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## Committee of Seventy Urges Essential Election Reforms Ahead of 2024 Presidential Contest

*The nonpartisan nonprofit detailed measures the Pennsylvania Legislature can and should take right away to ensure our elections remain free, fair, safe and secure.*

**SEPTEMBER 18, 2023** – Today, the nonpartisan nonprofit Committee of Seventy released a report detailing much-needed election administration reforms in order for Pennsylvania officials to successfully administer elections in 2024 and beyond. The recommendations would carry forward the job that 2019’s Act 77 started by improving efficiency in county operations, safeguarding election integrity, and mitigating disenfranchisement.

“Across the Commonwealth, election administrators do incredible work to ensure that our elections are free, fair, safe and secure,” said **Lauren Cristella, president and CEO of the Committee of Seventy**. “The recommendations in this report are commonsense solutions that will make administrators’ jobs easier, will improve the voting process, and will ensure everyone’s vote counts. We want every eligible voter to vote, to be informed when they vote, and to vote with confidence.”

The report, which can be read in full [here](#), details six key reforms that would improve elections in Pennsylvania:

- 1) Counties should be allowed to begin the processing of absentee and mail-in ballots up to seven days before Election Day.
- 2) Pennsylvania should eliminate the use of a privacy envelope as a requirement for a mail-in ballot to be counted, and eliminate the requirement of a handwritten date with the affidavit on the ballot-return envelope.
- 3) Counties should use a simple “notice and cure” process to streamline the steps for a voter to remedy the omission of their signature on the ballot-return envelope.
- 4) The deadline to request an absentee or mail-in ballot should move to 11 days before Election Day (second Friday before Election Day).
- 5) The current 2% statistical sample for election audits should be replaced with statutory language requiring the uniform implementation of risk-limiting audits by all 67 counties in every election.
- 6) The \$50 filing fee (unadjusted since 1927) for recount petitions should be increased to \$1,000 to deter frivolous or baseless charges. Second, to aid county judges in reviewing such petitions, specific allegations and evidence of fraud or error should be required and documented. County Boards of Election should also be afforded the ability to respond in court to filed petitions.

The report was co-authored by the Committee of Seventy’s **chief policy officer Pat Christmas** and **senior advisor for election administration Jeff Greenburg**, a former county election director from 2007-2020.

“We are heading into a second presidential election cycle since the enactment of Act 77, the no-excuse mail voting law, and very basic election issues remain unaddressed by the General Assembly. That is

unconscionable,” said Greenburg. “These nonpartisan reforms are supported on both sides of the aisle, but they’re also sought by our county officials charged with running elections. Let’s help them do their jobs, and create better elections for all Pennsylvanians.”

### **About the Committee of Seventy**

The Committee of Seventy is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that has promoted, supported and facilitated government ethics and election integrity for more than a century. We believe that elections should be more free, fair, safe and secure. The Committee of Seventy believes that finding common ground is the only path toward a vibrant and open democracy. Approaching problems through a bipartisan framework will lead to outcomes that improve our city, our state and our country.

For more information, find us at: <https://seventy.org/>

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