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May 5, 2020

The Verge
Candidates can't
campaign, so they're
trying to go viral

NBCUniversal is making some significant changes to its leadership structure and that includes giving Mark Lazarus oversight of Peacock, the company's new ad-supported streaming service.

According to the [Hollywood Reporter](#), Lazarus, who runs the NBC Sports Group and NBC's local TV stations, will now also run the company's

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette
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Harrisburg Patriot-News
Senators examine Pa.'s reopening plan and what lies ahead

Philadelphia Inquirer
How do you prevent a disputed 2020 election in Pennsylvania? Lessons from an expert panel.

Allentown Morning Call
Nearly 1 million Pennsylvanians have flooded election office with requests to vote by mail in the June 2 primary

Pittsburgh Tribune-Review

entertainment businesses including Peacock. He'll be chairman a new NBCUniversal business unit that includes NBC's cable channels. "This is the right structure to lead NBCUniversal into the future during this transformational time in the industry," said NBCUniversal CEO Jeff Shell in a statement. "Mark has a proven track record across every aspect of our television business from sports to local stations to entertainment. He is the ideal leader to oversee our television and streaming portfolio in this newly formed division, which allows us to have a more unified approach to our content strategy."

The shift in leadership at Peacock comes about three weeks after the service soft-launched for Comcast's Xfinity X1 and Flex subscribers. It also comes about seven months after Matt Strauss was given the reins at Peacock. According to the report, Strauss will still serve at chairman at Peacock and report to Lazarus. According to [The Wrap](#), Strauss will continue to lead day-to-day operations at Peacock as general manager.

On July 15, Peacock will launch nationwide on multiple platforms. The company said that with so many Americans stuck at home because of the virus, Comcast is evaluating an earlier launch date for Peacock, but for now July is still the target. Peacock Premium will be included free for X1 and Flex customers and it will cost \$4.99 per month (or \$9.99/month without ads) for everyone else when it launches on July 15. There will also be a free, ad-supported tier of Peacock featuring about half the content.

NBCU Monday also said that Telemundo chief Cesar Conde will now oversee NBC News, MSNBC and CNBC as chairman of NBCUniversal News Group. He's taking over for Andy Lack, who's leaving NBCUniversal at the end of the month. – [Fierce Video](#)

Gov. Tom Wolf urged voters to cast their ballots by mail next month as the state prepares for a primary election in the coronavirus pandemic. In a news conference Monday, Wolf and Secretary of State Kathy Boockvar provided an update on the June 2 primary election. They also discussed the challenges of the primary and preparations for those who want to cast ballots in person. Nearly 1 million voters have requested mail-in ballots, Wolf said.

The governor touted the virtues of a mail-in ballot for those leery of going to the polls. He said he'd apply for a mail-in ballot today. The primary, initially slated for April 28, was postponed to June 2 due to the coronavirus. This is the first year voters can cast ballots via mail without having to explain why they can't go to the polls. Last year, Wolf signed a sweeping election reform bill, which had strong bipartisan support.

Wolf touted the mail-in ballot as a way for voters to participate in democracy if they are anxious about going to the polls during the pandemic. "At the time we had no idea how important this change would be," Wolf said. In previous years, voters wanting to vote by mail had no other choice but to seek an absentee ballot and explain why they couldn't vote in person, such as an illness or military service.

When asked why the state isn't moving to an all-mail primary, Boockvar said a "hybrid election" is the best way to go. Right now, some voters with disabilities can't vote by mail at this time. "There's not enough time to really ensure adequate participation in our democracy with vote-by-mail alone," Boockvar said. About 76 percent of the requests for mail-in ballots have come online, Boockvar said. At the same time, she said the state will work to make sure those wishing to vote in person can do so safely. "You should feel free to go ahead and exercise your right to vote," Boockvar said.

Elections officials and voters have expressed ongoing concerns about the ability of counties to handle the unprecedented groundswell of requests [for mail-in ballots](#) and the decreasing pool of election poll workers who are deciding to stay home on election day rather than risk endangering their health

Editorial: The high cost of safe elections

by working the polls. Wolf has said he would love to allow counties more time to count all the mail-in ballots and absentee ballots. Counties can start counting the mail-in ballots on 7 a.m. on the primary election but Wolf would said he'd like it to be even sooner.

With the volume of mail-in ballots, Boockvar said it's possible not all of the votes will be counted on election night. Across Pennsylvania, more than 50,000 people have contracted the coronavirus and more than 2,400 have died, according to the state Department of Health.

Voting locations could change for many voters, Wolf said. The measure to postpone the primary allows county officials to consolidate polling places for the June primary. Some advocates said they worry that consolidating polling places could lead to disenfranchising voters. Some said they're worried about communities with a heavy concentration of minority members losing polling places.

Boockvar is urging schools to work with county officials to be used as polling places for the primary. Schools have been closed for the rest of the spring due to the coronavirus but Boockvar said the schools can serve as polling places. In addition, Boockvar said state law can compel schools to serve as polling places. She urged public and private organizations to offer their facilities as polling places. "Help serve democracy," she said.

Wolf was asked if voters would be required to masks to vote in person. The governor said no one will be forced to wear masks but said wearing a mask in public "is the right thing to do." If voters don't follow guidelines on social distancing, he said it would be up to local polling places to decide if anyone would be barred from voting. Boockvar said state officials are talking with the National Guard about the possibility of using guard members if needed to serve at polling places if counties can't find enough volunteers. She said if guard troops were tapped to serve as poll workers, they would be in plain clothes. The state has received nearly \$30 million from the federal government to help cover election costs.

Wolf is getting set to gradually re-open regions of Pennsylvania. On Friday, Wolf said he'll lift 24 counties in Pennsylvania's northern tier from the statewide stay-at-home order. These are the counties that will be reopened first: Bradford, Cameron, Centre, Clarion, Clearfield, Clinton, Crawford, Elk, Erie, Forest, Jefferson, Lawrence, Lycoming, McKean, Mercer, Montour, Northumberland, Potter, Snyder, Sullivan, Tioga, Union, Venango, and Warren.

In a news conference last week, the governor said he couldn't guarantee that most counties would be reopened before the primary. "The June 2 election is not a deadline," Wolf said Friday. Those wishing to vote in the June primary must register by May 18. Registered voters wishing to use a mail-in ballot must request one by 5 p.m. on May 26. Those wishing to register to vote or apply for mail-in ballots can do so on the state's elections website. The state's election website will have a list of polling places when they are finalized. – **Harrisburg Patriot-News**

U.S. Sen. Pat Toomey, chairman of the Senate Finance Committee Subcommittee on Health Care, will convene a virtual roundtable on the issue of safely reopening the economy at 11:30 a.m. Wednesday. In late April, Toomey unveiled a framework for how Pennsylvania could begin gradually re-opening its economy. You can learn more about his #PAStartsUpSafely framework here. The public will be able to stream this roundtable via his YouTube page.

Joining Toomey will include:

- [Mark McClellan](#), MD, PhD, Robert J. Margolis Professor of Business, Medicine, and Policy, founding Director of the Duke-Margolis Center for Health Policy at Duke University
- [Paul Romer](#), PhD, Professor of Economics, New York University
- [Steven D. Shapiro](#), MD, Executive Vice President, Chief Medical and Scientific Officer, and President of the Health Services Division, University of Pittsburgh Medical Center. – *Harrisburg Patriot-News*

Stay safe



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