

**Board of Chosen Freeholders**

County of Hunterdon
71 Main Street, Building #1
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MEDIA RELEASE**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****DATE: August 21, 2020****Contact: John E. Lanza, Freeholder**John.lanza@co.hunterdon.nj.us**Shaun C. Van Doren, Freeholder Director**Shaun.vandoren@co.hunterdon.nj.us

Hunterdon County Clerk and Hunterdon County Board of Elections Are Ready for Vote-By-Mail November General Election

Freeholders Still Hold Out Hope that Governor Will Provide Voter Choice

Freeholder John E. Lanza, the liaison to the Hunterdon County Clerk's Office and Board of Elections, noted that Hunterdon County Clerk Mary H. Melfi and Supervisor of Elections Beth Thompson are working around the clock to prepare for the all vote-by-mail November General Election.

Governor Phil Murphy mandated the all vote-by-mail November General Election through his signing of Executive Order No 177.

Lanza stated, "Both County Clerk Melfi and Supervisor of Elections Thompson along with their respective staff have the public's trust and respect. Lanza also stated, "Both Clerk Melfi and Supervisor Thompson are highly regarded by their peers across the state and they have the full faith and confidence of the entire Hunterdon County Freeholder Board."

Freeholder Lanza also noted, "It the hope of my colleagues on the Freeholder Board that Governor Murphy will give voters the option of voting in-person machine voting or through vote-by-mail for the November General Election. However, if this is not the case, Hunterdon County will be ready to undertake the substantial task of processing an entire vote-by-mail Presidential election."

Lanza also added, "While we agree that safety is paramount, the Board's request of voter choice is guided by the recent remarks by Americas leading expert on infectious diseases, Dr. Anthony Fauci, who noted that in-person voting was permissible with the proper safety protocols put in place."

In reflecting on this issue, Freeholder Director Shaun Van Doren added, "The Hunterdon County Freeholder Board will ensure that the Hunterdon County Clerk's Office and the Hunterdon County Board of Elections will have the necessary resources to carry out the November General Election."

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Director Van Doren also added, "I have directed that all County Departments and Divisions provide any logistical and personnel support that is needed by either the Hunterdon County Clerk's Office or the Hunterdon Board of Elections to carry out the vote-by-mail November General Election. We are living in challenging times and Hunterdon residents should rest assured that their county government is actively working to respond to the daily challenges presented by the ongoing public health emergency."

The Freeholders call upon Governor Murphy to reconsider his executive action and to allow for individuals to vote in-person should they chose to do so.