

ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION No. 184

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED AUGUST 25, 2020

Sponsored by:

Assemblyman GERARD SCHARFENBERGER

District 13 (Monmouth)

Assemblyman JON M. BRAMNICK

District 21 (Morris, Somerset and Union)

Assemblyman BRIAN BERGEN

District 25 (Morris and Somerset)

Co-Sponsored by:

Assemblymen Simonsen, McClellan, Catalano and McGuckin

SYNOPSIS

Urges Governor, NJ Secretary of State, and county clerks conduct primarily in-person voting during 2020 General Election.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 10/19/2020)

1 **AN ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION** urging the Governor, New Jersey
2 Secretary of State, and county clerks to conduct primarily in-
3 person voting during the 2020 General Election.
4
5 **WHEREAS**, The dangers posed by the Coronavirus disease 2019
6 (COVID-19) pandemic have led to many difficult decisions for both
7 the leaders and citizens of New Jersey; and
8 **WHEREAS**, It is important to appropriately use the information
9 provided to us by scientists and experts to make informed decisions
10 about the safety and feasibility of various activities; and
11 **WHEREAS**, The 2020 General Election, which includes elections for
12 President of the United States, one seat of the United States Senate
13 from this State, and all the seats of the United States House of
14 Representatives, will be held on Tuesday, November 3, 2020; and
15 **WHEREAS**, It is crucial that New Jersey officials do everything in their
16 power to ensure an accurate and timely election process for the
17 2020 General Election; and
18 **WHEREAS**, Executive Order No. 177, issued by the Governor on
19 August 14, 2020, states that the 2020 General Election will be
20 conducted primarily via mail-in ballots; and
21 **WHEREAS**, The order includes detailed safety measures for opening up
22 a limited number of polling locations throughout the State for in-
23 person voting; and
24 **WHEREAS**, With the inclusion of safety measures, the Governor,
25 Secretary of State, and county clerks should strongly consider
26 conducting the 2020 General Election primarily with in-person
27 voting; and
28 **WHEREAS**, There are still many issues that need to be worked out in a
29 primarily mail-in ballot election that the State has not and will not
30 adequately address before the November General Election; and
31 **WHEREAS**, During the July 7, 2020 Primary Election, New Jersey saw
32 numerous instances of mail-in voting issues that revealed the
33 potential for unclear and delayed results in the upcoming General
34 Election; and
35 **WHEREAS**, Final results for the Primary Election were not completely
36 finalized by the Department of State until more than a month later,
37 with the Republican Senate primary still in dispute; and
38 **WHEREAS**, The Primary Election saw 1.47 million New Jersey
39 residents vote, a number that will greatly increase for the General
40 Election, leading to more questions than answers on the feasibility
41 of mail-in voting, a concern county clerks have already expressed to
42 the Governor; and
43 **WHEREAS**, It is imperative that the Governor reverse course on his
44 decision to primarily conduct a mail-in ballot general election and
45 allow the citizens of New Jersey to safely vote in-person to ensure
46 accurate and timely general election results; now, therefore,

1 **BE IT RESOLVED** *by the General Assembly of the State of New*
2 *Jersey:*

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4 1. This House urges the Governor, New Jersey Secretary of
5 State, and county clerks to conduct primarily in-person voting
6 during the 2020 General Election to ensure accurate and timely
7 election results and to take the necessary steps to ensure the
8 public's safety while voting.

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10 2. Copies of this resolution, as filed with the Secretary of State,
11 shall be transmitted by the Clerk of the General Assembly to the
12 Governor, New Jersey Secretary of State, and all county clerks in
13 the State.

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STATEMENT

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18 This resolution urges the Governor, New Jersey Secretary of
19 State, and county clerks to conduct primarily in-person voting
20 during the 2020 General Election.

21 Executive Order No. 177 states that the State of New Jersey will
22 conduct primarily vote-by-mail voting for the 2020 General
23 Election on Tuesday, November 3, 2020. This election includes
24 selecting the President of the United States, one New Jersey seat in
25 the United States Senate, and all the seats in the United States
26 House of Representatives.

27 Many county clerks have already expressed concerns of
28 producing timely and accurate results for the November election.
29 While voting by mail has been a staple in the United States for over
30 a hundred years, it is not feasible to conduct it on a Statewide scale
31 with limited time to prepare for it. The 2020 New Jersey Primary
32 Election was held on Tuesday, July 7, 2020 with all mail-in voting.
33 It took more than a month for the Department of State to finalize
34 the election results, with disputes still occurring in key races. These
35 issues will only be multiplied when millions of more voters cast
36 their ballots for the general election.

37 The Governor's efforts to provide a safe voting procedure for
38 voters amid the COVID-19 pandemic should not be ignored. In his
39 executive order, the Governor lays out numerous detailed
40 procedures to ensure that voters will be safe at polling locations.
41 While COVID-19 poses a threat, proven steps have already been
42 taken to ensure safety, such as social distancing, mask
43 requirements, and cleaning protocols.

44 It is imperative during such an important election that New
45 Jersey provides accurate and timely results. A Statewide vote-by-
46 mail initiative is not feasible for this election cycle and could prove

1 disastrous for the State. With the procedures already in place and
2 the additional measures implemented by the Governor in his
3 executive order, it is crucial that the Governor reverse course on his
4 decision and make the 2020 General Election primarily in-person
5 voting.