to motions *in limine*, *Daubert* motions, exhibits, and witness declarations.

DATED this 23rd day of September, 2020.

BY THE COURT:

/s/ J. Nicholas Ranjan  
United States District Judge

# Exhibit B



**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA**

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No. 2:20-cv-966

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DONALD J. TRUMP FOR PRESIDENT, INC., *et al.*,

Plaintiffs

v.

KATHY BOOCKVAR, in her capacity as Secretary of the  
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, *et al.*,

Defendants

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**ORDER**

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In its earlier memorandum order [ECF 459], the Court neglected to mention one other claim that it abstained from deciding under *Pullman* but which was not addressed in the Pennsylvania Supreme Court's recent rulings. That is, Plaintiffs' claims regarding Secretary Boockvar's guidance that in-person mail-in ballots shall be accepted absent a "bona fide objection." As the Court explained in its abstention opinion [ECF 409, pp. 21-23], those claims, too, are based on an unsettled question of state law. Accordingly, for the same reasons that the Court will continue to abstain from deciding Plaintiffs' claims as to whether drop-boxes must comply with the notice and site requirements applicable to "polling places," *see* [ECF 459, pp. 5-6], the Court will also continue to abstain from deciding Plaintiffs' claims regarding verification of in-person, mail-in ballot applications.

In all other respects, the Court's earlier memorandum order [ECF 459] applies.

BY THE COURT:

/s/ J. Nicholas Ranjan  
United States District Judge

# Exhibit C

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA

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DONALD J. TRUMP FOR  
PRESIDENT, INC.; *et al.*,

Plaintiffs,

v.

KATHY BOOCKVAR; *et al.*,

Defendants.

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)  
) Civil Action No.: 2-20-CV-966  
)  
)  
) Judge J. Nicholas Ranjan  
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**PLAINTIFFS' MOTION FOR SUMMARY JUDGMENT**

Plaintiffs move for summary judgment pursuant to Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 56 and the Court's September 23, 2020 Memorandum Order. As outlined in the attached Memorandum In Support, Plaintiffs are entitled to declaratory and injunctive relief based upon the application of the law to the undisputed facts of this case. Accordingly, Plaintiffs' Motion should be granted.

This Motion includes a Proposed Order that specifically identifies the injunctive and declaratory relief Plaintiffs request from the Court.

Respectfully submitted,

PORTER WRIGHT MORRIS & ARTHUR LLP

Date: October 1, 2020

By: /s/ Ronald L. Hicks, Jr.

Ronald L. Hicks, Jr. (PA #49520)  
Jeremy A. Mercer (PA #86480)  
Carolyn B. McGee (PA #208815)  
Six PPG Place, Third Floor  
Pittsburgh, PA 15222  
(412) 235-4500 (Telephone)  
(412) 235-4510 (Fax)  
rhicks@porterwright.com  
jmercer@porterwright.com  
cmcgee@porterwright.com

and

Matthew E. Morgan (DC #989591)  
(admitted pro hac vice – ECF #10)  
Justin Clark (DC #499621)  
(admitted pro hac vice – ECF #31)  
Elections, LLC  
1000 Maine Ave., SW, 4th Floor  
Washington, DC 20224  
(202) 844-3812 (Telephone)  
matthew.morgan@electionlawllc.com  
justin.clark@electionlawllc.com

*Counsel for Plaintiffs*

**CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

I hereby certify that I caused a true and correct copy of the foregoing *Motion For Summary Judgment* to be filed on October 1, 2020, via ECF, which system will serve notice of same on all parties registered to receive same via the ECF system. For any party who has yet to enter an appearance, the undersigned certifies that a copy of the foregoing filing will be served on that party via First Class Mail and a copy sent to the County Solicitor, if known, via email or fax.

Respectfully submitted,

PORTER WRIGHT MORRIS & ARTHUR LLP

By: /s/ Ronald L. Hicks, Jr.

Ronald L. Hicks, Jr. (PA #49520)

Jeremy A. Mercer (PA #86480)

Carolyn B. McGee (PA #208815)

Six PPG Place, Third Floor

Pittsburgh, PA 15222

(412) 235-4500 (Telephone)

(412) 235-4510 (Fax)

rhicks@porterwright.com

jmercer@porterwright.com

cmcgee@porterwright.com

and

Matthew E. Morgan (DC #989591)

(admitted pro hac vice – ECF #10)

Justin Clark (DC #499621)

(admitted pro hac vice – ECF #31)

Elections, LLC

1000 Maine Ave., SW, 4th Floor

Washington, DC 20224

(202) 844-3812 (Telephone)

matthew.morgan@electionlawllc.com

justin.clark@electionlawllc.com

*Counsel for Plaintiffs*





infringement of Plaintiffs' fundamental right to vote and to a free and fair election. Accordingly, this Court orders, within no more than two (2) business days from the date of this Order, that:

a. Secretary Boockvar immediately withdraw her guidance and advise all Defendant county boards of elections that they are permitted, authorized, and required under the Pennsylvania Election Code to both reject absentee and mail-in ballot applications and to set aside and/or challenge voted absentee or mail-in ballots based on an analysis that the signature on the application or voted ballot does not match the signature on the voter's permanent registration record; and

b. All Defendant county boards of elections shall immediately comply with the procedures set forth in the Pennsylvania Election Code for both the approval and rejection of absentee and mail-in ballot applications, and the examination and verification of the voted absentee and mail-in ballots, as they relate to the comparison and analysis of the signatures on the applications or voted ballots to the voter's permanent registration record.

2. The guidance published by Defendant Kathy Boockvar, Secretary of the Commonwealth, on August 19, 2020, to the effect that county boards of elections may use drop boxes or mobile collection sites for the return and collection of absentee and mail-in ballots results is an unconstitutional infringement of Plaintiffs' fundamental right to vote and to a free and fair election. Accordingly, this Court orders, within no more than two (2) business days from the date of this Order, that:

a. Secretary Boockvar immediately withdraw her guidance and advise all Defendant county boards of elections that, at a minimum, they are not permitted or authorized to use unstaffed drop boxes for the return and collection of absentee and mail-in ballots;

b. All Defendant county boards of elections shall immediately cease using unstaffed drop boxes for the return and collection of absentee or mail-in ballots;

c. To the extent any county board of elections collected any absentee and mail-in ballots via unstaffed drop boxes prior to the entry of this Order, such county board of elections must segregate and not commingle or count those returned ballots with any other ballots cast in the upcoming November 3, 2020 General Election until further order of this Court; and

d. Until the Defendant county boards of elections agree upon, or the General Assembly provides, consistent and specific site selection guidelines and all Defendant county boards of elections agree to use staffed and secured drop boxes in compliance with those guidelines, the use of drop boxes and/or mobile collection sites by the Defendant county boards of elections is hereby enjoined.

3. The county residency restriction for watchers in Election Code Section 417, 25 P.S. § 2687(b), is unconstitutional as applied to the upcoming November 3, 2020 General Election. Accordingly, this Court orders that, within no more than two (2) business days from the date of this Order, Defendants immediately permit and authorize Plaintiffs to appoint watchers without regard to their county of residence. Also, Plaintiffs shall be permitted to have watchers present at all locations where voters are registering to vote, applying for absentee or mail-in ballots, voting absentee or mail-in ballots, and/or returning or collecting absentee or mail-in ballots, including without limitation any satellite or early voting sites established by any county board of elections.

4. Any claim and bill of costs for recovery of attorneys' fees and costs shall be filed within ten (10) days from the entry of this Order.

BY THE COURT:

---

J. Nicholas Ranjan, United States District Judge

13765461v1

# Exhibit D

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA**

DONALD J. TRUMP FOR PRESIDENT, INC.; <i>et al.</i> ,	)	
	)	<i>Electronically Filed</i>
Plaintiffs,	)	
	)	Civil Action
v.	)	
	)	No.: 2-20-CV-966
KATHY BOOCKVAR; <i>et al.</i> ,	)	
	)	Judge J. Nicholas Ranjan
Defendants.	)	

**PLAINTIFFS' MEMORANDUM OF LAW  
IN SUPPORT OF MOTION FOR SUMMARY JUDGMENT**

PORTER WRIGHT MORRIS & ARTHUR LLP  
Ronald L. Hicks, Jr. (PA #49520)  
Jeremy A. Mercer (PA #86480)  
Carolyn B. McGee (PA #208815)  
Six PPG Place, Third Floor  
Pittsburgh, PA 15222  
(412) 235-4500 (Telephone)  
(412) 235-4510 (Fax)  
rhicks@porterwright.com  
jmercer@porterwright.com  
cmcgee@porterwright.com

and

Matthew E. Morgan (DC #989591)  
(admitted pro hac vice – ECF #10)  
Justin Clark (DC #499621)  
(admitted pro hac vice – ECF #31)  
Elections, LLC  
1000 Maine Ave., SW, 4th Floor  
Washington, DC 20224  
(202) 844-3812 (Telephone)  
matthew.morgan@electionlawllc.com  
justin.clark@electionlawllc.com

*Counsel for Plaintiff*

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

INTRODUCTION ..... 1

STATEMENT OF FACTS ..... 7

I. THE PARTIES INCLUDE QUALIFIED ELECTORS AND REPRESENTATIVES ENFORCING THEIR RIGHT TO HAVE THE ELECTION DECIDED ON FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF FAIRNESS. .... 7

    A. The Plaintiffs Are a Presidential Candidate’s Campaign Committee, a National Political Party, Congressional Candidates, and Qualified Electors..... 7

    B. The Defendants Are the Secretary of the Commonwealth and all 67 County Boards of Elections. .... 8

II. THE UNITED STATES CONSTITUTION AND PENNSYLVANIA CONSTITUTION GUARANTEE FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS. .... 9

III. PENNSYLVANIA FAVORS IN-PERSON VOTING AND HAS ALWAYS HAD MANDATORY SAFEGUARDS FOR MAIL-IN BALLOTS. .... 10

IV. PENNSYLVANIA REFORMS ITS ELECTION LAW THROUGH ACT 77, BUT STILL REQUIRES SAFEGUARDS AGAINST VOTE DILUTION AND TO PROTECT THE EQUAL TREATMENT OF VOTERS. .... 11

V. THE SECRETARY’S SEPTEMBER 11 GUIDANCE IS CONTRARY TO THE ELECTION CODE AND WILL RESULT IN BALLOT FRAUD, VOTE DILUTION, AND UNEQUAL TREATMENT OF PENNSYLVANIA VOTERS. .... 15

VI. THE SEPTEMBER 28, 2020 GUIDANCE LIKEWISE IS CONTRARY TO THE ELECTION CODE AND WILL RESULT IN BALLOT FRAUD, VOTE DILUTION, AND UNEQUAL TREATMENT OF PENNSYLVANIA VOTERS. .... 15

VII. DEFENDANTS’ UNCONSTITUTIONAL JANUARY 10, 2020 GUIDANCE ON BALLOT DROP BOXES RESULTS IN ILLEGAL BALLOT COLLECTION AND COUNTING DURING THE PRIMARY ELECTION. .... 19

VIII. THE SECRETARY’S AUGUST 19 GUIDANCE DOES NOT RESOLVE THE CONSTITUTIONAL VIOLATIONS CREATED BY THE UNSTAFFED AND UNSECURED DROP BOXES. .... 23

IX. POLL WATCHERS SERVE AS A CRUCIAL CROSS-CHECK ON ELECTION ADMINISTRATION. .... 29

X. THE COUNTY RESIDENCY RESTRICTION ON POLL WATCHERS WILL RESULT IN UNEQUAL ELECTION OBSERVANCE AND DIFFERENT “RULES” FOR VOTERS..... 30

XI. DROP BOXES ALREADY CONTAIN INELIGIBLE CO-MINGLED BALLOTS AND PENNSYLVANIA VOTERS ARE FACING IRREPARABLE HARM IN THE FORM OF VOTE DILUTION AND UNEQUAL TREATMENT. .... 34

LEGAL STANDARD..... 34

LAW AND ARGUMENT ..... 35

I. NO GENUINE DISPUTE OF MATERIAL FACT EXISTS REGARDING PLAINTIFFS’ CLAIMS. ....	35
A. Under Both the United States and Pennsylvania Constitutions, the Right to Vote and to Free and Fair Elections Includes the Right to Have One’s Vote Fully Counted Without Dilution or Debasement. ....	36
B. Regulations Which Dilute or Debase the Right to Vote and to Free and Fair Elections Present a Federal Question and Are Subject to Strict Scrutiny. ....	38
C. Equal Protection Mandates that all Pennsylvania Voters Must Be Treated the Same or the Burden Is Severe. ....	40
D. Due Process also Demands that all Pennsylvania Voters Must Be Treated the Same or the Burden Is Severe. ....	43
II. THE SECRETARY’S SEPTEMBER 2020 GUIDANCE VIOLATES PLAINTIFFS’ FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT TO VOTE AND TO A FREE AND FAIR ELECTION. ....	45
A. Prohibiting Signature Verification for Absentee and Mail-in Applications and Ballots Dilutes the Vote and Violates Equal Protection.....	45
B. The September Guidance Creates an Unconstitutional Distinction Between Absentee, Mail-In, In-Person, and Provisional Voters, Violating Both Equal Protection and Substantive Due Process. ....	50
III. DEFENDANTS’ HAPHAZARD AND INCONSISTENT USE OF DROP BOXES AND MOBILE COLLECTION SITES VIOLATES PLAINTIFFS’ FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT TO VOTE AND TO A FREE AND FAIR ELECTION. ....	53
A. Unstaffed Drop Boxes and Mobile Collection Sites Dilute the Vote and Violate Equal Protection. ....	53
B. An Unfair Voting Scheme is Created by the Unequal Use of Drop Boxes and Mobile Collection Sites and Violates Due Process. ....	57
V. PLAINTIFFS ARE ENTITLED TO AN INJUNCTION TO PREVENT VOTE DILUTION AND FURTHER VIOLATIONS OF EQUAL PROTECTION AND DUE PROCESS. ....	68
CONCLUSION.....	70



**TABLE OF AUTHORITIES**

	<b>Page(s)</b>
<b>Cases</b>	
12(b) <i>Fleming Steel Co. v. Jacobs Eng'g Grp., Inc.</i> , 373 F. Supp. 3d 567 (W.D. Pa. 2019).....	48
<i>Absentee Ballots of November 4, 2003 Gen. Election</i> , 843 A.2d at 1224.....	13
<i>ACLU of N.M. v. Santillanes</i> , 546 F.3d 1313 (10th Cir. 2008) .....	50
<i>Ali v. Woodbridge Twp. Sch. Dist.</i> , 957 F.3d 174 (3d Cir. 2020).....	34
<i>Anderson v. Celebrezze</i> , 460 U.S. 780 (1983).....	39, 58, 61
<i>Anderson v. United States</i> , 417 U.S. 211 (1974).....	36, 53, 64
<i>Ariz. State Legislature v. Ariz. Indep. Redistricting Comm'n</i> , 576 U.S. 787 (2015).....	38
<i>Baker v. Carr</i> , 369 U.S. 186 (1962).....	36
<i>Benezet Consulting, LLC v. Boockvar</i> , 433 F. Supp. 3d 670 (M.D. Pa. 2020).....	39, 49
<i>Black v. McGuffage</i> , 209 F. Supp. 2d 889 (N.D. Ill. 2002).....	<i>passim</i>
<i>Burdick v. Takushi</i> , 504 U.S. 428 (1992).....	39, 53, 58
<i>Bush v. Gore</i> , 531 U.S. 98 (2000).....	<i>passim</i>
<i>In re Canvass of Absentee Ballots of Nov. 4, 2003 Gen. Election</i> , 843 A.2d at 1223 .....	10, 12, 54
<i>Canvass of Absentee Ballots of April 28, 1964 Primary Election</i> , 34 Pa. D. & C.2d 419 (Pa. Com. Pl. Phila. 1964).....	11

*Charfauros v. Bd. of Elections*,  
249 F.3d 941 (9th Cir. 2001) .....41

*City of Phila. v. Sessions*,  
309 F. Supp. 3d 289 .....69

*Cook v. Gralike*,  
531 U.S. 510 (2001).....9, 37

*Coverland-Green Spring Dairies, Inc. v. Pa. Milk Mktg. Bd.*,  
298 F.3d 201 (3d Cir. 2002).....34

*Crawford v. Marion Cnty. Election Bd.*,  
553 U.S. 181 (2008).....39, 63

*Crossey v. Boockvar*, 108 MM 2020,  
2020 Pa. LEXIS 4519 (Pa. Aug. 21, 2020).....61

*Curry v. Baker*,  
802 F.2d 1302 (11th Cir.1986) .....43

*Democracy N.C. v. N.C. State Bd. of Elections*,  
Civ. A. No. 20-cv-457, Order .....51

*Democratic Nat’l Comm. v. Bostelmann*, No. 20-cv-249-wmc,  
2020 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 172330 (W.D. Wis. Sep. 21, 2020) (enjoining  
Wisconsin requirement that election officials at polling places be “an elector  
of the county in which the municipality is located”) ..... *passim*

*Duncan v. Poythress*,  
657 F.2d 691 (5th Cir. 1981) .....43, 44

*Dunn v. Blumstein*,  
405 U.S. 330 (1972).....41

*eBay Inc. v. MercExchange, L.LC.*,  
547 U.S. 388 (2006).....34

*Exodus Refugee Immigration Inc. v. Pence*,  
165 F. Supp. 3d 718 (7th Cir. 2016) .....68

*Florida State Conference of N.A.A.C.P. v. Browning*,  
522 F.3d 1153 (11th Cir. 2008) .....43

*Gallagher v. N.Y. State Bd. of Elections*,  
2020 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 138219 (S.D.N.Y. Aug. 3, 2020).....57

*Gray v. Sanders*,  
372 U.S. 368 (1963).....41, 42, 51, 63

*Green Party v. Aichele*,  
89 F. Supp. 3d 723 (E.D. Pa. 2015) .....49

*Green v. City of Tucson*,  
340 F.3d 891 (9th Cir. 2003) .....39, 41

*Griffin v. Burns*,  
570 F.2d 1065 (1st Cir. 1978) (“If the election process itself reaches the point  
of patent and fundamental unfairness, a violation of the due process clause  
may be indicated and relief under § 1983 therefore in order.”).....43, 50

*Hadley v. Junior College District*,  
397 U.S. 50 (1968).....40

*Harper v. Virginia State Board of Elections*,  
383 U.S. 663 (1966).....35, 40

*League of Women Voters v. Commonwealth*,  
178 A.3d 737 (Pa. 2018).....37, 64

*Lemons v. Bradbury*,  
538 F.3d 1098 (9th Cir. 2008) .....39

*Marchioro v. Chaney*,  
442 U.S. 191 (1979).....59

*Marks v. Stinson*,  
19 F.3d 873 (3d Cir. 1994).....43

*Meyer v. Grant*,  
486 U.S. 414 (1988).....35

*Miller v. City of Bradford*, No. 17-268 Erie,  
2019 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 134248 (W.D. Pa. Aug. 9, 2019) .....15

*Moore v. Ogilvie*,  
394 U.S. 814 (1969).....40, 41

*Norman v. Reed*,  
502 U.S. 279 (1992).....39

*Obama for Am. v. Husted*,  
697 F.3d 423 (6th Cir. 2012) .....39

*Oburn v. Shapp*,  
521 F.2d 142 (3rd Cir. 1975) .....67

*Pa. Democratic Party v. Boockvar*, No. 133 MM 2020,  
2020 Pa. LEXIS 4872 (Pa., Sept. 17, 2020) ..... *passim*

*Pa. Voters Alliance, et al. v. Centre County, et al.*,  
Civ. A. No. 4:20-cv-1761 (M.D. Pa. 2020) .....61

*Patino v. City of Pasadena*, No. H-14-3241,  
2017 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 229191 (S.D. Tx. Jan 16, 2017).....68

*Patriot Party v. Allegheny Cty. Dep’t of Elections*,  
95 F.3d 253 (3d Cir. 1996).....58

*Pierce v. Allegheny County Bd. of Elections*,  
324 F. Supp. 2d 684 (W.D. Pa. 2003).....42, 51, 53, 67

*Prichard v. United States*,  
181 F.2d 326 (6th Cir.), *aff’d due to absence of quorum*, 339 U.S. 974 (1950).....36

*Project Vote v. Kelly*,  
805 F. Supp. 2d 152 (W.D. Pa. 2011).....9, 37, 46

*Purcell v. Gonzalez*,  
549 U.S. 1 (2006).....54

*Reynolds v. Sims*,  
377 U.S. 533 (1964)..... *passim*

*Roe v. Alabama*,  
43 F.3d 574 (11th Cir.1995) .....43

*Roth v. United States*,  
354 U.S. 476 (1957).....35

*Scheidementle v. Slippery Rock Univ. State Sys. of Higher Educ.*,  
470 F.3d 535 (3d Cir. 2006).....34

*Scutella v. Erie Cty. Prison*, No. 1:19-cv-245,  
2020 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 19318 (W.D. Pa. Feb. 5, 2020) .....69

*Smiley v. Holm*,  
285 U.S. 355 (1932).....38

*South v. Peters*,  
339 U.S. 276 (1950).....36

*Swartzwelder v. McNeilly*,  
297 F.3d 228 (3rd Cir. 2002) .....69

*TD Bank N.A. v. Hill*,  
928 F.3d 259 (3d Cir. 2019).....34

*Timmons v. Twin Cities Area New Party*,  
520 U.S. 351 (1997).....38

*Tiryak v. Jordan*,  
472 F. Supp. 822 (E.D. Pa. 1979) .....59, 63

*U.S. Term Limits, Inc. v. Thornton*,  
514 U.S. 779 (1995).....9, 37

*United States v. Classic*,  
313 U.S. 299 (1941).....36

*United States v. Marcavage*,  
609 F.3d 264 (3d Cir. 2010).....58

*Williams v. Rhodes*,  
393 U.S. 23 (1968).....38

*Winston v. Moore*,  
91 A. 520 (Pa. 1914) .....37

*Yick Wo v. Hopkins*,  
118 U.S. 356 (1886).....43

**Statutes**

25 P.S. § 2600 .....10

25 P.S. § 2601(t) .....8

25 P.S. § 2602(q) .....62

25 P.S. § 2602(w) & .....11

25 P.S. § 2641(a).....8

25 P.S. § 2642(f) .....9

25 P.S. § 2650(a) & (c) .....29

25 P.S. § 2687 ..... *passim*

25 P.S. § 2687(b) .....29, 66, 67

25 P.S. § 3050(a.3).....15, 17, 29, 46, 49

25 P.S. § 3145(a).....10

25 P.S. § 3146.1 .....11, 12

25 P.S. § 3146.2 .....16

25 P.S. § 3146.2(a)-(c).....16

25 P.S. § 3146.2(d) .....16

25 P.S. § 3146.2b .....45, 46

25 P.S. § 3146.2b(c).....16

25 P.S. §§ 3146.2b(d) .....49

25 P.S. § 3146.6(a).....54

25 P.S. §§ 3146.6(a).....12

25 P.S. § 3146.8(b) .....14

25 P.S. § 3146.8(g) .....13

25 P.S. § 3146.8(g)(1.1).....29

25 P.S. § 3146.8(g)(1.1) & g(3) .....14

25 P.S. 3146(g)(1.1) & (2) .....32

25 P.S. § 3146.8(g)(3).....13, 18

25 P.S. § 3146.8(g)(3) & g(4).....13, 45

25 P.S. § 3146.8(g)(4).....18

25 P.S. § 3146.8(g)(5)-(7).....13, 18, 19

25 P.S. §§ 3149.1-3149.9 (Supp. 1960).....10

25 P.S. §§ 3150.11–3150.12b .....12

25 P.S. § 3150.12 .....16

25 P.S. § 3150.12(b) .....16

25 P.S. § 3150.12b(a).....16

25 P.S. § 3150.14(a)-(b).....	13
25 P.S. § 3150.16(b)(1).....	13
<b>Other Authorities</b>	
Fed. R. Civ. P. 8(c) .....	48
Pa. Const .....	9
Pa. Const. art. II, § 1 .....	9
PA Const. art. VII, § 1 & art. I, § 28.....	9, 36
Pa. Const. art. VII, § 14 .....	10, 11
U.S. Const. amend. XIV, § 1 .....	40
U.S. Const. art. I, § 4, cl.1.....	9, 38
U.S. Const. Art. II, § 1, cl. 2 .....	38





and well-recognized election administration best practices, all in the hopes that come November 2020, she can help ensure the title of President is no longer used before the name Trump.

