

1 PHILADELPHIA CITY COMMISSIONERS

2 RETURN TO BOARD MEETING

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11 Friday, November 14, 2025

12 12:00 p.m.

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20 REPORTED BY:

21 Jacqueline Gissinger

22

23 Job No: 1018052

24

1 ATTENDANCE
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3 OMAR SABIR, CHAIRMAN
4 KHALIF CHESTNUT, CHIEF DEPUTY
5 LISA M. DEELEY, VICE CHAIR
6 NICK CUSTODIO, DEPUTY TO THE VICE CHAIR
7 SETH BLUESTEIN, COMMISSIONER
8 ERIC KAPENSTEIN, DEPUTY
9 KEVIN RICHARDSON, ADMINISTRATOR

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1 PROCEEDINGS

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3 COMMISSIONER SABIR: Good
4 afternoon. I call to order the meeting of the
5 Philadelphia City Commissioners Return Board
6 for Friday, November 14, 2025.

7 This meeting is in compliance with
8 the Pennsylvania Sunshine Act. The
9 Philadelphia City Commissioners are a
10 three-member bipartisan board of elected
11 officials in charge of elections and voting
12 registrations for the City of Philadelphia.
13 Each commissioner is elected to serve a
14 four-year term that coincides with the
15 municipal election cycle for Mayor and City
16 Council. The commissioners set and enforced
17 departmental policies to administer voter
18 registration and conduct elections in
19 accordance with federal and state voter
20 registration election laws.

21 The City Commissioners were
22 created by the Pennsylvania Assembly in 1711
23 with the focus on taxation to help various
24 regulatory powers throughout the centuries.

1 The Commissioner started maintaining voter
2 lists in 1799 and took on more
3 election-related responsibilities. That
4 didn't emerge in its current form until the
5 adoption of Philadelphia Home Rule Charter in
6 1951.

7 We will start off with public
8 comments. Before beginning their comments,
9 commenter's will state where they live, or if
10 they are not a resident of Philadelphia, and
11 that they are a Philadelphia taxpayer. Public
12 comment is not an opportunity for dialog or
13 Q&A. It's public comment, a chance for you to
14 tell us what you think. Each speaker will
15 have two minutes to speak. However, I may
16 extend the time to my discretion. Public
17 comment must concern matters on today's
18 meeting agenda.

19 Finally, it is my responsibility
20 to preserve the order and decorum of the
21 meetings. As such profane, slanderous,
22 discriminatory or personal attacks will not be
23 tolerated. If you wish to make a public
24 objection to a perceived Sunshine Act

1 violation, please raise your hand, and I will
2 recognize you. Outbursts will not be
3 tolerated.

4 Anyone wishing to offer public
5 comment, please step forward.

6 Hearing none, we will now move to
7 report from Secretary Seth Bluestein. Are
8 there any email public comments?

9 COMMISSIONER BLUESTEIN: As of
10 10:45 a.m. there were no email public
11 comments.

12 COMMISSIONER SABIR: Thank you
13 very much. We will now proceed to new
14 business. We will begin by considering the
15 first agenda item under new business,
16 Provisional Ballot Sufficiency
17 Determinations. These categories will be
18 presented by our voter registration
19 administrator, Kevin Richardson. Good
20 afternoon, Kevin.

21 MR. RICHARDSON: Good afternoon
22 commissioners.

23 COMMISSIONER SABIR: Can you
24 please read the first category and the number

1 of votes?

2 MR. RICHARDSON: Yes, sir. Okay.

3 The first category is missing board worker
4 signature. There was a total of 245 for one
5 board worker signature on the ballot, or the
6 affidavit was 155, and no board worker
7 signatures were 90.

