Voter Experience Survey June 2020

The June 2020 Voter Experience Survey was administered online using the Survey Monkey platform and distributed via email to Seventy's 25,000+ election news subscribers, through social media and on www.seventy.org, and to the media. The survey was open from Friday, May 29 to Monday, June 22, available before Election Day for voters who submitted absentee or mail-in ballots. Respondents were limited to one submission per IP address.

Seventy appreciates the support of the community, civic and media organizations who assisted in disseminating the survey – and to the 3,200 citizens who participated.

Did you vote in person on Election Day or by mail?		
I voted in person on Election Day.	679	21%
I voted by mail.	2519	79%

How confident are you that the current election process in your particular county produces accurate outcomes?											Avg.
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	**7.5**
98	71	36	60	70	271	200	382	629	531	770	
3%	2%	1%	2%	2.%	9%	6%	12%	20%	17%	25%	

Mail-in Voting (MV) Responses

MV Question 1: If at any point you encountered issues, did you contact your county election office for help?		
No.	2163	84%
Yes. I had an issue REQUESTING an absentee or mail-in ballot.	152	6%
Yes. I had an issue COMPLETING my absentee or mail-in ballot.	66	3%
Yes. I had an issue RETURNING my absentee or mail-in ballot.	180	7%

MV Question 2: If at any point you encountered issues, did you contact your county election office for help?		
No. I didn't know who to contact.	0	0%
No. I could not reach the elections staff.	32	29%
Yes. I reached the elections staff, but they could not resolve the issue.	31	28%
Yes. I reached the elections staff, and they helped me resolve the issue.	47	43%

MV Question 3: Please rate the absentee/mail-in voting process given your experience.		
Excellent	1541	61%
Good	678	27%
Fair	209	8%
Poor	83	3%

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MV Question 4: Do you plan to vote by absentee or mail-in ballot in the November 3, 2020 general election?

Yes	1585	63%
No	152	6%
Do not know	774	31%

In-person Voting at Polling Place (PP) Responses

PP Question 1: Approximately how long did you wait in line to vote?

Do not know	3	0%
Not at all	345	51%
Less than 10 minutes	182	27%
10 to 30 minutes	102	15%
31 minutes to an hour	30	4%
More than an hour	19	3%

PP Question 2: Did you encounter any individuals campaigning or distributing partisan flyers, buttons or posters inside the polling place (i.e., the space or room where the voting systems are located)?

Yes	59	9%
No	621	91%

PP Question 3a: Was there a problem with your voter registration when you tried to vote?

Yes	62	9%
No	618	91%

PP Question 3b: Were you allowed to vote?

No, I was not allowed to vote	5	8%
Yes, I used a provisional ballot	27	44%
Yes, I used the voting system	30	48%

PP Question 4a: Were you asked to show identification at the polling place (e.g., driver's license, student or government ID, voter registration card)?

Yes	103	15%
No	576	85%

PP Question 4b: Did you change your voter registration address before this election, or was this your first time voting in your county?

Yes	26	26%
No	75	74%

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PP Question 4c: Were you allowed to vote?		
No, I was not allowed to vote	2	2%
Yes, I used a provisional ballot	21	21%
Yes, I used the voting system	78	77%

PP Question 5: Did you encounter any problems with the voting equipment or the ballot that may have interfered with your ability to cast your vote as intended?		
Yes	103	15%
No	566	85%

PP Question 6a: Did you need help or assistance voting due to a disability?		
Yes	14	2%
No	655	98%

PP Question 6b: How did you receive help or assistance voting at the polling place?		
A person of my choosing (e.g., friend, relative, another voter) assisted me.	3	30%
I used the audio keypad/headphone device on the voting system.	1	10%
The voting system was adjusted or lowered so I could reach the ballot face.	0	0%
I did not receive help or assistance	6	60%

PP Question 7: Did the poll workers have and use personal protection equipment (face masks, gloves, sanitary wipes)?		
Yes	602	91%
No	60	9%