In a true effort to preserve and promote the integrity of the electoral process, to encourage the highest standards of ethics and competence in Pennsylvania's November General Election, and to minimize the possibility of election fraud, Plaintiffs sought intervention by this Court. Thus, they filed this action, a constitutional challenge to enjoin the unequal treatment of voters in Pennsylvania, enforce Pennsylvania's Election Code, and reduce the possibility of voter fraud. In this action, the Trump Campaign, the Republican National Committee, and other Plaintiffs—who range from elected representatives to private citizen poll watchers—ask this Court to uphold bedrock principles of democracy: all voters should be treated equally; all registered voters should be allowed to vote once; and all votes should be free from dilution by fraudulent votes.

The Defendants in this action are Pennsylvania Secretary of State Kathy Boockvar – in her official capacity – and the County Boards of Elections for each county in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Unconstitutional guidance memos issued by Secretary Boockvar, and implemented inconsistently by the remaining Defendants, along with the unjustified residency restrictions for poll watchers, jeopardize the equal treatment of the electorate in Pennsylvania and undermine the protections of the First and Fourteenth Amendment of the United States Constitution, as well as the Pennsylvania Constitution.

Specifically, Defendants' guidance memos eschew the Election Code's critical signature verification requirements as such are the sole way to ensure that absentee or mail-in voters actually are the qualified voters they purport to be. Additionally, Secretary Boockvar's guidance memos impermissibly create different classes of voters based upon both the manner in which a registered voter exercises his/her franchise and upon the county in which that voter votes. The Election Code

requires signature verification for all voters. But the guidance memos at issue require signature verification for in-person voters only (either those who vote a regular ballot or those who vote a provisional ballot), not for those who vote by mail (absentee or mail-in). Moreover, some Defendant Boards of Elections have said they will follow the illegal guidance while others have said they will not but will enforce the Election Code's signature comparison requirement. So, the upcoming November 3, 2020 General Election will see voters treated differently not only within a county but across the entire Commonwealth. The Constitution does not permit treating voters, or votes, differently in either way. The lack of signature verification will result in a violation of equal protection, vote dilution, and the promotion of fraudulent voting unless this Court enjoins the Defendants from implementing the illegal guidance. (App. Ex. 19, Riddlemoser Rep. at pp. 14-15.) The safeguards required by the Election Code and time-tested election administration best practices—which protect the sanctity of each citizen's vote and the integrity of the election process—cannot be ignored, yet that is exactly what Defendants intend to do.

Defendants also have implemented an unfair, haphazard, and uneven system for the collection of absentee or mail-in ballots via unstaffed and unsecured ballot drop boxes and/or via mobile collection sites. The use of unstaffed drop boxes and mobile collection sites poses a direct threat to the security of unknown hundreds (if not thousands) of ballots, placing those ballots in jeopardy of theft or destruction and making them vulnerable to manipulation. Defendants' experts acknowledge that the majority of drop boxes in Pennsylvania will be unstaffed and lack even video surveillance, despite simultaneously highlighting that the majority of states that use drop-boxes require at least one of the two methods for security reasons. Relying on an excuse of the alleged burden of employee costs, the Secretary of State has made an unconstitutional decision: she has sacrificed election security and integrity.

The lack of security for these drop-boxes means that if anyone attempted to drop off multiple ballots or to tamper with a ballot drop-box, no one would know. The lack of security also *ensures* that it will be easy to commit voter fraud. Defendants' experts do not even discuss the threat of mobile collection sites, thus conceding the true and real threat that such insecure areas pose to election security. As a result, the use of these drop boxes and mobile collection sites unconstitutionally permits a new means of vote dilution through ballot harvesting; no one will be watching these boxes or sites—which are designed purely as receptacles for significant numbers of ballots—nor will any Defendant take affirmative action to prevent anyone from depositing more than one ballot into the boxes.

The Defendants also lack consistent parameters regarding the location or use of the drop boxes and collection sites, either within a particular county (where will the boxes or sites be located and how are those locations determined) or across different counties (some counties are using unstaffed drop boxes and mobile collection site, some are using multiple unstaffed drop boxes, some are using just one unstaffed drop box, some are using no drop boxes at all). The lack of uniform measures regarding the use of, location of, and administration of unstaffed and unsecured ballot drop boxes and mobile collection sites violates the constitutional rights of the Plaintiffs. But more than that, these plans threaten to undermine the very integrity and defensibility of the November 3, 2020 General Election process and results unless this Court intervenes.

Finally, Defendants also intend to unconstitutionally enforce the Pennsylvania Election Code's restriction that a poll watcher only observe polls, pre-canvassing, and canvassing in his or her own county. Poll watchers fill multiple critical roles in ensuring the integrity of an election. They flag irregular ballots, help identify malfunctioning voting machines, call out possible voter fraud, and communicate with voters to help ensure voter turnout to the correct locations. Plaintiff

candidates all appear on the ballot in multiple counties and the Election Code must be applied uniformly across all 67 of Pennsylvania's counties, yet Pennsylvania's residency restriction on poll watchers prevents someone from watching polls across county lines. This needless and unjustified requirement poses considerable problems for Republicans, Democrats, and third-parties (such as the Libertarian Party, Constitution Party, and Communist Party), especially in counties or election districts where they are significantly outnumbered by the other party, even without the overlay of COVID-19's impact on poll watcher recruitment efforts.

The parties simply do not have enough registered voters in certain areas to send a poll watcher to observe elections at each polling location and are prevented from augmenting their numbers with poll watchers from another county. This means the interests of all parties, Republican, Democrat, and third-party, will not be represented equally through election observance. Critical oversight in some polling locations will be lost and pre-canvasses and/or canvasses will almost certainly go unobserved by one or more party. And despite knowing residents of Pennsylvania could staff all desired locations, Plaintiffs are being deprived of their ability to do so—which effectively deprives them of the ability to ensure the integrity of the election process and the results from those locations—due to the unjustifiable county-based residency restrictions. This is not equal treatment, especially for candidates who appear on the ballot in multiple counties.

Even if the parties did have enough in-county registered voters, there still will be unequal treatment because certain counties have testified that they will not allow poll watchers to participate in the pre-canvass and canvass of mail-in ballots. Other counties, such as Delaware County, intend to deploy “mobile sites” where the polling location will change from “day-to-day.” (App. Ex. 16, Hagan Dep. 26:19-27:8.)

Prompt action is needed. Election Day is 32 days away and the clock is ticking. Absentee and mail-in ballots have already been printed and sent out to voters and are being returned. Poll watchers are being recruited and the locations where they are needed are being determined. Counties are preparing for the election – some are planning to use ballot drop boxes, some are not, some are planning to use mobile ballot collection efforts, some are not. Among those counties using the boxes or mobile collection efforts, there is no uniform standard being applied. Moreover, some counties have said they will follow the Secretary’s guidance dispensing with the signature verification requirement of the Election Code, other counties have said they will ignore the guidance and follow the law. This is shaping up to be multiple elections in 67 counties under many different Election Codes. And the Secretary of the Commonwealth is fostering—if not championing—a divergent, incoherent, and inconsistent administration of the election process, all in hopes of defeating President Donald J. Trump. Defendants’ actions are untenable, indefensible, illegal, and unconstitutional.

To preserve the rights of millions of Pennsylvania registered voters, the constitutional rights of the Plaintiffs in this suit, and the integrity of this election, Plaintiffs seek three discrete remedies from this Court. *First*, Plaintiffs seek a declaration that Defendant Boockvar’s guidance memos dispensing with the signature verification of absentee and mail-in ballots are unconstitutional and ask this Court to enjoin enforcement thereof. *Second*, Plaintiffs seek a declaration that drop boxes and/or mobile collection sites for the return of absentee and mail-in ballots should be staffed, secured, and employed consistently within and across all 67 of Pennsylvania’s counties to prevent third-party delivery and the receipt of illegally cast ballots; use contrary thereto should be enjoined and any illegally cast ballots segregated and not counted. *Third*, Plaintiffs seek a declaration that the county residency restriction for watchers is

unconstitutional as applied to the upcoming General Election and an injunction preventing its application because of the burden on the Plaintiffs' constitutional rights will leave myriad locations unwatched and foster an environment ripe for voter fraud. Without the requested declaratory and injunctive relief, votes cast in the General Election in Pennsylvania will be illegal, unsecure, inaccurate, and indefensible and Pennsylvania voters will be treated unequally one from another. The undisputed facts show Plaintiffs are entitled to the requested relief as a matter of law.

### STATEMENT OF FACTS

#### I. THE PARTIES INCLUDE QUALIFIED ELECTORS AND REPRESENTATIVES ENFORCING THEIR RIGHT TO HAVE THE ELECTION DECIDED ON FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF FAIRNESS.

##### A. The Plaintiffs Are a Presidential Candidate's Campaign Committee, a National Political Party, Congressional Candidates, and Qualified Electors.

Plaintiffs include national elected officials, political committees, and private citizens, each seeking to enforce their state and federal constitutional rights. The elected officials include the Trump Campaign, (Compl., ¶ 8),<sup>2</sup> together with Congressmen Glenn Thompson (*id.* at ¶ 9), Mike Kelly (*id.* at ¶ 10), John Joyce (*id.* at ¶ 11), and Guy Reschenthaler (*id.* at ¶ 12). Each of the Congressmen are United States Representatives for Congressional Districts in Pennsylvania (App. Ex. 4, Decl. of Glen Thompson, ¶ 4; App. Ex. 6, Decl. of Guy Lorin Reschenthaler, ¶ 4; App. Ex. 5, Decl. of George Joseph Kelly, Jr., ¶ 5; App. Ex. 7, Decl. of John Patrick Joyce, ¶ 4.) The political committees are Donald J. Trump for President, Inc., which is the principal campaign committee for President Donald J. Trump, and the Republican National Committee, which works to promote the Republican party and its candidates in elections on behalf of over 30 million registered Republicans in the United States. (*Id.* at ¶ 13.)

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<sup>2</sup> References to the Complaint are to the Verified Second Amended and Supplemental Complaint filed on September 23, 2020 at ECF Docket Number 461.

The private citizens are Ms. Melanie Patterson (*id.* at ¶ 14) and Mr. Clayton Show (*Id.* at ¶ 15). Ms. Patterson and Mr. Show reside in Fayette County, Pennsylvania. App. Ex. 3, Aff. of Melanie Patterson ¶ 3.); (Compl. ¶¶ 14-15.) Ms. Patterson has always voted in person and intends to vote in-person at the upcoming General Election. (*Id.* at ¶ 4.) She wants to engage in poll watching outside of her home district. (*Id.* at ¶ 9.) Ms. Patterson has continued to reside in her election district for more than one election cycles and is a “qualified elector” as that term is defined in Election Code Section 102(t), 25 P.S. § 2601(t). (*Id.* at ¶ 5.) Ms. Patterson has been working for several months to recruit poll watchers on behalf of the Republican Party. (*Id.* at ¶ 10.)

**B. The Defendants Are the Secretary of the Commonwealth and all 67 County Boards of Elections.**

The Defendants include Kathy Boockvar, the current Pennsylvania Secretary of the Commonwealth, together with the County Board of Elections in each county in the Commonwealth. (Compl., at ¶¶ 16-17); (App. Ex. 9, Boockvar Dep. at 11:22-12:3.) Ms. Boockvar served as acting Secretary of the Commonwealth from January 2019 until the Pennsylvania Senate confirmed her appointment to the position in November 2019. (App. Ex. 9, Boockvar Dep. at 12:7-22.) In that position, Secretary Boockvar heads the Department of State, which does not issue any election guidance document without Secretary Boockvar’s knowledge and approval. (*Id.* at 12:23-13:9.)

Although the Commonwealth’s elections are governed by the Election Code, its elections are administered at the county level. Pennsylvania has 67 counties and, as of the June 2, 2020 Primary, has 9,128 voting precincts. (*See* App. Ex. 45, Department of State, Official Statewide Returns for June 2, 2020, available at <https://www.electionreturns.pa.gov/>.) Each of the counties has a County Board of Elections responsible for “exercising jurisdiction over the conduct of primaries and elections in such county.” 25 P.S. § 2641(a). The County Boards of Elections are

empowered to “make and issue such rules, regulations and instructions, **not inconsistent with law**, as they may deem necessary **for the guidance of voting machine custodians, elections officers and electors.**” 25 P.S. § 2642(f) (emphasis added).

## II. THE UNITED STATES CONSTITUTION AND PENNSYLVANIA CONSTITUTION GUARANTEE FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS.

Both the Constitution of the United States and Pennsylvania’s Constitution protect the right of qualified citizens to equal enjoyment in the right to vote. A state’s authority to regulate elections flows from the Constitution of the United States to the states. Project Vote v. Kelly, 805 F. Supp. 2d 152, 174 (W.D. Pa. 2011) (citing Cook v. Gralike, 531 U.S. 510, 522-23 (2001)); U.S. Term Limits, Inc. v. Thornton, 514 U.S. 779, 805 (1995) (In statewide elections involving federal candidates, “a State’s regulatory authority springs directly from the United States Constitution.”). The Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment guarantees that “one person’s vote must be counted equally with those of all other voters in a State[.]” Reynolds v. Sims, 377 U.S. 533, 560 (1964). The Pennsylvania Constitution bestows the right to vote upon qualified citizens and guarantees them equal protection in the enjoyment of that right. See Pa Const. art. VII, § 1 & art. I, § 28.

The Elections Clause of the U.S. Constitution gives the power to state legislatures to determine “[t]he Times, Places, and Manner of holding Elections for Senators and Representatives.” U.S. Const. art. I, § 4, cl.1. In Pennsylvania, the legislature is the General Assembly. See Pa. Const. art. II, § 1. Nothing in either the U.S. or Pennsylvania Constitution grants the General Assembly the authority to delegate to an executive officer its power to set the time, place, and manner of holding elections for Congress and the President. See generally U.S. Const.; Pa. Const.



**III. PENNSYLVANIA FAVORS IN-PERSON VOTING AND HAS ALWAYS HAD MANDATORY SAFEGUARDS FOR MAIL-IN BALLOTS.**

Before 1957, the Pennsylvania Constitution only allowed absentee voting by Pennsylvania residents engaged in actual military service (Art. 8, § 6 of the Pennsylvania constitution), and by bedridden or hospitalized veterans (Art 8 § 18 added to the Pennsylvania Constitution). In 1957, the Pennsylvania Constitution was further amended to permit absentee voting for those “qualified electors who may . . . be absent from the municipality of their residence because their duties, occupation or business require them to be elsewhere” or who would not attend a polling place because of illness, physical disability, religious holiday, or election duties on behalf of the county. Pa. Const. art. VII, § 14.

The Pennsylvania General Assembly enacted the Election Code to govern and regulate “general, municipal and primary elections, the nomination of candidates . . . and election contests” in Pennsylvania. 25 P.S. § 2600. In 1960, the General Assembly amended the Election Code to implement the 1957 amendments to the Pennsylvania Constitution regarding absentee voting. *See* The Act of January 8, 1960, entitled “An Act amending the Act of June 3, 1937,” P.L. 2135, 25 P.S. §§ 3149.1-3149.9 (Supp. 1960).

The Election Code amendments allowing for absentee voting also included mandatory safeguards that a qualified elector had to follow to cast an absentee ballot, including the requirement that—unless the elector had a physical disability—the elector had to mark and send in his or her own ballot, foreclosing third-party deliveries of mail-in ballots. *See In re Canvass of Absentee Ballots of Nov. 4, 2003 Gen. Election*, 843 A.23d 1223, 1226 (Pa. 2004) (“the Election Code does not provide for third-party deliveries of absentee ballots . . .”); 25 P.S. § 3145(a) (“the elector shall, in secret, proceed to mark the [mail-in] ballot”). This requirement for an elector to cast his or her own vote in the absence of a disability or extraordinary circumstances has always

been the law in Pennsylvania. Defendants agree the prohibition on ballot harvesting “is a long-time, well-established law in Pennsylvania.” (App. Ex. 9, Boockvar Dep. 88:20-89:15); *see also* (App. Ex. 10, Marks Dep. 70:1-3) (“If it is not the voter’s own ballot, then yes, I would not instruct that individual to insert that in the mailbox.”).

Pennsylvania courts have echoed the General Assembly’s preference for in-person voting, finding that “in the casting of an absentee ballot, the ordinary safeguards of a confrontation of the voter by the election officials and watchers for the respective parties and candidates at the polling place are absent.” *Canvass of Absentee Ballots on April 28, 1964 Primary Election*, 34 Pa. D. & C.2d 419, 420 (Pa. Com. Pl. Phila. 1964). For this reason, vote-by-mail was consistently regarded as “an extraordinary procedure in which the safeguards of the ordinary election process are absent.” *Id.* Defendants concede that in-person voting “has more elements of a chain of custody” than voting by mail. (App. Ex. 10, Marks Dep. at 42:5-18.)

#### **IV. PENNSYLVANIA REFORMS ITS ELECTION LAW THROUGH ACT 77, BUT STILL REQUIRES SAFEGUARDS AGAINST VOTE DILUTION AND TO PROTECT THE EQUAL TREATMENT OF VOTERS.**

Pennsylvania significantly expanded vote-by-mail<sup>3</sup> last year to implement “no excuse voting.” On October 31, 2019, the Pennsylvania General Assembly enacted Act 77, which expanded Pennsylvania’s acceptance of ballots by mail. Before Act 77, Pennsylvania law permitted only certain qualified absentee electors to vote by mail and required all other Pennsylvania voters to vote in-person. 25 P.S. § 3146.1. Act 77 changed this by creating two categories of voters who are permitted to vote by means other than voting in-person at a polling

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<sup>3</sup> Article VII, Section 14 of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania makes a distinction between a “qualified mail-in elector” and a “qualified absentee elector.” *See* 25 P.S. § 2602(w) & (z.6). Following the passage of “no excuse” voting, however, the terms “mail-in” and “absentee” often are used interchangeably to discuss the use of the United States Postal Service to deliver ballots to and from electors. For purposes of the remainder of this Memorandum, the terms “mail-in” and “absentee” are used interchangeably, unless otherwise noted.

location: absentee voters and mail-in voters. “Qualified absentee electors” include, among others, the traditional persons who would qualify for an absentee ballot under the 1957 amendments to the Pennsylvania Constitution—people who are unable to vote in person due to a physical disability or illness, people who expect to be absent from the municipality of their residence on Election Day due to work, and people who cannot vote in person because of observance of a religious holiday. 25 P.S. § 3146.1. Act 77 created a new category of “qualified mail-in electors,” which included all other registered voters, who may apply to submit their ballots by mail-in voting, without providing a justification. This is referred to in Act 77 as “no-excuse voting.” 25 P.S. §§ 3150.11–3150.12b.

Act 77 represented bipartisan reform. The Pennsylvania House of Representatives passed Act 77 on a bipartisan majority vote of 138-61, and the Act passed the Pennsylvania Senate on a bipartisan majority vote of 35-14. *See* Pennsylvania General Assembly, Senate Bill 421; Regular Session 2019-2020, [https://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/billinfo/bill\\_history.cfm?year=2019&sind=0&body=S&type=B&bn=421](https://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/billinfo/bill_history.cfm?year=2019&sind=0&body=S&type=B&bn=421).) Governor Wolf then signed Act 77 into law. (*Id.*)

Act 77’s reforms were not made in a vacuum, however. Similar to earlier absentee voting, Act 77 included mandatory procedures and requirements for verifying mail-in ballots. Act 77 retains the requirement that “the [non-disabled] elector shall send [his or her ballot] by mail, postage, except where franked, or deliver it in person to [the] county board of elections” in order for the ballot to be properly cast under Act 77. *See* 25 P.S. §§ 3146.6(a) & 3150.16(a). In this way, Act 77 bars “ballot harvesting” because the qualified elector, him- or herself, must send in the ballots. *See also* 25 P.S. §§ 3146.6(a) & 3150.16(a); *Pa. Democratic Party v. Boockvar*, No. 133 MM 2020, 2020 Pa. LEXIS 4872, \*70 (Pa., Sept. 17, 2020). This prohibition on third-party voting is mandatory, and ballots cast illegally by non-disabled third parties are void. *See*

Ballots of Nov. 4, 2003 Gen. Election, 843 A.2d at 1234 (“We hold that Section 3146.6(a)’s ‘in person’ delivery requirement is mandatory, and the absentee ballots . . . delivered in contravention of this mandatory provision are void.”)

An elector who requests a mail-in ballot may only vote a provisional ballot at the polling place on Election Day, unless the elector remits the unvoted mail-in ballot and the envelope containing the declaration of the elector to the judge of elections to be spoiled and the elector signs a statement under penalties of perjury that he or she has not voted the mail-in ballot. *See* 25 P.S. § 3150.16(b)(2) & (3). Act 77 expressly prohibits an elector from casting both a mail-in ballot and an in-person ballot, providing that “[a]ny elector who receives and votes a mail-in ballot . . . shall not be eligible to vote at a polling place on election day.” 25 P.S. § 3150.16(b)(1).

Act 77 requires that all mail-in ballots have a completed verification on the external envelope that contains the inner secrecy envelope, which contains the ballot. 25 P.S. § 3150.14(a)-(b). If that certification, which includes a signature line for the voter, is not completed in full, the ballot is to be set aside and not counted. *See* 25 P.S. § 3146.8(g). Act 77 also provides that the sole method to verify a ballot has been submitted by the actual voter named on the external envelope is a comparison of the signature on the external envelope to the voter’s permanent record on file. *See* 25 P.S. § 3146.8(g)(3). If the signature does not match, the voter is to be contacted and provided an opportunity to prove his or her identity. 25 P.S. § 3146.8(g)(5)-(7). If the county Board of Elections is “satisfied that the declaration is sufficient and the information contained in the ‘Registered Absentee and Mail-In Voters File,’ the absentee voters’ list and/or the ‘Military Veterans and Emergency Civilians Absentee Voters File’ verifies his right to vote,” the ballot contained therein “shall be counted and included with the returns of the applicable election district[.]” 25 P.S. § 3146.8(g)(3) & g(4).

Mail-in ballots may be pre-canvassed beginning at 7 a.m. on Election Day, with the canvass beginning after polls close on Election Day. (Compl. ¶ 37, citing 25 P.S. § 3146.8(g)(1.1) & g(3)). It is at the pre-canvass or canvass where county Boards of Elections are required to undertake the aforementioned signature comparison. According to the Department of State, mailing envelopes containing the secrecy envelope and ballot can be opened and the secrecy envelope removed and separated from that outer envelope, which contains the signature. (App. Ex. 10, Marks Dep. Ex. 36 at 3.) Then, the Department of State allows for those secrecy envelopes to be opened and the ballots processed. *Id.* (“If the pre-canvass process is not complete prior to the time the polls close, the scanning process may continue until complete ...”). “The only distinction between a pre-canvass and a canvass meeting is that election results generated during a canvass meeting may be made public.” *Id.* The Election Code permits poll watchers to be present whenever either (i) mail-in ballots are opened and (ii) when the ballots are counted and recorded. *See* 25 P.S. § 3146.8(b). Thus, poll watchers are permitted to attend both the pre-canvass and the canvass meetings to help ensure election integrity and to be able to challenge the signatures on any of the mail-in ballot envelopes before they are opened.