8 COMMISSIONER SABIR: I move that
9 this board's count the provisional ballots in
10 this category.

11 Is there a second?

12 COMMISSIONER DEELEY: Chairman,
13 I'll have remarks. Second.

14 COMMISSIONER SABIR: Sure. Go
15 ahead, Vice Chair. Proceed. Do you want to
16 make a comment?

17 COMMISSIONER DEELEY: Yes, I'm
18 sorry. It is the board workers
19 responsibility to sign their section of the
20 provisional ballot envelope. I do not
21 believe that the voters should be
22 disenfranchised for mistakes by the election
23 board workers.

24 COMMISSIONER SABIR: Thank you.

1 Secretary, do you have anything you want to
2 say?

3 COMMISSIONER BLUESTEIN: I have
4 nothing to add. Thank you.

5 COMMISSIONER SABIR: Secretary,
6 please call the roll.

7 COMMISSIONER BLUESTEIN: Vice
8 Chair Deeley.

9 COMMISSIONER DEELEY: Aye.

10 COMMISSIONER BLUESTEIN: I vote
11 aye. Chairman, Sabir.

12 COMMISSIONER SABIR: Aye. Please
13 proceed.

14 MR. RICHARDSON: Okay. The next
15 category is, Not Registered, not in SURE
16 system at all. There's 283 ballots.

17 COMMISSIONER SABIR: Okay. Anyone
18 want to make a comment before we second?
19 Anyone? Hearing none. Okay. I move that
20 this board does not count provisional ballots
21 in this category. Is there a second.

22 COMMISSIONER DEELEY: Second.

23 COMMISSIONER SABIR: Secretary
24 Bluestein, please call the roll.

1 COMMISSIONER BLUESTEIN: Vice

2 Chair Deeley.

3 COMMISSIONER DEELEY: Aye.

4 COMMISSIONER BLUESTEIN: I vote

5 aye. Chairman Sabir.

6 COMMISSIONER SABIR: Aye. Please

7 proceed.

8 MR. RICHARDSON: The next category
9 is no voter signature anywhere on the
10 affidavit for a total of one.

11 COMMISSIONER SABIR: I move that
12 the board does not count provisional ballots
13 in this category. Is there a second?

14 COMMISSIONER DEELEY: Second.

15 COMMISSIONER SABIR: Anyone
16 wishing to make a comment? Please proceed.

17 MR. RICHARDSON: The next category
18 to --

19 COMMISSIONER SABIR: No. No. I'm
20 sorry. Need to vote.

21

22 COMMISSIONER BLUESTEIN: Vice

23 Chair Deeley.

24 COMMISSIONER DEELEY: Aye.

1 COMMISSIONER BLUESTEIN: I vote
2 aye. Chairman Sabir.

3 COMMISSIONER SABIR: I vote Aye.
4 Please proceed.

5 MR. RICHARDSON: The next
6 category is -- it was determined by the staff
7 that voters voted in person, 30 total, 30
8 ballots.

9 COMMISSIONER SABIR: I move that
10 this board does not count provisional ballots
11 in this category. Is there a second?

12 COMMISSIONER DEELEY: Second.

13 COMMISSIONER SABIR: Anyone wish
14 to make comment? Secretary Bluestein, please
15 call the roll.

16 COMMISSIONER BLUESTEIN: Vice
17 Chair Deeley.

18 COMMISSIONER DEELEY: Aye.

19 COMMISSIONER BLUESTEIN: I vote
20 aye. Chairman Sabir.

21 COMMISSIONER SABIR: Aye. Please
22 proceed.

23 COMMISSIONER DEELEY: The next
24 category is, voters have their registration

1 canceled for one reason or another. For a
2 total 107.

3 COMMISSIONER SABIR: I move that
4 this board does not count provisional ballots
5 in this category. Is there a second?

6 COMMISSIONER DEELEY: Second.

7 COMMISSIONER SABIR: Any
8 commissioners want to make a comment.
9 Secretary Bluestein, please call the roll.

10 COMMISSIONER BLUESTEIN: Vice
11 Chair Deeley.

12 COMMISSIONER DEELEY: Aye.

13 COMMISSIONER BLUESTEIN: I vote
14 aye. Chairman Sabir.

15 COMMISSIONER SABIR: Aye. Please
16 proceed.

17 MR. RICHARDSON: The next category
18 is the voter was determined to be registered
19 out of county. That's 324.

20 COMMISSIONER SABIR: I move that
21 this board does not count provisional ballots
22 in this category. Is there a second?