PP Question 8: Were the poll workers able to address any question or issue you encountered in the voting process?		
Yes	309	47%
No	38	6%
Not applicable since no question came up	313	47%

PP Question 9: Please rate the job performance of the poll workers at the polling place where you voted.		
Excellent	387	59%
Good	176	27%
Fair	61	9%
Poor	36	5%

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Open-ended Responses

The open-ended responses listed below were selected as representative examples or because of detail or clarity provided by the respondent. All text is verbatim as received, except that identifiable information to individuals and candidates has been redacted.

Mail-in Voting Respondents

Did you encounter any issues in the absentee or mail-in voting process? If yes, please specify what problem(s) you had:

- Ballot requested around mid-March. As of late April, it was still "processing" on the website. I applied for another ballot. Received ballot shortly thereafter plus an email saying my send application was rejected as I had duplicate applications in the system.
- I am a college student that requested an absentee ballot while still in school. Since that time, and before I received that ballot, we had to leave school due to COVID-19. I was not able to retrieve my ballot from my mailbox at school. I then requested a mail in ballot and never received it. I did not vote. A message was left with Senator Sabatina's office regarding this (before the election) but never returned.
- I ended up with over 70 replies confirming my request for a mail-in ballot. I then got another email prompting me to request a mail-in ballot, which I did. I got one ballot, filled it out, and sent it in. I then got an email stating my application was rejected due to having duplicates. I later received confirmation that my ballot was accepted. It was very anxiety inducing.
- I forgot to put it in the "security envelope" and had no clear guidance as to whether this was a fatal defect. I think the instructions are overly complex, I am an attorney and made this mistake/oversight, I can imagine that folks who aren't as comfortable dealing with paper work and bureaucracy may have issues that render their vote invalid.
- I waited three months after requesting my ballot, and it didn't arrive until the afternoon of election day, too late to get a postmark from my local post office, so I had to go to the polling place anyhow to drop off the mail-in ballot.
- My application was submitted and accepted in March. The website said that my ballot was mailed out on May 1. It never arrived. After numerous phone calls and voice messages, I was informed on May 17 that a new ballot would be mailed. I received it on Monday, June 1, and mailed it the morning of June 2. Only because of the emergency extension ordered by the Governor was I able to vote by mail.
- The first time I attempted to apply online for a ballot, the system rejected my Drivers License #. Also happened a 2nd time when I tried on my tablet. I requested an application from my Rep, Pam Delissio, and received it, mailed it in, and then got an e-mail saying it was rejected because it was a duplicate! I phoned the election office at city hall and was advised that message was incorrect! My application was received, processed, and approved. This was not an easy process.

- Took 3 weeks for online registration to show up as being received. Ballot took 2 weeks to get to me after they said it was mailed. Completed ballot wasn't logged in until 4pm the day before election and was very stressful not knowing if I'd have to make a decision to not be counted or risk my health.

What feedback do you have on the process? What would you change?

More than 1,500 respondents provided feedback on their mail-in voting experience. Many comments were positive, but delays between submitted applications and received ballots were not an uncommon experience. A limited number of respondents reported receiving their ballot too late to return in the mail, or not receiving their ballot at all.

The following changes or improvements were frequently raised:

- Improve the turnaround time for processing applications and sending ballots to voters.
- Set a postmark deadline for ballots, preferably on Election Day. Determining at what point it would be too late to put a ballot in the mail was a challenge.
- Improve ballot tracking so that automated notices and status-checking tool align better with the actual status of an application or ballot.
- Multiple, accessible drop-off locations are needed, especially if ballots are received with limited time to return them.
- Clearer communication needed around the process as a whole, but in particular the deadlines, drop-off locations, and how to complete the ballot itself and avoid mistakes.
- Better access to local election officials to seek assistance, via phone and email.
- Send mail-in ballots to all voters to preclude the application step; or, send applications and vote-by-mail instructions to all voters.