The 2020 Primary Elections proved to be the first significant test of Act 77. According to Secretary Boockvar, before the enactment of Act 77 in 2016, Pennsylvania “had a total of 84,000 absentee ballots statewide cast.” (App. Ex. 9, Boockvar Dep. 189:4-16). In the 2020 Primary Election, the number ballooned to “nearly 1.5 million mail-in and absentee ballots.” (*Id.* at 189:4-18.) Pennsylvania election officials knew that mail-in voting would expand following Act 77’s passage. Before the Primary Election, Pennsylvania election officials estimated that as many as two million voters would apply to vote by mail. (App. Ex. 8, Marks Decl. ¶ 34.)

**V. THE SECRETARY'S SEPTEMBER 11 GUIDANCE IS CONTRARY TO THE ELECTION CODE AND WILL RESULT IN BALLOT FRAUD, VOTE DILUTION, AND UNEQUAL TREATMENT OF PENNSYLVANIA VOTERS.**

The Pennsylvania Department of State issued a guidance document on September 11, 2020, entitled "GUIDANCE CONCERNING EXAMINATION OF ABSENTEE AND MAIL-IN BALLOT RETURN ENVELOPES." (App. Ex. 24.) In the September 11 guidance, the Secretary states that the "Pennsylvania Election Code does not authorize the county board of elections to set aside returned absentee or mail-in ballots based solely upon signature analysis by the county board of elections." (*Id.* at 3.) The Secretary does not explain how she arrived at that conclusion given the Election Code's requirement for signature verification of qualified electors. Nor does the Secretary explain why an in-person voter can be challenged based solely upon his or her signature but a mail-in ballot voter cannot. (*Compare* 25 P.S. §§ 3050-(a.3)(1)-(2)(2020); *with* App. Ex. 24, p.3.)

**VI. THE SEPTEMBER 28, 2020 GUIDANCE LIKEWISE IS CONTRARY TO THE ELECTION CODE AND WILL RESULT IN BALLOT FRAUD, VOTE DILUTION, AND UNEQUAL TREATMENT OF PENNSYLVANIA VOTERS.**

The Department of State issued an additional deficient guidance related to the issue of signature verification on September 28, 2020 related to the issue of signature verification titled "GUIDANCE CONCERNING CIVILIAN ABSENTEE AND MAIL-IN BALLOT PROCEDURES." (App. Ex. 25.)<sup>4</sup> This most recent guidance provides additional information

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<sup>4</sup> Judicial notice of the Secretary's September 28, 2020 guidance memo is appropriate. *See Miller v. City of Bradford*, No. 17-268 Erie, 2019 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 134248, at \*7 n.4 (W.D. Pa. Aug. 9, 2019) ("The Court takes judicial notice of these provisions, as they constitute matters of public record."). With her issuance of the September 28 guidance memo, the Secretary did remedy one claim that Plaintiffs and this Court identified as claims remaining after the Pennsylvania Supreme Court's decision. Specifically, Plaintiffs still were pursuing a claim related to the Secretary's guidance memo requiring mail-in voters to vote only by provisional ballot, even if they were to spoil their ballot at the polling location. *See, e.g.*, ECF # 459, p.3, #11. But, in the September 28 guidance memo, the Secretary corrected that earlier guidance to conform to the Election Code and states that any mail-in voter who spoils his/her ballot and the accompanying envelopes and signs

about the acceptance and scrutiny of mail-in and absentee ballots for the upcoming General Election and not only fails to remedy but doubles down on the illegal September 11 guidance forbidding signature verification as a reason to set aside both mail-in ballots and ballot applications as well. In this September 28 guidance memo, the Secretary proclaims that “[t]he Election Code does not permit county election officials to reject applications or voted ballots based solely on signature analysis.” (*Id.*, at p. 9.) She then goes even further and pronounces that “[n]o challenges may be made to mail-in and absentee ballots at any time based on signature analysis.” (*Id.*)

As to ballot applications, the Election Code requires that a person applying for both an absentee and a mail-in ballot complete a form with various information and sign the application. *See* 25 P.S. § 3146.2(a)-(c); 25 P.S. § 3146.2(d) (the absentee ballot application “shall be signed by the applicant”); 25 P.S. § 3150.12(b); 25 P.S. § 3146.2(d) (except has not relevant here, “the application [for a mail-in ballot] shall be signed by the applicant.”). Other than the signature requirement, there is no other proof of identification required to be submitted with the ballot applications. *See generally* 25 P.S. § 3146.2; 25 P.S. § 3150.12. When those ballots are being reviewed for approval, the board of elections is required to both (i) compare the information provided on the application with the information contained on the voter’s permanent card and (ii) verify the proof of identification. *See* 25 P.S. § 3146.2b(c); 25 P.S. § 3150.12b(a). The board of elections, then, is required to engage in signature verification as the only means available to it to verify the identity of the voter. *See* (App. Ex. 19, Riddlemoser Rep. at pp. 10-15) (outlining importance of signature verification process in Pennsylvania).

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a declaration that they did not vote by mail-in ballot will be allowed to vote a regular ballot. *See* (App. Ex. 25, §§ 4.3, 5.1.) Therefore, Plaintiffs agree to withdraw that claim from those that still are being pursued.

As to signature analysis of the returned ballots, except for first-time voters, the *only* basis under the Election Code for the identification of any voter, whether voting in-person or by absentee or mail-ballot, is an analysis of the voter's signature. Before one can cast a regular ballot at a polling place on Election Day, that voter is subject to the following signature comparison and challenge process:

(1) All electors, including any elector that shows proof of identification pursuant to subsection (a), shall subsequently sign a voter's certificate in blue, black or blue-black ink with a fountain pen or ball point pen, and, unless he is a State or Federal employe [*sic*] who has registered under any registration act without declaring his residence by street and number, he shall insert his address therein, and hand the same to the election officer in charge of the district register.

(2) Such election officer shall thereupon announce the elector's name so that it may be heard by all members of the election board and by all watchers present in the polling place and **shall compare the elector's signature on his voter's certificate with his signature in the district register**. If, upon such comparison, the signature upon the voter's certificate appears to be genuine, the elector who has signed the certificate shall, if otherwise qualified, be permitted to vote: Provided, That **if the signature on the voter's certificate, as compared with the signature as recorded in the district register, shall not be deemed authentic by any of the election officers, such elector shall not be denied the right to vote for that reason, but shall be considered challenged as to identity and required to make the affidavit and produce the evidence as provided in subsection (d) of this section.**

25 P.S. § 3050(a.3)(1) – (2)(2020) (emphasis added). Mail-in voters face this same requirement under the Election Code. Pursuant to Section 1308(g)(3)-(7):

When the county board meets to pre-canvass or canvass absentee ballots and mail-in ballots..., the board shall examine the declaration on the envelope of each ballot not set aside under subsection (d) and **shall compare the information thereon with that contained in the 'Registered Absentee and Mail-in Voters File,' the absentee voters' list and/or the 'Military Veterans and Emergency Civilians Absentee Voters File,' whichever is applicable. If the county board has verified the proof of**



**identification as required under this act** and is satisfied that the declaration is sufficient and the information contained in the ‘Registered Absentee and Mail-in Voters File,’ the absentee voters’ list and/or the ‘Military Veterans and Emergency Civilians Absentee Voters File’ verifies his right to vote, the county board shall provide a list of the names of electors whose absentee ballots or mail-in ballots are to be pre-canvassed or canvassed.

25 P.S. § 3146.8(g)(3) (emphasis added). Only those ballots “that have been verified under paragraph (3) shall be counted . . .” 25 P.S. § 3146.8(g)(4). If a ballot is not counted because of a lack of a genuine signature, it is considered “challenged” and subject to the notice and hearing provisions under Section 1308(g)(5)-(7). 25 P.S. § 3146.8(g)(5)-(7).

Therefore, any county Board of Elections who follows the Secretary’s September 28 guidance memo by ignoring the signature comparison on voter applications will violate the Election Code, treat in-person applicants differently than applicants who apply by mail, and will open the door to voter fraud.<sup>5</sup> And any county Board of Elections who follows the Secretary’s September 10 and 28 guidance memos by ignoring the signature comparison on returned ballots will violate the Election Code and treat in-person voters such as Plaintiff Patterson differently based solely upon the manner in which they choose to exercise their franchise.

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<sup>5</sup> This would not be the first time the Secretary has issued an election guidance memo that was contrary to the dictates of the Election Code, opened the door to fraud, and was not followed by all counties. Prior to the Primary Election, the Secretary issued a guidance memo telling counties that they were to count, and not treat as void, mail-in ballots that were returned without an inner secrecy envelope. (App. Ex 54, Marks Email to Counties; App. Ex. 10, Marks Dep. 231:1-5.) Recently, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court determined that any mail-in ballots returned without the inner secrecy envelope were invalid ballots and should not be counted. *Pa. Democratic Party v. Boockvar*, 2020 Pa. LEXIS 4872, \*73-74. Fortunately, during the Primary Election, the Lawrence County Board of Elections declined to follow the Secretary’s guidance on that issue and refused to count 400+ mail-in ballots that were returned without their inner secrecy envelope. (App. Ex. 9, Boockvar Dep. 141:22-142:6.) Of the 17,862 ballots cast in Lawrence County during the primary, 8,003 were mail-in ballots. (App. Ex. 53, Act 35 Report at 10–11; App. Ex. 9, Boockvar Dep. 227:23–228:10.) The fact that 5.5% of mail-in ballots lacked an inner secrecy envelope raises the suspicion of voter fraud on a massive scale – fraud that would have been ignored had the Secretary’s guidance memo been followed.

The Secretary's guidance also will result in the different treatment of voter applicants and mail-in voters across the Commonwealth as not all counties will be following the September 11 and 28 guidance memos. (App. Ex. 1, Summary of County Interrogatory Responses.) Therefore, those voters who apply by mail and those mail-in voters in certain counties will be given preferential treatment not only over in-person applicants and voters throughout the Commonwealth but other mail-in applicants and voters in other counties. For example, numerous counties have responded to discovery in this case saying they **will follow** the Secretary's September 11 and 28 guidance memos and not engage in signature verification. (*Id.*) But, many counties have responded that they **will not follow** the Secretary's September 10 and 28 guidance memos, opting instead to follow the Election Code's signature verification requirement. (*Id.*) For example, in District 16, Representative Kelly's district, Bedford County has responded that it will follow the Secretary's guidance memos; Franklin County has responded that it will not; and Blair County has responded that it is still evaluating whether to follow the guidance. (*Id.*)

When asked in a deposition why she issued the September guidance memos, the Secretary replied "Well, you've sued us and -- or I should say, your client sued us, and it raised this issue, as you may recall, and asked permission to file an amended complaint." (App. Ex. 12, Boockvar 30(b)(6) Depo. 106:1-4.) Plainly, the Secretary's issuance of the September 10 and 28 guidance memos, which are contrary to the Election Code are not based on a compelling state interest and, will result in the violation of Plaintiffs' equal protection rights.

**VII. DEFENDANTS' UNCONSTITUTIONAL JANUARY 10, 2020 GUIDANCE ON BALLOT DROP BOXES RESULTS IN ILLEGAL BALLOT COLLECTION AND COUNTING DURING THE PRIMARY ELECTION.**

In advance of the 2020 Primary Election, on or about January 10, 2020, the Pennsylvania Department of State published and disseminated to every County Election Board an official guidance document entitled "Pennsylvania Applications and Balloting Guidance: Mail-in

Absentee Ballots and Voter Registration Changes.” (App. Ex. 9, Boockvar Dep. 154:1-18; App. Ex. 21, Boockvar Dep. Ex. 14, January 10, 2020 Pennsylvania Applications and Balloting Guidance: Mail-in and Absentee Ballots and Voter Registration Changes.) The January 10 guidance purported to “define both what is required by Act 77 and what is permissible under Act 77 or some other portions of the Election Code.” (App. Ex. 14 at 2.)

The January 10 guidance suggested, for the first time, the use of drop boxes or other collection locations for collecting mail-in ballots. (App. Ex. 9, Boockvar Dep. 183:16-184:2.) Under the headings “Optional County Services” and “Collection of Mail-In and Absentee Ballots,” the January 10 guidance stated that “[a]s allowed under existing law, county election boards may provide for mail-in and absentee application processing and balloting at more than one [county elections office (CEO)] located within county borders.” (App. Ex. 21, January 10 Guidance at 4.) The January 10 guidance also advised that “[w]hen choosing a location for the CEO, counties should consider, at a minimum, . . . choos[ing] locations that serve heavily populated urban/suburban areas, as well as rural areas, [including] near heavy traffic areas such as commercial corridors, large residential areas, major employers, and public transportation routes.” (*Id.* at 4–5.)

But nothing in the January 10 guidance indicated counties needed to make certain to prohibit third-party delivery of mail in ballots from someone other than a non-disabled qualified elector. (App. Ex. 9, Boockvar Dep. 189:4-13.) And although the guidance notes the importance of the County Election Boards to follow undefined “best practices” concerning the use of a “secure ballot collection receptacle,” it did not provide any explanation for what would qualify as those best practices. (App. Ex. 21, January 10 Guidance at 5.) Instead, it directed County Election

Boards to “contact the Department for guidance on factors, best practices, and examples of these receptacles.” (*Id.* at 6.)

Some, but not all, counties did contact the Department of State regarding best practices for drop boxes. Ms. Christine Ruther of Delaware County notes the Department of State informed her there were a list of “conditions” to the placement of drop boxes, including “the boxes had to be locked and under supervision at all times, this means they have to be at the polling places under the eyes of the Election Board.” (App. Ex. 27, May 18, 2020 Email from M. William.) But this list of conditions appears nowhere in the January 10 guidance (or any other guidance, to-date, issued by the Pennsylvania Department of State; nor was it produced in this litigation) and there is no evidence suggesting that these “conditions” were provided to all 67 County Boards of Elections.

Communications between counties and the state following the January 10 guidance confirm that the guidance was confusing. In one April 9 email exchange in Bedford County, the representative notes “I don’t have any information on Drop Boxes that are used for ballots. I have never heard of anything like that before.” (App. Ex. 26, April 9 Emails Between Adam Yake and Debra Brown.) The recipient agreed, noting they were “just not sure if it is feasible or if we are setting ourselves up for lots of problems.” (*Id.*)

Defendant Boockvar made no efforts to ensure that all 67 of Pennsylvania’s counties actually followed the January 10 guidance. Nor did she work to ensure that those counties that did follow the guidance did so consistently. Instead of helping to ensure voter integrity, as explained by Mr. Greg S. Riddlemoser, the Director of Elections and General Registrar in Stafford County, Virginia, changes like the ones made by Secretary Boockvar “invite lack of uniformity, sow confusion, and erode voter confidence.” (App. Ex. 19, Riddlemoser Rep. at p. 6.)

On June 2, 2020, Pennsylvania held its Primary Election, which was the first election that followed the enactment of Act 77 and its no-excuse mail-in ballot alternative. Secretary Boockvar's January Guidance resulted in actual harm to election process on several levels.

First, only certain counties followed the guidance and employed drop boxes. Mr. Johnathan Marks, Deputy Secretary for Elections and Commissions at the Pennsylvania Department of State, testified that approximately twenty County Election Boards followed the January 10 guidelines to use drop boxes. (App. Ex. 10, Marks Dep. 210:11-18; App. Ex. 29, Marks Dep. Ex. 31.) Deputy Secretary Marks confirmed that the January 10 guidance resulted in different interpretations among the counties concerning the use of drop boxes. (App. Ex. 10, Marks Dep. 184:2-7) ("Yes. That is my understanding that different counties had different interpretations of that."). Yet, the Secretary did nothing to prevent the unequal distribution of ballot drop boxes within or among the various counties and allowed voters to return mail-in ballots to unstaffed, unmonitored, and unsecured locations, such as shopping centers (App. Ex. 10, Marks Dep. 206:20-25; App. Ex. 29), parking lots (App. Ex. 10, Marks Dep. 201:24-202:25; App. Ex. 29), fairgrounds, parks (App. Ex. 10, Marks Dep. 205:21-24), retirement homes, college campuses (App. Ex. 29), fire halls (App. Ex. 10, Marks Dep. 205:17-19, App. Ex. 29), municipal government buildings (App. Ex. 10, Marks Dep. 203:23-205:6; App. Ex. 29), and elected officials' offices (App. Ex. 10, Marks Dep. 208:18-20; App. Ex. 31). The drop boxes were accessible during differing and irregular times, and some were accessible "24/7." (App. Ex. 31.)<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> In addition to the unstaffed and unsecured nature of the drop boxes, the placement of many of them also likely was illegal. Deputy Secretary Marks confirmed his understanding that elected officials' offices could not serve as a polling place. (App. Ex. 10, Marks Dep. 208:21-209:8.) Secretary Boockvar likewise disapproved of this approach to drop box placement: "I would prefer not to have drop boxes in elected officials' facilities or union halls, preferably, that is my opinion." (App. Ex. 9, Boockvar Dep. 204:20-25.)

These were not the only issues with Defendants' implementation of mail-in voting during the 2020 Primary Election. The use of unmonitored and unsecured drop boxes led to incidences of illegal voting, specifically ballot harvesting.<sup>7</sup> (See, e.g. App. Ex. 19; Ex. D to Mr. Riddlemoser's Expert Report (containing copies of photographs and video stills demonstrating ballot harvesting in Philadelphia and Elk Counties during the Primary); App. Ex. 28, Email from Lee Soltysiak ("Security was instructed before the boxes were in use on Saturday to instruct voters they can only drop off their own ballot. They have turned people away yesterday and today without incident who had ballots other than their own."))

In sum, the January 10 guidance did not provide equal treatment for mail-in voters during Pennsylvania's 2020 Primary Election. Deputy Secretary Marks conceded that there were "learned lessons from the primary," they received "concerns expressed . . . by county elected directors" and the Department of State would be "updating our guidance accordingly." (App. Ex. 10, Marks Dep. 188:6-22.)

#### **VIII. THE SECRETARY'S AUGUST 19 GUIDANCE DOES NOT RESOLVE THE CONSTITUTIONAL VIOLATIONS CREATED BY THE UNSTAFFED AND UNSECURED DROP BOXES.**

The Pennsylvania Department of State published its promised updated guidance on August 19, 2020. (App. Ex. 23, August 19, 2020, Pennsylvania Absentee and Mail-in Ballot Return Guidance.) In the interim, though, the Elections Reform Committee of the County Commissioners

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<sup>7</sup> Discovery revealed that ballot harvesting occurred in other respects during the Primary Election as well. For example, in Mercer County, a care home administrator delivered nine ballots on Election Day because the electors "had failed to timely mail the ballots." (App. Ex. 53, Act 35 Report. at 39.) Additionally, "[t]here were several, at least one or two counties who said that they realized some of their staff had wrongly accepted ballots from spouses of voters." (App. Ex. 9, Boockvar Dep. 92:4-10.) Additionally, Montour County confirmed in its discovery responses that it "allowed a nursing home representative to both pick up applications and deliver voted ballots." (App. Ex. 10, Marks Dep. 60:3-61:10; App. Ex. 49, Excerpt of Responses by Montour County.) Montour County also allowed spouses to cast mail-in and/or absentee votes, contrary to the provisions of the Election Code. (*Id.*)

Association of Pennsylvania held a virtual meeting, in which various concerns were raised regarding the security of ballot drop boxes, including how to locate and secure those drop boxes. (App. Ex. 10, Marks Dep. 186:9-188:5; App. Ex. 55, Marks Dep. Ex. 28.) During that July 14, 2020, meeting, Forrest Lehman, the Director of Elections for Lycoming County, raised specific concerns regarding the lack of security at ballot drop boxes.

How is a county to [*sic*] supposed to keep a drop box secure but also accessible by voters? A ballot drop box could be a target for political sabotage or mean-spirited vandalism. What if someone pours water into a drop box and ruins the ballots inside? Bodily fluids? Gasoline and a lit match? Hardly matters if the box is monitored by a camera – even if you catch the crime on tape and prosecute the perpetrator, those ballots are gone. What about the problem of where to locate them, geographical/political/racial representation, urban vs. rural, etc.

(App. Ex. 55, Marks Dep. Ex. 28; App. Ex. 10, Marks Dep. 181:6-21; App. Ex. 19, Riddlemoser Report.) The August 19 guidance purports to answer the last question raised by Mr. Lehman but punts on the issue of ballot security.

On the issue of security, the August 19 guidance, entitled “Absentee and Mail-In Ballot Return Guidance,” provides a few considerations but fails to require the ballot drop boxes to be staffed.<sup>8</sup> Instead, the August 19 Guidance states that “[w]hen feasible, ballot return sites should be monitored by a video security surveillance system or an internal camera that can capture digital images and/or video.” (App. Ex. 23, August 19 Guidance at 6.) But the guidance provides no alternatives or guidance for when such video surveillance is not “feasible” at the drop box location. (*Id.*) And the guidance recognizes that Mr. Lehman’s concern about water or other liquid is a valid

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<sup>8</sup> This failure is even more perplexing given the Secretary’s “conditions” before the 2020 Primary Election that the boxes be “under supervision,” that is “under the eyes of” election watchers at all times. (App. Ex. 27, May 18, 2020 Email from M. William.)

concern when it states the boxes should be designed to “minimize the ability for liquid to be poured into the drop-box.” (*Id.* at 5.) Yet the guidance does not mandate that the box be staffed, which would prevent, not simply minimize, the ability for liquid to be poured into the box.<sup>9</sup>

Another benefit of having staffed drop boxes, which the August 19 guidance ignores, is the deterrent to ballot harvesting. As succinctly put by Ms. Kimberly Frey, the Elk County Director of Elections, without having a staffed drop box, there is no way to determine if a qualified elector delivers only his or her own ballot to the drop box:

**Q: What would your county election workers do if it is determined a ballot was improperly delivered by a third-party?**

**A:** I don’t know how we would know that.

**Q: So would you agree with me there is no way to prevent that with this drop box?**

**A:** That’s correct.

(App. Ex. 11, Frey Dep. 24:12-18; *see also* Riddlemoser Report App. Ex. 19.) Similarly, Philadelphia County’s Rule 30(b)(6) deponent Seth Bluestein, when asked if there “a way to prevent commingling of those illegal ballots with actually legally dropped ballots,” responded “[o]nce the egg is cracked, it can’t be unscrambled.” (App. Ex. 13, Bluestein Dep. 50:1-7.) Deputy Secretary Marks agreed that despite signage advising against it, “there is nothing that physically prevents someone from dropping off more than one” ballot. (App. Ex. 10, Marks Dep. 164:14-19.)

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<sup>9</sup> Defendants likely will attempt to discredit these concerns by arguing that no such ballot box destruction has occurred in the past. But, Pennsylvania has used these in only limited situations one time before. And, there is a first time for everything. Before July 20, 1969, no one had walked on the moon. Before the Primary Election earlier this year, Pennsylvania did not have no-excuse mail-in balloting. Before January 28, 1986, no space shuttle had ever exploded. And the Department of State must believe ballot destruction is possible as it specifically has recommended that the boxes be designed to “minimize” the ability to pour liquids into them. And waiting for the first time to happen means disenfranchising all of the voters whose ballots were in the damaged, vandalized, or stolen box.



