

December 19, 2014

Dear Governor-Elect Wolf:

We are a coalition of organizations from across the state and we believe that ensuring that elections are free, fair and accessible to all Pennsylvanians—regardless of income, race, age, gender, disability or English language proficiency—will strengthen our democracy.

The three major reforms you have expressed support for—early voting, no-excuse absentee voting, and same-day voter registration—are critical. When implemented, reforms such as these have reduced barriers to voting, especially for voters of color who face obstacles when trying to exercise their fundamental right to vote. We are working hard to build support in the General Assembly over the next few years to make these ideas reality.

Over the course of the next year—in the ramp-up to the 2016 election—we believe that Department of State (“DOS”) can develop a plan to address some of the issues that voting reform advocates—and, from our understanding, county election administrators—see as critical issues that don’t require legislative intervention. Here are some examples:

- **Opportunities to improve voter registration.** We have the technology to add more than a million voters to the rolls and make sure no one loses the right to vote because they move. This could be achieved through better oversight of PennDOT and other state agencies and contractors that must comply with the requirements set by the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA); integrating voter registration opportunities into the customer service experience through state agencies and contractors not already covered by the NVRA; and modifying DOS policy to provide online voter registration that is equally open to all eligible voters regardless of whether they possess PennDOT identification.
- **Improve language access.** Considering the diverse needs of Pennsylvania voters, DOS should translate all election information on the state’s website into other languages in addition to the existing Spanish, including at least, Chinese, Russian, Korean and Vietnamese. The translations should be clear, accurate and complete.
- **Support county election administrators more effectively.** To achieve uniform election practices, DOS should provide guidance to the counties to clarify election law on issues such as voter eligibility, registration application acceptance, provisional ballot use, and voter intimidation/harassment charges.

These suggestions are by no means the only reforms that could be implemented at the executive level. Other issues worthy of further discussion include the state’s role in poll worker recruitment and training; improved voting systems; and changing the culture of election administration.

We are committed to improving the voting process in Pennsylvania as a means to realize

the democratic ideal that all Pennsylvanians should have the same opportunity to participate equally in our democracy. Therefore, we would like to request a meeting with the DOS transition team to discuss the ideas above in greater detail. Then, as soon as s/he is confirmed, we request a meeting with the new Secretary of the Commonwealth to discuss the suggestions above, as well as a legislative strategy for reform, in greater detail.

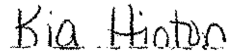
We are looking forward to working with you, your administration, and new leadership at DOS to modernize and improve voting in Pennsylvania. To schedule a meeting with our coalition, please contact Sara Mullen at the ACLU of Pennsylvania or Ben Geffen at the Public Interest Law Center of Philadelphia. Sara can be reached at (215) 592-1513 x122 or SMullen@aclupa.org. Ben can be reached at (267) 546-1308 or BGeffen@pilcop.org.

Thank you for your time and consideration of our recommendations.

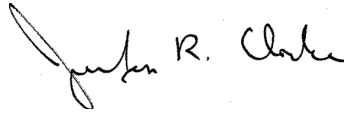
Sincerely,



Susan Carty
President, League of Women Voters of
Pennsylvania



Kia Philpot-Hinton, Chairwoman,
Action United



Jennifer Clarke
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