Selected responses:

- Why did I even need to request a ballot? Why couldn't one just have been mailed to every voter? 2. The ballots and ballot instructions are confusing and need to be streamlined. This needs to be as simple as possible so that honest mistakes don't invalidate votes. Get some UX design experts involved asap. 3. Consider a "post-marked by Election Day" return policy. Mail transit time is out of voters' control. 4. I received an email that my ballot was received (great), but I don't recall any confirmation that my vote was tabulated. Now I'm concerned that my vote wasn't counted.
- 1. Earlier and better information sent to voters on polling locations. (Mine changed twice) 2. Earlier and better information on who can vote by mail-in. Many were under the impression that they needed a doctor's note. 3. More staffing to process mail-in applications 4. Best option: send every registered voter a mail-in ballot
- Accept completed ballots 7 days after election. Automatically send VBM application to every registered voter in the state. Ditto ballot. Establish early voting and drop-boxes throughout city.

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- Adding a voter information pamphlet with the ballot would be helpful. I used to vote by mail in Oregon and it was a great experience.
- Allow postmark by election day. Allow one person to drop off multiple ballots in person. Increase number and hours of in-person return locations.
- Applications should be sent to everyone automatically. The deadlines should be moved up to ensure that all ballots can be received and cast well before the election date to avoid people having to then walk in and vote provisionally.
- Ballot drop-off sites should be available from the start. Mailing my ballot worked fine, but it took so long to receive my ballot after it was mailed (2 weeks) that I don't trust the postal service to deliver them on time; I would much prefer to drop off at a designated drop-off location.
- Commissioners office is essential. Phones MUST be answered! If people can't be in the office, redirect the call to where they can be answered.
- Eliminate the application process and just send every registered voter a ballot. Creates extra steps in the process that lag the process. Election boards had to process applications, registrations, send out ballots, record receiving the ballots. The lack of a field for social security number on the online form was a hindrance for students and senior citizens and senior citizens may need help filling out a paper form --and the online form, but it's more trouble for them to fill out the paper form, but it's easier to have someone help them with the online form. Hotline phone numbers for voters to call to check on status.
- Everything worked well. Easy to request mail in ballot online. Received ballot timely. Instructions clear. Received timely emails confirming each step in process.
- Hotline that answers for people who have not received their ballot
- I loved that I could just drop it off as I walked past city hall. The mailbox is in a convenient spot and obviously decorated so it was easy to find. All of the Dilworth Park employee were aware of it and could driver you to the box easily.
- I really appreciated that the postage was pre-paid, since I do not have any stamps at home and would have had to buy a stamp otherwise. The instructions on the ballot were a bit confusing in wording. Also, I worry about all the added paper use and how that will affect climate change. I am also worried about all the ballots being actually received and processed, considering the pandemic and protests might have made it hard for people to drop off their ballots in time or vote in-person.
- It took several weeks (3) to get the ballot. But there was email communication at every step, application received, voter status confirmed, ballot mailed, ballot received and recorded, which was excellent and made me trust the process.
- Mail ballots to every registered voter. Short of that, mail ballot applications to every registered voter, and make them available for pickup in public places.
- Make sure to include pre-paid return envelope & make sure that every registered voter who has not yet requested a vote-by-mail application is mailed a request form well in advance of the election.

