

LANCASTER COUNTY

OFFICE OF THE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

150 North Queen Street • Suite 715 • Lancaster PA 17603 • Phone: 717-299-8300 • Fax: 717-293-7208 • www.co.lancaster.pa.us
Lawrence George, County Administrator/Chief Clerk • Jacquelyn Pfursich, Esquire, County Solicitor

Ray D'Agostino • Joshua G. Parsons • John Trescot
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

MEDIA ADVISORY
May 17, 2022

CONTACT: Lany George, Chief Clerk – 717-299-8300

MEDIA ADVISORY

From the Lancaster County Board of Elections:

At 7:00 AM this morning, in accordance with the Pennsylvania Election Code, the Lancaster County Board of Elections began the prec canvass process for mail ballots already received by the County Elections Office. This is the process of opening and scanning of mail ballots.

Upon opening and scanning the first batch of ballots it became immediately apparent that a significant number of the mail ballots did not scan. Upon further inspection of the ballots, the County identified the ballots were printed by the mail ballot vendor, NPC, with the wrong identification code. This error prevents the ballots from being scanned on the County's central scanners.

The incorrect printing by the vendor was after the Elections staff approved NPC's test ballots, which had the correct ID code. Those ballots scanned properly during the County's logic and accuracy testing prior to the mailing of any ballots to voters. Thus, there was no way for the County to discover this vendor error prior to 7:00 am on election day, when the law requires mail ballots to be first opened.

In a previous election the County had a similar problem with another vendor, who the County subsequently fired and replaced with this current vendor, which serves many Pennsylvania counties. These types of errors are unacceptable and we hold the vendors responsible.

Let us be clear – this problem and the ongoing problems with the logistics of elections flows directly from the mail ballot law, Act 77 – 2019. Counties must run elections based on state law. This law is too complicated. It has too many short deadlines. It forces counties to use mail ballot vendors where counties used to be able to do absentee ballots internally. It does not allow prec canvass prior to 7:00am on election day, thus, counties cannot find vendor errors prior to that. It causes significant delays. It causes citizens to question why it takes so long to get results.

As we have said repeatedly since it was passed, Act 77-2019 must be repealed. We must stop these problems and have clear, simple election laws again.

After conferring with both major political parties, the staff recommended process to correct the issue will be remarking and scanning all affected ballots. This is the process used in the 2021 Primary Election when the previous mail ballot vendor printed the ballots incorrectly.

Running fair and secure elections is a sacred trust. The Board of Elections will do everything possible to ensure this problem is resolved in a transparent, secure way. Any steps taken will be transparently observed by both major political parties, representatives from the campaigns, and by the media.

The Board of Elections will hold a press conference on this matter at 1:00 p.m. in room 701 of the Lancaster County Government Administration Center, 150 N. Queen St., Lancaster.

LANCASTER COUNTY

OFFICE OF THE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

150 North Queen Street • Suite 715 • Lancaster, PA 17603 • Phone: 717-299-8300 • Fax: 717-293-7208 • www.co.lancaster.pa.us
Lawrence George, County Administrator/Chief Clerk • Jacquelyn Pfursich, Esquire, County Solicitor

Ray D'Agostino • Joshua G. Parsons • John Trescot
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

MEDIA ADVISORY/JOINT STATEMENT

CONTACT: Larry George, Chief Clerk – 717-299-8300

May 18, 2022

MEDIA ADVISORY/JOINT STATEMENT

From the Lancaster County Board of Elections and NPC CEO Chip Gallaher:

NPC takes full responsibility for the file processing error that occurred when printing Lancaster County's initial absentee and mail in ballots. As a result, NPC printed the wrong identification code on approximately 22,000 Lancaster County ballots. This error occurred even though a rigorous testing process, which included testing sample ballots for each voting precinct, was completed prior to the election without incident.

Unfortunately, such an error could not have been identified or corrected prior to the ballots being opened and scanned. Once the error was identified by Lancaster County Election Officials, NPC immediately coordinated with the County Officials to send replacement ballots. NPC will continue working with the County Officials to ensure the impact to the election process is minimalized. Going forward, NPC's version control practices have been revised to ensure only approved identification codes can be printed to avoid this situation from occurring again.