Moreover, Defendant's experts acknowledge that the majority of drop boxes in Pennsylvania will be unstaffed and lack even video surveillance, despite simultaneously highlighting that the majority of states that use drop-boxes require at least one of the two methods for security reasons. *See* Defendant's Expert Report of Robert M. Stein, Ph.D., 19, No. 2:20-CV-966; Defendant's Expert Report of Paul Gronke, Ph.D., No. 2:20-CV-966, 15. Defendant's experts' justification for lacking such security is that "manning in-person polling locations is a significant cost of conducting elections . . ." but they conveniently avoid discussing the costs of placing a video camera in front of a drop-box. Stein, 9 ("[i]n Oregon, New Mexico and Colorado, drop boxes must be monitored by an election official or video surveillance. Drop boxes in Montana must be staffed with election officials . . ."). Relying on an excuse of the alleged burden of employee costs, the Secretary of State has unconstitutionally decided election security is unimportant.

As to the issue of location, the August 19 guidance devotes just one-half page to the question of where to locate ballot drop boxes. (App. Ex. 23, August 19 Guidance at 3.) But the sum and substance of that advice/guidance is a list of 11 bullet-point items a county "should consider" in determining where to locate the ballot drop boxes. (*Id.*) Yet there is no direction that counties must consider any of those items, direct that a county ensure consistency in its selection criteria within a particular county, or encourage or require consistency among the counties. (*Id.*) And despite her testimony that she "would prefer not to have drop boxes in elected officials' facilities or union halls," Defendant Boockvar's August 19 Guidance does not state as much. (App. Ex. 9, Boockvar Dep. 204:20-25; App. Ex. 23, Boockvar Dep. Ex. 17, August 19 Guidance.) In fact, the August 19 guidance appears to do the exact opposite, encouraging counties to consider

“city and municipal facilities [and] county facilities” as locations for the drop boxes. (App. Ex. 23, August 19 Guidance at 3.)

Nor does the guidance require that voters have equal access to drop box locations, leaving this determination up to each county. (App. Ex. 9, Boockvar Dep. 201:6-203:18.)<sup>10</sup> As a result, Pennsylvania’s counties have announced that they will have different numbers of drop boxes. For example, York County will only have one drop box that will be available at the York County Administrative Center and offers different times of availability during the week and weekends, but is under video surveillance. (App. Ex. 37, <https://yorkcountypa.gov/voting-elections/mail-in-voting-faq.html> (“the only secured drop-box is in the lobby of the Elections Department.”).) Adams County has indicated it will use a single drop box in front of its Courthouse. (App. Ex. 48, Adams Cty. Resp. To Interrogatory #5 (“Adams County Board of Elections will use a single secure ‘drop box’ inside the lobby of the Adams County Courthouse.”).) Elk County will also have one drop box. (App. Ex. 11, Frey Dep. 18:6-8) (“Q: So you will only have that one drop box for the general election? A: That’s correct.”)

Delaware County indicated it will have 50 drop boxes throughout the county. (See App. Ex. 38, <http://www.delcopa.gov/publicrelations/releases/2020/safeelectionsgrant.html> (last accessed September 4, 2020); see also, App. Ex. 35. 1/17/20 Email message from K. Lehman (bate-stamped as PADOS000609.000001-5); App. Ex. 16, Hagan Dep. 28:11-25.) Whereas, Montgomery County announced it will have 11 drop boxes at unsecured locations, including a

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<sup>10</sup> While the August 19 guidance encouraged counties to submit a plan to the Department of State 45 days or more before the General Election, it does not *require* counties to submit this plan, and a county’s failure to submit a plan would not preclude it from using drop boxes. (App. Ex. 9, Boockvar 197:23-200:10; Ex. 23, August 19 Guidance.) Based on Plaintiffs’ review of the discovery responses in this case, no such plans were produced by any of the Defendants, despite being responsive to discovery requests.

public park and parking lots, and one location that is “To Be Determined.” (App. Ex. 39, <https://www.montcopa.org/Faq.aspx?TID=40>.; App. Ex. 14, Soltysiak Dep. 21:21-24.) Lehigh County will have five drop boxes available for use “during normal municipal business hour[s].” (App. Ex. 40, [https://www.lehighcounty.org/Portals/0/PDF/PublicInformation/Lettered\\_County%20Drop%20Boxes%20Announcement%20%20Press%20Release\\_table.pdf?ver=2020-09-24-144953-347](https://www.lehighcounty.org/Portals/0/PDF/PublicInformation/Lettered_County%20Drop%20Boxes%20Announcement%20%20Press%20Release_table.pdf?ver=2020-09-24-144953-347)). Some counties, like Delaware County, have announced the intention to implement “mobile voting locations” wherein a “voting mobile service center” will be used to collect ballots. *See* (App. Ex. 41, <https://delcopa.gov/elections/mobilevsa.html>), 9/27/20, 12:03pm; App. Ex. 16, Hagan Dep. 26:7-27:8.)

Other counties, like Allegheny County, indicated it will not use any unstaffed drop boxes, instead providing eight manned and secure return ballot locations. (*See* App. Ex. 58, <https://www.alleghenycounty.us/elections/frequently-asked-questions.aspx>; App. Ex. 17, Voyer Dep. 23:24-25:25.) Some counties, like Philadelphia County, as of September 29, 2020, are not yet decided on whether it will use drop boxes, whether those drop boxes would be manned and secure, or generally how it would use drop boxes. (App. Ex. 13, Bluestein Dep. 37:2-53:3.)

Still other counties, like Cambria, Monroe, Wyoming, and Lawrence will have no drop boxes at all. *See, e.g.*, (App. Ex. 42, <https://www.cambriacountypa.gov/election-and-voter-registration.aspx>, accessed 9/25/2020, 1:22am) (“CAMBRIA COUNTY WILL NOT HAVE DROP OFF BOXES”) (emphasis in original.); App. Ex. 43, Monroe County Mail-In and Absentee Ballot Information available from <http://www.monroecountypa.gov/Dept/Voter/Documents/MailInAbsenteeInformation.pdf>, accessed 9/27/2020, 9:45am (“5. Will Drop Boxes be used? a. NO”); (App. Ex. 50, Wyoming Cty. Resp. To Interrogatory #5) (“Wyoming County will NOT

utilize drop boxes or drop off locations other than the County Office.”); App. Ex. 15, Allison Dep. 24:21-25.)

As Mr. Riddlemoser notes, the counties have no guidance if they should install the same number of drop boxes as other counties or where they should be placed; should they place drop boxes in more heavily Democrat or Republican areas. (App. Ex. 19, Riddlemoser Rep. at p. 13.) Mr. Riddlemoser concludes that the “Secretary’s August 19, 2020, guidance offers no concrete answer to these questions or a myriad of others.” (App. Ex. 19, Riddlemoser Rep. at p. 18.) That failure by Defendant Boockvar could be disastrous for the process and results given that “upwards of three million” mail-in votes are expected to be cast in Pennsylvania during the General Election, twice as many as in the primary election. (App. Ex. 10, Marks Dep. 268:20–269:5.)

**IX. POLL WATCHERS SERVE AS A CRUCIAL CROSS-CHECK ON ELECTION ADMINISTRATION.**

In addition to observing the pre-canvass and canvass events, poll watchers, such as Plaintiff Ms. Patterson, serve a crucial role in the administration of elections. *See* 25 P.S. § 2687 (creating the position of poll watcher and giving every candidate from every political party the power to appoint poll watchers to serve in each election district in the Commonwealth). The Election Code also dictates the quality and manner of poll watcher appointments. *See* 25 P.S. § 2687. Without providing any statutory justification for it, the Election Code also limits a poll watcher to watching only those polls, pre-canvass, or canvass of the county in which he or she resides. *See id.*<sup>11</sup> The poll watcher may accept only a maximum of \$120 for his or her service. *Id.*

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<sup>11</sup> The poll watcher residency requirement creates an arbitrary distinction between representative – which can challenge at pre-canvassing and canvassing but need not be a county resident – and actual poll watchers. *Compare* 25 P.S. § 2687; 25 P.S. § 3146.8(g)(1.1). The poll watcher residency requirement also deters open elections. (App. Ex. 4, Thompson Decl., ¶ 21.) Anything, allowing nonresident to be poll watchers encourages free and fair elections. For example, in a small community, knowing the personal identity of the poll watcher could influence the vote. (*Id.* at 103:18-104:18.)

Poll watchers may observe the election from the time the first polling place official appears in the morning to open the polling until the time the polls are closed and the election returns are counted and posted at the polling place entrance. *See* 25 P.S. § 2687(b). Poll watchers may raise objections to “challenge any person making application to vote.” 25 P.S. § 2650(a) & (c). Poll watchers also may raise challenges regarding the voters’ identity, continued residence in the election district, or registration status. *See* 25 P.S. § 3050(d) (“any person . . . may be challenged by any qualified elector, election officer, overseer, or *watcher* at any primary or election as to his identity, as to his continued residence in the election district or as to any alleged violation of the provisions of section 1210 of this act, . . .”) (emphasis added.) The only way to ensure or challenge the “identity” of a mail-in voter is by use of the signature comparison process.

**X. THE COUNTY RESIDENCY RESTRICTION ON POLL WATCHERS WILL RESULT IN UNEQUAL ELECTION OBSERVANCE AND DIFFERENT “RULES” FOR VOTERS.**

As noted above, poll watchers serve an important function in ensuring the transparency, defensibility, and integrity of the election process. (App. Ex. 19, Riddlemoser Rep. at pp. 6 & 19; App. Ex. 20, Lockerbie Rep. at ¶ 14.) Despite the important function of poll watchers, the Election Code restricts poll watchers to observing “polling place” only within the county of their residence. 25 P.S. § 2687. This restriction will hamper poll watching during the 2020 General Election, which will reduce the integrity and voter confidence in the process and the outcomes from that election. (App. Ex. 19, Riddlemoser Rep. at pp. 6 & 19; App. Ex. 20, Lockerbie Rep. at ¶ 17.)

It is important to note that in Pennsylvania, all but three Congressional electoral districts contain portions of multiple counties (District 2 and 3 lie solely in Philadelphia County and District 18 lies solely in Allegheny County), and President Trump will appear on every ballot that will be cast in the General Election. (*See* App. Ex. 47, 2018 Remedial Congressional Districts by County, <https://www.dos.pa.gov/VotingElections/CandidatesCommittees/RunningforOffice/Pages/2018->

Remedial-Congressional-Districts.aspx.) But according to statistics collected and disseminated by the Pennsylvania Department of State, there is a significant gap between the number of voters registered as Democrats and Republicans in some Pennsylvania counties. (*See* App. Ex. 34, 2019 Voter Registration Statistics – Official,” Pa. Dept. of State (Nov. 5, 2019) (available at <https://www.dos.pa.gov/VotingElections/OtherServicesEvents/VotingElectionStatistics/Documents/2019%20Election%20VR%20Stats%20%20final.pdf>.) For example, Philadelphia County divides its 66 voting wards into 1,686 divisions. (App. Ex. 44, *See* Political Maps, Office of the Phila. City Commissioners (2020) (available at <https://www.philadelphiavotes.com/en/resources-a-data/political-maps>.) Republicans do not comprise a majority of voters in any ward in Philadelphia County. (*See* App. Ex. 46, Department Reports and Data, “Historical Citywide Voter Registration Data,” Office of Phila. City Commissioners (1940-2019) (available at [https://files7.philadelphiavotes.com/department-reports/Historical\\_Registration\\_1940-2019G.pdf#\\_ga=2.50450285.594957769.1601506841-1102870046.1601506841](https://files7.philadelphiavotes.com/department-reports/Historical_Registration_1940-2019G.pdf#_ga=2.50450285.594957769.1601506841-1102870046.1601506841).) Accordingly, Republicans face a disadvantage in Philadelphia County in recruiting qualified poll watchers. But Democrats face a similar hurdle in other counties in the Commonwealth. For example, Republicans account for almost 70% of the voters in Fulton, Franklin, Bedford, Huntingdon, and Perry Counties, thereby placing Democrats in a similar disadvantage in recruiting poll watchers in those counties. (*See* App. Ex. 34, 2019 Voter Registration Statistics – Official,” Pa. Dept. of State (Nov. 5, 2019) (available at <https://www.dos.pa.gov/VotingElections/OtherServicesEvents/VotingElectionStatistics/Documents/2019%20Election%20VR%20Stats%20%20final.pdf>.)

Recruiting qualified poll watchers is difficult on a good day. (App. Ex. 19, Riddlemoser Rep. p. 7.) As election expert and political scientist Professor Brad Lockerbie explains, in order

to become a certified poll worker, a candidate “must meet numerous criteria.” (App. Ex. 20, Lockerbie Rep. at ¶ 10.) For example, a poll watcher needs to be “willing to accept token remuneration, which is capped at \$120 under Pennsylvania state law[.]” (*Id.*) And a poll watcher must be able to take off work or otherwise make arrangements to be at the polling place during its open hours on Election Day, which can mean working more than 14 hours. (*Id.*; *see also* App. Ex. 3, Patterson Aff. at ¶ 10; (“others have told me that they would like to poll watch but cannot commit to spend 14+ hours to poll watch on Election Day.”)) As Ms. Patterson explains, the long day often necessitates poll watchers taking shifts, which, as Ms. Patterson testifies, means a party or candidate would need “at least 3 people to cover each precinct on Election Day[.]” (*Id.*)

These criteria alone limit the number of persons who will qualify as a poll watcher, but “Pennsylvania’s requirement that poll watchers be a resident of the relevant county greatly limits further the pool of potential candidates for this position.” (App. Ex. 20, Lockerbie Rep., ¶ 12.) This is especially true in heavily Democrat and heavily Republican areas, where “it is not at all clear” that the minority party would be able to identify sufficient candidates to qualify as poll watchers from the residents of that county. (*Id.* at ¶ 15.)

Even if the Democrat and Republican parties could rely on their minority number of registrants in heavily partisan counties, the county residency requirement all but forecloses poll watcher participation from third-parties. As Professor Lockerbie explains, even if one were to assume that *all* third-party voters were members of the same minor party, which of course they are not, then in Philadelphia County, it would require “every 7th registrant” to be a poll watcher in order for the third party to have a poll watcher observing each precinct. (*Id.* at ¶ 16.)

But the application of the county residency requirement is uniquely problematic in the 2020 General Election. As Professor Lockerbie explains, the 2020 General Election is unique because

of the unprecedented restrictions on public gatherings resulting from COVID-19. These restrictions have “magnified” the difficulties in securing poll watchers. (*Id.* at ¶ 11.) According to Professor Lockerbie, based upon the data that he reviewed, “the quality and quantity of poll watchers subject to the residency requirements will lead to inconsistent appearance of such individuals.” (*Id.* at ¶ 17.) But “[i]n contrast, relief from the residency requirement will ameliorate these obvious problems.” (*Id.* at ¶ 18.)

Further complicating the situation, Pennsylvania law does not even speak to the ability of poll watchers to be present at locations used to collect mail-in and absentee ballots to ensure that no third-party delivery or other ballot harvesting occurred. Instead, any person in Pennsylvania, including a non-resident of Pennsylvania, can serve as a “representative” and attend the pre-canvass and canvass activities related to absentee and mail in ballots. 25 P.S. § 3146(g)(1.1) & (2); (App. Ex. 20, Lockerbie Rep. at ¶ 19.) But representatives are not poll watchers. (App. Ex. 9, Boockvar Dep. 238:17-19.) And the Department of State takes the position that the county residency restriction in the Election Code would bar a poll watcher from traveling between counties to watch the pre-canvass of mail in ballots. (*Id.* at 239:4-8.)

The need for and strain on the resources of poll watchers is even greater now that myriad counties have stated they will be using (and are using) drop boxes to collect mail-in ballots. Moreover, the expected surge in mail-in ballots during the General Election means there will be more mail-in ballots to be pre-canvassed and canvassed, which will require more poll watchers. Especially in light of the COVID-19 impacts and fears, as Professor Lockerbie’s Report and Ms. Patterson’s testimony demonstrate, the county residence restriction on poll watchers will preclude poll watchers from being present in all locations where votes are being cast. This means that a



significant portion of ballots will be cast in darkness, without the transparency provided by poll watchers.

**XI. DROP BOXES ALREADY CONTAIN INELIGIBLE CO-MINGLED BALLOTS AND PENNSYLVANIA VOTERS ARE FACING IRREPARABLE HARM IN THE FORM OF VOTE DILUTION AND UNEQUAL TREATMENT.**

Plaintiff's harm is real, imminent, and, if Defendants are not enjoined, irreparable. As explained by the Congressmen, their election will be affected if illegal absentee and mail-in votes are permitted to be cast, resulting from counties who, following Secretary Boockvar's guidance, have decided not to enforce the mandatory terms of the Election Code on mail-in ballots. (App. Ex. 4, Decl. of Glen Thompson, ¶¶ 6-8; App. Ex. 6, Decl. of Guy Lorin Reschenthaler, ¶¶ 5-10; App. Ex. 5, Decl. of George Joseph Kelly, Jr., ¶¶ 9-14; App. Ex. 7, Decl. of John Patrick Joyce, ¶¶ 9-11.) As Ms. Patterson testifies, she faces imminent harm of vote dilution resulting from Secretary Boockvar's guidance. (App. Ex. 3, Patterson Aff. at ¶¶ 6-8.)

The unconstitutional guidance issued by the Department of State means that mail-in ballots already have been cast in violation of the Election Code, either through third-party voting – whether fraudulent or not – and through the inability to perform a signature challenge for the application of an absentee or mail-in ballot. *See* (App. Ex. 25 September 28 Guidance.) The counties have confirmed that there is no way to disentangle improperly cast mail-in ballots from properly cast mail in ballots. (App. Ex. 13, Bluestein Dep. 50:1-7).

**LEGAL STANDARD**

“Summary judgment is appropriate only if, construed in the light most favorable to the non-moving party, the record shows that there is no genuine dispute of material fact and that the moving party is entitled to judgment as a matter of law.” *Ali v. Woodbridge Twp. Sch. Dist.*, 957 F.3d 174, 179 (3d Cir. 2020). “[A] court should view the facts in the light most favorable to the non-moving party and make all reasonable inferences in that party's favor.” *Scheidementle v.*

Slippery Rock Univ. State Sys. of Higher Educ., 470 F.3d 535, 538 (3d Cir. 2006). But, the evidence presented by the non-moving party “must be more than a scintilla.” *Id.*

The summary judgment standard does not change if a party seeks declaratory or injunctive relief. Coverland-Green Spring Dairies, Inc. v. Pa. Milk Mktg. Bd., 298 F.3d 201, 210 n.12 (3d Cir. 2002) (“The standard for granting summary judgment on a request for a declaratory judgment is the same as for any other type of relief.”). However, to award injunctive relief at summary judgment requires a district court to engage in a two-step analysis, first applying the summary judgment standard to determine whether the moving party is entitled to relief as a matter of law, and then applying its discretion as to whether to grant a permanent injunction. See TD Bank N.A. v. Hill, 928 F.3d 259, 269 (3d Cir. 2019).

To be awarded a permanent injunction, a moving party must demonstrate: “(1) it will suffer irreparable injury, (2) no remedy available at law could adequately remedy that injury, (3) the balance of hardships tips in its favor, and (4) an injunction would not disserve the public interest.” TD Bank, 928 F.3d at 278 (citing eBay Inc. v. MercExchange, L.L.C., 547 U.S. 388, 391 (2006)).

## LAW AND ARGUMENT

### I. NO GENUINE DISPUTE OF MATERIAL FACT EXISTS REGARDING PLAINTIFFS’ CLAIMS.

After the completion of extensive discovery, including numerous depositions and responses to discovery requests, no genuine dispute of material fact exists regarding Plaintiffs’ constitutional claims. Defendants have confirmed the unequal application of Pennsylvania election law regarding signature matching and drop boxes, and there is no dispute that those requirements along with the county poll watcher requirement, will dilute votes in violation of the

United States Constitution. Thus, summary judgement is appropriate in Plaintiffs' favor on all of their claims.

**A. Under Both the United States and Pennsylvania Constitutions, the Right to Vote and to Free and Fair Elections Includes the Right to Have One's Vote Fully Counted Without Dilution or Debasement.**

The most fundamental principle defining credible elections in a democracy is that they must reflect the free expression of the people's will. Accordingly, the rights to vote and to free, fair, and transparent elections are fundamental to our constitutional democracy and protected by the First and Fourteenth Amendments of the United States Constitution. *Harper v. Virginia State Board of Elections*, 383 U.S. 663, 665 (1966). See also *Reynolds*, 377 U.S. at 554 (The Fourteenth Amendment protects the “the right of all qualified citizens to vote, in state as well as in federal elections.”); *Meyer v. Grant*, 486 U.S. 414, 421 (1988) (citing *Roth v. United States*, 354 U.S. 476, 484 (1957)) (“The First Amendment ‘was fashioned to assure unfettered interchange of ideas for the bringing about of political and social changes desired by the people.’”). Once a state endows its citizens with voting rights, “the right to vote as the legislature has prescribed is fundamental.” *Bush v. Gore*, 531 U.S. 98, 104 (2000).

“Obviously included within the right to [vote], secured by the Constitution, is the right of qualified voters within a state to cast their ballots and have them counted” if they are validly cast. *United States v. Classic*, 313 U.S. 299, 315 (1941). “[T]he right to have the vote counted” means counted “at full value without dilution or discount.” *Reynolds*, 377 U.S. at 555, n.29 (quoting *South v. Peters*, 339 U.S. 276, 279 (1950) (Douglas, J., dissenting)). Invalid or fraudulent votes “debase[.]” and “dilute” the weight of each validly cast vote. *Anderson v. United States*, 417 U.S. 211, 227 (1974). “The deposit of forged ballots in the ballot boxes, no matter how small or great their number, dilutes the influence of honest votes in an election, and whether in greater or less degree is immaterial. The right to an honest [count] is a right possessed by each voting elector,

and to the extent that the importance of his vote is nullified, wholly or in part, he has been injured in the free exercise of a right or privilege secured to him by the laws and Constitution of the United States.” Anderson, 417 U.S. at 226 (quoting Prichard v. United States, 181 F.2d 326, 331 (6th Cir.), *aff’d due to absence of quorum*, 339 U.S. 974 (1950)). Accordingly, “every voter in a federal ... election, whether he votes for a candidate with little chance of winning or for one with little chance of losing, has a right under the Constitution to have his vote fairly counted, without its being distorted by fraudulently cast votes.” Anderson, 417 U.S. at 227; *see also Baker v. Carr*, 369 U.S. 186, 208 (1962).

The Pennsylvania Constitution also bestows the right to vote upon qualified citizens and guarantees them equal protection in the enjoyment of that right. *See Pa. Const. art. VII, § 1 & art. I, § 28*. Further, Article I, Section 5 of the Pennsylvania Constitution, entitled “Elections” and commonly referred to as the “Free and Equal Elections Clause,” provides that “[e]lections shall be free and equal; and no power, civil or military, shall at any time interfere to prevent the free exercise of the right of suffrage.” Pa. Const. art. I, § 5.

The Free and Equal Elections Clause “is contained within the Pennsylvania Constitution’s ‘Declaration of Rights,’ which ... is an enumeration of the fundamental individual human rights possessed by the people of the Commonwealth that are specifically exempted from the powers of the Commonwealth government to diminish.” League of Women Voters v. Commonwealth, 178 A.3d 737, 803 (Pa. 2018). Under that clause, “elections are free and equal within the meaning of the [Pennsylvania] Constitution when they are public and open to all qualified electors alike; *when every voter has the same right as every other voter; when each voter under the law has the right to cast his ballot and have it honestly counted*; when the regulation of the right to exercise the franchise does not deny the franchise itself, or make it so difficult as to amount to a denial; and

when no constitutional right of the qualified elector is subverted or denied him.” Winston v. Moore, 91 A. 520, 523 (Pa. 1914) (emphasis added).

