

State Government: Voter Identification
Senate Bill 9

Article 1:

Voter ID is a flashpoint in Pennsylvania election law talks

By: Marc Levy May 7, 2021

HARRISBURG, Pa. (AP) — Republicans wanting stricter voter identification provisions in Pennsylvania is emerging as an early flashpoint with Democratic Gov. Tom Wolf in what GOP lawmakers cast as a top-to-bottom update of state election law following a presidential contest that Donald Trump still baselessly maintains was stolen from him.

Wolf's chief of staff, Mike Brunelle, said the House Republican in charge of writing election legislation called him to discuss the matter, but it was a short conversation.

Wolf is ready to discuss legislation to update the state's election law, but opposes changes to the voter ID law, Brunelle told The Associated Press.

"When voter ID was put on the table, it made it clear that it was not a serious discussion," Brunelle said.

Rep. Seth Grove, R-York, said he had called Brunelle to get discussions started and Brunelle asked him whether Grove wanted voter ID to be part of negotiations. Grove told him that it needs to be because House Republicans are concerned about it, Grove said.

"Well, I don't want to waste your time, we're not interested in it," Brunelle told Grove.

The renewed fight over Pennsylvania's election law comes as Republicans wage a campaign to [tighten voting laws](#) in other political battlegrounds, including Georgia, Florida, Iowa, Texas and Arizona, spurred on by Trump's baseless claims about election fraud.

It also comes after last year's slugfest in Pennsylvania's courts and statehouse over its fledgling mail-in voting law. That was [capped](#) by about half the Republicans in Pennsylvania's Legislature — including Grove and House GOP leaders — urging members of Congress to block Pennsylvania's electoral votes from being cast for the winner of the presidential election, Democrat Joe Biden.

Even before that, [Republican lawmakers had blocked](#) the top election priority of counties: to process an impending avalanche of mail-in ballots before Election Day, amid warnings that Trump could use a protracted post-election vote count in the battleground state to undermine confidence in the election.

In 2014, Pennsylvania's courts [struck down](#) a GOP-penned law requiring a state-issued photo ID for voters, saying its backers failed to demonstrate the need for it and that it imposed an unreasonable burden on the right to vote because it did not require that a valid photo ID be convenient and available to voters.

The law, then among the nation's strictest, was signed in 2012 by then-Gov. Tom Corbett, a Republican. Every single Democratic lawmaker voted against it, and it was never enforced before courts blocked it.

The law reverted to what had been in force previously, a requirement that someone voting in person at a polling place for the first time show a form of approved identification to poll workers.

More than a dozen forms [qualify](#), including a driver's license, government or military ID cards, a firearms permit, and a current utility bill, paycheck or bank statement.

No county election board, prosecutor or state official has raised a concern over any sort of widespread election fraud in November's election in Pennsylvania, including in-person voting fraud.

Prosecutors have discovered several cases of people voting by mail for a dead relative, however.

Sen. David Argall, R-Schuylkill, the lead Republican senator on election legislation, said many members of his caucus are also interested in tightening the voter ID law.

"A lot of us supported the law that was passed years ago that was overturned by the state courts, and so it's not a new issue," Argall said.

It's not clear exactly how Republicans will want to change Pennsylvania's voter ID law.

Rep. Jeff Wheeland, R-Lycoming, has introduced legislation to require in-person voters in each election to show one of the forms of photo ID that are currently deemed valid, or two forms of valid non-photo ID.

It would, Wheeland said, help voters have confidence in the election and help poll workers process voters.

Wheeland acknowledged that he knew of no case from November's presidential election in which someone voted fraudulently in person.

"Statistically, you could say, 'yes, it does go on.' It's nothing new, I think, to anybody who has worked a poll," Wheeland said, recalling one case, perhaps in 2012, when he was a county commissioner in Lycoming County. "Is it rampant? No. But is one too many? Yes."

<https://apnews.com/article/donald-trump-pennsylvania-house-elections-elections-government-and-politics-e3d6bbd3fcc61d745be8ea768a04f1c5>

Article 2:

Pennsylvania Republicans propose voter ID law and mail voting rollback

By: Jane C. Timm June 10, 2021

Pennsylvania Republicans proposed legislation Thursday that would add voter ID requirements and roll back mail voting in the state's elections.

The bill faces a difficult path to passage: Democratic Gov. Tom Wolf, who would have to sign the bill for it to be enacted, said Wednesday that he would oppose such restrictions.

The legislation is being pushed by Republicans who sought to undermine the results of the election last year, publicly urging Congress not to certify the state's election results on Jan. 6.

House Bill 1300 would require voters to show photo ID at the polls and eliminate the mail voting list that sends certain voters their ballots ahead of each election. It would also require Pennsylvanians to register to vote 30 days before elections, instead of 15.

The bill's lead sponsor, Republican Rep. Seth Grove, organized and signed a letter in December urging Pennsylvania's congressional delegation to object to certifying Pennsylvania's 2020 results. Joe Biden won the state by more than 80,000 votes.

