



Board of Chosen Freeholders

County of Hunterdon
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MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Hunterdon Freeholders Oppose Governor's Restrictive November Vote Plan

Support Vote By Mail But Say Voters Deserve A Choice

Hunterdon County's Freeholder Board approved a resolution Tuesday that calls on Governor Phil Murphy to reverse the decision to prevent in person voting on voting machines in the November election, and to instead allow voters a choice between mail ballots and in person voting at the polls, noting that Dr. Anthony Fauci has said that in-person voting is permissible with the proper protocols in place.

Freeholder Board Sue Soloway stated at the meeting, "I find it ironic that today we commemorate the 100th anniversary of the establishment in the U.S. Constitution of right to vote for women, while at the same time the Governor throws up road blocks for those who wish to cast their ballots in person on election day."

Hunterdon County Clerk Mary Melfi, the Constitutional Officer responsible for election administration in the county, reported to the Freeholders that under the Governor's executive order all voters will receive ballots for the November election in the mail. Those ballots can be completed and returned to the Board of Elections in a variety of ways.

Melfi said under the Governor's plan, voters who turn out to the polling places on November 3rd will be required to complete provisional ballots.

The provisional ballots then must be compared to voting records to ensure the provisional voter did not already vote by mail. The review and counting of the provisional ballots delayed the determination of the final results from the July Primary election for several weeks.

Soloway asked, "The primary election had a low turnout, imagine how late the results will be with the massive number of votes cast in the November election? And will the public trust the outcome of ballots held in secret for many weeks as comparison of provisional ballots to voting records takes place?"

Freeholder John E. Lanza added, "I believe Deputy Director Soloway makes a good case about the potential public mistrust of the outcome of an election whose results are not known for weeks, perhaps even months at the national level.



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Make no mistake, I support the vote by mail initiative. I have made that statement previously. Many people find it easier and it helps encourage participation. I received a great many votes by mail in last year's election which I greatly appreciate. But voters deserve a choice."

Lanza said, "And for those who discount the opportunity for election fraud, we only have to look back to the reports on fraud in the May vote by mail municipal election in Paterson. The election results were nullified. Some of the persons involved are facing criminal charges."

The Freeholders resolution states in part, 'Voting is a sacred democratic right that has been secured through social movements, protected in the courts, and preserved on the battlefield by American veterans, and if it has been deemed safe for individuals to wait in lines at Wal-Mart, grocery stores, and to gather at the Jersey shore, then surely it is safe enough for voters to cast their ballots in person should they chose to do so.'

The resolution recognizes that Dr. Fauci, the Director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases and America's leading expert on infectious diseases, recently stated, "there's no reason why we shouldn't be able to vote in person or otherwise."

In the resolution, the Freeholders call upon Governor Murphy to reconsider his executive action and to allow for individuals to vote in-person should they chose to do so.