The rights protected by the Pennsylvania Free and Equal Elections Clause may not be taken away by an act of the Commonwealth’s legislative or executive branches, and both branches are prohibited by this clause from interfering with the exercise of those rights, even if the interference occurs by inadvertence. See League of Women Voters, 178 A.3d at 810. Moreover, the rights protected by the Free and Equal Elections Clause, including without limitation the right to free and fair public elections, apply to the election of both federal and state candidates. See *id.* at 811.

**B. Regulations Which Dilute or Debase the Right to Vote and to Free and Fair Elections Present a Federal Question and Are Subject to Strict Scrutiny.**

In statewide elections involving federal candidates, “a State’s regulatory authority springs directly from the United States Constitution.” Project Vote v. Kelly, 805 F. Supp. 2d 152, 174 (W.D. Pa. 2011) (citing Cook v. Gralike, 531 U.S. 510, 522-523 (2001); U.S. Term Limits, Inc. v. Thornton, 514 U.S. 779, 805 (1995)). Specifically, the Elections Clause of the United States Constitution states that “[t]he Times, Places, and Manner of holding Elections for Senators and Representatives, shall be prescribed in each State by *the Legislature* thereof.” U.S. Const. Art. I, § 4, cl. 1 (emphasis added). Likewise, the Electors Clause of the United States Constitution states that “[e]ach State shall appoint, in such Manner as *the Legislature* thereof may direct, a Number of Electors” for President. U.S. Const. Art. II, § 1, cl. 2 (emphasis added).

The Legislature is “the representative body which ma[kes] the laws of the people.” Smiley v. Holm, 285 U.S. 355, 365 (1932). Consequently, regulations of congressional and presidential elections “must be in accordance with the method which the state has prescribed for legislative enactments.” *Id.* at 367; see also Ariz. State Legislature v. Ariz. Indep. Redistricting Comm’n, 576 U.S. 787, 807 (2015).

Because the United States Constitution reserves for state legislatures the power to set the time, place, and manner of holding elections for Congress and the President, state executive officers have no authority to unilaterally exercise that power, much less flout existing legislation. While the Elections Clause “was not adopted to diminish a State’s authority to determine its own lawmaking processes,” *Ariz. State Legislature*, 576 U.S. at 824, it does hold states accountable to their chosen processes when it comes to regulating federal elections. *See id.* at 820. Accordingly, “[a] significant departure from the legislative scheme for appointing Presidential electors presents a federal constitutional question.” *Bush*, 531 U.S. at 113 (Rehnquist, J., concurring); *see also Smiley*, 285 U.S. at 365. Although states are afforded the power to regulate their elections, their authority to do so is not unrestricted. To the contrary, election-related legislation must conform to the limits imposed by the Constitution. *See Williams v. Rhodes*, 393 U.S. 23, 29 (1968).

In reviewing a First Amendment challenge to a state’s election law, the Supreme Court emphasized that “[n]o bright line separates permissible election-related regulation from unconstitutional infringements on First Amendment freedoms.” *Timmons v. Twin Cities Area New Party*, 520 U.S. 351, 358 (1997). Instead, under what has come to be known as the *Anderson-Burdick* balancing test, “the rigorousness of our inquiry into the propriety of a state election law depends upon the extent to which a challenged regulation burdens” the First Amendment right. *Burdick v. Takushi*, 504 U.S. 428, 434 (1992). *See also Crawford v. Marion Cnty. Election Bd.*, 553 U.S. 181, 204 (2008) (Scalia, J., concurring) (“To evaluate a law respecting the right to vote—whether it governs voter qualifications, candidate selection, or the voting process—we use the approach set out in *Burdick* ... .”); *Obama for Am. v. Husted*, 697 F.3d 423, 429 (6th Cir. 2012) (“when a state regulation is found to treat voters differently in a way that burdens the fundamental right to vote, the *Anderson-Burdick* standard applies”).

The *Anderson-Burdick* balancing test requires a “weighing” of several factors, including: (1) the “character and magnitude” of the alleged constitutional injury; (2) “the precise interests put forward by the State as justifications for the burden imposed by its rule[.]” and (3) “the extent to which those interests make it necessary to burden the plaintiff’s rights.” *Anderson v. Celebrezze*, 460 U.S. 780, 788 (1983). If, upon review of these factors, the challenged regulation imposes “severe restrictions” on the First Amendment rights, then the law is constitutional only if it is “narrowly drawn to advance a state interest of compelling importance.” *Burdick*, 504 U.S. at 434 (quoting *Norman v. Reed*, 502 U.S. 279, 289 (1992)). In other words, strict scrutiny applies. *See id.*; *see also Benezet Consulting, LLC v. Boockvar*, 433 F. Supp. 3d 670, 688 (M.D. Pa. 2020) (applying strict scrutiny on in-state witness requirement law because severe burden on constitutional rights).

“[R]egulations that contravene the principle of ‘one person, one vote’ by diluting the voting power of some qualified voters within the electoral unit’ ... are subject to strict scrutiny.” *Lemons v. Bradbury*, 538 F.3d 1098, 1104 (9th Cir. 2008) (quoting *Green v. City of Tucson*, 340 F.3d 891, 900 (9th Cir. 2003)). As our Supreme Court explained: “The idea that one group can be granted greater voting strength than another is hostile to the one man, one vote basis of our representative government.” *Moore v. Ogilvie*, 394 U.S. 814, 818-19 (1969).

**C. Equal Protection Mandates that all Pennsylvania Voters Must Be Treated the Same or the Burden Is Severe.**

The character and magnitude of the injury to the fundamental right to vote is severe when the burden on a qualified elector’s vote dilutes the weight of that vote and fails to afford it equal protection. The Fourteenth Amendment states that “no State shall deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.” U.S. Const. amend. XIV, § 1. Because the fundamental right to vote “can be denied by a debasement or dilution of the weight of a citizen’s

vote just as effectively as by wholly prohibiting the free exercise of the franchise,” Reynolds, 377 U.S. at 555, the Supreme Court declared in Bush: “The right to vote is protected in more than the initial allocation of the franchise. Equal protection applies as well to the manner of its exercise. Having once granted the right to vote on equal terms, the State may not, by later arbitrary and disparate treatment, value one person’s vote over that of another.” Bush, 531 U.S. at 104-5; *see also* Harper, 383 U.S. at 665 (“Once the franchise is granted, lines may not be drawn which are inconsistent with the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.”).

The Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment proscribes that “one person’s vote must be counted equally with those of all other voters in a State.” Reynolds, 377 U.S. at 560. In other words, “whenever a state or local government decides to select persons by popular election to perform governmental functions, [equal protection] requires that each qualified voter must be given an equal opportunity to participate in that election ... .” Hadley v. Junior College District, 397 U.S. 50, 56 (1968).

Accordingly, the Equal Protection Clause requires states to “avoid arbitrary and disparate treatment of the members of its electorate.” Charfauros v. Bd. of Elections, 249 F.3d 941, 951 (9th Cir. 2001) (quoting Bush, 531 U.S. at 105); *see also* Dunn v. Blumstein, 405 U.S. 330, 336 (1972) (“[A] citizen has a constitutionally protected right to participate in elections on an equal basis with other citizens in the jurisdiction.”); Gray v. Sanders, 372 U.S. 368, 380 (1963) (“The idea that every voter is equal to every other voter in his State, when he casts his ballot in favor of one of several competing candidates, underlies many of [the Supreme Court’s] decisions.”). “[T]reating voters differently” thus “violate[s] the Equal Protection Clause” when the disparate treatment is the result of arbitrary, ad hoc processes.” Charfauros, 249 F.3d at 954. Indeed, a



“minimum requirement for non-arbitrary treatment of voters [is] necessary to secure the fundamental right [to vote].” Bush, 531 U.S. at 105.

Additionally, the use of “standardless” procedures can violate the Equal Protection Clause. Bush, 531 U.S. at 103. “The problem inheres in the absence of specific standards to ensure ... equal application” of even otherwise unobjectionable principles. Id. at 106. Any voting system that involves discretion by decision makers about how or where voters will vote must be “confined by specific rules designed to ensure uniform treatment.” Id.

Finally, when evaluating a voter dilution claim under the equal protection clause, it is critical to correctly identify the “relevant electoral unit.” Green, 340 F.3d at 900. As the Supreme Court in *Gray* states: “Once the geographical unit for which a representative is to be chosen is designated, all who participate in the election are to have an equal vote – whatever their race, whatever their sex, whatever their occupation, whatever their income, and wherever their home may be in that geographical unit. This is required by the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.” Gray, 372 U.S. at 379; see also Moore, 394 U.S. at 819 (law that “discriminates against the residents of the populous counties of the State in favor of rural sections ... lacks the equality to which the exercise of political rights is entitled under the Fourteenth Amendment”); Reynolds, 377 U.S. at 555 (“Weighting the votes of citizens differently, by any method or means, merely because of where they happen to reside, hardly seems justifiable.”); Pierce v. Allegheny County Bd. of Elections, 324 F. Supp. 2d 684, 697 (W.D. Pa. 2003) (“A state must impose uniform statewide standards in each county in order to protect the legality of a citizen’s vote. Anything less implicates constitutional problems under the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.”).

The “geographical unit” in this election is the entire Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Along with the presidential election, Pennsylvania voters are casting ballots for the offices of attorney general, auditor general, and state treasurer – all state-wide elections. Accordingly, *all* Pennsylvanians “who participate in the election are to have an equal vote” as “required by the Equal Protection Clause.” *Gray*, 372 U.S. at 379 (emphasis added). *See also Pierce*, 324 F. Supp. 2d 699 (different interpretations of election code could lead to differing “*statewide* standards,” diluting the vote in certain counties and “afford[ing] greater voting strength than similarly-situated voters” in others); *Black v. McGuffage*, 209 F. Supp. 2d 889, 900 (N.D. Ill. 2002) (“That people in different counties have significantly different probabilities of having their votes counted, solely because of the nature of the system used in their jurisdiction is the heart of the problem.”). Accordingly, all qualified Pennsylvania voters – “whatever their race, whatever their sex, whatever their occupation, whatever their income, and wherever their home may be (in any county)” – must be afforded the same protections and equal treatment of their vote. *Gray*, 372 U.S. at 379.

**D. Due Process also Demands that all Pennsylvania Voters Must Be Treated the Same or the Burden Is Severe.**

Separate from the equal protection clause, courts have found that the fundamental right to vote is protected by the Fourteenth Amendment’s due process clause which protects against “the disenfranchisement of a state electorate.” *Duncan v. Poythress*, 657 F.2d 691, 702 (5th Cir. 1981). “When an election process ‘reaches the point of patent and fundamental unfairness,’ there is a due process violation.” *Florida State Conference of N.A.A.C.P. v. Browning*, 522 F.3d 1153, 1183-84 (11th Cir. 2008) (quoting *Roe v. Alabama*, 43 F.3d 574, 580 (11th Cir.1995) (citing *Curry v. Baker*, 802 F.2d 1302, 1315 (11th Cir.1986))). *See also Griffin v. Burns*, 570 F.2d 1065, 1077 (1st Cir. 1978) (“If the election process itself reaches the point of patent and fundamental unfairness, a violation of the due process clause may be indicated and relief under

order.”); Marks v. Stinson, 19 F.3d 873, 889 (3d Cir. 1994) (enjoining winning state senate candidate from exercising official authority where absentee ballots were obtained and cast illegally).

Part of the courts’ justification for such ruling is the Supreme Court’s recognition that the right to vote and to free and fair elections is one that is preservative of other basic civil and political rights. See Black, 209 F.Supp.2d at 900 (quoting Reynolds, 377 U.S. at 561-62 (“since the right to exercise the franchise in a free and unimpaired manner is preservative of other basic civil and political rights, any alleged infringement of the right of citizens to vote must be carefully and meticulously scrutinized.”)); see also Yick Wo v. Hopkins, 118 U.S. 356, 370 (1886) (“the political franchise of voting ... is regarded as a fundamental political right, because [*sic*] preservative of all rights.”). Thus, courts have found that “the right to vote, the right to have one’s vote counted, and the right to have ones vote given equal weight are basic and fundamental constitutional rights incorporated in the due process clause of the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States.” Black, 209 F. Supp. 2d at 900 (a state law that allows local election officials to impose different voting schemes upon some portions of the electorate and not others violates due process).

“Just as the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment prohibits state officials from improperly diluting the right to vote, the due process clause of the Fourteenth amendment forbids state officials from unlawfully eliminating that fundamental right.” Duncan, 657 F.2d at 704. It is well established that when a state accords arbitrary and disparate treatment to voters, those voters are deprived of their constitutional rights to due process and equal protection. Bush, 531 U.S. at 107.

Accordingly, in addition to equal protection, the Fourteenth Amendment's due process clause protects the fundamental right of vote against voter dilution.

**II. THE SECRETARY'S SEPTEMBER 2020 GUIDANCE VIOLATES PLAINTIFFS' FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT TO VOTE AND TO A FREE AND FAIR ELECTION.**

Secretary Boockvar's unfair, haphazard, and uneven system of Election guidance is causing an immediate and direct injury to Plaintiffs. Secretary Boockvar's guidance memos instruct counties—contrary to Pennsylvania's Election Code passed with bipartisan support—that signatures cannot be used to verify absentee or mail-in applications or ballots. (App. Ex. 24, Sept. 11 Guidance; App. Ex. 25, Sept. 28 Guidance.) If these guidance memos continue to stand, the integrity of the electoral process in Pennsylvania will be severely burdened and whether a free and fair election in Pennsylvania occurred in Pennsylvania questioned.

Plaintiffs' injuries, caused by the Secretary's guidance, involve their fundamental right to have their votes and the votes of those similarly situated counted and not subject to being debased or diluted by illegally cast votes through absentee or mail-in voters whose signatures on applications or ballots do not match their voter registration records or are otherwise not verified. Plaintiffs are also burdened because Secretary Boockvar's guidance creates an unequal voting scheme across the Commonwealth's counties, invoking an improper distinction between absentee/mail-in voters and in-person/provisional voters. The Commonwealth's perceived justification, if any, for imposing such a burden upon Plaintiffs is not sufficient to justify so burdening Plaintiffs' fundamental rights. Any such justification fails to outweigh Plaintiffs' fundamental right to have their votes counted at full value without dilution or discount. Therefore, under an *Anderson-Burdick* analysis, strict scrutiny applies to Plaintiffs' voter dilution claims.

**A. Prohibiting Signature Verification for Absentee and Mail-in Applications and Ballots Dilutes the Vote and Violates Equal Protection.**

The Pennsylvania Legislature promotes free and fair elections by protecting qualified voters through signature verification for voting applications and absentee, mail-in, *and* in-person ballots. By instructing counties to not verify absentee and mail-in electors by signature analysis, the Secretary is placing a severe burden on the fundamental right to vote for which there is no compelling interest.

The Election Code is clear that, when applying for an absentee or mail-in ballot, the qualified election must be verified and approved before the absentee or mail-in ballot is provided. *See* 25 P.S. § 3146.2b (absentee application approval); 3150.12b(a) (mail-in application approval). When the ballot is returned, the qualified elector must be verified again. *See* 25 P.S. § 3146.8(g)(3) and (g)(4) (“only those ballots that have been verified under paragraph (3) shall be counted . . .”). The qualified elector’s signature is the sole method for verifying absentee and mail-in ballots, ensuring that only qualified electors’ ballots are counted and votes are not diluted by fraudulent ballots. *See* (App. Ex. 19, Riddlemoser Rep. at p. 11) (“Pennsylvania’s signature verification process . . . is the initial lynchpin in ensuring the integrity of the voting process and avoiding the potential for fraud.”). Signature verification is similarly required for verifying in-person voters. *See* 25 P.S. § 3050(a.3)(1)–(2); *see also* *Applewhite v. Commonwealth*, 2014 Pa. Commw. Unpub. LEXIS 756 (Jan. 17, 2014) (finding voter photo-ID law unconstitutional).

Yet, Secretary Boockvar, contrary to the Election Code, is promoting an election procedure that prohibits verifying absentee and mail-in ballots through signature comparison, impermissibly creating different classes of voters based on the manner the voter chooses to vote. (App. Ex. 24, Sept. 11 Guidance at 3) (“The Pennsylvania Election Code does not authorize the county board of elections to set aside returned absentee or mail-in ballots based solely on signature analysis by the county board of election”); (App. Ex. 25, Sept. 28 Guidance at 9) (“The Election Code does not

permit county election officials to reject applications or voted ballots based solely on signature analysis.”.) In similar contradiction to the Election Code, Secretary Boockvar further stated that signature verification is not permitted *at all* under the Election Code for absentee and mail-in ballots. (Ex. 12, Boockvar (30(b)(6)) Dep. 54:2 – 56:19.) But, without signature verification, it is difficult, if not impossible, to envision how an absentee or mail-in ballot would be deemed valid, presenting a ripe opportunity for illegal and fraudulent votes to be cast.

The Secretary’s Guidance is further troubling based on long-standing precedent that applications for an absentee or mail-in ballot and voted absentee and mail-in ballots require the voter’s signature. *See* 25 P.S. §§ 3146.2b (absentee application approval); 3150.12b(a) (mail-in application approval); 3146.6(a) (voted absentee ballot); & 3150.16(a) (voted mail-in ballot). Moreover, Pennsylvania Courts have held that applications and absentee/mail-in ballots cast without signatures are void, and those failing signature comparisons may be challenged. *See, e.g., Project Vote*, 805 F. Supp. 2d at 152; *Opening of Ballot Box of the First Precinct of Bentleyville*, 598 A.2d 1341 (Pa. Commw. 1991); *Wilkes-Barre Election Appeals*, 44 Pa. D. & C.2d 535 (Luzerne C.P. 1967); *Canvass of Absentee Ballots of November 2, 1965, Gen. Election*, 39 Pa. D. & C.2d 429 (Montgomery C.P. 1965); *Fogleman Appeal*, 36 Pa. D. & C.2d 426 (Juniata C.P. 1964). Yet, Secretary Boockvar suggests that this is not the case. She suggests that no county election board could set aside an application or ballot when the signatures do not match and cannot be verified because such “consequence” is not expressly spelled-out in the Election Code. (Ex. 12, Boockvar (30(b)(6)) Dep. 104:2–105:18.) Coincidentally, the Secretary advanced that same faulty argument before the Pennsylvania Supreme Court when she sided with the Pennsylvania Democratic Party to assert that county election boards could not set aside and void absentee or mail-in ballots because they lacked inner secrecy envelopes, and the Supreme Court unanimously

rejected that position. See *Pa. Democratic Party v. Boockvar*, 2020 Pa. LEXIS 4872, at \*72 (“The clear thrust of *Appeal of Pierce*, however, is that, even absent an express sanction, where legislative intent is clear and supported by a weighty interest like fraud prevention, it would be unreasonable to render such a concrete provision ineffective for want of deterrent or enforcement mechanism. What we learn from that decision is that violations of the mandatory statutory provisions that pertain to integral aspects of the election process should not be invalidated *sub silentio* for want of a detailed enumeration of consequences.”).

At its essence, the Secretary’s September 2020 guidance memos promote voter fraud. Take, for example, a college-aged, out-of-state son or daughter who fails to timely submit an absentee or mail-in application. Under the Secretary’s guidance memos, that child’s parent could fill out the application in the child’s name, sign the child’s signature to it, and mail it to the election board, and upon noting the mismatched signature, the election board could not reject it solely on that basis. Moreover, under the Secretary’s guidance memos, the child’s parent could go one step further, by filling out the declaration, signing the child’s name, and mailing back the voted ballot. Because the ballot is signed, the county election board again cannot reject it for a non-genuine signature, according to the Secretary’s guidance memos, even though it is clear that the child did not sign the ballot. Instead, under the Secretary’s guidance memos, the election board must accept the ballot and no one, not even a candidate or other qualified voter (or the child herself), is entitled to challenge that ballot based solely on the non-genuine signature. A vote cast in this manner is a clear violation of the Election Code and a fraudulent vote.

Moreover, the voter fraud would not stop there, but would continue to snowball, with spouses, neighbors, acquaintances, strangers, and others, illegally submitting applications for mail-in ballots and returning them as voted ballots for choices made, not by the stated applicant but

instead the person who signed the voter's name to the application and ballot. Thus, these guidance memos, like her now-struck guidance memos during the Primary Election allowing naked ballots to be counted, are a violation of the Election Code, and a severe burden on the fundamental right to vote. *See* (App. Ex. 9, Boockvar Dep. 141:22-142:6 (“I was aware that Lawrence County had a lot of ballots returned without secrecy envelopes. I was also aware Lawrence County did not count those ballots. I disagree with that decision by them.”).) Strict scrutiny applies.

Applying strict scrutiny, the Secretary's guidance unconstitutional, violate equal protection, and must be enjoined. First, the Secretary provided no interest, let alone a compelling interest, for her arbitrary, disparate, and unequal voting scheme. A compelling government interest is an affirmative defense to an equal protection claim requiring a strict scrutiny review. *See, e.g., Gonzales v. O Centro Espirita Beneficente Uniao do Vegetal*, 546 U.S. 418, 429, 126 S. Ct. 1211, 1219 (2006) (the government “bear[s] the burden of demonstrating a compelling interest as part of its affirmative defense”). By failing to plead and or otherwise assert any compelling state interest as an affirmative defense, the Secretary waived this as an affirmative defense to her unconstitutional burden on the fundamental right to vote. *See Fed. R. Civ. P. 8(c)* and *12(b) Fleming Steel Co. v. Jacobs Eng'g Grp., Inc.*, 373 F. Supp. 3d 567, 593 (W.D. Pa. 2019) (“affirmative defenses are waived if they are not specifically raised by responsive pleading or by appropriate motion.”). Without a compelling state interest, her guidance memos fail under strict scrutiny and the Secretary must be enjoined from prohibiting signature verification for absentee and mail-in applications and ballots.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Secretary Boockvar and Courts interpreting Pennsylvania Election Code have recognized that “ensuring integrity and preventing fraud in the electoral process” is a compelling state interest. *Benezet Consulting*, 433 F. Supp. 3d at 689. *See also Green Party v. Aichele*, 89 F. Supp. 3d 723, 745 (E.D. Pa. 2015) (“the Commonwealth has a compelling interest in preventing voter fraud in the signature gathering process”). Yet, the Secretary is not promoting this interest. When asked



But, *even if* there was a compelling government interest, which there is not, her guidance memos are not narrowly tailored. The Election Code already provides a workable voting scheme for signature verification that comports with equal protection and due process. Should an absentee or mail-in ballot or application be challenged for any reason, including signature verification, the Election Code requires a notice and opportunity to be heard. *See, e.g.,* 25 P.S. §§ 3146.2b(d) (requiring notice and opportunity to cure for rejected absentee ballot application); 3150.12b(c) (same for rejected mail-in ballot application); & 3146.8(h) (allowing voter six days following the election to provide verifiable proof of identification). This is substantially similar to the notice and opportunity to be heard provided to in-person and provisional voters, thus providing all voters with the opportunity to cure their signatures or any other ballot deficiencies so their ballots can be counted. *See* 25 P.S. § 3050(a.4)(4)(i). The Election Code as written—allowing signature verification and providing an opportunity to cure a signature deficiency—already protects free and fair elections and the fundamental right to vote. (*See* App. Ex. 19, Riddlemoser Rep. at pp. 2-13.) The Secretary’s guidance memos are unconstitutional and unnecessary, and must be declared as such.