23 COMMISSIONER DEELEY: Second.

24 COMMISSIONER SABIR: Any

1 commissioners want to make a comment?

2 Hearing. None. Secretary, Bluestein, please
3 call the roll.

4 COMMISSIONER BLUESTEIN: Vice
5 Chair Deeley.

6 COMMISSIONER DEELEY: Aye.

7 COMMISSIONER BLUESTEIN: I vote
8 aye. Chairman Sabir.

9 COMMISSIONER SABIR: Aye. Please
10 proceed.

11 MR. RICHARDSON: The next category
12 is the voter returned a mail in or absentee
13 ballot that was counted. There was a total of
14 40.

15 COMMISSIONER SABIR: I move that
16 this board does not count provisional ballots
17 in this category. Is there a second?

18 COMMISSIONER DEELEY: Second.

19 COMMISSIONER SABIR: Any
20 commissioners want to make a comment?

21 Hearing none. Secretary Bluestein, please
22 call the roll.

23 COMMISSIONER BLUESTEIN: Vice
24 Chair Deeley.

1 COMMISSIONER DEELEY: Aye.

2 COMMISSIONER BLUESTEIN: I vote
3 aye. Chairman Sabir.

4 COMMISSIONER SABIR: Aye. Please
5 proceed.

6 MR. RICHARDSON: The next category
7 is the voter only signed once on the affidavit
8 for a total of 210.

9 COMMISSIONER DEELEY:
10 Mr. Chairman, I have a question for Kevin on
11 this category prior to the motion, please.

12 COMMISSIONER SABIR: Please
13 proceed.

14 COMMISSIONER DEELEY: Kevin, was
15 there a signature on the envelope?

16 MR. RICHARDSON: Yes, by the
17 voter.

18 COMMISSIONER DEELEY: Was the
19 staff able to compare that signature to the
20 registered voter in the SURE system?

21 MR. RICHARDSON: Yes.

22 COMMISSIONER DEELEY: In all
23 cases, the signature was determined to be
24 genuine.

1 MR. RICHARDSON: Yes.

2 COMMISSIONER DEELEY: Did all the
3 voters in this category sign on the left side
4 and not on the right side, or did some sign
5 on the right and not on the left.

6 MR. RICHARDSON: It was a
7 combination of both.

8 COMMISSIONER DEELEY:
9 Mr. Chairman, I would like to request that
10 this category be broken out into two
11 different votes, one that deals with the
12 voters that signed in location one, but not
13 two, and another for voters that signed in
14 two, but not one.

15 The reason I ask for this is
16 because, in Re: Canvass of provisional
17 ballots in the 2024 Primary Election, deals
18 with the former. There has not been a case
19 that deals with the latter. Each has
20 offended a different line of the election
21 code. Thank you.

22 COMMISSIONER SABIR: I move -- I
23 make a motion that this board does not count
24 the ballots in this category. Is there a

1 second?

2 COMMISSIONER BLUESTEIN: Second.

3 COMMISSIONER SABIR: Secretary

4 Bluestein, please call the roll.

5 COMMISSIONER BLUESTEIN: Vice

6 Chair Deeley.

7 COMMISSIONER DEELEY: I have

8 remarks on the motion.

9 COMMISSIONER SABIR: You have more
10 remarks?

11 COMMISSIONER DEELEY: Yes. Just
12 to assist in showing everyone what I'm
13 talking about here, I would like to display a
14 blank provisional deck envelope, because I
15 think the core of this issue is the lack of
16 understanding that we are asking voters to
17 sign the same envelope twice.

