

# Pritzker Signs Legislation: Rep. Katie Stuart of Edwardsville Supportive Of Bill That Allows Ballot Access For Everyone

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**SPRINGFIELD** – Building on efforts that ensured the safe and active participation in the 2020 elections, Governor JB Pritzker signed HB 1871 into law today to establish permanent ballot drop boxes and allow curbside voting across Illinois for early voting or on Election Day. The new law codifies safety measures that were implemented ahead of the 2020 general election, allowing residents to safely exercise their constitutional right to vote.

“There are hundreds of active efforts to undermine the right to vote in nearly every state – the most horrific of which signed into law by Georgia’s governor – but here in Illinois, we hope to lead the way in strengthening access to the ballot so residents can have their voices heard,” **said Governor JB Pritzker.** “No one should have to risk their personal health in order to participate in our democracy. By making ballot drop boxes and curbside voting permanent features of our elections, we’re ensuring that all voters can

access the ballot, especially our most vulnerable residents who may face barriers to voting in person. I want to thank Senator Morrison and Representative Stuart for bringing this legislation to the finish line so that all Illinoisans can continue to safely exercise their right to vote during the pandemic and in the years to come.”

“The right to vote is fundamental. A lot of research and study of other states where there is a robust Vote By Mail system went in to the crafting of this bill,” **said State Rep. Katie Stuart (D-Edwardsville)**. “I am so thankful that Governor Pritzker is signing this bill today, and letting everyone know that Illinois is a leader in preserving access to the ballot for everyone.”

“Today is a monumental day for voters across the state who have long expressed a desire for greater access to their right to vote,” **said Senate Majority Caucus Whip Julie Morrison (D-Lake Forest)**. “The November 2020 election proved the need—and want—for voting expansion measures, and I applaud my colleagues and the governor for their support.”

During the pandemic, a record number of Illinoisans voted by mail or through secure drop boxes and curbside options. These alternatives allowed vulnerable residents, such as seniors and individuals with disabilities to wield their right to vote, without the risks of voting in-person during a pandemic. Under the new law, these options will remain in effect for future elections.

## **Drop Boxes**

This legislation permits election officials to install drop box sites where voters can submit mail-in ballots without postage. Election officials must collect and process all ballots at the close of each business day, and voters can return vote by mail ballots at any collection site through the close of polls on Election Day. Ensuring voter safety is paramount, and all collection sites must be secured by locks and only opened by election authority personnel. To further bolster security, the State Board of Elections can establish additional guidelines for the collection sites.

## **Curbside Voting**

The legislation permits local election authorities to establish curbside voting for individuals to cast a ballot during early voting or on Election Day. Curbside voting allows certain voters to complete their ballot from their vehicle in a designated zone

outside of the polling place. Prior to the new law, this option was only available to voters with a temporary or permanent disability, who may face difficulties entering the polling place. In this instance, the voter may request that two election judges—at least one from the Democratic Party and one from the Republican party—deliver a ballot to the voter at each vehicle where curbside voting is taking place.

## **Help America Vote Act**

Previously, the Governor worked with the State Board of Elections to dedicate funding from the federal Help America Vote Act to help subsidize ballot drop boxes and increase pay for local election judges across the state. This legislation builds on those efforts by permitting the State Board of Elections to distribute any remaining funds they may have received under the Help America Vote Act to local election authorities to help with the maintenance of drop boxes.

The new law takes effect immediately.