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Supervisor of Elections Pasco County

A quarterly enhancement to our website - www.pascovotes.com

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Happy Independence Day!

"When in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation." Thomas Jefferson 1776

These passionate opening words of the Declaration of Independence set the stage in justifying the impending revolt against British Rule in 1776, and in the fiery political climate of the time, it further clarified the ideals about liberty and the determination with which the American spirit was founded. Even after 241 years, the intensity of these words rings true in our great country as we experience one of the most unique political periods of our time in recent history.

It seems there has been no "downtime" preceding the upcoming 2018 election cycle as my staff and I are already extremely busy with preparations. We have had candidates file, their petitions verified, we will be launching our second list maintenance mailing of the year, we are working on a total redo of the pollworker training manuals, we have been conducting pollworker orientations, we have redesigned the vote-by-mail ballot certificate, we have secured additional early voting sites and have done an analysis of all precincts and polling locations, and the preventive maintenance of the voting equipment has been completed.

We are not the only ones that have been busy. We have already had reports of robocalls, we have been notified by two activist groups that they will be conducting voter registration mailings to Florida residents in September, and we have been given the "heads up" that Floridians for a Fair Democracy have been actively seeking petition signatures that we will be receiving soon for verification.

We also take this time between election cycles to pursue continuing education for the staff and additional cross training. In addition to attending the Florida Supervisors of Elections summer conference in June, several staff members have been attending Florida Certified Elections Professional (FCEP) classes, a nationally-awarded program organized by Florida State Association of Supervisors of Elections. The program provides Florida elections officials, their staff, and vendors the opportunity to receive continuing education that encourages the highest level of professionalism.

This weekend as we celebrate the 241st anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration of Independence, let us take time to reflect on the passion and bravery of those who began the process of turning 13 colonies into the great nation we know today.



In this Edition...

A look at 2016

- Vote-by-mail
- Early Voting
- Voter Turnout
- Initiative Petitions



As of June 30, 2017

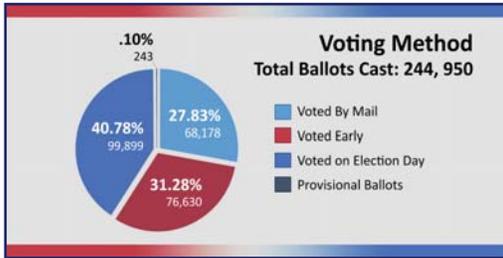
Republican	129,999
Democrat	105,568
Other	93,335
Minor Party	1,391
TOTAL	333,293

Three Offices Countywide

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



Let's take a look



Vote-by-Mail

- 27.83% of Pasco County voters chose to vote by mail in the General Election of 2016.
- 15,300 new requests were added to the vote-by-mail database for future elections as a result of the checkbox we added to our certificate envelope.
- We already have over 62,000 vote-by-mail requests in our database for the 2018 election cycle!

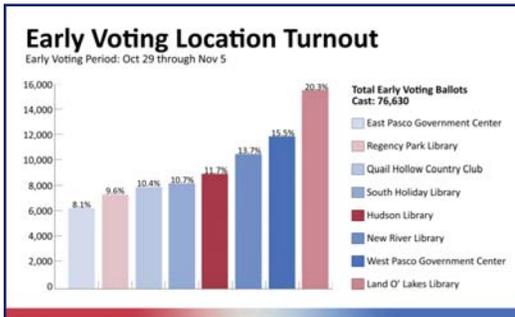
Although vote-by-mail statistics give us great information to help us prepare for future elections, the actual number of voters who ultimately choose to vote by mail is fluid. Some voters who requested vote-by-mail ballots will choose to vote early or at the polls, and the number is influenced as well by voters who request ballots at the last minute due to a change in plans. One thing is for sure, more and more Pasco County voters are choosing the vote-by-mail option. For some voters, voting by mail is the *only* option, e.g. members of the military. Of those that cast vote-by-mail ballots in Pasco County, 1,654 of them were domestic military voters residing outside of Florida. An additional 697 were military and civilian voters residing overseas or UOCAVA voters.

**1,654 domestic military votes
697 overseas military/civilian**

Ever wonder how the military votes?

The Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) was established by the United States Department of Defense and exists to assist military and overseas citizens and their eligible family members in casting their votes no matter where they are at election time. The agency administers the federal responsibilities of the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA) of 1986, and provides voter registration resources in accordance with the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 (NVRA).

FVAP provides voter registration resources to Military members and their families and creates and disseminates educational materials on the absentee voting process, election dates and deadlines, and contact information for stateside election offices. They are a great liaison to the Supervisors of Elections who are ultimately responsible for registering military and overseas citizens and providing them ballots.



Early Voting

Casting a ballot in person prior to Election Day at a location designated by the Supervisor of Elections and depositing the voted ballot in the tabulation system.

- 76,630 voters or 31.28% of the total voters in the November 2016 General Election chose to vote early.
- That's a 57.56% increase over 2014 and a 20.43% increase over 2012.
- Of the eight voting locations, the Land O' Lakes Library had the most voters with 20.3% of the total early voters.

