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**BREAKING** **FEATURED**

## Boards of elections adjust as early vote counting allowed

MICHELLE BRUNETTI POST Staff Writer

Sep 5, 2020



Joe McIntyre of ES&S counts mail-in ballots in 2018 at the Atlantic County Board of Elections using a scanner.

Press archives

A new state law allows Boards of Election to start counting vote-by-mail ballots 10 days before Election Day, increasing the chance of getting earlier results but also creating a challenge to election security.

The counting is done electronically, using a scanner that reads the filled-in ovals on paper ballots.

“One of the things (the new law) brought up is, how can you safeguard ... so that no one can get into that machine?” Atlantic County Board of Elections Democratic member John Mooney said during the board’s Tuesday night special meeting.

Access to early results could be misused by parties or individuals trying to influence races by focusing last-minute efforts where their candidates are losing, Mooney said.

Gov. Phil Murphy signed three bills into law a week ago Friday, one of which allows early counting as a way of giving election boards more time to count the unprecedented number of paper mail-in ballots they will see in the general election. He previously released two executive orders requiring the election to be conducted mostly through vote-by-mail ballots, as a way of preventing the spread of the coronavirus.

Atlantic County Board of Elections Chair Lynn Caterson, a Republican, said the new law specified that any release of results before close of polls on Election Day will be a third-degree criminal offense.

At Tuesday’s meeting, the board voted to purchase a second scanner for counting ballots at a cost of \$55,000, much or all of which it hopes will be reimbursed by federal funding for COVID-19 related expenses.

The wording of the new law makes it clear it is the responsibility of boards of elections to secure results.

“If a county board of elections begins opening the inner envelopes and canvassing (counting) the mail-in ballots from the inner envelopes prior to the day of the election, the county board shall implement the measures necessary to ensure the security and secrecy of the mail-in ballots,” the law states. “The contents of the mail-in ballots and the results of the ballot canvassing shall remain confidential and ... in no circumstances disclosed prior to the close of polls on the day of the election.”

Allowing early counting of vote-by-mail ballots will get results to voters faster in a high-interest election where turnout is expected to be extremely high.



Want to be a pool worker or a poll worker for Nov. election? Both are needed

“Timely results are definitely in the public interest,” said John Froonjian, executive director of the William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy at Stockton University. “If they are delayed a long time, people question whether the election was rigged. Nobody wins if voters lose faith in the electoral system.”

Atlantic County anticipates receiving 120,000 to 140,000 ballots, and Cape May County anticipates handling 60,000.

“We can run ballots through the scanner, and we just don’t print results,” Cape May County Democratic Registrar Michael Kennedy said of that county’s approach to keeping results secret. “Nobody at the Board of Elections would know what the outcomes are, because we are not going to print them.”

But Kennedy said there isn’t a foolproof way to prevent someone from doing so.

“Unfortunately, I don’t know if there is a way to 100% stop that from happening. I can tell you it will not happen here at Cape May County Board of Elections. I’m the last guard of defense, and those reports will not be printed or shown until election night,” he said.



Murphy ready to rumble over Trump campaign election lawsuit

Kennedy acknowledged it “comes down to individuals.”

The Cape May County Board of Elections purchased two new scanners in April for the July 7 primary, Kennedy said. That office now has three scanners.

The 10-day lead time will make it likely his office will have all ballots it has received through the mail or ballot drop boxes counted by the close of polls on election night, Kennedy said. His office will post the preliminary results online after polls close.

Mooney said he's hopeful there is some way to guarantee no one can access results in the scanner before 8 p.m. Nov. 3.

"I want to make sure no one in our office knows anything about the codes (to run results)," Mooney said.



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Atlantic County getting ready for deluge of General Election paper ballots

A technician from an outside firm runs the scanner that counts votes, Mooney said. He is asking the company to guarantee in writing that no staff members from either party can get into the machine.

New Jersey is not alone in allowing early vote-counting, Froonjian said.

According to data from the National Conference of State Legislators, about a dozen states allow mail-in-ballots to be counted before Election Day, he said.

Another dozen or so allow you to start counting on Election Day before the polls close, he said, which is what New Jersey had done historically.

The changes will help election officials provide an accurate and timely vote, Froonjian said.

But he said election officials must protect election security.

