



TO: Members of the Senate Republican Policy Committee

FROM: Joe Kantz, Snyder County commissioner and co-chair of the CCAP Elections Reform Committee

DATE: January 27, 2020

RE: **Review of Act 77 and Act 94 of 2019 – Election Reforms**

Good morning, I'd like to thank Senator Argall and Senator Phillips-Hill for the invitation to be here today. As a Commissioner who has been serving the residents of a rural county for the past twelve years, I also want to thank the Senate for working to make some long overdue changes to the Election Code last year.

As most compromised bills normally do, Act 77 and Act 94 have brought a number of new challenges. As we head into the Primary this April, counties will be dealing with a new, shorter 15 day deadline for voter registrations, new mail-in ballot processes and new timeframes for absentee and mail-in ballots, not to mention 22 counties who will still be deploying new voting equipment.

In addition, the new requirements for absentee ballots to be processed after 8:00 p.m. on election day and on a central count machine will cause disruptions if the county doesn't have a central tabulator. In Snyder County, we thought our nearly \$300,000 mandate for new equipment was bad enough, when we already had a paper ballot, but now, as of this past week, we found out we need to spend another \$60,000 for a central tabulating machine. Even with the 60% reimbursement from the state's bond issue, it will still cost us an additional \$25,000 in a small, 7th class county.

Further, we will need to educate the public and media about the time frames to tabulate the ballots, especially in a Presidential year when national media is looking for results. None of us know how many mail-in ballots we are going to receive or how these ballots will affect the timeframes to count ballots.

One thing that could help save time and money would be to pursue the necessary changes in the constitution regarding mail-in ballots. A single application and ballot for mail-in and absentees would be a big step in the right direction as well.

Again, I thank you for the opportunity to discuss these issues and I invite your questions.