



### **Remarks of Senator Collett for Petitions and Remonstrances 1.5.2021**

Thank you Mr. President.

On a day marked by history and tradition as a celebration of democracy in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, at a time when we should be celebrating the hard fought victories of the newly-elected and returning members of our Chamber and reflecting on the important work ahead of us, I rise to reiterate my shock that the integrity of certified election results – and the integrity of Pennsylvania voters – are being questioned.

I am sad and quite frankly outraged that Senator Corman and Leader Ward insisted upon wasting time and dragging this chamber into the mud by disputing the close but definitive victory of Senator Jim Brewster, our colleague from Allegheny and Westmoreland counties.

The majority leaders' refusal to swear him in today – going so far as to remove Lieutenant Governor Fetterman, the President of the Senate, from his rostrum for following procedure and entertaining motions on the issue – is nothing more than a disingenuous ploy to piggyback on a hot button national political debate and gain favor with an outgoing President and his followers. It's no secret that Pennsylvania republicans had a good year this year – and they know darn well that these elections, their successful elections, were conducted with integrity and have withstood independent review by countless local and county officials as well as our state and federal courts. You can't have it both ways. This maneuver denies the reality of close elections and temporarily denies representation to the people of the 45<sup>th</sup> senatorial district while a final, doomed legal challenge plays out.

Ultimately, Senator Brewster received 69 more votes than his opponent in a hard-fought race. Just because an election is a close one does not mean it is illegitimate. On the contrary, it highlights that in a democracy, every single vote makes a difference, and that the voters — not legislators or judges — have the final word.

Debasing that core democratic principle for political points establishes a dangerous precedent. No individual or party should hold enough power to sway elections and disenfranchise the voters.