

**LAFAYETTE TOWNSHIP
SUSSEX COUNTY, NEW JERSEY**

RESOLUTION 2013-16

A RESOLUTION OPPOSING SENATE BILL S-2364 AND ASSEMBLY BILL A-3553
WHICH PROPOSE TO EXPAND THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR REGISTERED VOTERS TO
CAST THEIR BALLOTS AT AN ELECTION WITH THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY

WHEREAS, Senate Bill S-2364 and Assembly Bill A-3553 propose to expand the opportunities for registered voters to cast their ballots at an election within the State of New Jersey; and

WHEREAS, the goal of accommodating voters in pursuit of greater participation in the democratic process is a worthy goal; but

WHEREAS, the said bill as it is currently drafted involves proposals that would increase workloads, add more costs to the election process, and ultimately serve to confuse voters more than it would accommodate their needs; and

WHEREAS, the opportunity for “Early Voting” already exists in the State of New Jersey through the Vote by Mail ballot process.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Township Committee of the Township of Lafayette in the County of Sussex does hereby oppose Bill S-2364 and Bill A-3553 for the following reasons:

1. Current State Law provides that the County Clerk shall mail sample ballots for Primary Election on or before 12 noon on Wednesday preceding election (N.J.S.A. 19:23-34). The proposed Bill requires polling places to be open beginning 15 days before an election. This bill creates an inherent conflict between the date upon which the County Clerk is required to mail sample ballots and the date upon which sample ballots must be posted in polling places. It creates a situation in which the County Clerk will be obligated to mail sample ballots to voters, inviting them to come vote on Election Day, who will have already cast their votes, creating confusion for the average voter and citizen. It will also pressure county Clerks to have sample ballots available earlier than the statutory date upon which said sample ballots need to be provided to the general public via mail.
2. The requirement that a single polling place must be kept open ten (10) hours a day, Monday through Saturday, and on Sundays for eight (8) hours, beginning fifteen (15) days before an election up until two (2) days before an election will create additional expense on County Boards of Election, who will be required to staff this said polling place with poll workers who will be required to handle voters that come from every voting district within a municipality as opposed to a single voting district at each polling place on election day.
3. The Sussex County Board of Elections points out that the average age of Poll workers in Sussex County is 72 years. The bill would require complete re-training of poll workers on how to handle paper ballots on the Early voting days as opposed to the electronic voting done on Election day; many current poll workers will not be interested or physically capable of staffing polling places for such extended periods of time for two (2) straight weeks; hiring new poll workers and training them will be

required to staff the early voting locations; costs will be incurred in transporting election materials to and from each early voting location every day in order to maintain chain of custody for protecting the integrity of the ballots cast; overtime costs would be incurred for staffing the Board of Elections offices each day and each evening, all of which adds up to an estimated additional expense exceeding \$150,000 per election.

4. The Bill creates a conflict for Municipal clerks who are required, by law, to be in their offices during the hours that polls are open for an election. Additionally, many municipalities now rely on their Public Works employees to set up and take down polling places. This will create overtime issues on municipalities.
5. The Bill requires a central location be utilized for the early voting polling place. In many instances, this will require the use of the municipal building for seven (7) days a week, for two (2) weeks prior to the election, for up to 12 hours a day. This creates an inherent conflict with already-scheduled court sessions, meetings of governing bodies, meetings of various boards such as Planning Boards, Zoning Boards, Recreation Commissions, and Boards of Health, which will require re-scheduling and postponing hearings on applications before those bodies, in turn creating inconvenience for the general public and increased costs for the municipality.
6. The Sussex County Board of Elections estimates that, taking all factors into consideration, the total cost of setting up and conducting the first early voting election would be \$680,000, and the cost of each early voting election thereafter would be \$198,000.
7. This represents an unfunded mandate, creating unnecessary additional burden and expense on the county and local levels of government, and provides no meaningful increase in the opportunity for New Jersey voters to “vote early” because current state law and established procedures allow a voter to download a Vote By Mail Ballot application, mail in that application, receive a Vote by Mail ballot, and cast their ballot, without ever having to leave their own home or business location.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Township Committee of the Township of Lafayette does hereby call upon its representatives in the State Legislature to oppose the adoption of this bill.

AND, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a copy of this Resolution shall be sent to the Office of the Governor; Senator Paul A. Sarlo, Budget & Appropriations Chair; Assemblyman Vincent Prieto, Budget Chair; Senators Nia Gill and Jim Whelan, the Sponsors of Bill S-2364; Assemblypersons Daniel R. Benson, Herb Conaway, Jr., Craig J. Coughlin, Wayne P. DeAngelo, Patrick J. Diegnan, Jr., Sheila Y. Oliver, and John Wisniewski, the Sponsors of Bill A-3553; Senator Steven Oroho and Assemblywoman Alison McHose, who represent this District; the Sussex County Board of Elections; and the New Jersey League of Municipalities.

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CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify the foregoing to be a true and correct copy of a resolution duly adopted by the Township Committee of the Township of Lafayette, in the County of Sussex, New Jersey, at a meeting held on March 5, 2013.

AnnaRose Fedish, RMC  
Municipal Clerk