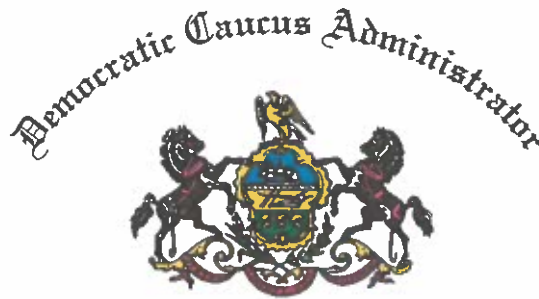


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Senate of Pennsylvania

August 8, 2022

The Honorable Kevin Barnhardt, Chair
The Honorable Christian Leinbach, Member
The Honorable Michael Rivera, Member
Berks County Board of Elections
633 Court Street
Reading, PA 19601

Dear Members:

I am writing to express my serious concerns about the difficulties Berks County encountered administering this year's primary election. In addition, I want to relay to you the sentiments recently expressed to me by many constituents who fear what might be in store for them as they head to the polls in November in light of what occurred in May.

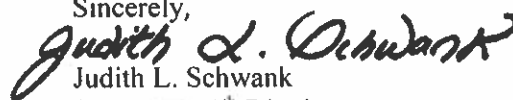
First, let me say, having been in your shoes as a county commissioner and a member of the election board, I know first-hand how difficult a task election administration can be. My goal in writing to you is not to cast blame, but to offer suggestions and assistance in working to improve things.

Over the last few years, the public has been besieged with hyperbolic rhetoric about the alleged pervasive incidence of fraud in our elections, which raises doubt about the integrity of our election system. These claims have even been cast here in Berks County. In almost every instance, allegations of fraud have proven to be unfounded. Undoubtedly, this unrelenting political noise has shaken voter confidence. And, in this toxic atmosphere, when the system does breakdown, as it did here in Berks County this past May, our residents may come to believe there is truth to the notion that our democracy is failing, which could dissuade them from voting and having their voices heard. That is something all of us must work together to prevent, and that is why it is so critical that we get the election this November right. And, we do not have much time to do it.

I applaud you for engaging the services of an outside entity to identify the causes of the breakdown this past May. Now that we know where some of the problems occurred, I am anxious, as are our constituents, to know what the plan is for November. May I suggest that an ad hoc panel be expeditiously convened which draws on leadership, experience, and expertise from diverse cross sections of our community—election experts from other jurisdictions, county employees, poll workers, civic leaders, academia, and our business and non-profit communities—to help us develop and implement a solid plan of action.

The task is essential and the need is urgent. I stand ready to assist you in your efforts and would welcome the opportunity to discuss this matter in detail with you.

Sincerely,


Judith L. Schwank
Senator—11th District

JLS/TG