18 The signature boxes are within
19 inches of each other. When reading the Re:
20 Canvass of provisional ballots in the 2024
21 Primary Election, I believe that the court
22 erred -- because this fact was not clear to
23 them. To start they referred to one
24 signature ballots as unsigned. Quoting from

1 the majority opinion, Walsh additionally
2 emphasizes Wagner provided a full executed
3 affidavit attesting that the ballot was the
4 only one he submitted in that election. As
5 such, Walsh characterizes the envelope
6 signature requirement as unnecessary and
7 superfluous. That affidavit that they are
8 talking about is not on some other piece of
9 paper. It is a signature line on the left
10 side of the envelope that you will see on the
11 screen listed as a voter signature number
12 one. The decision further spends several
13 pages diving into the meaning of the word
14 shall.

15 In this sentence, shall place his
16 signature on the front of the provisional
17 ballot envelope. In the election code, this
18 sentence refers to the right side signature
19 box listed as voter signature number two.
20 But nowhere does it mention that the voter
21 had already placed their signature on the
22 front of the provisional envelope on the left
23 side.

24 It then goes on to affirm that the

1 staff must compare the signature on the
2 envelope with the one in the voter SURE
3 record to assess whether it is genuine and
4 executed by the same person who signed the
5 affidavit. I will note that all of this is
6 activity -- all of this activity of signing
7 provisional ballots is happening in the
8 polling place in front of the election board
9 workers.

10 So I'm not sure what situation is
11 occurring, where the person signing the left
12 side would be different from the person
13 signing the right side. It seems to me, the
14 judge of elections would have to put a stop to
15 that if two different people were filling out
16 provisional envelopes.

17 As we heard from Kevin, our staff
18 only needs one of the two signatures to
19 compare it to the SURE system and determine
20 if it is genuine. I am aware of what 25 PS
21 3050 says about the need for both signatures,
22 but it would not be the first thing in the
23 election code to be thrown out because it
24 unfairly disenfranchises voters.

1 In conclusion, I believe that the
2 court errored in its decision and Re: Canvass
3 a provisional ballots in the 2024 Primary
4 Election. I think that if presented the full
5 picture, and I have faith in our law
6 department's ability to do that, they would
7 find using the buzzwords of the day, that
8 there is no compelling government interest in
9 making voters sign the same piece of paper
10 twice when we only need one to complete our
11 check.

12 I will also note that with the
13 issues that occurred in Chester County on
14 November 4, with their paper poll books that
15 resulted in an extreme number of provisional
16 ballots, we could see this case revisited as
17 there may be local races there where these
18 ballots are determinative. Thank you.

19 COMMISSIONER SABIR: Okay. So I
20 do believe before you made your comment,
21 Secretary, correct me if I'm wrong, you had
22 already voted --

23 COMMISSIONER BLUESTEIN: I
24 seconded your motion to not count the ballots.

1 COMMISSIONER SABIR: Oh, you
2 seconded the motion. Okay. So now I proceed
3 to vote. Can you please call roll?

4 COMMISSIONER BLUESTEIN: Vice
5 Chair Deeley.

6 COMMISSIONER DEELEY: No.

7 COMMISSIONER BLUESTEIN: I vote
8 Aye. Chairman Sabir?

9 COMMISSIONER SABIR: Aye. Please
10 proceed.

11 MR. RICHARDSON: Okay. The next
12 category is where the secrecy envelope was not
13 used. We have 132 ballots.

14 COMMISSIONER SABIR: Okay. I move
15 that this board does not -- did I make a
16 motion?

17 COMMISSIONER DEELEY: No, but I
18 would --

19 COMMISSIONER SABIR: Hold on one
20 second. I'll make the motion and then you can
21 make a comment.

22 COMMISSIONER DEELEY: No. I have
23 a question for --

24 COMMISSIONER SABIR: Oh, before we

1 make the motion.