**B. The September Guidance Creates an Unconstitutional Distinction Between Absentee, Mail-In, In-Person, and Provisional Voters, Violating Both Equal Protection and Substantive Due Process.**

The Secretary’s September 2020 guidance memos also place an unconstitutional burden on due process. *See Black, 209 F. Supp. 2d at 900* (a state law that allows local election officials to impose different voting schemes upon some portions of the electorate and not others violates due process). *First*, Secretary Boockvar’s September guidance memos result in the unequal

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*why* she issued the September Guidance, she stated: “Well, you’ve sued us and -- or I should say, your client sued us, and it raised this issue, as you may recall, and asked permission to file an amended complaint.” (App. Ex. 12, Boockvar 30(b)(5) Depo. 106:1-4.) This is not a compelling interest, and the Secretary cannot provide one.

treatment of absentee/mail-in voters and in-person/provisional ballot voters. Although “[a]bsentee voting is a fundamentally different process from in-person voting, and is governed by procedures entirely distinct from in-person voting procedures,” “such different treatment” cannot be “without justification.” ACLU of N.M. v. Santillanes, 546 F.3d 1313 (10th Cir. 2008) (requiring in-person voters to present photo-id but not absentee voters was a proper distinction between the classes of voters because of “the unique procedures for absentee voting allow for a separate process confirming the identification of a voter”). There is no justification in this instance to create such an arbitrary and disparate rule between absentee/mail-in voters and in-person voters. Signature verification, for absentee, mail-in, *and* in-person voters, is Pennsylvania’s only procedure for confirming the identification of all voters. To suggest that absentee and mail-in voters do not need to comply with the signature verification process at the time they vote, but that in-person (whether voting a regular or provisional ballot) votes must be subject to such verification flies in the face of due process. *See, e.g., Griffin*, 570 F.2d at 1077 (the due process clause warrants federal relief “where broad-gauged unfairness permeates an election, even if derived from apparently neutral action”). It also flies in the face of unquestioned best practices for election administration. *See* (Riddlemoser Rep. at p. 11) (“Pennsylvania’s signature verification process . . . is the initial lynchpin in ensuring the integrity of the voting process and avoiding the potential for fraud.”)

*Second*, Secretary Boockvar’s guidance memos are not being implemented equally across the state. Some counties are following her guidance memos, while others, knowing the guidance memos violate Pennsylvania’s Election Code and the Constitution, have indicated that they will continue signature analysis. (App. Ex. 1, Summary of County Interrogatory Responses.) Allowing this type of a patchwork of different rules from county to county, and as between absentee and mail-in voters and in-person voters, in a statewide election involving federal and state candidates,

is exactly the type of equal protection concerns which this Court addressed over 15 years ago. *See Pierce*, 324 F. Supp. 2d at 698-699. *See also Gray*, 372 U.S. at 379-381 (a county unit system which weights the rural vote more heavily than the urban vote and weights some small rural counties heavier than other larger rural counties violates the Equal Protection Clause and its one person, one vote jurisprudence).

*Third*, at least one other federal district court has recently rejected a similar attempt by its state election board to rewrite the requirements for absentee and mail-in voting without legislative action shortly before the upcoming November 3, 2020 General Election. Specifically, on September 30, 2020, the District Court for the Middle District of North Carolina ordered a status conference to address the North Carolina State Board of Elections' attempt to eliminate the legislative requirement under North Carolina law that voters have a witness sign their absentee ballots in order for them to be properly cast and counted. *See Democracy N.C. v. N.C. State Bd. of Elections*, Civ. A. No. 20-cv-457, Order dated 09/30/2020 (ECF # 145) (M.D. N.C. 2020) (Olsteen, W., D.J.). There, the North Carolina State Board of Elections gave notice to the federal district court that it had issued "Memo 2020-19" which the court found "may be reasonably interpreted to eliminate the one-witness requirement under the guise of compliance with this court's order." *See id.* at ECF # 145, p. 3.

Judge William Olsteen found "such an interpretation unacceptable," noting that "permitting a voter to cast an unwitnessed absentee by mail ballot ... undermines and in effect eliminates the Legislature's interest in preventing ballot fraud[.]" *See id.* at ECF # 145, p. 10. Also, Judge Olsteen noted that the State Election Boards' memorandum ignores that the court had "upheld the one-witness requirement and in so doing found that it was a reasonable measure to deter fraud." *See id.* at pp. 7-8. Additionally, Judge Olsteen raised concern about the timing of

the memorandum given that it was issued fewer than 60 days before the election. *See id.* at p. 11. Accordingly, the North Carolina court scheduled a status conference to determine whether the court's interpretation of the Memo 2020-19 is correct and whether other action or relief was necessary. *See id.* at p. 12; *see also id.* at ECF # 124, p. 102, 159-160.

Thus, the Secretary's guidance memos on signature analysis create unequal, unfair, and different voting schemes between in-person and absentee voters and across the Commonwealth's counties. This is a clear violation of both equal protection and due process among the Pennsylvania electorate, and those aspects of her September 11 and 28, 2020 guidance memos should be declared unconstitutional.

**III. DEFENDANTS' HAPHAZARD AND INCONSISTENT USE OF DROP BOXES AND MOBILE COLLECTION SITES VIOLATES PLAINTIFFS' FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT TO VOTE AND TO A FREE AND FAIR ELECTION.**

Secretary Boockvar also fails to protect free and fair elections by permitting the use of unstaffed, unmonitored drop boxes and mobile collection sites. The Secretary's August 19, 2020 guidance memo permits counties, at their sole discretion, to implement drop boxes—unstaffed and unmonitored, and, in some cases, mobile and unmonitored. (App. Ex. 23, August 19 guidance.) Like the signature verification, Plaintiffs' injuries, caused by the Secretary's guidance memo, involve their fundamental right to have their votes and the votes of those similarly situated counted and not subject to being debased or diluted by illegally cast or delivered votes at unstaffed drop boxes. The Secretary's arbitrary guidance also creates a varying voting scheme across the Commonwealth, raising serious concerns as to the validity of the votes cast. Therefore, under an *Anderson-Burdick* analysis, strict scrutiny applies to Plaintiffs' voter dilution claims.

**A. Unstaffed Drop Boxes and Mobile Collection Sites Dilute the Vote and Violate Equal Protection.**

Mobile collection sites and unstaffed drop boxes fail to provide secure, free, and fair elections, risking vote dilution through illegal third-party harvesting and fraudulently cast ballots. The Secretary's guidance memo instructs counties to use, at their discretion, drop boxes. (App. Ex. 23, August 19 Guidance at 4-5.) Her Guidance also permits counties to use, at their own discretion, mobile collection sites (*Id.*) But, the Secretary fails to provide consistent parameters or uniform standards when implementing drop boxes and mobile units, leading to unmanned, unmonitored drop boxes and unsecure mobile collection sites. This vague guidance memo places a severe burden on the fundamental right to vote to which the Secretary provided no compelling interest. *See Burdick*, 504 U.S. at 434 (strict scrutiny applies when burden severe). *See also Anderson*, 417 U.S. at 226 ("The deposit of forged ballots in the ballot boxes, no matter how small or great their number, dilutes the influence of honest votes in an election . . . to the extent that the importance of his vote is nullified, wholly or in part, he has been injured in the free exercise of a right or privilege secured to him by the laws and Constitution of the United States.") (internal quotation omitted).

Unstaffed drop boxes and mobile collection sites promote the casting of illegal, unreliable, and fraudulent ballots, and fail to contain basic minimum guarantees against such conduct that violate the Constitution by leading to the dilution of validly cast ballots. *See Pierce*, 324 F. Supp. at 695 ("the principle that vote dilution unconstitutionally violates equal protection extends to matters beyond malapportioned legislative districts"); *see also* Statement of the Facts, II.G; App. Ex. 9, Boockvar Dep. 154:1-18, 183:16-184:2, 189:4-13, App. Ex. 21, Boockvar Dep. Ex. 14, January 10 Guidance.). The risk of illegal and fraudulently cast ballots is not remote. A similar version of the guidance memo, which was in place during the Primary Election, allowed for the creation of these unstaffed and unmonitored drop boxes, as well as mobile service centers, and the

acceptance and counting of illegally returned ballots. (App. Ex. 9, Boockvar Dep. 92:4-10, Boockvar Dep. Ex. 18; App. Ex. 53, Act 35 Report); (App. Ex. 10, Marks Dep. 60:3-61:10, Marks Dep. Ex. 7, App. Ex. 49, Montour County Interrogatory No. 5.) Despite knowing of this flawed system, the Secretary did not remediate the situation; instead she continued the practice and allowed for the use of these illegal ballot dropping locations in the upcoming General Election. (App. Ex. 9, Boockvar Dep. 92:4-10.)

Unmonitored, unstaffed drop boxes and mobile units “present[] the easiest opportunity for voter fraud” through ballot destruction and illegal third-party ballot harvesting. (App. Ex. 19, Riddlemoser Rep. at 16.) The use of unstaffed drop boxes places the security of unknown hundreds (if not thousands) of ballots in jeopardy of theft, destruction, and manipulation. (App. Ex. 19, Riddlemoser Rep. at Ex. D.) This not only dilutes the weight of *all* qualified Pennsylvania electors, it curtails a sense of security in the voting process. *See Purcell v. Gonzalez*, 549 U.S. 1, 4 (2006) (“Confidence in the election process is essential to the functioning of our participatory democracy.”). *See generally*, App. Ex. 4, 5, 6, and 7, Decl. of Congressman Thompson, Reschenthaler, Kelly and Joyce. As held by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court and recognized by Secretary Boockvar, third-party ballot harvesting is illegal in Pennsylvania. *See, e.g., 25 P.S. § 3146.6(a); In re Canvass of Absentee Ballots of Nov. 4, 2003 Gen. Election*, 843 A.2d at 1226 (“the Election Code does not provide for third-party deliveries of absentee ballots . . .”); Sept. 28 Guidance, Sec. 4.1, p. 6 (“A voter must return his or her own completed absentee or mail-in ballot . . . Third-person delivery of absentee or mail-in ballots are not permitted, and any ballots delivered by someone other than the voter are required to be set aside.”). Although Secretary Boockvar and her experts *know* that unstaffed drop boxes leads to illegal third-party ballot harvesting, App. Ex.

19, Riddlemoser Rep., she refuses to change her tune, promoting the use of this unconstitutional voting scheme and placing a severe burden on the fundamental right to vote.

What is further troubling about the Secretary's interpretation of the August guidance memo is that it is contrary to the understanding and election expertise of the guidance memo's principal author, Veronica Degraffenreid, special advisor on election modernization for the Commonwealth. (App. Ex. 18, Degraffenreid Dep. 8:16-25, 35:2-8). Prior to her role with the Commonwealth, Ms. Degraffenreid served as director of election operations for North Carolina for six years, administering North Carolina's election code. (*Id.*) Under Ms. Degraffenreid, North Carolina provided no-excuse absentee voting and over-the-counter ballot options. (*Id.* at 13:5-16:17.) North Carolina also required two witness signatures on ballot return envelopes to verify voters. (*Id.*) Even with these systems of voting, under Ms. Degraffenreid's guidance, North Carolina did not use unstaffed drop boxes. More telling, according to Ms. Degraffenreid, the principal author of the guidance memo and experienced election official, Pennsylvania also does not permit the use of unstaffed and unmonitored drop boxes. See App. Ex. 18, Degraffenreid Depo 17:9-18:15; 36:1-25. Thus, there is no compelling reason for the use of unstaffed drop boxes.

This severe burden on the fundamental right to vote cannot stand unless Secretary Boockvar's guidance memo on drop boxes is narrowly tailored to serve a compelling government interest. Defendants have offered no interest – let alone a compelling interest – for the use of unmonitored mobile collection sites and unstaffed drop boxes. This alone proves this type of ballot delivery fails strict scrutiny and their use must be enjoined. But, *even if* there is a compelling interest, the Secretary's guidance memo is not narrowly tailored. A narrowly tailored drop box policy requires the drop boxes to be secure and attended to at all times by a sworn election official. *See* (Riddlemoser Rep. 15-16.) The election official can verify the identity of the ballot dropper,

preventing any illegal third-party ballot delivery, and safeguard that all ballots collected are secured from tampering at the end of each day. (*Id.*) A narrow-tailoring such as this would serve the Commonwealth's best interest when remediating ballot errors, like signatures, before ballot submission and ensuring the qualified elector's ballot is cast. (*Id.*) In this scenario, qualified electors are still afforded the opportunity to drop off their ballots, but the election scheme is narrowly tailored to that interest while protecting the qualified elector's right to an equal vote. As it stands, Secretary Boockvar's guidance memo on drop boxes and mobile collection sites is not narrowly tailored, is unconstitutional, and the use of such systems should be enjoined.

**B. An Unfair Voting Scheme is Created by the Unequal Use of Drop Boxes and Mobile Collection Sites and Violates Due Process.**

The various use of mobile collection and drop boxes across counties also violates due process. *Black*, 209 F. Supp. 2d at 900 (a state law that allows local election officials to impose different voting schemes upon some portions of the electorate and not others violates due process). The Secretary's guidance memo on these drop boxes creates different voting schemes across the Commonwealth. It is entirely up to each county when deciding whether to allow for the use of drop boxes, whether staffed or unstaffed, located inside or outside a municipal building, a park, garage, or elected officials' office or building, or targeting a particular demographic or group. (*See* App. Ex. 9, Boockvar Dep. 199:10–200:10; 201:6-203:18; 211:18–212:9; Statement of Facts, *supra*, II.G.). For example, Delaware County will have 50 drop boxes throughout the county and implement mobile collection sites, yet Monroe County will have neither. *Compare* Delaware County Warded \$2.2 Million Grant for Save Elections; <http://www.delcopa.gov/publicrelations/releases/2020/safeelectionsgrant.html> (accessed September 4, 2020); *with* (Monroe County Mail-In and Absentee Ballot Information available



from <http://www.monroecountypa.gov/Dept/Voter/Documents/MailInAbsenteeInformation.pdf>, accessed Sept. 27, 2020, 9:45am.)

With the risks associated with mobile collection units and drop boxes, the use of these voting schemes by some counties but not others further dilutes the votes and creates an unconstitutional burden on due process. “That people in different counties have significantly different probabilities of having their votes [weighed the same as others], solely because of the nature of the system used in their jurisdiction is the heart of the problem.” *Black*, 209 F. Supp. 2d at 899; see also *Gallagher v. N.Y. State Bd. of Elections*, 2020 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 138219, \*64 (S.D.N.Y. Aug. 3, 2020) (“That burden is exceptionally severe. A large number of ballots will be invalidated, and consequently, not counted based on circumstances entirely out of the voters’ control.”). Accordingly, the Defendants’ inconsistent use of drop boxes and other mobile collection sites, in accordance with the Secretary’s August 19, 2020 guidance, violates equal protection and due process, and must be enjoined.

**IV. THE COUNTY RESIDENCY RESTRICTION ON WATCHERS WILL RESULT IN UNEVEN ELECTION OBSERVATION AND UNEQUAL VOTING CHALLENGES, VIOLATING EQUAL PROTECTION AS APPLIED IN THE 2020 GENERAL ELECTION.**

As applied to the 2020 General Election, during the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, Pennsylvania’s residency requirement for watchers violates equal protection. Under Election Code Section 417(b), a party may only utilize county residents as watchers. See 25 P.S. § 2687. Although the Pennsylvania Supreme Court recently affirmed that such requirements are *facially* acceptable as a “reasonable” limitation, the court did not consider, in light of the limitations presented by COVID-19, whether a county residency restriction *as applied* causes parties to be unable to staff watchers and violates equal protection. See *Pa. Democratic Party v. Boockvar*, 2020 Pa. LEXIS 4872 at \*86-88.

**A. As Applied, Pennsylvania’s County Residency Requirement Constitutes an Unconstitutional Burden on the First and Fourteenth Amendment Rights of Candidates and Political Parties to Free and Fair Elections and Equal Protection.**

A state regulation that imposes reasonable, nondiscriminatory burdens on the election process will be subject to an intermediate form of scrutiny, and the Court must determine if the state’s interests outweigh the burdens on Fourteenth Amendment rights. *See Burdick*, 504 U.S. at 428, 434 (quoting *Anderson*, 460 U.S. at 788); *see also Democratic Nat’l Comm. v. Bostelmann*, No. 20-cv-249-wmc, 2020 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 172330, at \*84 (W.D. Wis. Sep. 21, 2020) (enjoining Wisconsin requirement that election officials at polling places be “an elector of the county in which the municipality is located”). Although a law may facially pass muster under equal protection, if the law, as applied, calls into question the ability to meet the requirements of the law and provide equal protection, no matter how “reasonable” the law may be on its face, the burden on the right to free and fair elections is unconstitutional. *See, e.g., United States v. Marcavage*, 609 F.3d 264, 273 (3d Cir. 2010) (“An as-applied attack, in contrast, does not contend that a law is unconstitutional as written but that its application to a particular person under particular circumstances deprived that person of a constitutional right.”). When determining if an election law violates equal protection as applied, the Court must consider the circumstances surrounding application of the law in the current climate. *See Patriot Party v. Allegheny Cty. Dep’t of Elections*, 95 F.3d 253, 270 (3d Cir. 1996) (“the challenged Pennsylvania election laws, as applied in this case, constitute an unconstitutional burden on the Patriot Party’s First and Fourteenth Amendment rights to free association and equal protection”).

Watchers are essential to the electoral process, playing a critical role when ensuring the integrity of an election by flagging irregular ballots, malfunctioning voting machines, and possible voter fraud, while also communicating with voters to help ensure voter turnout to the correct

locations. Tiryak v. Jordan, 472 F. Supp. 822, 823-24 (E.D. Pa. 1979) (quoting Marchioro v. Chaney, 442 U.S. 191, 195 (1979)); *see also* (App. Ex. 19, Riddlemoser Rep. at pp. 6 & 19; App. Ex. 20, Lockerbie Rep. at ¶ 14.). Pennsylvania’s Election Code requires for a general election that: (1) each party is entitled to appoint three poll watchers per location; (2) each candidate for nomination is entitled to appoint two watchers per election district; and (3) each watcher be a resident of the county for which the watcher is appointed. *See* 25 P.S. § 2687; *see also* (App. Ex. 20, Lockerbie Rep. at ¶¶ 6-10) (additional qualifications for poll watchers include that the individual must be sufficiently educated on election law and procedure to perform the duties of a poll watcher and must be willing to serve for what amounts to less than minimum wage).)

In a “normal” election, the residency requirement limits the pool of potential watchers per party and candidate in each county. It is questionable whether the residency requirement even is justifiable in “normal” elections. (App. Ex. 4, Thompson Decl. at ¶ 21.) However, the current pandemic severely challenges the ability of parties to staff watchers, violating equal protection as applied to the 2020 General Election. *See* Bostelmann, 2020 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 172330 at \*84 (“eliminating the residence requirement [for poll workers] would provide greater flexibility across the state to meeting unanticipated last-minute demands for staffing due to COVID-19 outbreaks or fear”). “[T]he United States has suffered through an unprecedented period of pandemic and curtailment of public activity.” App. Ex. 20, Lockerbie Report ¶ 11. The pandemic’s impact on elections is and has been so severe that numerous states cancelled in-person voting for the primaries, and the Commonwealth repeatedly referred to the pandemic as a basis to expand mail-in voting due to the fact that voters may be unwilling or unable to come to polling places in November. *Id.* The impact expands further, to the number of residents who are willing to appear at a mass gathering, like a polling place, for twelve or more hours to observe election activities.

Although watchers play a critical role in the electoral process and the integrity of an election, watchers, for all parties and candidates, are difficult to find. In a “normal” election, the Republican Party and its candidates have “struggled to recruit and retain sufficient poll [watchers].” See (App. Ex. 2, Decl. of James Fitzpatrick, ¶¶ 20-22 & 25); see also Bostelmann, 2020 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 172330 at \*85. For the 2020 General Election, the Trump Campaign, the RNC, and the Congressmen Plaintiffs do not believe that they will be able to obtain a full roster of qualified and willing watchers for the General Election if the residency requirement is in place. (App. Ex. 2, Decl. of James Fitzpatrick, ¶ 25; App. Ex. 4, Decl. of Glenn Thompson, ¶¶ 19-20; App. Ex. 5, Decl. of Mike Kelly, ¶ 16; App. Ex. 7, Decl. of John Joyce, ¶¶ 11-13; App. Ex. 6, Decl. of Guy Reschenthaler, ¶¶ 11-13; App. Ex. 3, Aff. of Melanie Patterson, ¶ 5.)

For minor parties, the difficulty of staffing watchers is even worse. Unlike the major parties, which at least have a roster of members to canvas for possible service, minor parties simply do not have the ability to staff the polling places with the residency requirements in place. See App. Ex. 20, Lockerbie Report, at ¶ 17 (utilizing 2016 election data for Philadelphia, all “other” parties combined would have to compete for one in every seven voters to serve as their appointed poll watcher). Given that there are dozens of smaller parties who have nominees for President that are eligible to receive votes in Pennsylvania, the residency requirement amounts to a wide-scale denial of the ability to observe the election where candidates will be evaluated. *Id.* at ¶ 16; see also Anderson, 460 U.S. at 780 (recognizing third or minor political parties still afforded protections under First and Fourteenth Amendments).

Additionally, the upcoming November 3, 2020 General Election involves the first time that the Commonwealth electorate will be voting at a general election under its newly enacted no-excuse by-mail voting. At the Secretary’s encouragement, several county boards of elections have

established temporary satellite offices to allow voters to apply in-person for an absentee or mail-in ballot and upon approval, vote and return that ballot to the county election officials staffing such satellite offices. (App. Ex. 17, Voye Dep. at 16: 4-20; App. Ex. 13, Bluestein Dep. at 30: 2-10; App. Ex. 14, Soltysiak Dep. at 16:22 – 17:8, 43:11-16; and App. Ex. 16, Hagan Dep. at 18:11-22.) At least three of these counties (*i.e.*, Philadelphia, Delaware, and Centre) are ones in which Democratic registered voters out-number than their Republican counterparts. *See* <https://www.dos.pa.gov/VotingElections/OtherServicesEvents/VotingElectionStatistics/Pages/VotingElectionStatistics.aspx> (last accessed October 1, 2020). Also, these same three counties have received funding for the establishment of such multiple satellite offices – Philadelphia, alone, has approved 15 satellite offices to operate from September 28, 2020 until Election Day – and other absentee and mail-in ballot efforts from a private group that favors the Democratic Party and their platform. *See Pa. Voters Alliance, et al. v. Centre County, et al.*, Civ. A. No. 4:20-cv-1761 (M.D. Pa. 2020), Complaint filed 09/25/2020 (ECF # 1), p. 1-2, 17-18; *see also Crossey v. Boockvar*, 108 MM 2020, 2020 Pa. LEXIS 4519, at \*2-\*3 (Pa. Aug. 21, 2020) (Saylor, C.J.) (concurring and dissenting) (noting that “[t]his litigation represents one of many high-stakes disputes between political organizations with differing constituencies unfolding across the country. I respectfully dissent to the associational interests of one side (Democratic parties) being represented to the exclusion of the other [Republican parties]”. . The Secretary has stated that she anticipates approximately 2 million votes (approximately 25% of the total registered electorate) will be cast in the November 3, 2020 General Election via absentee and mail-in ballots, and that the vast majority of them will be cast through these early voting satellite offices. Under the Election Code, a “polling place” is defined as the “room provided in each election district for voting at a primary or election.” 25 P.S. § 2602(q). Therefore, seeking to staff these county satellite offices in addition

to the polls on Election Day is making it impossible for parties and candidates, including the Plaintiffs in this case, to recruit and staff watchers for the November 3, 2020 General Election. (App. Ex. 2, Decl. of James Fitzpatrick, ¶¶ 22, 24-25 & 28.)<sup>13</sup>

Thus, Election Code Section 2687's county residency requirement, as applied in these unprecedented times, is not rationally connected or reasonably related to any interest presented by the Commonwealth. Removing the county residency restriction is reasonable and promotes a compelling state interest of free and fair elections. Removing the residency restriction ameliorates challenges faced by the parties when staffing watchers, allowing citizens outside of the county, who are ready, willing, and able but would otherwise be prohibited, to serve as a poll watchers for major and minor political parties alike. Removing the residency barrier also provides "greater flexibility across the state to meet unanticipated last-minute demands for staffing due to COVID-19 outbreaks of fear." *Bostelmann*, 2020 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 172330 at \*85. And, removing the residency requirement affirms the sanctity of the election process and public confidence that, whatever the outcome in the upcoming November 3, 2020 General Election, it has been the result of a full and fair process. Thus, removing the residency requirement is reasonable as applied in these circumstances, satisfying equal protection and the fundamental right to free and fair elections. *See, e.g., Bostelmann*, 2020 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 172330 at \*86.

