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VOTE

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in November could play a critical role in Florida, where races for U.S. Senate, governor and agriculture commissioner were determined by less than 1 percentage point in 2018. And the number of people voting by mail is expected to explode after an August primary in which more than 2.3 million voters cast mail-in ballots in Florida, or almost 60% of all voters.

The first mail-in ballots for the Nov. 3 election were sent out Thursday in parts of the state. A total of about 4.9 million voters have requested to vote by mail so far, including about 2.3 million Democrats and 1.5 million Republicans. About 1.1 million requests came from non-party or small party voters.

"We have a recipe for disaster," said Daniel A. Smith, a Florida elections expert and political science professor at the University of Florida, who estimated the 33,000 statewide number.

But Orange elections supervisor Bill Cowles said the numbers don't yet show how many other voters ultimately did get their ballot fixed by printing out an affidavit available online along with a copy of a photo ID and returning it to the county supervisor's office before 5 p.m. on the Thursday after Election Day.

And he's hopeful that the word will get out, especially to young first-time voters more likely to make mistakes, on how to make sure their ballot is counted.

Changes made

Florida's vote-by-mail system is in the center of a political firestorm because of President Trump's repeated attacks on the mail-in process, despite many experts believing it largely benefitted Republicans since it was introduced in 2002. In addition, reports of slowdowns at the Post Office have also led to worries about how it would affect the election.

But for years, the biggest concern about mail-in voting has been its high rate of rejections for issues including signature mismatches, forgetting to sign at all, and late arrival by mail at elections offices.

In November 2018, there were 10,000 reports of voter error statewide, largely signature mismatches and late-arriving ballots. Another 10,000 were rejected for not having a signature.

Many only learned about the rejection on or after Election Day, including former U.S. Rep. Patrick Murphy. But the deadline to fix any issues was the day before Election Day, and even a late court decision giving voters a few more days didn't solve the problem.

That 2018 election saw the U.S. Senate race was decided by about 10,000 votes and the governor's race by about 32,000. The Florida Legislature passed a law in 2019 extending the deadline to fix ballot issues until the Thursday after the election, as well as giving supervisors more time to count mail-in ballots before Election Day.

Still, Cowles said the extra time amounts to only about four more days.

'Experience matters'

In Orange, the percentage of rejected ballots, about 2.3%, is on par with the 2018 primary, despite the big increase in mail-in ballots this time around.

But breaking down the numbers in Orange, the reasons for rejection are significantly different than in the past.

The majority of rejections in Orange, 58%, were be-

How to fix your ballot

Is something wrong with your mail-in ballot? Here's how to fix it so it gets counted.

Contact info: First, it's best if your voter registration on file includes multiple ways for the elections office to contact you if your ballot has been rejected. You can include your phone number and email in addition to your address. Otherwise, the only way to reach you is by letter, and that could take time.

The affidavit: If notified by mail or email, the office will include a copy of the affidavit you have to print and fill out. If notified by phone, you can also go online to your county elections office website to find the affidavit. Orange County voters can visit oc elections.com; Osceola voters can visit votesosceola.com; Lake voters can visit lakevotes.com; and Seminole voters can visit voteseminole.org. Voters can also check the status of their ballot for themselves at those sites at any time.

Photo ID: After filling out the affidavit, which will include an updated version of your signature if that was the issue, you would also have to make a copy of a photo ID. That could include a Florida driver license, a military, student, retirement center, neighborhood association, public assistance ID, or veteran health ID card, among others. If you don't have any of those, a current utility bill, bank statement, or government check or document works.

Head to the elections office: Take the completed affidavit and the photo ID copy to your county elections office at 119 W Kaley St., Orlando, for Orange County voters; 2509 E. Irlo Bronson Memorial Highway, Kissimmee, for Osceola voters; 1898 E. Burleigh Blvd, Tavares, for Lake voters; and 1500 E. Airport Blvd, Sanford, for Seminole voters.

Running out of time? If it's close to Election Day, don't worry; you have until 5 p.m. on the Thursday after Election Day to drop off your affidavit at the elections office.