- More drop boxes in advance of Election Day, to ensure timely and accurate delivery to the commissioners. Also reminders to request one *early* since it took a while to arrive

In-person Voting Respondents

Did you encounter any individuals campaigning or distributing partisan flyers, buttons or posters inside the polling place (i.e., the space or room where the voting systems are located)? If yes, please specify what you observed:

- A few outside; none inside. It was right next to City Hall, so there were police lines and flashing lights but not much foot traffic.
- Campaign material on the table where I signed the book.
- Committee persons and candidates were outside appropriately
- I had to run out a promoter for [Candidate A] who was inside (I was a poll worker). She continued to campaign outside within a 20' radius despite repeated requests to move farther away. So did a promoter for another candidate, but not so boldly.
- Lots of new candidates and people canvassing out front of the locations.
- One person actively engaged with me to discuss the candidate he was promoting. A few more people were sitting near the door to the building and just said hello.
- People were campaigning outside the voting facility. None inside.
- The two people regulating the number of people going into the voting area where distributing flyers for [Candidate B]. While very technically outside of the polling, they were acting as workers for the polling place and handing out flyers that made multiple voters be reprimanded for brining campaign information into the polling place. Another group was campaigning for a candidate directly to the person or people who were next to go into the polling place. These folks literally jumped backwards when I said they weren't to campaign so close to a polling place and said "see, we're far enough away now."

Was there a problem with your voter registration when you tried to vote? If yes, please specify what problem(s) you had:

- Applied for ballot it never came in the mail so we went in person to vote and we weren't in the book for provisional
- First time voting there so I had to show ID, which I was not prepared for (but fortunately had brought)
- I can't vote because PA doesn't allow independents to vote in primaries. This needs to be changed.
- I prepared online voter registration application 5/18/2020 (due to change of address from different county). According to the online "voter application status" website my application was processed and approved on 5/19/2020.   Never received new voter registration card- tried several days to contact Philadelphia County election office without success. Went to polls with PA website's print-out of my registration status (poll worker saw that the

information shown on form appeared correct) but my name wasn't listed in voter registration book. Had to fill out provisional ballot, which, quite frankly means not a vote unless needed. With computer technology-can't understand why I wasn't listed in book. Poll worker told me to call Philadelphia county election office today, 6/3/2020- still can't get thru.

- I switched both my husband and I's voter affiliation to Democrat in January 2020 just for this election. Neither name was in the log and we had to fill in provisional ballots.

- I've voted @ Wm D Kelley school for the past 20 years But on June 2 2020 when I arrived to vote I was told to go to Daniel Boone only to get to Boone school to be turned away and told to go back to Kelley school & "tell them to stop sending people to Boone in which I replied I will not I don't work here I'm only trying to vote I went back & fourth a total of 4 times to each school until I had to call someone who was working @ another poll who provided me with a city # who informed me I was in the book @ Boone & to tell them to look again After another look my name was found I voted

- It took a long time for the election worker to find the slip of paper with my name. At first he told me that there was no record for me. After I gave him my business card clearly showing the spelling of my name, he found the slip of paper with my name.

- My change of address had not processed and I had to fill out a provisional ballot

- My info was in the book and I signed my name as normal. Apparently my info was also to be in a stack of small papers to give to the attendant at the machines, but they could not find mine and had to write it up by hand remarking that quite a few were   missing (or out of order). That seemed to be new and took extra time.

- They, at first, could not find me in the books to sign in to vote. I had to confirm my voter registration myself and after showing them my ID and webpage on my phone they were able to find my name and sign me in.

- Upon arrival, there was a lot of confusion on who was able to go first or not. Then lines were created alphabetically but soon became unfair because everyone who was in A-R were helped more while S-Z line, which grew to around the corner. It became very frustrating causing people to leave which i feel like was a set up from the beginning. When you finally got into the building, you had to wait again until there was more space for them to enter.

Did you encounter any problems with the voting equipment or the ballot that may have interfered with your ability to cast your vote as intended? If yes, please specify what problem(s) you had:

- All went well -I'm sure my vote was counted as intended -but it was hard to read the small print on the side screen off to the right on the paper ballot when you double check to make sure your vote was properly recorded.

- Ballots were too large for the machine and had to be trimmed down

- Having to enter a ward/division and party inside machine much more cumbersome than when it was done by poll person outside machine.