**B. The Decisions in *Republican Party of Pa. v. Cortes* and *Pennsylvania Democratic Party v. Boockvar* Do Not Preclude Plaintiffs' As-Applied Challenge.**

In Answers to the Complaint and earlier Motions to Dismiss, Secretary Boockvar and several County Election Boards have argued that Plaintiffs' challenge to the county residency

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<sup>13</sup> Equally concerning is that not all counties have advised whether watchers will be permitted to observe the activities at any of Defendants' satellite offices or any of the drop boxes or other mobile collection sites that they may use. (*See, e.g.,* App. Exh. 56, Montgomery County Guidance for Watchers at Drop Box Locations.)

requirement is barred by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court's September 17, 2020, decision in *Pennsylvania Democratic Party v. Boockvar*, and its adoption of the Pennsylvania Eastern District Court's decision in *Republican Party of Pa. v. Cortes*. See, e.g., Secretary's Answer and Affirmative Defenses (ECF # 492), p. 49-50, 52. However, this argument is without merit.

The United States Supreme Court has long held that the right to vote includes, *inter alia*, the ability to do so free from state-imposed burdens or dilution by fraud. See, e.g., Gray, 372 U.S. at 380 (every vote must be "protected from the diluting effect of illegal ballots."); Crawford, 553 U.S. at 196 (plurality op. of Stevens, J.) ("There is no question about the legitimacy or importance of the State's interest in counting only the votes of eligible voters."); accord Reynolds, 377 U.S. at 554-55 & n.29. Indisputably, Pennsylvania's poll watcher statute seeks to preserve an orderly and accurate canvass of the electorate by permitting candidates to appoint qualified registered electors to observe, report, and, on occasion, challenge the process by which the vote occurs. Tiryak, 472 F. Supp. at 823-24. Any limitation on people who can perform these functions necessarily will impact the extent to which these functions will be carried out.

Despite these indisputable facts, in *Pennsylvania Democratic Party v. Boockvar*, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court held that the poll watcher qualification requirements, including those related to residency, "impose[] no burden on one's constitutional right to vote and, accordingly, requires only a showing that rational basis exists to be upheld." *Pennsylvania Democratic Party v. Boockvar*, 2020 Pa. LEXIS 4872, at \*86. Other than by relying primarily on the *Cortes* decision from the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court provided no analysis as to how it reached the conclusion that a statute enacted to preserve a transparent voting process and to identify and regulate irregularities that would impact voting was, in fact, disassociated from the "right to vote." *Id.* If poll watchers are not there to

preserve the right to vote free from irregularities, and the associated right of candidates to have their candidacy fairly adjudicated by the electorate, one wonders why they are there at all. Indeed, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court in *Pennsylvania Democratic Party v. Boockvar* simply changed the question by noting that *Cortes* held that “serving as a poll watcher does not implicate a fundamental constitutional right, like the right to vote, but rather, is a right conferred by statute.” *Id.* at \*79. To be clear, the right at issue here is the right of **candidates** and **political parties** to participate in an election where the process is transparent and open to observation and the right of the **voters** to participate in such election.

In *Pennsylvania Democratic Party v. Boockvar*, the Republican challengers did, in fact, raise the constitutional right to participate in a free election untainted by fraud: “every voter in a federal election, whether he votes for a candidate with little chance of winning or for one with little chance of losing, has a right under the Constitution to have his vote fairly counted, without its being distorted by fraudulently cast votes.” *Id.* at \*82 (*quoting* Respondents’ Brief at 45 and *citing Anderson*, 417 U.S. at 227). And, while not disputing that poll watchers serve an important function in securing that guarantee, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court summarily decided that concerns about fraud “are unsubstantiated and are specifically belied by the Act 35 report issued by the Secretary on August 1, 2020 concerning mail in voting in the Primary Election.” *Id.* at \*87. The Pennsylvania Supreme Court appeared to conclude, as a factual matter, that notwithstanding the U.S. Constitution’s guarantee of a fair and untainted electoral process, fraud is not a concern in Pennsylvania simply because the Secretary says so. But the U.S. Constitution guarantees are not so makeweight that a public official may sweep them away with the assurance “don’t worry, it’s not a problem.” Moreover, the authority cited by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, the Secretary’s the Act 35 report, dealt with the security of mail-in balloting and did not conclude that



observation and challenge was no longer needed at polling places. *See* App. Ex. 53, Act 35 Report, p. 39 (“The data provided by the counties reinforces numerous independent studies that conclude that mail ballot fraud is exceedingly rare, ...”).<sup>14</sup> Indeed, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court apparently took on the mantle of a super-legislature and concluded that watchers really are not needed after all. That is a bridge too far.

In fact, it is not the burden of a candidate or political party to prove fraud exists before procedural safeguards related to a free and accurate election are acknowledged to be of a constitutional dimension. App. Ex. 19, Riddlemoser Rep. The court in *Pennsylvania Democratic Party v. Boockvar* never grappled with the core question of the purpose of the Pennsylvania poll watcher statute. It is not the existence of fraud that infuses poll watching with constitutional protections – it is the possibility of something less than a full and free election that connects their presence with constitutional guarantees.

Moreover, to the extent proof of fraud is required before a court is willing to infuse poll watching with constitutional protections, this Court need only review the recent criminal convictions in the case of *United States v. DeMuro*, Criminal No. 20-112 (E.D. Pa. unsealed May 21, 2020). In that case, a former Judge of Elections in South Philadelphia pled guilty to adding fraudulent votes to the voting machines during Election Day – also known as “ringing up” votes – and then falsely certifying that the voting machine results were accurate for specific federal, state,

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<sup>14</sup> As both Secretary Boockvar and Deputy Secretary Marks confirmed, the Act 35 report did not disclose all the data provided by the counties to the Secretary. (App. Ex. 9, Boockvar Dep. 231:25 – 232:8; App. Ex. 10, Marks Dep. 242:11–244:18, 245:1-7, 246:18 – 247:12, 254: 1-17.) Specifically, the Act 35 Report makes no mention that of the 8,003 absentee and mail-in ballots cast in Lawrence County, which represented 45% of the total votes cast in the 2020 Primary Election, 440 of them were returned without inner secrecy envelopes as mandated by the Election Code. (App. Ex. 10, Marks Dep. 242:11 – 244:18, 245:1-7.) Deputy Secretary Marks testified he was unable to exclude the possibility of fraud on this issue. (*Id.* at 240:15–241:7.)

and local Democratic candidates in the 2014, 2015, and 2016 primary elections. The scheme involved a political consultant who purportedly solicited monetary payments from the candidates as “consulting fees,” and then used portions of those funds to pay election board officials, including DeMuro, in return for ringing up votes. DeMuro was able to commit the fraud because there were no poll watchers at his precinct. *See United States v. DeMuro*, Criminal No. 20-112, Information (ECF # 1) (E.D. Pa Mar. 03, 2020); M. Cavacini, “U.S. Attorney William M. McSwain Announces Charges and Guilty Plea of Former Philadelphia Judge of Elections Who Committed Election Fraud,” U.S. Attys. Office – Pa., Eastern (May 21, 2020) (available at <https://www.justice.gov/usao-edpa/pr/us-attorney-william-m-mcswain-announces-charges-and-guilty-plea-former-philadelphia>).

The Eastern District of Pennsylvania’s decision in *Cortes* fares no better in undermining the claims made there. There, the court focused on, and rejected, claims of the poll watchers themselves. *Cortes*, 218 F. Supp.3d at 414 (rejecting a First Amendment right of poll watchers under the right of free association); *id.* (rejecting the claim that poll watching involved political speech). When considering the claims that the party would be unable to staff polling places due to the residency requirement, the district court rejected these claims due to a lack of evidence. For example, the court determined that the claim that poll watchers would deter fraud as “speculation” on the record presented to the court. *Id.* at 406. Moreover, the court relied on its factual conclusion that the party “points to no polling place that Section 2687(b) prevents it from staffing with poll watchers.” *Id.* at 408. Finally, the court noted that Section 2687(b) does not “bar[ ]” parties from staffing particular polling places. *Id.* at 411.

But, the core of the as-applied challenge here is not that the Plaintiffs cannot staff a particular polling place, it is that a candidate and his or her party is presented with the Hobson’s

choice of selecting limited polling places to observe due to the residency requirement and accept that unobserved polling places must exist due to the inability to recruit a sufficient force of poll watchers due to the necessity that candidates be county residents. As the evidence presented in this matter establishes, the residency requirement necessarily limits the abilities of the parties to staff these positions and, as such, puts into danger the constitutionally-guaranteed right to a transparent and undiluted vote.

Accordingly, as applied, the county residency requirement for watchers in Election Code Section 2687 is unconstitutional.

**V. PLAINTIFFS ARE ENTITLED TO AN INJUNCTION TO PREVENT VOTE DILUTION AND FURTHER VIOLATIONS OF EQUAL PROTECTION AND DUE PROCESS.**

There is no question that Plaintiffs have demonstrated irreparable injury because Defendants have infringed, and will continue to infringe, Plaintiffs' federal and state constitutional rights leading up to the 2020 General Election. "Irreparable harm means that the moving party will be injured in such a way that adequate compensatory or other corrective relief will not be available at a later date in the ordinary course of litigation." *Pierce*, 324 F. Supp. 2d at 706 (citing *Oburn v. Shapp*, 521 F.2d 142, 151 (3rd Cir. 1975)).

Free, fair, and credible elections are fundamental principles defining our democracy. Secretary Boockvar, through her unconstitutional rule-making, is severely risking the integrity of the 2020 General Election. (App. Ex. 5, Decl. of Mike Kelly.) The President's and the Congressmen's fundamental right of free and fair elections will suffer irreparable harm if Secretary Boockvar is not enjoined from continuing her unconstitutional policies and the Counties enjoined from following those policies. There will be no protection of one-person, one-vote in Pennsylvania, because her policies prohibiting signature verification and allowing inconsistently located/used unstaffed drop boxes will result in illegal ballots being cast and counted with

legitimate votes. The Republican National Committee faces the same irreparable harm, on behalf of its candidates and members, who will respectively have their elections disparaged and their votes diluted should the Secretary's practices continue. *See, e.g., Patino v. City of Pasadena*, No. H-14-3241, 2017 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 229191, \*2 (S.D. Tx. Jan 16, 2017) (when vote dilution occurs, "[r]emedies like monetary damages, or more limited injunction provisions, are inadequate to redress the injury and to prevent future harm").

Individual in-person voters face even further irreparable harm, as their in-person votes will be disparately impacted through the Secretary's arbitrary guidance allowing in-person votes to be treated more strictly than mail-in votes. For example, Ms. Patterson and Mr. Show, who both intend to vote in person, will be treated differently than absentee or mail-in voters. (App. Ex. 3, Aff. of Melanie Patterson, ¶ 5.) Under Secretary Boockvar's guidance memo, their votes face a rigid screening process and signature comparison, which could lead to the rejection of their ballots. But, under Secretary Boockvar's September guidance memos, a fraudulent voter, casting an illegal ballot via absentee or mail-in, can succeed in casting an illegal ballot. (App. Ex. 19, Riddlemoser Rep. at Rep. Ex. D.) The irreparable harm faced by all Plaintiffs and the Pennsylvania electorate is clear; Defendants must be enjoined.

Weighing the balance of harms also tips sharply in Plaintiffs' favor. Where, as here, a plaintiff shows a violation of equal protection, "the balance of harms need not strongly weigh in [the moving party's favor] for this factor to be met." *Exodus Refugee Immigration Inc. v. Pence*, 165 F. Supp. 3d 718, 739 (7th Cir. 2016). Plaintiffs have shown that, unless enjoined, Defendants' conduct during the 2020 General Election will illegally effect the results of elections throughout Pennsylvania and the nation.

Plaintiffs likewise have met their burden to show their claims advance the public interest. The Third Circuit instructed that “the public interest is best served by eliminating constitutional violations.” Scutella v. Erie Cty. Prison, No. 1:19-cv-245, 2020 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 19318, \*17 (W.D. Pa. Feb. 5, 2020) (citing Swartzwelder v. McNeilly, 297 F.3d 228, 242 (3rd Cir. 2002)) (internal quotations omitted); see also City of Phila. v. Sessions, 309 F. Supp. 3d 289, 342 (E.D. Pa. 2018 (“Enjoining constitutional violations also furthers the public interest.”)). Accordingly, because Plaintiffs will suffer irreparable harm, a balancing of harms favors Plaintiffs, and the public interest is best suited by a free, fair, and equal 2020 General Election, the injunctive relief Plaintiffs seek is warranted and should be granted.

### CONCLUSION

The undisputed facts show Plaintiffs are entitled to the three distinct remedies from this Court as a matter of law. *First*, Plaintiffs are entitled to: (a) a declaration that Secretary Boockvar’s guidance memos dispensing with the signature verification of absentee and mail-in applications and ballots are unconstitutional; and (b) an injunction enjoining all defendant county boards of election from following that guidance memo. *Second*, Plaintiffs are entitled to: (a) a declaration that all drop boxes and/or mobile collection sites for the return of absentee and mail-in ballots must be staffed, secured, and employed consistently within and across all 67 of Pennsylvania’s counties to prevent third-party delivery and other improperly cast absentee or mail-in ballots; and (b) an injunction enjoining any contrary use and segregating any improperly cast ballots. *Third*, Plaintiffs are entitled to: (a) a declaration that the county residency restriction for watchers is unconstitutional as applied to the upcoming General Election; and (b) an injunction preventing its application, because of the burden on the fundamental right to vote and to a free and fair election will leave myriad locations unwatched and foster an environment ripe for voter fraud.

As the clock continues to tick away to November 3, 2020, Plaintiffs and Pennsylvania's millions of voters are speeding toward a General Election that will undoubtedly be a divisive and incoherent administrative nightmare. This is all while Secretary Boockvar continues to issue illegal guidance memos to all 67 Pennsylvania County Boards of Elections promoting defiance of Pennsylvania's Election Code – all in order to oust a President she does not favor. The undisputed facts and the Election Code, as interpreted by long-standing jurisprudence, leave no doubt that Plaintiffs are entitled to the remedies they seek from this Court. For these reasons, as fully set forth above, Plaintiffs respectfully request the Court to grant their Motion for Summary Judgment in its entirety and enter the relief set forth in their proposed order.

Respectfully submitted,

PORTER WRIGHT MORRIS & ARTHUR LLP

Date: October 1, 2020

By: /s/ Ronald L. Hicks, Jr.

Ronald L. Hicks, Jr. (PA #49520)  
Jeremy A. Mercer (PA #86480)  
Carolyn B. McGee (PA #208815)  
Six PPG Place, Third Floor  
Pittsburgh, PA 15222  
(412) 235-4500 (Telephone)  
(412) 235-4510 (Fax)  
rhicks@porterwright.com  
jmercerc@porterwright.com  
cmcgee@porterwright.com

and

Matthew E. Morgan (DC #989591)  
(admitted pro hac vice – ECF #10)  
Justin Clark (DC #499621)  
(admitted pro hac vice – ECF #31)  
Elections, LLC  
1000 Maine Ave., SW, 4th Floor  
Washington, DC 20224  
(202) 844-3812 (Telephone)  
matthew.morgan@electionlawllc.com

justin.clark@electionlawllc.com

*Counsel for Plaintiffs*

**CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

I hereby certify that I caused a true and correct copy of the foregoing *Plaintiffs'* *Memorandum of Law in Support of Motion for Summary Judgment* to be filed on October 1, 2020, via ECF, which system will serve notice of same on all parties registered to receive same via the ECF system. For any party who has yet to enter an appearance, the undersigned certifies that a copy of the foregoing filing will be served on that party via First Class Mail and a copy sent to the County Solicitor, if known, via email or fax.

Respectfully submitted,

PORTER WRIGHT MORRIS & ARTHUR LLP

By: /s/ Ronald L. Hicks, Jr.

Ronald L. Hicks, Jr. (PA #49520)  
Jeremy A. Mercer (PA #86480)  
Carolyn B. McGee (PA #208815)  
Six PPG Place, Third Floor  
Pittsburgh, PA 15222  
(412) 235-4500 (Telephone)  
(412) 235-4510 (Fax)  
rhicks@porterwright.com  
jmercer@porterwright.com  
cmcgee@porterwright.com

and

Matthew E. Morgan (DC #989591)  
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Justin Clark (DC #499621)  
(admitted pro hac vice – ECF #31)  
Elections, LLC  
1000 Maine Ave., SW, 4th Floor  
Washington, DC 20224  
(202) 844-3812 (Telephone)  
matthew.morgan@electionlawllc.com  
justin.clark@electionlawllc.com

*Counsel for Plaintiffs*



# Exhibit E

# REDACTED

**From:** Jake Smeltz <[jsmeltz@pahousegop.com](mailto:jsmeltz@pahousegop.com)>  
**Sent:** Monday, September 21, 2020 9:28 AM  
**To:** Wills IV, Victor <[vicwills@pa.gov](mailto:vicwills@pa.gov)>  
**Subject:** Follow Up / Signature Mismatch Issue

Victor,

Following up from the naked ballot issue discussion...

When will the Department issue a correction concerning its incorrect guidance regarding setting aside absentee or mail in ballots based on a signature mismatch?

On September 11, 2020, the Department of State issued a "Guidance Concerning Examination of Absentee and Mail-In Ballot Return Envelopes." On page 3 of that Guidance, the Department offered that "[t]he Pennsylvania Election Code does not authorize the county board of elections to set aside returned absentee or mail-in ballots based solely on signature analysis by the county board of elections." As reflected in the Court's opinions in Pa. Democratic Party, that assertion is incorrect.

On September 17, 2020, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court issued its opinion in Pa. Democratic Party v. Boockvar. It's worth taking a quick walk-through of the Majority Opinion before continuing with an analysis of Justice Wecht's Concurring Opinion.

Count 3 of the Petition was described by the Court, on pages 5-6 of the Majority Opinion, as follows:

In Count 3, Petitioner highlighted that the "procedure for mail-in ballots often leads to minor errors, which result in many ballots being rejected and disenfranchising voters who believe they have exercised their right to vote." *Id.* at 51, ¶ 186. In anticipation of these expected errors, Petitioner again sought an injunction requiring Boards that have knowledge of an incomplete or incorrectly filled out ballot and the elector's contact information to contact the elector and provide them "the opportunity to cure the facial defect until the UOCAVA deadline."

Page 38 of the Majority Opinion described the minor errors at issue (*emphasis in bold added*):

Petitioner bases this claim on its assertion that the multi-stepped process for voting by mail-in or absentee ballot inevitably leads to what it describes as minor errors, such as not completing the voter declaration or using an incorrect ink color to complete the ballot. See 25 P.S. § 3146.6(a) (explaining the process for voting by absentee ballot, which requires, inter alia, an elector to mark the ballot using only certain writing implements and ink; and to fill out, date, and **sign the declaration printed on the outer envelope**); *id.* § 3150.16(a) (explaining the process for voting by mail-in ballot, which imposes the same requirements). According to Petitioner, these minor oversights result in many ballots being rejected and disenfranchising voters who believe they have exercised their right to vote.

To further its request for a "notice and opportunity to cure", the Majority Opinion noted on Page 39 that "Petitioner further claims there is no governmental interest in ... requiring the formalities for the completion of the outside of the mailing envelope to be finalized prior to mailing as opposed to prior to counting."

In the end, the Majority Opinion concluded that "the Boards are not required to implement a 'notice and opportunity to cure' procedure" but advocated for the General Assembly to provide one. Page 41 of the Majority Opinion.

On page 7 of his Concurring Opinion, Justice Wecht clarified that the Court's opinion regarding Count 3 extended "no farther than to ballot defects that are capable of objective assessment pursuant to uniform standards—a qualification that captures all of the defects Petitioners seek the opportunity to cure in this case."

These issues, however, are "distinct from circumstances in which a ballot's validity turns on subjective assessments, such as signature mismatches." J. Wecht, Concurring Opinion, page 8.

Justice Wecht, on page 9, continued:

While this case offers no challenge to such inherently subjective bases for disqualifying ballots, I do not view today's Opinion as foreclosing the possibility of relief in a future case seeking the opportunity to address circumstances in which a subjective, lay assessment of voter requirements as to which reasonable minds might differ stands between the elector and the tabulating machine.

On page 10, he expressed his "hope that the General Assembly would revisit the issue and consider furnishing such a procedure on its own initiative." As an aside, HB 2626 would do just that, establishing a procedure to contact a voter whose signature on the outer envelope of the absentee or mail-in ballot does not match the signature on file with the person's voter registration, and allow the voter to cure this deficiency.

What is eminently clear, however, is that the Petitioners in Pa. Democratic Party did not "bring a discrete challenge to the Commonwealth's prescribed processes for examining the validity of signatures on ballot envelopes, so resolution of that question must wait." J. Wecht, Concurring Opinion, page 10. Therefore, until challenged and found to be unconstitutional, the Pennsylvania Election Code most certainly **does** authorize the county board of elections to set aside returned absentee or mail-in ballots based solely on signature analysis by the county board of elections.

We need to be 100% clear to the counties regarding these issues. Like the naked ballot issue, it has to be based on the law, as ultimately directed in this Supreme Court opinion.

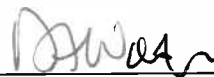
Let me know if we need to talk.

**Jake Smeltz | Chief of Staff**  
The Speaker's Office  
Pennsylvania House of Representatives  
W (717) 783-6424  
C (717) 201-8362

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**CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE**

I hereby certify that this filing complies with the provisions of the *Public Access Policy of the Unified Judicial System of Pennsylvania: Case Records of the Appellate and Trial Courts* that requires filing confidential information and documents differently than non-confidential information and documents.