The state of Florida officially began early voting in 2004 with the goal of increasing voter participation through convenience and to relieve congestion at polling locations on election day. Early voting is still a relatively new feature of democracy, and there seems to be no signs of letting up. The number of voters statewide who headed to the polls before Election Day set a new record in 2016.

With that in mind, and the projected growth in Pasco County, we will be adding three additional early voting sites for the upcoming 2018 election cycle.



Odessa Community Park - Community Center
1627 Chesapeake Dr.
Odessa, FL 33556



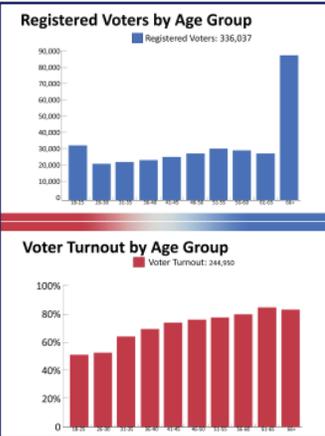
3173 Cypress Ridge Blvd
Wesley Chapel, FL 3354



Alice Hall Community Center
38116 5th Ave
Zephyrhills, FL 33542



What's Happening . . .



Bravo to the Baby Boomers! Once again, in the General Election of 2016, you topped the chart as being the age group that has the most registered voters and the highest number of turnout in Pasco County! But wait -- this is Florida land of the retiree right? In Florida, 53 of 67 counties have an above-average share of people 65 and older when compared with the percentage of Americans in that demographic (14.5%, or 46.2 million).¹ Does this disproportion skew the statistics? Well, yes. Although Florida may be one of the “grayest” states, there is a statistic that is not unique to Florida, and it’s consistent throughout our nation. Young people are voting at low rates. In fact, young people vote at rates 10-15 points behind those over 30. Nationally, youth turnout in 2016 was the same as 2012, despite deeper familiarity with the candidates and billions spent in the election. Sadly, young people think the political system is broken and that there’s no reason to engage.² How can it be that the most educated generation of our time could be so disengaged?



For starters, this generation and the one preceding it finished their high school education with little or no instruction in civics or the rights and responsibilities of being an effective citizen. According to retired Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O’Connor, “Only one-third of Americans can name the three branches of government, but two-thirds can name a judge on American Idol.” Since 2006 with the launching of iCivics, her online civics education course, she has been a staunch advocate of civics education and has worked with legislation to make sure it happened. In 2010 the Justice Sandra Day O’Connor Civics Education Act was passed. The good news is that Florida has been leading the nation in restoring civics to the classroom.



So what to do about this generation that is 100% connected to cell phones and only 50% registered to vote? Well, for starters, registering to vote has never been easier, and beginning in October Florida will join the ranks of states where on-line voter registration is available. In the meantime, there is much hard work to be done to convince this fiercely independent generation that the system works and that it’s worth protecting.

¹ <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/07/09/where-do-the-oldest-americans-live/>

² Ashley Spillane, Founder and Chief Strategist, <http://impactual.com>



Constitutional Initiative Petition Amendments

Ever been asked to sign a petition?

If you have ever been approached in a parking lot or a public function and asked to sign an initiative petition, you may have asked yourself what is this all about and where do these people come from?

In Florida, the people have a right to propose amendments to the Florida Constitution through an initiative petition process. Anyone with “initiative” can begin the process by registering as a political committee with the Division of Elections. Upon approval of the petition format, petitioners set out to collect the required number of registered Florida voter signatures. Per the Florida Constitution, the number of signatures needed is based on eight percent of the voters who cast votes in the last presidential election. In order to be on the 2018 General Election ballot, 766,200 voter signatures will be required, and those signatures must come from at least half of Florida’s congressional districts.

Once the petitioners have met 10% of the required signatures, the initiative is sent through the Attorney General to the Florida Supreme Court which ensures the text of the amendment is in compliance with statute. A financial impact statement prepared by the Financial Impact Estimating Conference (FEIC), is also reviewed by the Supreme Court. Should the petition obtain enough signatures to make ballot placement, the statement of financial impact will be on the ballot as well.

It is likely you may cross paths with petitioners in the next few months. Please keep in mind that ALL petition signatures are scrutinized on a one-by-one basis, and verified against the signature that is on the voter registration record. If you want your petition to count, please be sure to use your normal signature, and if your signature has changed, please be sure a current signature is on file with the Supervisor of Elections’ Office.

The following initiative petitions have met the initial 10% signature requirement and have made it through the judicial review process:

- Petition 14-01 Floridians for a Fair Democracy - Voting Restoration Amendment
- Petition 14-02 Floridians for Solar Choice - Limits or Prevents Barriers to Local Solar Electricity Supply
- Petition 15-22 Voters in Charge - Voter Control of Gambling in Florida

For more information on Constitutional Initiative Petitions: <http://dos.myflorida.com/elections/laws-rules/constitutional-amendments/>