



General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Joint State Government Commission
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Report Summary in Response to 2016 Senate Resolution 394
Voting Technology in Pennsylvania

Senate Resolution No. 394 of 2016 directed Joint State Government Commission (JSGC) to study the issue of voting system technology. Specifically, the resolution directed that the study include information gathered from other states regarding the administration of elections and technology, a survey of counties in the Commonwealth regarding the administration of elections, and information regarding the cost to administer elections and to improve, upgrade, modernize or replace election system technology.

To facilitate the study, the resolution also directed JSGC to assemble an Advisory Committee consisting of the Secretary of State or a designee; the Commissioner for the Bureau of Commissions, Elections and Legislation or a designee; representatives from groups advocating for individuals who are hearing impaired, physically disabled, and blind or visually impaired; county commissioners, who must be from geographically and politically diverse areas of the Commonwealth; county election officials, who must be from geographically and politically diverse areas of the Commonwealth; and other individuals selected by JSGC.

The Advisory Committee met in person and via teleconference to discuss numerous issues that the members identified as relevant to voting technology. Ultimately, the Advisory Committee came to consensus on a number of recommendations. Those recommendations, as well as relevant background information, are presented in the report prepared pursuant to Senate Resolution No. 394 of 2016.

While many members of the Advisory Committee felt that the laws governing elections in Pennsylvania needed to be reviewed and updated in their entirety,

the focus of this report is voting technology, as directed by Senate Resolution No. 394. As a result, the recommendations on which the Advisory Committee reached consensus presume the continuation of the status quo regarding the administration of elections under current law. If the current law is amended, the recommendations may not reflect the most efficient use of taxpayer dollars or be in the best interests of the Commonwealth and its citizens.

The Advisory Committee recommends that the act of June 3, 1937 (P.L.1333, No.320), known as the Pennsylvania Election Code, be amended in several ways to provide a greater incentive to poll workers to attend training, to allow counties to conduct elections more efficiently by taking into account actual voter participation levels when determining how many ballots to print, and to improve election security and integrity.

The Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly provide funding to assist counties in the purchase or lease of new equipment. The Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly create a commission to advise the General Assembly regarding proposed amendments to the Pennsylvania Election Code as well as other election-related matters.

Finally, the Advisory Committee recommends that Article 5 of The Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania be amended to prevent ambiguity and inefficiency regarding the way justices, judges, and justices of the peace are listed on ballots for purposes of retention elections.

The full report is available on our website

<http://jsg.legis.state.pa.us/>