

**Mercer County Commissioner's Meeting  
Joyce McDade Administration Building  
640 South Broad Street; Trenton, NJ 08611  
March 9, 2023 (6 p.m.)  
Public Comment to be read into the record**

From: Mike Todd  
8 Chambers Court,  
Robbinsville NJ 08691

Good evening,

As I and other Robbinsville Township Council Members are unable to attend tonight's Mercer County Commissioner's Meeting due to a conflict with our own Township Council meeting being held at the same time, I am asking that my public comment be read into the record at tonight's meeting.

Since November 2022, there has been a tremendous amount of finger pointing and blaming as to what transpired on Election Day 2022 and the weeks that followed. There are still no concrete solutions, and we are 3 months away from a primary election. Time is running out. Below are solutions that we are hoping that you act on. One of the most important rights of American citizens is the right to vote. Sadly, after the past two elections, our residents are losing faith in this process and feel their voices are not being heard and have even had their ballots disqualified. You have the power to fix this.

The Commissioners need to put additional funding into their budget for new voting machines. Voters have lost faith in the process due in large part to the machines. Having to use Sharpie markers on ballots, scanners jamming, no privacy at the polls, and no way to verify if a vote counted, or if a poll worker tossed ballots out of their window at the end of the night, are all issues. Machines used in other counties that look like the old machines – with a curtain, and a computer screen, where a blank piece of paper is put into the machine and then the voter's vote prints on the paper before it drops into the machine, feels much more secure and leaves less room for error.

The Board of Elections needs to be better organized regarding poll workers. The training provided to these workers is not sufficient. Many did not know what to do on election day and most did not know where the emergency ballot slot was, or how to take ballots out of the emergency slot. Some did not seal ballot bags at the end of the night. Municipal Clerks used to get worker lists weeks in advance. Now, they are receiving them the weekend before an election—not leaving sufficient time to find people to pick up supplies for their polling locations. When the clerks start calling poll workers to pick up supplies, many will say they haven't taken the classes and aren't scheduled to work, leaving polling locations without sufficient coverage. Meanwhile, people who want to work are being told no more poll workers are needed.

The process for delivering ballots at the end of the evening needs to be the same for the paper ballots as it is for provisional ballots. For provisional ballots, board workers bring their bags to the municipal clerk, where they are checked for seals. These ballots are then escorted by police to the County Superintendent's Office. Why are paper ballots from machines being treated differently? They should be brought to the municipal clerk to check for seals, then brought to the Board of Elections office by police. This would avoid problems such as some districts being "lost" for 2 days in the chaos of hundreds of poll workers bringing ballots to Spruce Street in Lawrence at the end of an exhausting day.

This would also avoid the trouble Municipal Clerks have finding someone who wants to drive to Trenton after an 18-hour workday because senior citizens, who make up the majority of these poll workers, do not feel safe driving at night when they are that tired.

A better emergency plan needs to be drafted and distributed to poll workers and the Municipal Clerk with clearly outlined steps to take if there are machine failures. Not knowing what to do on election morning caused great confusion and irritation to many voters. Municipal Clerks were told by the Superintendent's Office to use provisional ballots, then later told to use regular ballots by the County Clerk's Office. All County Offices with a hand in elections need to be on the same page in an emergency, and the people on the front line – Municipal Clerk's & poll workers - need to know exactly what to do in an emergency instead of being given conflicting information. County-wide notifications to the municipal clerks should have been made with instructions, instead of everyone just "winging it" on November 8, 2022, as there was virtually no communication from the county to the towns, especially Robbinsville. In addition, County Offices called Master Poll workers explaining the problems, but they never notified the municipal clerks – and they are the ones on the front lines during election day! This is their Super Bowl.

There needs to be better communication to the voters in the event of an emergency. Robbinsville put out a notice immediately and was vilified for it. The County needed to do the same, instead of a waiting hours to put out any statements or instructions to voters. Later, Robbinsville was actually investigated by the NJ prosecutor's office for being transparent and telling voters there was an issue with a significant number of ballots from one of its districts. This is beyond absurd. They were not investigating the mishaps, but rather seemed more interested in investigating why Robbinsville was publicizing those mishaps.

More transparency is needed from the County. Plain and simple. We all need your urgent help in correcting the many issues at hand so voters can regain confidence in the County's ability to administer a fair and just election, just as it has done in the past.

Thank you for this time and we look forward to hearing more on the actions from this Board and the Board of Elections along with the County Clerk's Office.

Regards,

Mike Todd  
Robbinsville Township Council  
Vice President