Since the election, House Republicans have hosted months of hearings about election processes and voter fraud, despite broad evidence that there is no widespread voter fraud in U.S. elections.

Republican House Speaker Bryan Cutler championed the bill in a news release. Cutler also signed the December letter, and he was reported to have been urged in phone calls by former President Donald Trump to "fix" issues in the state's election last year.

"Pennsylvanians must have faith in their elections, and this bill is another piece of restoring the public's trust," Cutler said in the release.

Trump's stolen election lie has inspired legislation across the country as Republican lawmakers introduce or advance hundreds of restrictive election bills that would make it harder to vote. At least 22 bills have been enacted, according to the Brennan Center for Justice at the New York University School of Law, which has been tracking voting legislation.

The Pennsylvania bill also includes a number of voting expansions, most of them likely to be aimed at winning the support of the governor. Republicans do not have veto-proof majorities in the Legislature.

The expansive provisions of the bill include creating five days of early in-person voting starting in 2025 and allowing drop boxes.

<https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/2020-election/pennsylvania-republicans-propose-new-voter-id-law-mail-voting-rollback-n1270431>

Article 3:

New poll shows broad support for voter ID in PA.

By: Justin Sweitzer June 17, 2021

Just one day after a poll showed support for early voting and increased funding for election administration in Pennsylvania, a new poll from Franklin & Marshall College found that a large majority of Pennsylvania voters also support strengthening the state's voter ID requirements.

The poll's findings come as Harrisburg lawmakers prepare to consider a sweeping proposal that would require all voters to show proof of ID at the polls, establish signature verification requirements and implement early, in-person voting in the state.

The F&M poll found that nearly three-quarters of voters support strengthening the state's current voter ID law, with 74% saying that voters should be required to show ID at the polls. Republicans were much more likely to favor voter ID than Democrats, with 95% of Republicans supporting bolstered voter ID requirements, compared to 47% of Democrats.

Additionally, 81% of voters said county election officials should be required to verify signatures on mail-in ballots with those already on file, with a majority of both Democrats and Republicans favoring the idea.

A majority of voters also favored new updates to state election laws, with 59% of voters calling for the state's Election Code to be revised.

The broad support for voter ID and signature-matching will likely be vindicating for Republicans, who are championing the two proposals as a way to increase election security. State Rep. Seth Grove, who chairs the House State Government Committee, recently introduced an election reform proposal that would establish voter ID, require signature-matching, establish early voting centers and allow curbside voting for disabled voters, among an array of other proposed changes.

Grove told City & State PA on Thursday that the poll underscores the desire for many of the changes outlined in his proposal, House Bill 1300.

"I think within House Bill 1300, there's a lot of popular measures. You see polling for dropboxes – we have dropboxes. Satellite offices? We have satellite offices. We have in-person early voting, right? So we have all these provisions for increasing access and then we have increased security features – voter ID, signature verification – people are supporting those measures, as well," Grove said.

"[The poll] just validates what we're doing in House Bill 1300. It has a lot of the popular measures both Republicans and Democrats like, which is why it's such a good bill."

Gov. Tom Wolf, however, has expressed strong objections to components in Grove's bill, including voter ID requirements and moving voter registration and ballot application deadlines further away from Election Day. Grove wrote to Wolf this week urging a meeting with the governor after initial election

reform talks broke down, and Wolf responded by saying “voter ID and similar attempts at voter suppression are non-starters with my administration.”

“Instead of pandering to the conspiracists and trying to silence the voices of Pennsylvanians, in the near term, we should be working on a bipartisan basis to address a few limited priorities upon which we can agree,” Wolf wrote, expressing an openness to working with Grove on issues like expanding time for counties to process ballots, increasing pay for election workers and providing more funding to counties – all of which are including in HB 1300.

Grove, however, suggested Thursday that HB 1300 may be the governor’s one chance to get some of the election reforms he’s seeking.

“If this bill gets shut down by the governor, we're not coming back to election reform,” he told City & State. “We've got to go do congressional redistricting and we've got to move on to other priorities. So, if counties want their entire wish list done, they better go start talking to the governor.”

The F&M poll surveyed 444 registered voters – 205 Democrats, 177 Republicans and 62 independents – from June 7 through 13. The poll has a margin of error of +/- 6.4%.

The poll also asked Pennsylvania voters their thoughts on the most pressing issues facing the state. The coronavirus pandemic is no longer the top issue concerning voters, with only 7% listing the pandemic as their chief concern. Instead, 30% listed “government and politicians” as the chief concern facing Pennsylvania, with another 15% identifying the economy as their top worry.

Wolf’s approval numbers also saw a drop since last year, with 52% of voters believing Wolf was doing an “excellent” or “good” job in July 2020. This month, however, just 39% of respondents said the same.

<https://www.cityandstatepa.com/politics/2021/06/new-poll-shows-broad-support-voter-id-pa/364567/>