“It’s extremely important that elections are fair, secure and beyond reproach,” Froonjian said.

Who is running for office in Atlantic County?

## ATLANTIC COUNTY

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### Atlantic County Sheriff (Vote for 1)

Candidate	Name	Votes	Winner
Eric Scheffler	Democrat		
Joseph O'Donoghue	Republican		

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### Atlantic County Surrogate (Vote for 1)

Name	Party	Votes	Winner
James Curcio	Republican		
Stephen Dicht	Democrat		

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## Atlantic County Freeholders (Vote for 2)

Name	Party	Votes	Winner
Caren Fitzpatrick	Democrat		
Celeste Fernandez	Democrat		
John Risley Jr	Republican		
James Toto	Republican		

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## Atlantic County Freeholder District 3 (Vote for 1)

Candidate	Party	Votes	Winner
Andrew Parker	Republican		
Thelma Witherspoon	Democrat		

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## ABSECON

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## Mayor (Vote for 1)

Candidate	Party	Votes	Winner
Kimberly A. Horton	Democrat		
Gregory Seher	Republican		

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## Council Ward 1 (Vote for 1)

Candidate	Party	Votes	Winner
Elizabeth (Betty) Howell	Democrat		
Nicholas LaRotonda	Republican		

## Council Ward 2 (Vote for 1)

Candidate	Party	Votes	Winner
Donald W. Burroughs	Democart		
Chris C. Seher	Republican		

## ATLANTIC CITY

## Atlantic City Mayor (Vote for 1)

Candidates	Party	Votes	Winner
Thomas Forkin	Republican		
Marty Small	Democrat		

## Council Ward 2 (Vote for 1)

Candidate	Party	Votes	Winner
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Candidate	Party	Votes	Winner
LaToya Dunston			

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## BRIGANTINE

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### Council Ward 1 (Vote for 1)

Candidate	Party	Votes	Winner
Karen Bew	Republican		

### Council Ward 2 (Vote for 1)

Candidate	Party	Votes	Winner
Paul Lettieri			

### Council Ward 3 (Vote for 1)

Candidate	Party	Votes	Winner
Dennis Haney	Republican		

### Council Ward 4 (Vote for 1)

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Candidate	Party	Votes	Winner
Richard DeLucry	Democrat		

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## BUENA

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### Council (Vote for 2)

Candidate	Party	Votes	Winner
Aldo S. Palmieri	Republican		
Jorge Alvarez	Republican		

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## BUENA VISTA TOWNSHIP

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### Township Committee (Vote for 1)

Candidate	Party	Votes	Winner
David Turner	Democrat		
William Ruggieri	Republican		

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### Township Committee - 1 year unexpired (Vote for 1)

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<b>Candidate</b>	<b>Party</b>	<b>Votes</b>	<b>Winner</b>
Ronnise White	Democrat		
Kurt Renart	Republican		

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## CORBIN CITY

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### Mayor (Vote for 1)

<b>Candidate</b>	<b>Party</b>	<b>Votes</b>	<b>Winner</b>
Robert Schulte	Republican		

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### Council (Vote for 1)

<b>Candidate</b>	<b>Party</b>	<b>Votes</b>	<b>Winner</b>
Matthew Kane	Democrat		
William Collins	Republican		

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## EGG HARBOR CITY

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### Mayor (Vote for 1)

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Candidate	Party	Votes	Winner
Lisa Jiampetti	Democrat		
Joseph A. Ricci, Jr.	Republican		

## Common Council (Vote for 3)

Candidate	Party	Votes	Winner
Donna Heist	Democrat		
Mason Wright, Jr.	Democrat		
Karl Timbers	Democrat		
Ingrid E. Clark	Republican		
Clifford Mays, Jr.	Republican		
Joseph G. Ellis	Republican		

## EGG HARBOR TOWNSHIP

### Township Committee(Vote for 2)

Candidate	Party	Votes	Winner
Lisa March	Democrat		
Frank Rivera III	Democrat		
Paul W. Hodson	Republican		
Laura Pfrommer	Republican		

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## ESTELL MANOR

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### TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE (Vote for 1)

Candidate	Party	Votes	Winner
Julia A. Sparks	Republican		

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## FOLSOM

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### Council - 1 year unexpired (Vote for 1)

