

Overview on Termination or Extension of Disaster Emergency Declarations 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. Some voters will participate in special elections. All voters (including independent) will be asked to decide on three constitutional amendments and a statewide referendum, including future abilities to terminate or extend disaster emergency declarations.

Background

Following the news of COVID-19 cases in PA, the governor signed an emergency disaster declaration on March 6, 2020. He further ordered closure of the physical operation of non-life sustaining businesses across the state to mitigate exposure of the virus and some orders continue to remain in effect.

The legislature questioned timelines, administrative responses, data, and ultimately pushed through a constitutional amendment that provides voters the option to decide on the management and ability to declare emergency declarations.

What will the ballot measure do?

If approved the ballot measure would allow the state legislature to terminate or extend a disaster emergency declaration or a portion of such declaration without needing approval of the governor. The ability to extend or end an emergency declaration would be removed from the decision of the governor and would be subjected to a vote by the state legislature.

Supporters believe the responsibility on a termination or extension for an emergency declaration would be better served by the legislature.

Opponents against the measure raise concern that its passage will limit flexibility for a quick reaction time in the event of future emergencies.

Understanding Options

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

A **"yes"** vote supports this constitutional amendment to allow the PA General Assembly to pass a resolution, where the governor is unable to veto, by a simple majority to extend or end a governor's emergency declaration.

A **"no"** vote opposes this constitutional amendment, meaning that any governor would continue to be allowed to veto resolutions terminating emergency declaration and a two-thirds legislative vote would continue to be required to override the veto.

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.