

Veto No. 2019-3

SB 48

July 5, 2019

To the Honorable Senate of the
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania:

Pursuant to Article IV, Section 15 of the Pennsylvania Constitution, I am returning herewith, without my approval, Senate Bill 48, Printer's Number 1080.

Voting is what powers and sustains our democracy. I firmly believe that both I and the General Assembly have an obligation to strive to make voting more secure and more accessible to the citizens of this Commonwealth. Unfortunately, this legislation does not seek to increase voter participation in Pennsylvania. This failure is a missed opportunity to enact meaningful voting reforms.

This legislation, while purporting to secure elections, binds the hands of future administrations through a decertification procedure which weakens the ability of the commonwealth and counties to quickly respond to flaws that would require the decertification of large numbers of machines fewer than 180 days before an election. This is not acceptable as a legislative measure.

Finally, this bill eliminates straight party ballot voting. This policy choice removes a convenient voting option which is used by voters of any party affiliation. To implement such a change, particularly as new machines are being used for the first time, could lead to voter confusion and longer lines at the polls. These factors may lead to decreased voter participation, which, again, is in conflict with an inclusive approach to our system of elections. I sought amendatory language at various points to include voter-friendly reforms in this legislation, but those changes were not accepted.

For the reasons set forth above, I must withhold my signature from Senate Bill 48, Printer's Number 1080.

TOM WOLF