Lehigh County 2026 General Election Ballot Referendum Questions

Plain English text follows the ballot question ("Purpose," "Limitations," and "Effects" descriptors) pursuant to 25 P.S. § 2621.1.

Hanover Twp. Referendum (Ordinance No. 674):

Shall Section 3.10 of the Hanover Township Home Rule Charter be amended to allow Council Members to participate remotely in meetings and count toward a quorum and vote?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Purpose
The purpose of this amendment is to remove the physical-presence requirement for quorum participation.

Limitations
Council Members must still be present at the meeting, whether in person or virtually.

Effects
Eliminating the physical requirement would allow Council Members to attend meetings in person or remotely. If the referendum to amend the Charter is approved, it would be effective immediately.

Lehigh County Government Center
17 S. Seventh Street
Allentown, Pennsylvania 18101-2401
Phone: 610-782-3180
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City of Allentown Referendum (Bill 54-2026):

Do you favor amending the City of Allentown Public Health Code by adding a new chapter titled "Paid Sick Leave Act?" Such an addition would require businesses to provide paid sick time to employees.

☐ Yes

☐ No

Purpose
The addition to the Health Code would require businesses to provide paid sick time to employees.

Limitations
Under the proposed amendment, all employees shall have the right to sick time. All employees of employers with fifteen (15) or more employees shall accrue a minimum of one (1) hour of paid sick time for every thirty (30) hours worked in Allentown unless the employer provides a faster accrual rate. All employees of employers with fewer than fifteen (15) employees shall accrue a minimum of one (1) hour of sick time for every thirty (30) hours worked in Allentown unless the employer provides a faster accrual rate.

Effects
If approved, this addition to the Health Code will take effect on January 1, 2027.

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Whitehall Twp. Referendum (Ordinance No. 3438)

Do you favor eliminating Whitehall Township's elected Treasurer position at the end of the current Treasurer's term and having the mayor appoint a Finance Director to handle the Treasurer's and Tax Collector's duties?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Purpose

The Township's Home Rule Charter is like the Township's constitution; it sets up the rules for Township government. Currently, Whitehall Township has a Treasurer, who is elected for a term of four years. The Township Treasurer is the chief fiscal officer of the Township and is responsible for receiving, collecting, accounting for, and depositing into the Township treasury all taxes, fees, funds, assessments, or charges that are levied, established, or received by the Township for general or special purposes.

Limitations

The elected Treasurer position would be eliminated at the end of the current Treasurer's term and replaced with a Finance Director. The Finance Director would be appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the Board of Commissioners.

Effects

If you vote "Yes" on this ballot question, it means that you support abolishing the position of an elected Treasurer upon the completion of the current elected Treasurer's term or earlier vacancy in the office of the Treasurer and replacing that position with a Finance Director who would have the same powers and duties as the current Treasurer but would be appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the Board of Commissioners rather than being elected by the voters.

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North Whitehall Township Referendum

Do you favor the imposition of an additional earned income tax at the rate of 0.15% by North Whitehall Township to be used to finance the acquisition of interests in real property to preserve open space?"

☐ Yes

☐ No

Purpose

The purpose of the ballot question is to determine whether the voters of North Whitehall Township desire to impose an additional earned income tax to provide funds for the Township to acquire, develop, improve, design, engineer, maintain, and preserve open space lands under the Open Space Lands Acquisition and Preservation Act, Act of Jan. 19, (1968) 1967, P.L. 992, No. 442, as amended, 32 P.S. § 5001 et seq. (referred to herein as the "Open Space Law").

