



CITY OF ALLENTOWN

No. 182

RESOLUTION

R - 2021

Introduced by the City Council on October 20, 2021

Recommends the Pennsylvania law requiring county boards of election to post plain English statements at polling places so that people can read the statements prior to voting be amended to include such statements be included in mail-in-ballot information

Resolved by the Council of the City of Allentown, That

WHEREAS, Allentown City Council passed Ordinance 15708 on May 5, 2021, establishing a referendum on whether Section 101(B) of the Charter shall be removed. The section reads as follows: "English shall be the official language of the City of Allentown and the language in which City business shall be conducted, unless otherwise required by applicable state and/or federal law or regulation."

WHEREAS, Pennsylvania law directs county board of elections to draft ballot questions and plain English statements; and

WHEREAS, the Plain English statements are intended to enable voters to better understand the ballot questions that they will vote on; and

WHEREAS, the Plain English Statement for this question reads as follows:

Shall paragraph B of Section 101 of the City of Allentown Home Rule Charter be removed from the Charter?

The City's Home Rule Charter is like the City's constitution; it sets up the rules for City government.

Section 101(B) of the Charter states as follows: "English shall be the official language of the City of Allentown and the language in which City business shall be conducted, unless otherwise required by applicable state and/or federal law or regulation." If you vote "Yes" on this ballot question, it means that this provision will be deleted in its entirety, so that English is no longer the official language of the City.

If you vote "Yes" on this ballot question, it means that this provision will be deleted in its entirety, so that English is no longer the official language of the City.

WHEREAS, Pennsylvania law requires county boards of election to post plain English statements to be posted at polling places so that people can read the plain English statements prior to voting; and

WHEREAS, Pennsylvania allows voting by mail-in ballot; and

WHEREAS, Pennsylvania law does not appear to require county board of elections to mail plain English statements with ballots; and

WHEREAS, the reasons that lead the General Assembly to require plain English statements in polling places should also require those plain English statements to be sent with mail-in ballots; and

WHEREAS, the use of mail-in-ballots is increasing and becoming more commonplace.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Council of the City of Allentown finds that voters requesting mail in ballots should have the same information available to those that cast their ballot and polling places.

BE IT SO RESOLVED that Council hereby recommends Plain English Statements be provided to each voter as part of the mail-in-ballots and that appropriate action be taken by officials to establish such a policy.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that a copy of this be forwarded to local state representatives, county officials, Secretary of State, and the Governor.