2 COMMISSIONER DEELEY: Yeah.

3 COMMISSIONER SABIR: Proceed.

4 COMMISSIONER DEELEY: Thank you,
5 Mr. Chairman.

6 Kevin, these voters were
7 determined to be registered voters, correct.

8 MR. RICHARDSON: Yes.

9 COMMISSIONER DEELEY: These voters
10 sign the affidavit.

11 MR. RICHARDSON: Yes.

12 COMMISSIONER DEELEY: The only
13 thing wrong with these ballots is they're not
14 inside the secrecy envelope?

15 MR. RICHARDSON: That is correct.

16 COMMISSIONER DEELEY: Thank you.
17 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

18 COMMISSIONER SABIR: Okay. I
19 move that this board does not count
20 provisional ballots in this category. Is
21 there a second?

22 COMMISSIONER BLUESTEIN: Second.

23 COMMISSIONER DEELEY:

24 Mr. Chairman, remarks on the motion, please.

1 COMMISSIONER SABIR: Please
2 proceed.

3 COMMISSIONER DEELEY: I believe
4 whether or not a ballot is in the secrecy
5 envelope not material in determining whether
6 or not such individual is qualified under
7 state law to vote in such election. But
8 unlike the mail ballots, where the voters are
9 filling them out on their kitchen tables,
10 these voters are doing this process in a
11 polling place.

12 The judge of elections should be
13 instructing them to place their ballot in the
14 secrecy envelope. So this is a poll worker
15 error that we should not be punishing the
16 voter for.

17 Furthermore, the difference here
18 is the provisional ballots are outlined in
19 federal law, the Help America Vote Act. This
20 is a federal election. This is not. I'm
21 sorry. State law determines if someone is
22 eligible to vote. If we determine these
23 voters to be registered, and that they sign
24 the affidavit, and that they have not already

1 voted in another way, then we must count
2 them.

3 PA law has extra hurdles, but
4 putting a ballot in a secrecy envelope has no
5 bearing on whether or not someone is
6 qualified to vote. I believe that
7 Pennsylvania law is in conflict with the
8 Help America Vote Act. This has not
9 been -- this has not been the subject of
10 recent court challenges, and therefore I
11 believe that these ballots should count.

12 COMMISSIONER SABIR: Secretary,
13 please call the roll.

14 COMMISSIONER BLUESTEIN: Vice
15 Chair Deeley.

16 COMMISSIONER DEELEY: No.

17 COMMISSIONER BLUESTEIN: I vote
18 aye. Chairman Sabir.

19 COMMISSIONER SABIR: Aye. The
20 other category, there's none.

21 MR. RICHARDSON: Mr. Chairman,
22 that concludes my report.

23 COMMISSIONER SABIR: Thank you. I
24 appreciate you. I appreciate you and all your

1 staff working tirelessly to get this done.
2 That concludes our Provisional Ballot
3 Sufficiency Determination. Thank you for all
4 your hard work. We appreciate it.

5 MR. RICHARDSON: You're welcome.
6 Have a good day.

7 COMMISSIONER SABIR: We'll now
8 move to the non-agenda items. We will move to
9 any additional comments by Commissioner and
10 Vice Chair Deeley. Did you have any other
11 business to be rated meeting?

12 COMMISSIONER DEELEY: I have none.
13 Thank you.

14 COMMISSIONER SABIR: Secretary.

15 COMMISSIONER BLUESTEIN: I have
16 nothing to add. Thank you.

17 COMMISSIONER SABIR: Before we
18 pause or recess, whatever we call it, I just
19 wanted to really again thank the staff. I do
20 realize that there needs to be additional
21 training to our board workers. And so -- and
22 I'm pretty almost certain that the board
23 workers who are making some of these mistakes
24 are the same board workers.

1 So maybe we can do additional
2 training targeting them to see if we can get
3 this number down. It's definitely -- it's
4 hard for me to see these numbers here, because
5 people, you know, they tried to vote and
6 everything else.

