

SPECIAL ELECTION CONDUCTED SOLELY BY "VOTE-BY-MAIL BALLOTS" POSTPONED UNTIL MAY 12, 2020



JOINT INFORMATION CENTER MEDIA RELEASE



Governor Phil Murphy • Lt. Governor Sheila Oliver
Colonel Patrick J. Callahan, Director, State Office of Emergency Management

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 19, 2020

CONTACT: Christine Lee
Press Office: Governor's Office
Email: Christine.Lee@nj.gov

For a VOTE-BY-MAIL Ballot Contact:

Mary Melfi
Hunterdon County Clerk
71 Main Street
Flemington, NJ 08822
908-788-1214

Governor Murphy Announces Changes to Upcoming New Jersey Elections in Response to COVID-19

TRENTON – Governor Phil Murphy today signed Executive Order No. 105, implementing changes to upcoming elections to further mitigate the spread of COVID-19 and ensure that voters can exercise their right to vote without risking their health and safety. The executive order temporarily changes certain election procedures and changes the date of upcoming elections in an effort to protect voters and ensure fairness to candidates during this unprecedented crisis.

“As the coronavirus outbreak continues to unfold, we must take aggressive and swift action to help mitigate further spread and flatten the curve,” said **Governor Murphy**. “My top priority is to keep New Jerseyans healthy and safe during this pandemic, and these new measures will ensure that all New Jersey voters are able to safely exercise their right to vote and be engaged in our democracy.”

“Governor Murphy and I fully respect that elections are the foundation of our democracy, but we will not allow our citizens to be put in harm’s way as the COVID-19 pandemic escalates,” said **Lt. Governor Sheila Oliver, who serves as Commissioner of the Department of Community Affairs**. “The well-being of our constituents is our number one priority and I support the decision to hold elections currently scheduled for March 21st, March 31st, and April 21st in May.”

“The actions we are taking today protect our voters, election workers, and election security,” said **Secretary of State Tahesha Way**. “Postponing these upcoming local elections and rescheduling them on May 12th, when they will be conducted exclusively using vote by mail, will reduce the potential risk to health and safety while ensuring that every New Jersey voter has fair and free access to the ballot box. As we continue to face this public health crisis, our team at the Division of Elections is working every day with our local, county, state, and federal partners to protect New Jersey voters and our democracy.”

The Order specifically requires the following, effective immediately:

- Candidates filing petitions for the March 30th deadline shall be able to submit their petitions online, in addition to in person, and the Secretary of State shall create an online form that allows voters to submit their signatures on petitions electronically.
- The March 21, 2020 special election in Fire District 1 for the Township of Old Bridge and the March 31, 2020 special elections in the **Township of West Amwell** and Atlantic City shall be **postponed until May 12, 2020** to be held concurrently with the municipal non-partisan elections currently scheduled for that date.
- The school board elections scheduled for April 21, 2020 shall also be postponed until May 12, 2020, to be held concurrently with the municipal non-partisan elections currently scheduled for that date.
- **All elections scheduled for May 12, 2020, both before and after this Order takes effect, shall be conducted solely via vote-by-mail ballots.**

Election rules have been modified during prior emergencies, including by Governor Kean in 1982 during a severe winter storm and by the Christie Administration in 2012 in the aftermath of Superstorm Sandy.