Don't wait to mail or drop off your ballot: If your ballot is rejected because it arrived too late, after 7 p.m. on Election Day, there's nothing you can do to fix it. So if it's less than four days before Election Day, it's best to just go to any open early voting site or county elections office to deliver your mail-in ballot to a dropbox. But don't wait until then. You should mail back or return your ballot as soon as possible so the elections office has enough time to notify you of any other mistake.

cause the ballots arrived after Election Day at the elections office, compared with 49% in the 2018 primary.

In Seminole, 90% of the 1,347 rejected ballots came in late, while in Osceola 40% of the 766 rejected ballots were late.

Despite the concerns over postal delivery, which rose to a furor in August after reports that postal sorting machines were shut down and dismantled nationwide, Cowles said the vast majority of rejected late ballots in Orange, almost 90%, were postmarked on or after Election Day.

"I don't understand is why people put them in the mail system on Election Day," Cowles said. "And that's the message we've got to work hard to tell them again: a postmark [on Election Day] does not count."

Cowles stressed that voters can always drop off mail-in ballots in lockboxes at early voting sites and the elections office, adding that almost 10,000 such ballots were successfully dropped off in August. Meanwhile, the percentage rejected for mismatched signatures, including Gregory's, dropped from 22% to 14%.

In Orange, Blacks and Hispanics were disproportionately rejected, making up 22% and 26% of signature mismatch rejections despite making up just 17% each of the electorates.

Young voters ages 18 to 25 in Orange were also disproportionately rejected for mismatched signatures, making up 30% of all such rejections. Similar discrepancies were seen in Osceola County.

Looking at the March presidential primary, in which 18,000 estimated mail-in ballots were rejected statewide, "we've had the same type of issues for younger voters and Black and Hispanic voters having higher rejection rates," Smith said.

But, he added, one thing consistent across all ethnicities and age groups is that first-time mail-in voters are

also more likely to be rejected.

"In two words, experience matters," Smith said.

'This is our fault'

The only signature the elections office had on file for Gregory, he said, was the one he signed on an electronic pad at the Department of Motor Vehicles.

"The way I signed the ballot is different than what I had on file," Gregory said. "I was given a chance to fix the mistake, but by the time I got the information it was too late."

He said would have found out about his rejected ballot quicker if he had been emailed or texted instead of waiting for the mail. But he didn't include an email or phone number when filling out his application, and Cowles said mail is the only remedy left if that happens.

"There are people who don't want other people to know their email address or their cell numbers," Cowles said because such information would be publicly available if included. "But if they have an email address, we email the document to them [to fix the ballot]. If they have a phone number, we're having our phone bank call them on a regular basis."

It all depends, he said, on how soon they turn in their ballot to ensure the office has enough time to notify them. But, he said, other groups, including political parties, can do their part as well.

"I think the Legislature's intent initially was that the parties and the candidates would follow up with these voters," Cowles said. "Now, the work seems to be on us contacting them. But I would hope that the parties

... would be out there aggressively tracking down these voters to get them to fix [ballots]."

Ryan Bergin, a 20-year-old from Orlando, said he forgot to sign his ballot.

"I was actually being pretty careless and submitted my ballot without following the proper steps," Bergin said.

He was notified about it several times, but the one candidate he voted for had dropped out and so he didn't get around to fixing the issue.

"I imagine the reason this happens so much to 18- to 25-year-olds is because we don't really pay close attention and most of us haven't voted before," he said. "As much as I'm naturally suspicious about people trying to lower youth voter turnout, I would say this is our fault. ... But now I know how to do it for the important election."

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*Membership valid until August 15, 2021.

