

Why Should I Care About the May 18th Ballot Questions?

The life of every Pennsylvanian will be impacted by the outcomes of these ballot questions. Some are changes to our state Constitution that are being rushed through with little public discussion or thought for long-term consequences. Know what's on your ballot and VOTE on May 18th or by mail.

ALL REGISTERED VOTERS CAN VOTE ON THESE BALLOT QUESTIONS.

Ballot Question	What It Does	Consequences
<p><i>Shall the Pennsylvania Constitution be amended to change existing law and increase the power of the General Assembly to unilaterally terminate or extend a disaster emergency declaration . . .*</i></p>	<p>Gives total control to the PA legislature to END or CONTINUE a "State of Emergency". Removes the Governor's veto power over their decision.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Vote: NO</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would severely limit the Governor's ability to keep us safe during a state of emergency • We need fast action when lives are at stake. Emergencies are no time for 253 politicians in Harrisburg to have a political debate. Disasters should not be subject to a political process in the legislature. • State agencies that coordinate their response to a disaster would be taking their "marching orders" from 253 legislators rather than the Governor and his/her cabinet. • We need the Governor, who represents ALL Pennsylvanians, to act quickly and decisively. This opens up opportunities for political or regional favoritism to influence ongoing disaster relief decisions.
<p><i>Shall the Pennsylvania Constitution be amended to change existing law so that: a disaster emergency declaration will expire automatically after 21 days, regardless of the severity of the emergency, unless the General Assembly takes action to extend the disaster emergency . . .*</i></p>	<p>Limits the Governor's power to DECLARE a "State of Emergency" to a maximum period of 21 days (it's currently 90 days).</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Vote: NO</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disasters do not have a predictable time limit. This law would apply to all kinds of disasters: hurricanes, blizzards, industrial accidents, pandemics, etc. • Emergency Federal aid often requires that a disaster declaration is in place. If it lapses, this could delay FEMA assistance, emergency supplies, deployment of the National Guard, implementation of emergency funding to communities. • Creates the logistical hurdle of convening the 253-member legislature for a vote every 3 weeks under disaster conditions. • Grants the sole power to manage an emergency to individual legislators elected in different regions of the state, rather than the executive elected by the entire state.
<p><i>Shall the Pennsylvania Constitution be amended by adding a new section providing that equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged because of an individual's race or ethnicity?</i></p>	<p>Restricts PA government agencies and institutions from denying an individual's equal rights because of race or ethnicity.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Vote: No Recommendation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both the Pennsylvania Constitution and the Equal Protection Clause in the U.S. Constitution already provide broad protections against discrimination by State-run agencies. • This amendment focuses on prohibiting discrimination against the <i>individual</i>, with a color-blind approach to discrimination. This would include claims of "reverse discrimination", where a Caucasian person could sue a State-run operation, agency, or school if they felt they were discriminated against. Thus, this new law could be used to ban equal opportunity programs that consider race for the purpose of balancing out inequities. • <i>For perspective on this complex amendment, please visit: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n5PdpMbG1Vs</i>
<p><i>Do you favor expanding the use of the indebtedness authorized... for loans to volunteer fire companies, volunteer ambulance services....to include loans to municipal fire departments or companies that provide services through paid personnel...*</i></p>	<p>Would expand the class of eligible loan applicants (volunteer organizations) to include municipal fire departments and ambulance companies with paid personnel.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Vote: YES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These loans may be used for establishing or modernizing firefighting facilities, or for the purchase of new firefighting apparatus, vehicles, and protective or communications equipment. • This referendum does not authorize incurring any additional debt to fund the loan program. It also does not expand the purposes for which loans may be made.

*For complete questions and more information about these ballot questions, visit <https://onyourballot.vote411.org/index.do>