



# SOUTHEAST DELEGATION OF THE PENNSYLVANIA HOUSE DEMOCRATIC CAUCUS

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The Honorable Tom Wolf  
Governor, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
225 Main Capitol Building  
Harrisburg, PA 17120

October 28, 2019

**RE: Senate Bill 421 The Elimination of Straight Ticket Voting (STV)**

Dear Governor Wolf:

I am writing to you today as the Chairwoman of the Southeast Delegation of the Democratic Caucus to inform you that our delegation has exceeded the threshold of opposition required to form a delegation position against SB 421. The Delegation's position is based on the following:

- 1) Voters have always enjoyed the freedom to choose straight ticket voting or voting individual races and we cannot support the elimination/restriction of this freedom.
- 2) The elimination of straight ticket voting will act as a form of voter suppression especially in high-density precincts where lines are already long, and logistics are difficult. These precincts are located largely in low-income and minority areas and we cannot support disproportionate disenfranchisement in these areas where people already have challenges getting off work and making time to cast their ballot.
- 3) The high volume of changes in the bill have already created and will continue to create confusion regarding process and implementation. In fact, one of the commissioners in our largest city has already stated publicly that implementation for 2020 is impossible.

We do acknowledge and understand that there are positive reforms in the bill but do not believe that the overall net impact of the bill is a public policy positive for our Commonwealth. In fact, these minor reforms pale in comparison to the potentially catastrophic impacts of this bill. At a minimum there needs to be a delayed implementation schedule to 2021 or beyond so that we can prepare our election officials and systems and get more comprehensive feedback from the electorate.

Therefore, on behalf of the Southeast House Delegation I must express our strong opposition to Senate Bill 421 and even stronger desire that you veto the bill if it ever comes across your desk. The elimination of straight ticket voting will disproportionately impact our region and its ability to have our voice heard in the electoral process.

Voting is our most basic democratic right and responsibility. We should do everything in our power to make it easier and more accessible. It should also be noted that SB 421 makes voting more complicated and difficult for people with mental, emotional, and physical disabilities who may already find the current system challenging. SB 421 adds complication and burden at a time when we cannot afford either. We respectfully and adamantly oppose SB 421.

Sincerely,

Margo L. Davidson, Chair