NOTICE OF CHANGE TO THE ORANGE COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN – PUBLIC HEARINGS

On Tuesday, October 13, 2020, beginning at 2:00 P.M., or as soon thereafter as the matter may be heard, the Orange County Board of County Commissioners ("BCC") will hold public hearings regarding the adoption of the 2020-1 Regular Cycle Amendment to the Orange County Comprehensive Plan ("CP"), as it has been amended, as authorized by Chapter 163, Florida Statutes, for the matters listed below. The BCC will hold the hearings either "in person" at the First Floor of the Orange County Administration Center at 201 S. Rosalind Ave., in downtown Orlando, Florida, OR "virtually," utilizing communications media technology, made permissible pursuant to Governor Ron DeSantis's Emergency Executive Order No. 20-69 related to the Covid-19 state of emergency, as amended, OR a combination of both formats. At the time of publication of this notice, it could not be known by Orange County whether the hearings would be held in person, virtually, or a combination of both formats. In order to determine the format of the hearings, or if you have any questions, please call the Orange County Planning Division at 407-836-5600 between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except legal holidays, or visit the County Calendar at <https://www.ocfl.net/Home/CountyCalendar.aspx>.



A. Privately Initiated Future Land Use Element Map Amendment to Change the Designation of Lands within Areas Identified on Map Set Forth Below and Concurrent Rezoning Request:

- 2020-1-A-3-1: C to MHRD (Senior Housing) and LUP-20-01-004: Rezoning: C-1 and A-2 to PD (Colonial Greens PD). Also requested are seven (7) waivers from Orange County Code: 1) A waiver from Section 38-1254(2) to allow a right-of-way setback of eight (8) feet for no more than fifty (50) percent of the linear right-of-way frontage, in lieu of a twenty (20) foot setback from the entire right-of-way; 2) A waiver from Section 38-1258(b) to allow the entire senior affordable housing complex to be a maximum of four (4) stories, forty-four (44) feet, in lieu of the restriction that fifty (50) percent of the building being a maximum height of three (3) stories, forty (40) feet and the remaining fifty (50) percent be one (1) story or two (2) stories in height; 3) A waiver from Section 38-1258(c) to allow the senior affordable housing complex to be a maximum of four (4) stories, forty-four (44) feet, in lieu of the maximum height of three (3) stories, forty (40) feet; 4) A waiver from Section 38-1258(f) to allow a six (6)-foot composite screening wall or a precast concrete wall system in lieu of a six (6)-foot high masonry, brick or block wall; 5) A waiver from Section 38-1255 to allow shade trees at a ratio of one (1) shade tree per two (2) units in lieu of the required one (1) shade tree per unit; 6) A waiver from Section 38-1476 to allow 1.4 parking spaces per unit in lieu of the required two (2) parking spaces per unit; and 7) A waiver from Section 38-1258(g) to access a multi-family site from a right-of-way serving a planned single family residential. Parcel Dsk#: 24-22-30-0000-00-029035/05/1084; Generally located north of Millmockett Lane, east of SR 417, south of Donnybrook Dr., and west of Constanline St. - 10.60 gross ac.

In conjunction with the adoption of the above Comprehensive Plan Amendment, the BCC will consider adoption of the following ordinance: AN ORDINANCE PERTAINING TO COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING IN ORANGE COUNTY, FLORIDA; AMENDING THE ORANGE COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN, COMMONLY KNOWN AS THE "2010-2030 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN," AS AMENDED, BY ADOPTING AN AMENDMENT PURSUANT TO SECTION 163.184(3), FLORIDA STATUTES, FOR THE 2020 CALENDAR YEAR (FIRST CYCLE); AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE

ABBREVIATIONS INDEX: IND-Industrial; C-Commercial; O-Office; LDR-Low Density Residential; LMDR-Low-Medium Density Residential; MDR-Medium Density Residential; MHRD-Medium-High Density Residential; HDR-High Density Residential; PD-Planned Development; EDU-Educational; COMS-Wetland/Conservation; PR/OS-Parks/Recreation/Open Space; OS-Open Space; CONS-Conservation; PRES-Preservation; R-Rural/Agricultural; RS-Rural Settlement; RS 1/1-Rural Settlement 1/1; RS 1/2-Rural Settlement 1/2; ACNU-Activity Center Mixed Use; ACP-Activity Center Residential; GC-Growth Center; PD-Planned Development; USA-Urban Service Area; WB-Water Body; CP-Comprehensive Plan; FLUM-Future Land Use Map; FLUE-Future Land Use Element; GOPS-Goals, Objectives, and Policies; OBJ-Objective; LUP-Land Use Plan; RZ-Rezoning; A-1-Citrus Rural District; A-2-Farmland Rural District; R-CE-Country Estate District; PD-Planned Development District; C-1-Retail Commercial District; R-1A-Single-Family Dwelling District; R-2-Residential District; R-O-W-Right-of-Way; SR-State Road; AC-Acres