Limitations

Approval of the ballot question would allow the Board of Supervisors of North Whitehall Township to impose an additional earned income tax at the rate of 0.15% (fifteen hundredths of one percent). This additional earned income tax will remain effective until repealed in accordance with the Open Space Law; provided, however, that the tax may not be repealed earlier than five (5) years from the date of its imposition. Such additional tax revenue could only be used for purposes permitted by the Open Space Law. More specifically, revenue from the additional tax received may only be used to retire debt incurred to purchase interests in real property or in making additional acquisitions of real property pursuant to the Open Space Law or the state law known as the Agricultural Area Security Law, to pay transactional fees that are incidental to acquisitions pursuant to the Open Space Law, including, but not limited to, costs of appraisals, legal services, title searches, document preparation, title insurance, closing fees, and survey costs, and to pay for expenses necessary to prepare the resource, recreation or land use plan required to be prepared pursuant to the Open Space Law. In any particular year, if the Township determines that it will be able to satisfy its annual debt service on debts incurred in purchasing interests in real property or in making additional acquisitions of real property pursuant to the Open Space Law or the state law known as the Agricultural Area Security Law and pay all transactional fees incidental to acquisitions made pursuant to the Open Space Law, then the Township may use up to 25% of the annual revenue generated by the additional earned income tax to develop, improve, design, engineer, and maintain property acquired pursuant to the Open Space Law. Revenue generated by the additional earned income tax may not be used to acquire real property or interests in real property through condemnation.

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Effects

If the majority of the voters of North Whitehall Township vote in favor of the ballot question and the Board of Supervisors imposes the additional earned income tax, then the Township will use the revenue from the additional earned income tax to:

1. Retire any debt incurred in purchasing interests in real property or in making additional acquisitions of real property pursuant to the Open Space Law or under the state law known as the Agricultural Area Security Law;

2. Pay any transactional fees that are incidental to acquisitions made pursuant to the Open Space Law, including, but not limited to, costs of appraisals, legal services, title searches, document preparation, title insurance, closing fees, and survey costs; and

3. Pay any expenses necessary to prepare the resource, recreation, or land use plan required to be prepared by the Open Space Law.

Additionally, in any particular year, if the township determines that it will be able to satisfy its annual debt service on debt incurred in purchasing interests in real property or in making additional acquisitions of real property under the Open Space Law or under the state law known as the Agricultural Area Security Law and pay any transactional fees incidental to acquisitions of real property under the Open Space Law, then the township may use up to 25% of the annual revenue from the additional earned income tax to develop, improve, design, engineer, and maintain property acquired under the Open Space Law.

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County of Lehigh Referendum 1 (Ordinance No. 2026-118):

Shall the Lehigh County Home Rule Charter be amended to expand the membership of the Election and Registration Commission from 3 voting members to 5 voting members, consisting of 2 members from each of the two largest political affiliations in the County, and 1 member from the third largest political affiliation (inclusive of non-affiliated/independent), and to revise the appointment process to provide residents the opportunity to apply for the Commission?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Purpose

The purpose of this amendment is to expand the membership of the Election and Registration Commission. The current Commission consists of the County Executive or his or her designee, and 2 Board appointed members (1 from each of the two largest political parties). The amendment would expand this Commission to 2 members from each of the two largest political affiliations and a 5th member from the third largest political affiliation (including non-affiliated/independent). The amendment would also change the appointment process, enabling residents to apply as a representative of their political affiliation on the Commission.

Limitations

Membership on the Commission will be limited to 2 members of the two largest political affiliations in the County, and one member for the third largest.

Effects

If the referendum to amend the Charter is approved by the Electors of Lehigh County, it would be effective immediately.

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County of Lehigh Referendum 2 (Ordinance 2026-128):

Shall multiple sections of the Lehigh County Home Rule Charter be amended to allow the County to publish notices in at least one newspaper of general circulation instead of the currently required two newspapers?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Purpose

The purpose of this amendment is to change the requirement that the county publishes notices for items including, but not limited to, adopting the operating budget, establishing or changing taxes, adopting or repealing zoning ordinances, in two newspapers of general circulation in the County to one newspaper of general circulation.

Limitations

The County will be required to publish in "at least" one newspaper of general circulation. It can publish in more but not less.

Effects

If the referendum to amend the Charter is approved by the Electors of Lehigh County, it would be effective immediately.

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County of Lehigh Referendum 3 (Ordinance 2026-127):

Shall Section 606 of the Lehigh County Home Rule Charter be amended to eliminate the requirement that the Chair of the Board of Commissioners serve on the Lehigh County Retirement Board, and replace the Chair with another member of the Board of Commissioners?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Purpose
The purpose of this amendment is to substitute the Chair of the Board of Commissioners on the County Retirement Board with one of his or her fellow Board of Commissioners members.

Limitations
The amendment still requires that the seat on the Retirement Board be filled by a member of the Board of Commissioners.

Effects
If approved, this amendment would take effect on January 1, 2027.

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