



Board of Chosen Freeholders

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MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Hunterdon Voters Exceed State Average In Vote By Mail Participation

According to the recently released NJ Division of Elections report, the percentage of Hunterdon County voters using vote by mail in the 2019 election exceeded the state average and was the fourth highest in the state, Freeholder Matt Holt reported at the December 17th Freeholder meeting.

Holt reported, "As a percentage of total votes cast in the County for the 2019 general election, 18.5% were vote by mail votes – nearly 6800 on 36,700 votes cast. The state average was 16.7%

A great job was done by both County Clerk Mary Melfi and Board of Elections Administrator Beth Thompson and their teams in their successful administration of the vote by mail program."

County Clerk Mary Melfi stated, "Our office issued about 12,500 vote by mail (VBM) ballots to Hunterdon County registered voters who requested the ballots, which required 200 additional work hours for the staff. The total cost of the 2019 implementation of the new laws is estimated to be \$70,000.

Through the efforts of the New Jersey Association of Counties and County Clerks statewide, the law was determined by the Council on Local Mandates to be an unfunded state mandate that the state must pay for. We anticipate legislation in early January that will provide funding to counties for reimbursement."

Beth Thompson noted, "Almost 6,800 ballots were returned, verified, secured, and counted, along with over 500 Provisional ballots that were also processed. With the machine votes, there was an overall county voter turnout of 37.23% in 2019.

The VBM ballots require extra attention. Even our Board of Elections Commissioners are put to work processing the ballots."

Holt added, "Hunterdon County voters should be congratulated for taking advantage of the early voting opportunity."

Vote by mail Mail-in Ballots are available 45 days prior to an election. All accepted Mail-in Ballots are counted on Election Day. Please contact the County Clerk's office, (908)788-1214, for any questions regarding the VBM Ballot or process. Or for more information, copy and paste this address into your web browser:

co.hunterdon.nj.us/countyclerk.htm.