

Overview on Equality of Rights Ballot Question

On May 18, 2021, voters will head to the polls to participate in the primary election. The ballot will feature races for municipal offices, a few county offices, and state judges. All voters (including independent) will be asked to decide on three constitutional amendments and a statewide referendum, including a question on Pennsylvania's Equal Rights Regardless of Race or Ethnicity Amendment.

Background

Article I of the Constitution of Pennsylvania is known as the Declaration of Rights and states that, "all men are born equally free and independent, and have certain inherent and indefeasible rights, among which are those of enjoying and defending life and liberty, of acquiring, possessing and protecting property and reputation, and of pursuing their own happiness."

In 1971, PA voters approved an amendment to add Section 28 to the Declaration of Rights that states, "Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania because of the sex of the individual." But as it stands, Pennsylvania's Constitution does not provide protections against the denial of equal rights based on race or ethnicity.

What will the ballot measure do?

The proposal of the Pennsylvania Equal Rights Regardless of Race or Ethnicity Amendment would make the Pennsylvania Constitution align with the protections included in the US Constitution.

If the measure is approved by voters, PA would join 16 states with an amendment addressing equal rights regardless of race in their constitution.

Understanding Options

See below for an understanding on how answers will factor into the ballot measure:

A "**yes**" vote supports adding language to the state constitution that prohibits the denial or restriction of rights on account of an individual's race or ethnicity.

A "**no**" vote opposes adding language to the state constitution that prohibits the denial or restriction of rights on account of an individual's race or ethnicity.

Disclaimer

YCEA has not adopted a formal stance on any of the constitutional amendments. Voters are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the ballot questions and offices on the ballot before they vote. A sample ballot may be accessed on the [County's Voting and Elections webpage](#).

An overview of the three additional ballot questions and the YoCo Voter Guide may be found by [clicking here](#).

Make Your Vote Happen.