Candidate	Party	Votes	Winner
Albert W. Norman	Republican		

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### Council (Vote for 2)

Candidate	Party	Votes	Winner
James C. Whittaker Jr	Republican		
Jacob Blazer	Republican		

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# HAMILTON TOWNSHIP

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## Township Committee (Vote for 1)

Candidate	Party	Votes	Winner
Judith Link	Democrat		
Richard Cheek	Republican		
Bruce A. Strigh	Independent		

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# HAMMONTON

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## Council (Vote for 3)

Candidate	Party	Votes	Winner
Otto Hernandez	Republican		
William "Bill" Cappuccio	Republican		
Joshua "Josh" Trepiccione	Republican		
Sam Rodio	Independent		
Steve Furgione	Independent		
Bill Olivio	Independent		

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# LINWOOD

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## Council at-large - 1 year unexpired term (Vote for 1)

Candidate	Party	Votes	Winner
Matthew Levinson	Republican		

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## Council Ward 1 (Vote for 1)

Candidate	Party	Votes	Winner
Eric Ford	Republican		

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## Council Ward 2 (Vote for 1)

Candidate	Party	Votes	Winner
Ralph Paolone	Republican		

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## MULLICA TOWNSHIP

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## Township Committee (Vote for 1)

Candidate	Party	Votes	Winner
Chris Silva	Republican		

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## NORTHFIELD

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### Council Ward 1 (Vote for 1)

Candidate	Party	Votes	Winner
Lisa Lehne-Gilmore	Democrat		
David Notaro	Republican		
Alicia Garry	Independent		

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### Council Ward 2 (Vote for 1)

Candidate	Party	Votes	Winner
Rich DiCriscio	Democrat		
Thomas Polistina	Republican		

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## PLEASANTVILLE

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### Mayor (Vote for 1)

Candidate	Party	Votes	Winner
Judy M. Ward	Democrat		

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Candidate	Party	Votes	Winner
Lawrence "Tony" Davenport	Independent		

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## Council-at-Large (Vote for 1)

Candidate	Party	Votes	Winner
Carla Thomas	Democrat		
Sharnell Morgan	Independent		

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## Council Ward 1 (Vote for 1)

Candidate	Party	Votes	Winner
Ricky Cistrunk	Democrat		

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## Council Ward 2 (Vote for 1)

Candidate	Party	Votes	Winner
Joanne Famularo	Democrat		

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PORT REPUBLIC

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## Council-at-Large (Vote for 1)

Candidate	Party	Votes	Winner
Roger Giberson	Republican		

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## Council Ward 1 (Vote for 1)

Candidate	Party	Votes	Winner
Thomas Kurtz	Independent		

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## Council Ward 2 (Vote for 1)

Candidate	Party	Votes	Winner
Jacob Nass	Independent		

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## SOMERS POINT

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## Council-at-Large (Vote for 1)

Candidate	Party	Votes	Winner
Joseph T. McCarrie, Jr	Republican		

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## Council Ward 1 (Vote for 1)

Candidate	Party	Votes	Winner
Charles W. Falkenstein	Republican		

## WEYMOUTH TOWNSHIP

### Township Committee (Vote for 1)

Candidate	Party	Votes	Winner
Carl Peter Keiffenheim	Republican		

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#### Bill A4475 wording on early counting

"A county board of elections may begin opening the inner envelopes and canvassing each mail-in ballot from the inner envelopes no earlier than 10 days prior to the day of the election. The secretary of state shall establish guidelines concerning the early canvassing process. If a county board of elections begins opening the inner envelopes and canvassing the mail-in ballots from the inner envelopes prior to the day of the election, the county board shall implement the measures necessary to ensure the security and secrecy of the mail-in ballots. The contents of the mail-in ballots and the results of the ballot canvassing shall remain confidential and shall be disclosed only in accordance with the provisions of Title 19 of the Revised Statutes, regulations and guidelines concerning the disclosure of election results, and in no circumstances disclosed prior to the close of polls on the day of the election."



Officials: Fatal shooting of UPS hostage-taker in New Jersey was justified

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## Michelle Brunetti Post

Staff Writer

In my first job after college got paid to read the New York Times and summarize articles for an early online data base. First reporting job was with The Daily Record in Parsippany. I have also worked in nonprofits, and have been with The Press since 1990.