



Written by [Rebecca Terrell](#) on October 26, 2022

Will Mail-in Ballots Strike Again in Pennsylvania Midterms?

Pennsylvania lawmakers are questioning whether they will be able to trust the outcome of midterm elections in their state on November 8.

In a repeat of 2020, mail-in ballots are at the crux of concerns — to be specific, more than 240,000 ballots mailed to unverified applicants.

“As of October 21, 2022, records of 2022 Mail Ballot Data shows [sic] that counties have already mailed over 240,000 unverified ballots,” reads an October 25 [letter](#) from fifteen state House members — all Republicans — to liberal Democrat Leigh Chapman, acting secretary of state.

The unverified ballots are perfectly okay, according to the deputy secretary for elections and commissions, Jonathan Marks.

Not only can counties register voters without verification of identity, but they *must* send a mail-in ballot to any person who requests one, even if that individual provides invalid identification.

Marks testified to that effect before the House State Government Committee (SGC) in mid-September. However, he said that “the ballot doesn’t count unless the voter provides a valid form of ID.”

(Marks is the same official whom Republicans accused of violating state code in 2020 by “notifying Democrat Party representatives of ballots that were rejected before the polls closed,” according to [The Federalist](#).)

Representatives Frank Ryan and Dawn Keefer, members of the SGC, led the letter signatories in pointing out a glaring contradiction between Marks’ testimony and guidelines published several days later by Chapman’s office.

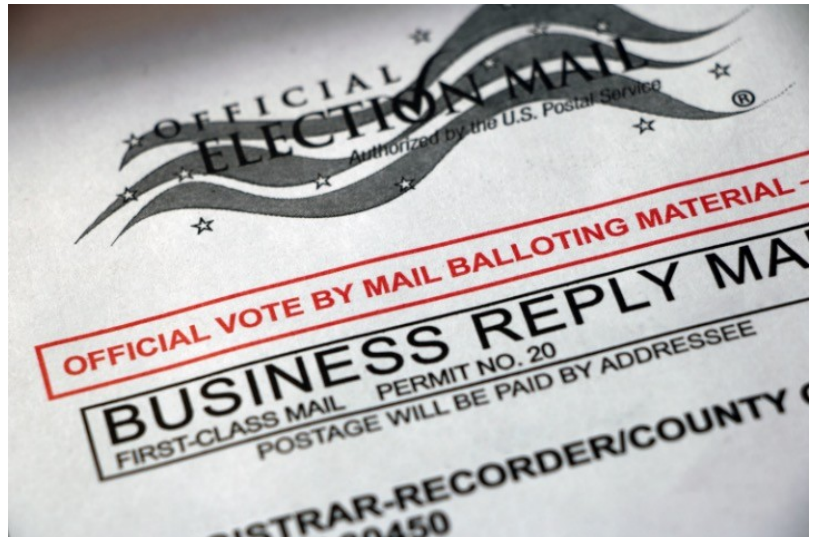
The [document](#), *Guidance Concerning Examination of Absentee and Mail-in Ballot Return Envelopes*, claims that counties must verify an applicant’s identification prior to mailing a ballot.

“Due to this conflicting information, conscientious election workers could unknowingly accept and count ballots for which no verification has ever occurred,” the lawmakers point out.

Moreover, they cite unnamed county election officials who report ineffective or ignored verification processes in their own jurisdictions.

Lawmaker Demands

The representatives called the number of unverified ballots that have been mailed “staggering” and charged that “according to law, [they] must be set aside and not counted for the 2022 General Election unless the voter produces ID.”



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To ensure compliance, they want Chapman to require counties to certify that they have set aside the unverified ballots and to **“make a record of the type of identification produced by the voter who previously provided non-matching ID.”** (Emphasis in original.)

Beyond that, they are demanding that Chapman immediately issue a directive to county election officials on the proper handling of ballots.

The letter further requires that Chapman correct the *Guidance* document or provide SGC with an explanation for Marks’ false testimony given under oath.

They also call for a list of mail-in ballot applicants who provided identification that does not match official records.

“It is extremely alarming that ballots have been sent to and returned by unverified voters,” Keefer said in a [press release](#) issued by Ryan’s office announcing the letter. “This is another glaring gap in Pennsylvania’s election integrity that can be secured by simply following state and federal election laws and requiring all voters be verified before mail-in ballots are issued. Clearly more secure and robust policies must be put in place to ensure the integrity of our elections.”

Chapman’s Background

Election integrity is not Chapman’s strong suit, as a brief review of her career reveals. Democratic Governor Tom Wolf would have been hard-pressed to find a less suitable candidate as overseer of Pennsylvania’s elections.

Prior to that appointment, Chapman served as “executive director of Deliver My Vote, a left-leaning political advocacy group that promotes at-home voting in collaboration with other left-leaning nonprofits such as Engage Michigan, ProgressNow, the Center for Voter Information, and the Voter Participation Center,” according to [Influence Watch](#).

She has also worked for other leftist organizations, including Let America Vote, “a political committee that promotes the election of Democrats and opposes Republicans, and the Advancement Project, a group that opposes laws that permit election officials to require voters to produce a photo identification to validate their identity and legal eligibility to vote.”

Influence Watch also relates that “she has repeatedly equated voter identification laws with Jim Crow-era racism” and has “endorsed the involuntary registration of persons eligible to vote who have not chosen to register voluntarily.”

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