



Pennsylvania Department of State

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Department of State Introduces Redesigned, User-Friendly Provisional Ballot Envelopes

The redesign aims to decrease the number of rejected provisional ballots, allowing more eligible Pennsylvanians' votes to be counted

Harrisburg, PA – Continuing the **Shapiro Administration's** commitment to strengthening our democracy and keeping our elections safe and secure, **Secretary of the Commonwealth Al Schmidt** announced today that the Department of State has redesigned the provisional ballot envelopes that counties use in an effort to improve legibility and make the envelope more user friendly.

"Every registered voter in our Commonwealth should have the opportunity to cast their vote and make their voice heard in each election," **Schmidt** said during a press conference in Philadelphia. "We believe these changes to the provisional ballot envelopes will have a positive impact, just as the changes we made to mail ballot materials two years ago did."

This envelope update follows the **Shapiro Administration's** successful redesign of mail ballot envelopes and materials in 2023. Those redesigned materials resulted in the November 2024 general election seeing a 57% decrease in mail ballot rejections.

In that same election, 29.12% of the provisional ballots cast in Pennsylvania were rejected. The most common reason for a rejected provisional ballot was that the voter was not registered; the second-most-common reason was an incomplete provisional ballot envelope.

The redesigned envelopes feature a layout that clearly instructs voters which fields they must fill out, including highlighting the two places where the envelope must be signed. The envelopes also streamline the process for election workers, identifying which fields they need to complete before and after the voter completes their provisional ballot.

The Department received design feedback from county elections officials in Philadelphia, Berks, Butler, Mercer, and Greene counties, who specifically mentioned the need for enhanced usability for voters and poll workers alike.

“During this redesign process, we listened to our county election officials who told us the design of the provisional ballot envelopes led to missing signatures and incomplete envelopes, which ultimately led to the ballots being rejected,” **Schmidt** said. “I want to thank the county election officials who worked with us in this redesign process, which is another step toward ensuring that Pennsylvania elections remain free, fair, safe, and secure.”

“The redesign of the ballot envelope simplifies the process of voting provisionally, and that means fewer errors and fewer rejected ballots,” said **Omar Sabir, Chairman of the Philadelphia City Commissioners**. “It’s an important part of ensuring that every eligible vote gets counted, and we’re proud to lead this multi-county effort alongside our partners at the Department of State.”

“I’m extremely proud of the work that went into redesigning the provisional ballot envelope,” **Philadelphia City Commissioner Seth Bluestein** said. “Improvements to envelope design such as these may appear small, but they can make a big difference in reducing errors that might prevent Pennsylvanians from exercising their right to vote.”

Schmidt said he expects counties to use the new voter- and poll-worker-friendly materials in the 2025 general election. To help counties with the cost of replacing their current provisional ballot envelopes, the Department is offering grant money to counties who opt to use the new envelopes.

County elections officials may ask a voter to [vote by provisional ballot under certain conditions](#). A provisional ballot voter is asked to follow these instructions:

- Complete in front of election officials the sections on the provisional ballot envelope labeled Voter Affidavit, Voter Signature #1, and Voter’s Current Address.
- Mark the provisional ballot in an accessible and private area of the polling place.
- Seal the provisional ballot in the secrecy envelope.
- Seal the secrecy envelope in the provisional ballot affidavit envelope.
- Fill out in front of polling place election officials the Voter Signature #2 section on the provisional ballot envelope.
- Return the sealed provisional ballot affidavit envelope to a polling place election official.
- Receive a provisional ballot identification receipt.

Within seven days after the election, county boards of elections decide whether each provisional ballot vote should be counted.

For more information on voting in Pennsylvania, including [mail](#) and [provisional](#) ballots, call the Department of State's year-round voter hotline at 1-877-VOTESPA, visit vote.pa.gov, or follow [#ReadytoVotePA](#) on social media.

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