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Donna A. Walsh

Date: October 4, 2020

**IN THE SUPREME COURT OF PENNSYLVANIA**

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**No. 149 MM 2020**

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**IN RE: NOVEMBER 3, 2020 GENERAL ELECTION**

**PETITION OF KATHY BOOCKVAR,  
SECRETARY OF THE COMMONWEALTH,**

**BRYAN CUTLER, SPEAKER OF THE PENNSYLVANIA HOUSE OF  
REPRESENTATIVES, KERRY BENNINGHOFF, MAJORITY LEADER  
OF THE PENNSYLVANIA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,**

**Proposed-Intervenor Respondents.**

---

**MEMORANDUM OF LAW IN SUPPORT OF  
PRELIMINARY OBJECTION OF SPEAKER OF THE PENNSYLVANIA  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES BRYAN CUTLER AND  
MAJORITY LEADER OF THE PENNSYLVANIA HOUSE OF  
REPRESENTATIVES KERRY BENNINGHOFF**

---

**CHALMERS & ADAMS LLC**

Zachary M. Wallen

Pa. ID No. 309176

301 South Hills Village Drive

No. LL200-420

Pittsburgh, PA 15241

*Counsel for Proposed-Intervenor  
Respondents Speaker of the Pennsylvania  
House of Representatives Bryan Cutler and  
Majority Leader of the Pennsylvania House  
of Representatives Kerry Benninghoff*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<b>Page</b>
TABLE OF AUTHORITIES .....	i
PRELIMINARY STATEMENT .....	1
I. FACTUAL BACKGROUND.....	2
II. ARGUMENTS IN SUPPORT OF PRELIMINARY OBJECTION.....	4
A. Preliminary Objection Pursuant to Pa. R. Civ. P. 1028(a)(4) in the Nature of a Demurrer .....	4
III. CONCLUSION.....	13

## TABLE OF AUTHORITIES

### Cases

<i>Appeal of James</i> , 105 A.2d 64 (Pa. 1954).....	11
<i>Appeal of McCracken</i> , 88 A.2d 787 (Pa. 1952).....	6
<i>Boord v. Maurer</i> , 22 A.2d 902 (Pa. 1941).....	6
<i>Chanceford Aviation Properties, LLP v. Chanceford Twp. Bd. of Supervisors</i> , 923 A.2d 1099 (Pa. 2007).....	8, 9
<i>Commonwealth v. Conklin</i> , 587 Pa. 140, 897 A.2d 1168 (2006).....	9
<i>In re Canvass of Absentee Ballots of Nov. 4, 2003 General Election</i> , 843 A.2d 1223 (Pa. 2004).....	7, 11
<i>In re Guzzardi</i> , 99 A.3d 381 (Pa. 2014).....	11
<i>NAACP Pennsylvania State Conference v. Boockvar</i> , No. 364 MD 2020 (Pa. Commw. Ct. 2020).....	13, 14, 15
<i>Nutter v. Dougherty</i> , 921 A.2d 44 (Pa. Commw. Ct. 2007), <i>aff'd</i> , 938 A.2d 401 (Pa. 2007) .....	6
<i>Pennsylvania Democratic Party v. Boockvar</i> , ___ A.3d ___, 2020 WL 5554644 (Pa. 2020) .....	11, 12, 13
<i>Walker v. Eleby</i> , 577 Pa. 104, 842 A.2d 389 (2004).....	9

### Constitutional and Statutory Authorities

25 P.S. § 2868 .....	8
25 P.S. § 2937 .....	8
25 P.S. § 3031.12 .....	4
25 P.S. § 3050 .....	8
25 P.S. § 3058 .....	6
25 P.S. § 3146.1 .....	3, 4
25 P.S. § 3146.6(a).....	6
25 P.S. § 3146.8(g)(3).....	7
25 P.S. § 3146.8(g)(4).....	7
25 P.S. § 3150.16(a).....	6

The Statutory Construction Act of 1972, Pa.C.S. § 1501 et seq. ....7, 8

**Other Authorities**

2019 Pa. Legis. Journal-House 1740-41 (Oct. 29, 2019) .....3

2019 Pa. Legis. Serv. Act 2019-77 (S.B. 421) (West).....4

Pennsylvania House of Representatives, Members of the House,

[https://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/legis/home/member\\_information/](https://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/legis/home/member_information/)

[mbrList.cfm?body=H&sort=alpha](https://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/legis/home/member_information/mbrList.cfm?body=H&sort=alpha).....3



Proposed Intervenors Speaker of the House of Representatives, Bryan Cutler, and Majority Leader of the House of Representatives, Kerry Benninghoff (“House Leaders”), hereby file this Memorandum of Law in Support of their Preliminary Objection.

### **PRELIMINARY STATEMENT**

The Pennsylvania General Assembly has worked in a bipartisan fashion in conjunction with the Governor to modernize Pennsylvania’s Election Code.

The Petitioner, while not questioning that commitment to free and fair elections, or making a direct constitutional challenge to any particular statute, seeks to have this Court adopt a tortured interpretation of the Election Code to read it as somehow disallowing election boards from using voters’ signatures as one of the methods for voter identification.<sup>1</sup>

This interpretation would be in clear contravention of the plain meaning of the Election Code and legislative intent, and in opposition to a long history of the Commonwealth’s County Election Boards using voter signatures to verify their identities. Indeed, signature matching is used throughout the election process—from nomination petitions to in-person voter identification. To disregard signatures in the

---

<sup>1</sup> Given this position, it is curious that modifications to this signature-verification provision were not included in Governor Wolf’s Executive Order than he issued on the eve of the June Primary election. Executive Order 2020-02, available at <https://www.oa.pa.gov/Policies/eo/Documents/2020-02.pdf>.

absentee/mail-in context would give rise to an absurd result, that would undoubtedly give rise to constitutional challenges on equal protection grounds, based on the disparate treatment of in-person and mail-in voters.

In addition to the constitutional harm of disregarding the plain meaning of a statute intended to maintain the integrity of Pennsylvania's elections, the Secretary's interpretation of the statute would lead to absurd conclusions. For example, even if Jane Doe's mail-in ballot was mailed back to the county board of elections with a clear signature of "Richard Roe" on it, per the Secretary's Petition and guidance, a county board of elections would be legally obligated to ignore the obvious discrepancy and count the ballot. This absurd conclusion shows the obvious flaws of the Secretary's attempts to circumvent clear and coherent statutory provisions.

For those reasons, this Court should sustain the House Leaders' preliminary objection and summarily dismiss the Petition with prejudice.

## **I. FACTUAL BACKGROUND**

Petitioner filed a petition with this Court this past Sunday, October 4, 2020, seeking a judicial declaration that "(1) county election officials may not reject absentee or mail-in applications or refuse to count voted absentee or mail-in ballots based on a subjective perception of signature variation; and (2) absentee and mail-in ballots and the applications for those ballots may not be challenged by third-parties at any time based on signature comparison." *Petition* at p. 25.

This suit was brought as the Pennsylvania General Assembly has been passing bipartisan legislation that has greatly *expanded* the ability of Pennsylvania's voters to vote by mail, starting with Act 77 of 2019.

The Legislative and Executive branches have worked hard over the past year to create a series of bipartisan election reforms, starting with Act 77 of 2019. *See* 2019 Pa. Legis. Journal-House 1741 (Oct. 29, 2019) (documenting the 138-61 vote on SB 421 (Act 77)); *see also* Pennsylvania House of Representatives, Members of the \_\_\_\_\_ House, [https://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/legis/home/member\\_information/mbrList.cfm?body=H&sort=alpha](https://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/legis/home/member_information/mbrList.cfm?body=H&sort=alpha) (the composition of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives at the time of the enactment of Act 77 was 110 Republicans and 93 Democrats).

Pennsylvania has traditionally only allowed absentee voting by those with a statutorily defined excuse to do so, such as physical disability or absence from one's municipality on Election Day. *See* 25 P.S. § 3146.1. For someone to vote absentee, the voter would have had to provide a permissible reason to do so, and the voter would have been provided with an absentee ballot that would have had to be returned by the voter no later than 5:00 p.m. on the Friday before the election.

In addition to allocating \$90 million to ensuring that Pennsylvanians could vote securely on modern voting machines, Act 77 of 2019 created a new category of

“no excuse” mail-in voting. 2019 Pa. Legis. Serv. Act 2019-77 (S.B. 421) (West). These no excuse mail-in voters now do not have to provide the traditional reason to vote by mail, can request those ballots later in the process than was previously possible, and are able to return their ballots several days later than had been traditionally been allowed—8:00 p.m. on Election Day. *Id.* The traditional voting options remain available—voters may still choose to request an absentee ballot if they have a statutorily permitted reason for doing so, or vote in-person on Election Day. *See* 25 P.S. § 3146.1; 25 P.S. § 3031.12.

The General Assembly continues to monitor the COVID-19 situation and stands ready to enact all further measures as may be required to ensure that the Commonwealth continues to have free and fair elections.

## **I. ARGUMENTS IN SUPPORT OF PRELIMINARY OBJECTION**

### **A. Preliminary Objection Pursuant to Pa. R. Civ. P. 1028(a)(4) in the Nature of a Demurrer**

Petitioner incorrectly seeks a declaratory judgment to resolve a pretextual controversy where no meaningful dispute exists. As such the House Leaders’ demurrer must be sustained.

Petitioner’s action is not styled as a constitutional challenge, but instead Petitioner argues that the plain text of the Election Code should be read differently from its plain meaning, and that this Court needs to assume King’s Bench

jurisdiction to issue a declaratory judgment that the Election Code does not provide for signature-matching or to allow challenges based on the signature on the declaration. *Petition* at p. 25.

Here, the Secretary's contentions are in plain error, and as such, the House Leaders' demurrer should be sustained.

This Court has long acknowledged that the duties and responsibilities of a county board of elections "are not limited to those of a humanized adding machine . . . the Board is charged with discretionary responsibilities . . ." *Appeal of McCracken*, 88 A.2d 787, 788 (Pa. 1952).

"[T]he Election Code delegates extensive powers and authority to county election boards, including rulemaking authority to guide voting machine custodians, elections officers and electors and power to investigate election frauds, irregularities and violations of the law. . ." *Nutter v. Dougherty*, 921 A.2d 44, 60 (Pa. Commw. Ct. 2007), *aff'd*, 938 A.2d 401 (Pa. 2007). As noted in *Boord v. Maurer*, 22 A.2d 902, 904 (Pa. 1941):

The Election Code makes the County Board of Election more than a mere ministerial body. It clothes it with quasi-judicial functions, for Section 304 of the Code provides that: "Each county board of elections may make regulations, not inconsistent with this act or the laws of this Commonwealth, to govern its public sessions, and may issue subpoenas, summon witnesses, compel production of books, papers, records and other evidence, and fix the time and place for hearing any matters relating to the administration and conduct of primaries and elections in the county under the provisions of this act.

In the context of absentee and mail-in ballots, the county boards of elections are charged with maintaining the integrity of the process through its “quasi-judicial” functions. *Id.*

A touchstone principle of Pennsylvania election policy is that “the spirit and intent of our election law . . . requires that a voter cast his ballot alone, and that it remain secret and inviolate.” *In re Canvass of Absentee Ballots of Nov. 4, 2003 General Election*, 843 A.2d 1223, 1230 (Pa. 2004). This principle is codified by statute in 25 P.S. § 3058, which states that “[n]o voter shall be permitted to receive any assistance in voting unless . . . he has a physical disability.” This extends to absentee and mail-in balloting where “the elector shall, in secret, proceed to mark the ballot. . .” 25 P.S. § 3146.6(a).

The absentee or mail-in voter shall:

then fold the ballot, enclose and securely seal the same in the envelope on which is printed, stamped or endorsed ‘Official Election Ballot.’ This envelope shall then be placed in the second one, on which is printed the form of declaration of the elector, and the address of the elector’s county board of election and the local election district of the elector. **The elector shall then fill out, date and sign the declaration printed on such envelope.** Such envelope shall then be securely sealed and the elector shall send same by mail, postage prepaid, except where franked, or deliver it in person to said county board of election.

*Id.* (emphasis added); *see also* 25 P.S. § 3150.16(a) (providing for the identical procedure for mail-in voters).

When the ballots are returned, the county board of elections must “**examine the declaration on the envelope of each ballot. . . and shall compare the information thereon with that contained in the 'Registered Absentee and Mail-in Voters File,' the absentee voters' list and/or the 'Military Veterans and Emergency Civilians Absentee Voters File.'**” 25 P.S. § 3146.8(g)(3) (emphasis added). The declaration includes a signature as provided by 1306 and 1306-D of the Election Code.

“All absentee ballots which have not been challenged under section 1302.2(c) and all mail-in ballots which have not been challenged under section 1302.2-D(a)(2) and that have been verified under paragraph (3) shall be counted and included with the returns of the applicable election district.” 25 P.S. § 3146.8(g)(4).

The Statutory Construction Act of 1972, Pa.C.S. § 1501 *et seq.*, directs that the object of all interpretation and construction of statutes is to ascertain and effectuate the legislature's intent. 1 Pa.C.S. § 1921(a); *Chanceford Aviation Properties, LLP v. Chanceford Twp. Bd. of Supervisors*, 923 A.2d 1099, 1104 (Pa. 2007). Generally, the best indicator of legislative intent is the plain language of the statute. *Walker v. Eleby*, 577 Pa. 104, 842 A.2d 389, 400 (2004). In construing statutory language, “[w]ords and phrases shall be construed according to rules of grammar and according to their common and approved usage[.]” 1 Pa.C.S. § 1903(a).

When the words of a statute are clear and unambiguous, there is no need to look beyond the plain meaning of the statute “under the pretext of pursuing its spirit.” 1 Pa.C.S. § 1921(b); *Commonwealth v. Conklin*, 587 Pa. 140, 897 A.2d 1168, 1175 (2006). Only “[w]hen the words of the statute are not explicit” may a court resort to the rules of statutory construction including those provided in 1 Pa.C.S. § 1921(c); *Chanceford*, 923 A.2d at 1104. The statute must “be construed, if possible, to give effect to all its provisions,” so that no provision is reduced to mere surplusage. 1 Pa.C.S. § 1921(a); *Walker*, 842 A.2d at 400. Finally, it is presumed “[t]hat the General Assembly does not intend a result that is absurd, impossible of execution or unreasonable.” 1 Pa.C.S. § 1922(1).

Here, the Secretary is asking for this Court to ignore the plain meaning of the statutory provisions, ignoring the Commonwealth’s long history of using voters’ signatures in the voting process. Should this Court adopt the Secretary’s interpretation of these procedures, the county board of elections would be required to ignore obvious discrepancies in declarations and count ballots that should not otherwise be counted, in clear contravention of the language contained in the Election Code.

The Election Code uses signature-matching by the county boards of elections and the Department of State as a key component of its efforts to identify voters. For example, signature-matching is one of the key components of vetting signatures on



nomination petitions and papers. 25 P.S. § 2868; 25 P.S. § 2937. Indeed, signature-matching is the key component of identifying in-person voters. 25 P.S. § 3050.

In addressing election policy, “the judiciary should act with restraint, in the election arena, subordinate to express statutory directives. Subject to constitutional limitations, the Pennsylvania General Assembly may require such practices and procedures as it may deem necessary to the orderly, fair, and efficient administration of public elections in Pennsylvania.” *In re Guzzardi*, 99 A.3d 381 (Pa. 2014).

“Election laws will be strictly enforced to prevent fraud . . . .” *Appeal of James*, 105 A.2d 64, 65 (Pa. 1954). A court “cannot simply ignore substantive provisions of the Election Code. . . . [S]o-called technicalities of the Election Code are necessary for the preservation of secrecy and the sanctity of the ballot and must therefore be observed—particularly where, as here, they are designed to reduce fraud.” *In re Canvass of Absentee Ballots of Nov. 4, 2003 General Election*, 843 A.2d 1223, 1234 (Pa. 2004).

This Court just upheld the importance of strictly enforcing the technical requirements concerning mail-in ballots last month in the *Pennsylvania Democratic Party* case. *Pennsylvania Democratic Party v. Boockvar*, \_\_\_ A.3d \_\_\_, 2020 WL 5554644 (Pa. 2020). In Count III of its petition, the petitioners that case sought “to require that the Boards contact qualified electors whose mail-in or absentee ballots contain minor facial defects resulting from their failure to comply with the statutory

requirements for voting by mail, and provide them with an opportunity to cure those defects.” *Id.* at \*19.

Interestingly, “the Secretary oppose[d] Petitioner’s request for relief in this regard. She counters that there is no statutory or constitutional basis for requiring the Boards to contact voters when faced with a defective ballot and afford them an opportunity to cure defects.” *Id.* “The Secretary further notes that . . .the Free and Equal Elections Clause. . .cannot create statutory language that the General Assembly chose not to provide.” *Id.*

This Court concluded that “the Boards are not required to implement a ‘notice and opportunity to cure’ procedure for mail-in and absentee ballots that voters have filled out incompletely or incorrectly. Put simply, as argued by the parties in opposition to the requested relief, Petitioner has cited no constitutional or statutory basis that would countenance imposing the procedure Petitioner seeks to require (*i.e.*, having the Boards contact those individuals whose ballots the Boards have reviewed and identified as including “minor” or “facial” defects—and for whom the Boards have contact information— and then afford those individuals the opportunity to cure defects until the UOCAVA deadline).” *Id.* at \*20.

In his concurrence, Justice Wecht clearly indicated that he was opposed to the *policy* of signature-matching, but he acknowledged that as the operative law and noted that the *Pennsylvania Democratic Party* “case offers no challenge to such inherently subjective bases for disqualifying ballots, I do not view today’s Opinion as foreclosing the possibility of relief in a future case seeking the opportunity to

address circumstances in which a subjective, lay assessment of voter requirements as to which reasonable minds might differ stands between the elector and the tabulating machine.” *Pennsylvania Democratic Party v. Boockvar*, \_\_\_ A.3d \_\_\_, 2020 WL 5554644 \*34 (Pa. 2020) (J. Wecht concurring).

Indeed, Justice Wecht noted a series of cases where courts had addressed constitutional challenges to signature-matching, and his “hope that the General Assembly would revisit the issue and consider furnishing such a procedure on its own initiative, this Court has the prerogative to address this problem if it proves worthy upon closer examination.” *Id.* \*35.

Again, no constitutional claim is before the Court—only one of statutory interpretation. Curiously, the Secretary (along with the House Leaders) recently opposed a constitutional challenge to mail-in and absentee ballot signature verification procedures in the *NAACP-PSC* case. *NAACP Pennsylvania State Conference v. Boockvar*, No. 364 MD 2020 (Pa. Commw. Ct. 2020). In the *NAACP-PSC* case, the petitioner sought a multitude of election relief, including that the Court direct the Secretary to “provid[e] adequate guidance to election officials when verifying mail ballots through signature matching and require notice and an opportunity to cure a mail ballot flagged for signature mismatch. . . .” *NAACP Pennsylvania State Conference v. Boockvar*, No. 364 MD 2020, Petition for Review (Pa. Commw. Ct. filed June 18, 2020) (**Exhibit 1**). After a thorough evidentiary

hearing, Judge Brobson denied the petitioner’s application for a preliminary injunction, and subsequently sustained the preliminary objections of the Respondents, including Secretary Boockvar, in the form of a demurrer. *NAACP Pennsylvania State Conference v. Boockvar*, No. 364 MD 2020, Memorandum Opinion (Pa. Commw. Ct. filed September 11, 2020) (**Exhibit 2**); *NAACP Pennsylvania State Conference v. Boockvar*, No. 364 MD 2020, Order (Pa. Commw. Ct. filed September 11, 2020) (**Exhibit 3**).

As the Secretary herself noted in her Memorandum of Law in support of her preliminary objections in the *NAACP-PSC* case, “the question presented by Petitioner’s lawsuit is not whether the reforms would be good public policy; it is whether the Court can require their implementation, in derogation of the Election Code and *as a matter of constitutional law*, based on the facts alleged in the Petition. As a matter of law, the answer is no. Accordingly, the Court should sustain Respondents’ Preliminary Objections and dismiss the Petition.” *NAACP Pennsylvania State Conference v. Boockvar*, No. 364 MD 2020, Respondents’ Brief in Support of Preliminary Objections to Petitioner’s Petition for Review (Pa. Commw. Ct. filed August 13, 2020) (emphasis in original) (**Exhibit 4**).

Here, it is neither a question of public policy nor constitutional law, but solely a matter of statutory interpretation of a straightforward statute.

As the Pennsylvania Election Code has always placed a heavy emphasis on signature verification to confirm identity, and clearly does so here with absentee and mail-in ballots, the House Leaders' demurrer should be sustained and the Petition dismissed with prejudice.

### III. CONCLUSION

For the foregoing reasons, Speaker of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives Bryan Cutler and Majority Leader of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives Kerry Benninghoff respectfully request that this Court sustain their Preliminary Objection to the Application for Invocation of King's Bench Power to Declare Proper Construction of Election Code and dismiss this action with prejudice.

Dated: October 7, 2020

Respectfully submitted,

*/s/ Zachary M. Wallen*

Zachary Wallen

Pa. ID No. 309176

**CHALMERS & ADAMS LLC**

301 South Hills Village Drive

No. LL200-420

Pittsburgh, PA 15241

*Counsel for Proposed-Intervenor  
Respondents Speaker of the Pennsylvania  
House of Representatives Bryan Cutler and  
Majority Leader of the Pennsylvania House  
of Representatives Kerry Benninghoff*

**CERTIFICATION OF WORD COUNT**

Pursuant to Rule 2135 of the Pennsylvania Rules of Appellate Procedure, I certify that this Memorandum of Law contains 2,871 words, exclusive of the supplementary matter as defined by Pa.R.A.P. 2135(b).

*/s/ Zachary M. Wallen*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
*Counsel for Proposed-Intervenor  
Respondents Speaker of the Pennsylvania  
House of Representatives Bryan Cutler and  
Majority Leader of the Pennsylvania House  
of Representatives Kerry Benninghoff*

Dated: October 7, 2020

**CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE**

I hereby certify that this filing complies with the provisions of the Public Access Policy of the Unified Judicial System of Pennsylvania: Case Records of the Appellate and Trial Courts that require filing confidential information and documents differently than non-confidential information and documents.

*/s/ Zachary M. Wallen*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
*Counsel for Proposed-Intervenor  
Respondents Speaker of the Pennsylvania  
House of Representatives Bryan Cutler and  
Majority Leader of the Pennsylvania House  
of Representatives Kerry Benninghoff*

Dated: October 7, 2020

# **EXHIBIT B**



IN THE SUPREME COURT OF PENNSYLVANIA

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No. 149 MM 2020

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IN RE: NOVEMBER 3, 2020 GENERAL ELECTION

PETITION OF KATHY BOOCKVAR,  
SECRETARY OF THE COMMONWEALTH,

BRYAN CUTLER, SPEAKER OF THE PENNSYLVANIA HOUSE OF  
REPRESENTATIVES, KERRY BENNINGHOFF, MAJORITY LEADER  
OF THE PENNSYLVANIA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

Proposed-Intervenor Respondents.

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[PROPOSED] ORDER

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Now, this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2020, upon consideration of the  
Petition to Intervene filed by Speaker of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives  
Bryan Cutler and Majority Leader of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives  
Kerry Benninghoff, it is hereby **ORDERED, ADJUDGED, and DECREED** that  
the Petition is **GRANTED**.


**SO ORDERED BY THE COURT:**

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# EXHIBIT C

**VERIFICATION**

I, Bryan Cutler, Speaker of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives, depose and say, subject to the penalties of 18 Pa. C.S. § 4904, relating to unsworn falsification to authorities, that the allegations set forth in the foregoing *Petition to Intervene* are true and correct to the best of my knowledge, information, and belief.

  
BRYAN CUTLER  
Speaker  
PA House of Representatives

Date: October 7, 2020

**VERIFICATION**

I, Kerry Benninghoff, Majority Leader, Pennsylvania House of Representatives, depose and say, subject to the penalties of 18 Pa. C.S. § 4904, relating to unsworn falsification to authorities, that the allegations set forth in the foregoing *Petition to Intervene* are true and correct to the best of my knowledge, information, and belief.

  
KERRY BENNINGHOFF  
Majority Leader  
PA House of Representatives

Date: October 7, 2020