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- I filled out a provisional ballot, and several people sat at the same table filling out provisional ballots with no partitions and other voters walking right by, so there was no privacy and no attempt at privacy.
- It was a paper ballot and the print was not very large. I found it very difficult to read and to complete. Please offer Large Print Ballots in November.
- Most (7-9) of the total (12-14) voting machines were not functional when I was there. The people working there were suggesting that we reach out to the election complaint people. When I tried to do that they could not locate my address, so I could not make a complaint. I do not know if this issue was resolved later in the day.
- Only received the questions. I did not get the Democratic ballot. The volunteers did not know how to use the machines or how to make the ballot come up.
- The paper ballot was challenging for my daughter to complete. She has high functioning autism and I ended up having to supervise her ballot completion (provided assistance). We were not told the ballot would be paper only and there was no sample ballot for her to review in advance so she would be prepared. She has never missed an election since she was able to vote, and is very comfortable with our usual polling place (which was not available) and the electronic system. She was also very anxious due to 1. a different polling place, 2. very long lines (one outside of the building, one inside of the building, both before even entering the polling area), 3. chaotic nature of the polling area (social distancing could have been achieved in the smaller local polling place, but in this large combined polling place which required many poll workers, there was absolutely no social distancing and while the poll workers were friendly and tried to be helpful, it was a frenzied, chaotic scene. HUGE mistake to combine polling places and make everyone is our community go to the same place - led to long lines, long waits, chaos, and NO SOCIAL DISTANCING
- The paper ballot was too big for the scanner; trying to get the paper to slide in as flat as possible took too long and the scanner rejected the ballot four times before finally accepting it.
- Upon arrival, we were informed that the "wrong machines" had been delivered to the polling station, and that we would have to complete provisional ballots. The site did not have pens to complete said ballots; someone delivered a box of pens as I was leaving. Apparently the "right machines" were delivered as I was leaving. I don't know if they actually worked. To-date (6/11), my vote has yet to be counted. (Polling place for for PHILA WD 50 DIV 07)
- When I hit the "PRINT" button the ballot physically printed out & returned to me instead of the machine taking me to the "VOTE" button
- Worker took me to the booth. Never asked my party. Showed me the buttons on the left and said push this button then left the booth. I pushed the button and then 2 buttons popped up for either Democrat or Republican. I'm registered Republican and chose that but i could have easily chose Democrat. Since it was the primary this was wrong. It should have been set for my party before I went into the booth.

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How did you receive help or assistance voting at the polling place? If you received another form of assistance, please specify:

- There was no ADA access for elderly. A woman had to be assisted up the steps by the people giving out party information. Disgraceful. This location is horrible. It should be at the school we're there is plenty of space.
- One of the ladies helping at the table where they check to make sure you are on the book helped me understand the new machine because it was first time I used one & I was temporary coming from a different polling place that had been closed & condensed due to Coronavirus.
- Poll watcher let me sit in his chair while waiting
- The line was very long to get into the building. My spouse and I cannot stand for an extended period of time. There was no provision for handicapped persons, only one long line. Luckily for us, they came outside and announced our letter of the alphabet could move into another line which was shorter.
- I notified one of the poll workers who did an excellent job of assisting me

What health or safety issues did you observe while in the polling place?

- 50+ people inside polling booth. Shared writing utensils. Masks lowered to hear conversations. Lack of hand sanitizer in building. Need to lick envelope for provisional ballots. All windows shut to limit airflow in building. Inability to complete social distancing at all points of process due to cramped space inside Vare Recreation center. Same entrance used for entry and exit of building leading to increased instance of transmission. Disabled entrance not clearly labeled requiring high risk voters to climb a flight of stairs.
- All had masks on but did not see gloves or any kind of sanitary wipes. The Democrat volunteers outside handing out literature had no protection.
- All workers were wearing masks, there were sneeze guards placed at the edges of tables, pens were sanitized before and after each use, copious hand sanitizer inside and out.
- Distancing was not observed or marked. People were taking their masks off online and talking. The woman who checked me in was not wearing a mask.
- Hand sanitizer and wipes available as needed. Poll workers had masks on but some were not wearing properly. Markers were on the floor to maintain 6ft distancing but many people weren't adhering to social distancing. There was an effort to keep voting stations apart but due to consolidation of at least 3 polling places it didn't seem like there was sufficient space to maintain 6ft distances. The provisional ballot has two standard envelopes that I didn't feel comfortable licking to seal, so they were left unsealed with the lack of another option.
- I voted in person in my precinct, AND I am the Judge of Elections for the precinct. We had two problems concerning protection from coronavirus. First, the county was supposed to provide us with a new pen for each and every voter. They were not with our supplies in the morning when we opened up, and after we called it took over an hour for them to arrive. So during

