

**TO:** Rich Fitzgerald, Allegheny County Executive  
David Voye, Elections Division Manager  
Allegheny County Board of Elections

**DATE:** September 2, 2020

**RE:** Make Allegheny County Voting Safer & More Accessible

**As organizations representing thousands of Allegheny County residents, workers on the frontlines of the pandemic, and the public's interest, we are calling on County Executive Rich Fitzgerald, Elections Division Manager David Voye, and the Allegheny County Board of Elections to act immediately to better protect public health amidst this pandemic and to increase access for all voters by establishing a continuity of operations plan that includes satellite county offices, drop boxes, and efficient levels of Election Day polling places.**

Under Pennsylvania's new voting law, voters are empowered to visit their county's election office or other designated satellite offices to request a mail ballot, and/or to drop off a ballot. Voters may also return ballots at secure ballot return receptacles (drop boxes) established by their county. [Recent guidance from the Pennsylvania Department of State](#) lays out a clear, safe and secure process for establishing in person mail-in voting options by our Counties. [Many of Pennsylvania's largest counties have announced plans](#) for satellite voting centers and drop boxes. But Allegheny County has so far failed to release a plan that includes satellite county election offices and drop boxes--and time is running out. Additional in-person voting sites will help reduce congestion, thereby better protecting public health and ensuring access to more voters. Frontline essential workers who are tirelessly leading us through this pandemic especially need these additional voting options.

Additionally, Allegheny County must make a plan to meet the needs of voters choosing to vote in-person on Election Day. This includes fully staffing polling locations with election day workers and finalizing a polling place plan at least two weeks prior to Election Day. With roughly 40% of voters participating in person on Election Day in the recent primary, it is important to safeguard the integrity of in-person voting for November. Polling places must be fairly and equitably located with consideration given to the number of registered voters per location and minimizing long lines.

In the midst of an unprecedented public health crisis that has already claimed the lives of at least 7,635 Pennsylvanians, and a political attack on the United States Postal Service that threatens to slow the return of mail ballots prior to Election Day, it's critical that county officials act on this opportunity to better protect public health and the integrity of our elections by expanding access to safe voting options and ensuring that polling locations are safe, equitable and adequately staffed on Election Day. The Allegheny County Board of Elections must make a plan and implement it. We urge you to swiftly and decisively create a comprehensive plan that includes satellite county offices, drop boxes, and efficient levels of Election Day polling places in Allegheny County to ensure access to safe voting for this November's general election that will better protect public health and ensure every voter can exercise their fundamental freedom--especially frontline workers. We expect you to do everything you can to

protect the health and voting rights of the workers on the frontlines of this pandemic who are doing everything *they* can right now to lead our community through this crisis.

**We urge you to initiate a safe and accessible voting plan that includes:**

- **At least 18 satellite elections offices to improve access to in person vote by mail throughout Allegheny County.**
- **Ballot “drop boxes” throughout that allow the safe, convenient and secure return of vote by mail ballots and are accessible to all county citizens.**
- **Hazard pay for poll workers to ensure that sufficient staff will be available to protect the integrity of our election.**
- **Finalize a polling place plan with a number of locations reflective of the 2016 general election that are fairly and equitably located – especially focused on Black voter access – at least two weeks prior to Election Day with proper notification sent to county voters.**

The Allegheny County Board of Elections should follow the guidance provided by the Pennsylvania Department of State and take immediate action to expand voting options to ensure the election is fair, safe and accessible to all voters in our community.

The undersigned:

African American Chamber of Commerce of Western PA  
All Voting is Local PA  
Bhutanese Community Association Pittsburgh  
Black Voters Matter Fund Pennsylvania  
Black Women for Positive Change  
Bloomfield Development Corporation  
Clean Water Action  
CMU CREATE Lab  
EM|Power (Expanding Minds'- People Organized Working to End Racism)  
Keystone Progress Education Fund  
Pennsylvania Interfaith Impact Network (PIIN)  
Pennsylvania Joint Board of Workers United, SEIU  
Pennsylvania Religious Action Center (RAC-PA)  
Pennsylvania Working Families  
Pittsburgh Mennonite Church  
Pittsburgh United  
Pittsburghers for Public Transit  
Planned Parenthood Pennsylvania Advocates  
PUMP

Restaurant Opportunities Center of Pennsylvania  
Rodef Shalom  
SEIU 32BJ  
SEIU Local 668  
SEIU Healthcare Pennsylvania  
Sierra Club Allegheny Group  
Take Action Mon Valley (TAMV)  
The Black Political Empowerment Project (B-PEP)  
The Center for Loving Kindness of the JCC of Greater Pittsburgh  
The Pittsburgh Chapter of The Links, Incorporated  
The Squirrel Hill Urban Coalition  
UFCW Local 1776KS  
VotePA  
Voter Empowerment Education & Enrichment Movement Pittsburgh  
Wake Up The Vote  
West End P.O.W.E.R.  
YWCA Greater Pittsburgh