Information on Attending or Observing the Hearings:
 The hearings will be hosted by the Orange County Mayor or Vice-Mayor, a quorum will be maintained during the hearings, and the hearings will be conducted and operated by Orange County Government. If the hearings are held virtually, the members of the BCC will participate from different locations via WebEx. (See <https://www.webex.com> for more information.)
 Regardless of the format, the hearings may be viewed on Orange TV via the internet or television.
 Online: <http://orangecountyfl.net/OpenGovernment/OrangeTVisionTV.aspx>.
 Televised: Channel 488 on Spectrum; Channel 9 on Comcast; Channel 99 on AT&T U-Verse; and Channel 10.2 over the air.

Information on Providing Testimony or Participating in a Hearing:
 Members of the public who would like to provide testimony and evidence during the hearings may utilize one of the following options:
 If the hearings are being held in person, the person may attend the hearings at the First Floor of the Orange County Administration Center at 201 S. Rosalind Ave., in downtown Orlando, Florida.
 If the hearings are being held virtually, the person may participate in one of the following two ways:
 • The person may participate at a kiosk in Room 105 at the First Floor of the Orange County Administration Center, 201 S. Rosalind Avenue, Orlando, Florida; or
 • The person may join and participate from a remote location through the video section of WebEx found in link in the County Calendar at <https://www.ocfl.net/Home/CountyCalendar.aspx>.

Please note, if the hearings are held virtually, the BCC members will not be physically present at the First Floor of the Orange County Administration Center at 201 S. Rosalind Avenue in downtown Orlando, Florida. The person will communicate virtually with the BCC members from a remote location or from the kiosk equipped with a computer laptop located in Room 105 on the First Floor, where the person will see, hear, and speak to the BCC members and the BCC members will see, hear, and will be able to speak to the person.
 Please also note, the time allotted to each individual for testimony will be at the sole discretion on the Orange County Mayor or Vice-Mayor, and may be reduced from the normal time limit of three minutes, depending on the number of speakers.
 Orange County staff will be present to assist at the kiosk in Room 105 and on the First Floor to ensure that social distancing and other health and safety measures are practiced and enforced.
 Also, if you intend to show photographs, presentations, reports, or any other documents when you testify at the hearings, it is requested that you bring them to the hearings by 5:00 p.m. on Monday, October 12, 2020, you either email them and correct copies of such documentary evidence to PublicComment@ocfl.net and note the hearing to which it relates, or physically deliver copies of such documentary evidence to the Planning Division at the Second Floor of the Orange County Administration Center at 201 S. Rosalind Avenue in downtown Orlando, Florida.
 Section 286.0105, Florida Statutes, states that "if a person decides to appeal any decision made by a board, agency or commission with respect to any matter considered at a meeting or hearing, he or she will need a record of the proceedings, and that, for such purpose, he or she may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based."

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), if any person with a disability as defined by the ADA needs special accommodations to participate in this proceeding, then not later than two business days prior to the proceeding, he or she should contact the Orange County Communications Division at (407) 836-5651.
 PARA MAS INFORMACION, REFERENTE A ESTAS AUDIENCIAS PUBLICAS, FAVOR COMUNICARSE CON LA DIVISION DE PLANIFICACION URBANA AL NUMERO, 407-836-3111.
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PUBLIC AUCTION

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Sat., October 3, 11AM, 1801 W. St. (SR46), Sanford, FL

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