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The Importance of Privacy in the Information Age

How important is it to you to protect your private information? In my office, I am seeing increasing concern from the public about voter registration information being subject to Public Records Laws. Voter registration falls under Chapter 119 of the Florida Statutes or the "Public Records Law" which makes any records made or received by any public agency in its official business available for inspection. As such, there is little my office can offer in the way of protection. The solution can only come through a change in the law, as stated in Chapter 119 which goes on to say "unless specifically exempted by the Florida Legislature".

For several years, my associates and I in the Florida State Association of Supervisors of Elections (FSASE) have actively sought protection of your information in Tallahassee. Finally, in the current legislative session, Senate Bill 1072 and House Bill 707 are progressing through the legislative process.

I have heard from many voters who feel strongly enough about this issue that they have asked to be removed from the voter registration rolls. They are willing to "give up" their voting rights in exchange for their privacy. There are also frantic phone calls from stalking/abuse victims who fear for their lives and request protection of their public information. Although there are information protection options available for victims, there is a cumbersome application process and protection is not immediate. Many of these victims are in temporary living situations, have no access to the internet, or have transportation issues which makes it difficult to complete an application process. At issue, too, is the concern from the mother of a minor who had pre-registered to vote at a high school registration drive. Once filed by the student, the voter registration application became public record, and there was nothing this mother could do to protect her child's information from persons online with nefarious motives.

So, how important is it to you to protect your private information? I would encourage you to contact your legislators and let them know your feelings. Navigating life through the Information Age has made us all increasingly vulnerable as we enjoy the advantages of computer mediated technology. While it's true that private data collection is widespread and information is readily available through many public sources, fear of protecting your personal information should NEVER be a deterrent to exercising your right to vote. Bottom line: Voters shouldn't have to choose between exercising their right to vote and protecting their privacy.



In this Edition...

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As of April 24, 2017

Republican	129,733
Democrat	105,610
Other	93,642
Minor Party	3,861
TOTAL	332,846

Three Offices
Countywide

Dade City (352)521-4302
Land O' Lakes (813)929-2788
New Port Richey (727)847-8162



Think Your Vote Doesn't Count?

Every Vote Counts

Throughout  U.S. history important events have been decided by just a few votes.  John F. Kennedy, the 35th  president, would have lost the  presidential  race to  Richard Nixon in 1960 if **1** person at each voting  precinct had voted differently. In 1845, when the U.S. Senate voted on whether or not  Texas should become a state, the **VOTE** was 27-25. Had one senator voted differently, the  result would have been a  tie and  Texas would not have been  asked to become part of the Union.

← This example from our children's education program encourages participation by stressing the importance of every vote.

The graph below is a great example of how this translates into "real life". A candidate in the recent Municipal Election lost by 7 votes!

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It's important to note how this race was affected by undervotes ... the # of choices selected by a voter in a contest was less than the minimum number allowed for that contest

Mayor CITY OF NEW PORT RICHEY (Vote For 1)				
Participating Precincts Reporting: 1 / 1				
OVER VOTES: 0		UNDER VOTES: 1		
Choice	Percent	Votes		
Ed Beckman (NON)	43.29%	687		
Rob Marlowe (NON)	56.71%	900		
		1,587		
City Commissioner CITY OF SAN ANTONIO (Vote For 2)				
Participating Precincts Reporting: 1 / 1				
OVER VOTES: 0		UNDER VOTES: 105		
Choice	Percent	Votes		
Mark B. Anderson (NON)	41.92%	210		
James S. Markley (NON)	29.74%	149		
Timothy Newlon (NON)	28.34%	142		
		501		

Will Passion Equate to Participation?

Turn your Passion Into Action

No election in recent history created the spirit and engagement of the first amendment like the 2016 Presidential Election. The nearly 75% voter turnout in Pasco County should be a source of pride to all of us. I imagine this level of compassion is exactly what our founding fathers envisioned when they crafted the Bill of Rights.

However, given the history of turnout in Pasco County, this high percentage is the exception, not the norm. In our last midterm General Election, only 46% of Pasco voters cast their ballots in the important races that directly affect us most.

The process begins with every voter who chooses to cast a ballot. Collectively, the voices of the voters possess power, and I'm hopeful the spirit and engagement we are seeing today will equate to your votes in the future.

What's Happening . . .

Legislation Update



In last quarter's edition of PascoVotes we discussed the Florida State Association of Supervisors of Elections' efforts to advocate for a legislative mandate requiring the state of Florida to join ERIC, the Electronic Registration Information Center. ERIC, which uses efficient and effective data matching, has been instrumental in identifying more than a million voters who are registered in more than one state. Cleaner voter rolls equate to more efficient elections with shorter lines at the polls, and ultimately cost savings with less returned mail and fewer provisional ballots.

As of April 21, 2017, the House Governmental Oversight and Accountability Committee passed two bills which allow the state to enter into voter information sharing with other states. The bills have been placed on the House Special Order Calendar for Tuesday, April 25th. The companion bills in the Senate are scheduled to be heard by the Senate Appropriations Committee and the Rules Committee.

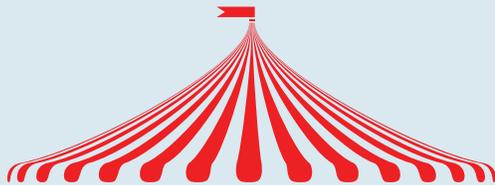
The accuracy of the voter registration rolls cannot be overstated in delivering transparent, trouble-free and secure elections. The addition of ERIC will be a valuable tool.

What Can You Do As a Voter?

It's simple!
If you move, let us know.
If your name changes, let us know.
If you wish to change your party, let us know.
If you're not sure if you're registered - ask!

Did You Receive a List Maintenance Post Card From Us?

It's simple!
Return it via USPS or respond on-line from the homepage of our website <http://www.pascovotes.com>



Are You Having a Community Event?

Let us know ... we'd like to be there. Our office is looking for opportunities to come to your community. We can offer voter registrations, address updates, party change applications, vote-by-mail requests and check voter registration status on site!

Call 800-851-8754



New Addition to Our Outreach Team

Our education/outreach events are going high-tech with the addition of the EViD Edge. The Edge, which is the size of a tablet, will give us a portable solution allowing us to access the voter registration database for quick voter "look-ups" when we are out in the community.

The first application for this new tool will be at the weekly jury pool room, a facet of our outreach program that we began in 2010 in partnership with Paula S. O'Neil, Pasco County Clerk and Comptroller. Through this effort we reach over 40,000 people annually who may need to register to vote or update their voter registration.

Many potential jurors are surprised to learn that their name was selected from the Florida Driver License database rather than the voter registration rolls, one reason citizens use to avoid registering to vote. This new service is another facet of the Pasco County Supervisor of Elections' Office education/outreach program in an effort to make registering to vote readily available and convenient.