7 So again, I think we could do a
8 better job. So we definitely can reach out to
9 those board workers, and even if you have to
10 do additional training, I'm all in support of
11 that. Thank you.

12 - - -

13 (Whereupon, the meeting concluded at
14 12:18 p.m.)

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1 C E R T I F I C A T I O N

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3 I, Jacqueline Gissinger,
4 hereby certify that the proceedings and
5 evidence noted are contained fully and
6 accurately in the stenographic notes
7 taken by me in the foregoing matter, and
8 that this is a correct transcript of the
9 same.

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Jacqueline Gissinger

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Court Reporter - Notary Public

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(The forgoing certification of
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<hr/> <p>1</p> <p>107 10:2 10:45 5:10 155 6:6</p> <hr/> <p>2</p> <p>2024 13:17 14:20 17:3 210 12:8 245 6:4 25 16:20 283 7:16</p> <hr/> <p>3</p> <p>30 9:7 3050 16:21 324 10:19</p> <hr/> <p>4</p> <p>4 17:14 40 11:14</p>	<hr/> <p>9</p> <p>90 6:7</p> <hr/> <p>A</p> <p>a.m. 5:10 ability 17:6 absentee 11:12 activity 16:6 add 7:4 additional ly 15:1 administra tor 5:19 affidavit 6:6 8:10 12:7 15:3, 7 16:5 affirm 15:24 afternoon 5:20,21 agenda 5:15 ahead 6:15 assess 16:3 assist</p>	<p>14:12 attesting 15:3 aware 16:20 aye 7:9,11,12 8:3,5,6,24 9:2,3,18, 20,21 10:12,14, 15 11:6,8, 9 12:1,3,4</p> <hr/> <p>B</p> <p>ballets 6:9 ballot 5:16 6:5, 20 11:13 15:3,17 ballots 7:16,20 8:12 9:8, 10 10:4,21 11:16 13:17,24 14:20,24 16:7 17:3, 16,18,24 begin 5:14 blank 14:14 Bluestein 5:7,9 7:3, 7,10,24 8:1,4,22 9:1,14,16,</p>	<p>19 10:9, 10,13 11:2,4,7, 21,23 12:2 14:2,4,5 17:23 board 6:3,5,6, 18,23 7:20 8:12 9:10 10:4,21 11:16 13:23 16:8 board's 6:9 books 17:14 box 15:19 boxes 14:18 broken 13:10 business 5:14,15 buzzwords 17:7</p> <hr/> <p>C</p> <p>call 7:6,24 9:15 10:9 11:3,22 14:4 canceled 10:1 Canvass 13:16 14:20 17:2</p>	<p>case 13:18 17:16 cases 12:23 categories 5:17 category 5:24 6:3, 10 7:15,21 8:8,13,17 9:6,11,24 10:5,17,22 11:11,17 12:6,11 13:3,10,24 Chair 6:15 7:8 8:2,23 9:17 10:11 11:5,24 14:6 Chairman 6:12 7:11 8:5 9:2,20 10:14 11:8 12:3,10 13:9 characteri zes 15:5 check 17:11 Chester 17:13 clean 14:22 code 13:21</p>
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Public Meeting Agenda: Return Board Meeting

November 14, 2025 – 12:00 P.M.

Philadelphia City Commissioners
11311 Roosevelt Blvd.
Philadelphia, PA 19154

- I. Call to Order
- II. Public Comment
 - A. In-person public comments
 - B. Report from the Secretary – Emailed public comments
- III. New Business
 - A. Provisional Ballot Sufficiency Determination
 - 1. Missing Board Worker Signature
 - 2. Not in SURE
 - 3. No Voter Signature
 - 4. Voted In Person
 - 5. Cancelled Registration
 - 6. Registered Out of County
 - 7. Returned Mail-in or Absentee Ballot that was counted
 - 8. One Voter Signature
 - 9. Secrecy Envelope not Used
 - 10. Other
- IV. Non-Agenda Items