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CLERK SOLLAMI COVELLO ANNOUNCES VOTE BY MAIL BALLOTS NOW AVAILABLE AT MERCER COUNTY CLERK'S OFFICE

TRENTON- Mercer County Clerk Paula Sollami announced that all registered voters will receive a Vote-by-Mail application as part of Mercer County's latest initiative to raise voter participation across all districts.

"I hope that by allowing voters more flexibility in when and how they vote, that more people will engage in our elections and have their voices heard," remarked Mercer County Clerk Paula Sollami Covello of the new voting initiative. "I am glad that the County Executive and the Board of Chosen Freeholders have given me their full support in undertaking this important effort to raise voter participation and the quality of our democratic processes in Mercer County."



Mercer County Clerk Paula Sollami Covello at the Press Conference (center left in blue) with her Deputy Walker Worthy, Jr. (outer right in suit), and Freeholders Lucy Walter and Anne Cannon (left-right)

By end-of-August 2017, a Vote-by-Mail application will be sent out, with return postage, to all registered Mercer County voters who are not already signed up to receive November General Election Vote-by-Mail Ballots. Voters have the option of using this application to receive a Vote-by-Mail Ballot at their convenience. Filling out and applying for a Vote-by-Mail Ballot is not necessary and interested voters are still able and encouraged to go to their assigned polling location and vote in person.

Additionally, the Mercer County Clerk's Office at 240 West State Street in Trenton will have extended hours Sunday, October 29th from 10-2pm, Saturday, November 4th from 9-1pm, and Sunday, November 5th from 10-2pm in order to allow voters more flexibility and time to turn in their Vote-by-Mail ballots in person.

The last presidential election had some of the lowest voter turn-out in history, with only about 55% of voting age citizens participating and less than 60% of registered voters casting a ballot. As a result, States are thinking of other options to encourage voter participation in our democratic process. New Jersey is no exception to these trends with only 12% of eligible registered voters turning out to cast votes in the 2017 Primary election. Out of the 230,000 registered voters in Mercer County, less than 14% turned out to vote in the 2017 Primary, despite there being a gubernatorial race leading the ballot.

As a result, in order to encourage flexibility, accessibility, and raise democratic participation in the United States' election process, the Mercer County Clerk Paula Sollami Covello, with the support of the Mercer County Executive and the Board of Chosen Freeholders, held a Press Conference on July 19th to announce her a new Vote-by-Mail pilot initiative.

Other New Jersey counties that have undertaken similar Vote-by-Mail efforts have been Middlesex, Camden, and Bergen counties. Mercer is the latest to encourage wide-spread Vote-by-Mail applications.

For any questions, please contact either the Mercer County Clerk's Main Office at 609-989-6820 or the Mercer County Clerk's Office of Elections at 609-989-6494.

To request a Vote-by-Mail application, voters can call 609-989-6494. Vote-by-Mail applications also are available on the web at www.mercercounty.org/countyclerk in both English and Spanish. That website is <http://www.njelections.org/voting-information-vote-by-mail.html>.

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