that busy time, we had to keep cleaning the pens with sanitizing wipes, which caused delays. Second, we had a high number of people who needed to fill out provisional ballots because they had requested mail-in ballots but had not received them. They were therefore on the list of people who could not vote in the ordinary way but had to go provisional. In terms of coronavirus, most were scared to lick the envelopes to seal them shut. I have requested for the next election that we be issued a moistener pad. We had to make due with tissues wetted from a water bottle.

- One person had on a mask shield the others did not wear their masks. I did not see anyone wiping down our machines. The poll workers were shoulder to shoulder (8 people). Were voted in a small room with 7 machines and many people signing in to vote. There was a long line and most of the time we were not 6 feet apart.
- Our polling personnel had face shields only. I had to vote by provisional ballot, because my mail-in ballot never arrived. They had a used damp paper towel at the table to wet the envelopes that needed to be sealed. It didn't seem sanitary to me.

Methodology

Seventy's Voter Experience Survey was piloted in November 2015 to identify issues that the electorate may be encountering during the voting process. Most questions have been collected from academic studies conducted in other states and have been kept consistent each election season. Responses are anonymous.

These results are not drawn from a random and representative sample of Philadelphia-area and Pennsylvania voters. Despite the large number of respondents, only rough generalizations can be inferred about the experiences of the 3,200 survey participants – not the broader universe of voters.

Please contact Policy Director Patrick Christmas at pchristmas@seventy.org with questions or feedback on the survey. Find past results at: www.seventy.org/get-involved/voter-experience-survey

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Demographics of June 2020 Respondents*

Zip Codes

Philadelphia	**2201**	
Center	441	20%
North	236	11%
Northeast	241	11%
Northwest	492	22%
South	495	22%
West/Southwest	296	13%

Suburban Counties	**845**	
Bucks	188	22%
Chester	80	9%
Delaware	177	21%
Montgomery	400	47%

Other zip codes	42	
No data	31	
TOTAL	3,198	

Philadelphia regions: **Center (19102, 19103, 19106, 19107, 19123, 19130), **North** (19120, 19121, 19122, 19124, 19125, 19132, 19133, 19134, 19140), **Northeast** (19111, 19114, 19115, 19116, 19135, 19136, 19137, 19149, 19152, 19154), **Northwest** (19118, 19119, 19126, 19127, 19128, 19129, 19138, 19141, 19144, 19150), **South** (19112, 19145, 19146, 19147, 19148), **West/Southwest** (19104, 19131, 19139, 19142, 19143, 19151, 19153)*

Race, Ethnicity or Origin**

Asian	63	2%
Black or African American	388	12%
Hispanic or Latino/a	60	2%
Native American	22	<1%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	4	<1%
White or Caucasian	2,526	80%
Other race or ethnicity	45	1%
Multiracial	62	2%

Age

18-35	443	13%
36-55	800	24%
56-74	1,456	44%
75+	372	11%
Blank	227	7%

Gender**

Female	1,967	64%
Male	1,050	34%
Non-binary	22	<1%
Prefer not to say	23	<1%
Prefer to self-describe	3	<1%
Other	8	<1%

*Respondents were not required to include demographic information.
**Respondents could select multiple categories.

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