



**BETTER
PHILADELPHIA
ELECTIONS
COALITION**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT:

Patrick Christmas, Policy Director
Committee of Seventy
267-940-4503 (o)
pchristmas@seventy.org

City Commissioner Offices on the Ballot in 2019

Better Philadelphia Elections Agenda to be Released Next Year

PHILADELPHIA, PA (November 8, 2018) – With polls closed in a historic midterm election season, voters across Pennsylvania can turn their attention to important municipal elections in 2019. In Philadelphia, the office of the Mayor and all 17 City Council seats will be on the ballot, in addition to the city’s row offices: Sheriff, Register of Wills and City Commissioner. Powerful judgeships in local and state appellate courts will be up as well.

“Many of the local offices on the ballot next year are both consequential and oft-overlooked by much of the electorate,” said Committee of Seventy Policy Director Patrick Christmas. “The Better Philadelphia Elections Coalition will be focused on the races for City Commissioner, especially given the well-documented absence of one of the three current officials.”

Philadelphia’s three City Commissioners are elected every four years and are responsible for overseeing elections and voter registration in the city. An [NBC Investigative report](#) published November 2, just before last week’s midterms, found that Commissioner Anthony Clark has continued a pattern of infrequent work attendance that goes back to before his re-election in 2015. Commissioner Clark, for his part, suggests that he often works remotely, despite the lack of a city-issued phone, computer or email account.

“Similar to our local judicial elections, row office races in Philadelphia can be heavily influenced by ballot position and party endorsement,” said Christmas. “Commissioner Clark had both first position and party support in 2015, no doubt contributing to his nearly 76,000 votes in the primary – 28,000 more than the next-highest voter-getter. Still, motivated and well-informed voters can have an impact in these elections.”

The Better Philadelphia Elections Coalition will not be endorsing any candidates for City Commissioner in 2019 but will be promoting an agenda around critical issues in local elections,

including voting system technology and election security, poll worker recruitment and preparation, disability access and support for limited English proficiency voters. Candidates will also be asked for their positions on election law, given the urgent need to modernize Pennsylvania's 1930s-era Election Code.

"City officials obviously don't have a vote in the General Assembly," said Christmas. "But we need them to speak to the most restrictive aspects of state law that affect Philadelphia voters. The Commonwealth's cumbersome absentee-voting process, in particular, creates challenges for voters and potential disenfranchisement every election."

Voters, civic and community leaders, and others interested in supporting the Better Philadelphia Election campaign are encouraged to follow on Facebook: www.facebook.com/BetterPhillyElections. Resources for voters and election reforms for discussion are posted regularly.

The Coalition's agenda will be released in early 2019.

###

Americans for Democratic Action | Asian Americans United | Committee of Seventy | Disability Rights Pennsylvania
Economy League of Greater Philadelphia | Fifth Square | Greater Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce
Influencing Action Movement | Pennsylvania Immigration and Citizenship Coalition | Philadelphia 3.0
Philadelphia Progressive Caucus | Philadelphia National Organization of Women | Public Interest Law Center | SEAMAAC