



# Brian E. Corley

## Supervisor of Elections

### Pasco County

## Voting by Mail - Concerns and Misconceptions

Florida voters have three options for voting, Election Day, Early Voting or Vote-by-Mail, but the pandemic has introduced a new perspective to the vote-by-mail option as a way of casting a ballot in the safety of your home. While we anticipate still having in-person voting for the November General Election, and we acknowledge that some voters prefer to vote in-person, the reality of COVID-19 is that due to high voter turn-out, mandated social distancing, and CDC-recommended cleaning guidelines, the potential for long lines and wait times is inevitable. Promoting vote-by-mail is one way we can attempt to mitigate these anticipated issues, as well as offer a safe and secure voting option for high risk populations and anyone who just prefers to vote-by-mail. For many cycles, voting by mail has shown a steady increase in utilization by Pasco County voters. The convenience of voting from home in your own time seems compatible with today's lifestyles, and it's unlikely to go away anytime soon despite the misinformation surrounding the vote-by-mail option this election cycle.

For voters concerned about the timely return delivery of their voted ballot, Pasco County will be mailing the November General Election ballots on September 24th - 40 days prior to the election. The obvious solution is to vote your ballot and return it as soon as possible via postage-paid USPS, but there are other options such as hand delivery to any of our three offices countywide 8:30 am to 5:00 pm daily. We also offer curbside drop-off at each of our Early Voting sites during the early voting period October 19th through October 31st from 7:00 am to 7:00 pm including weekends. Drop boxes are attended throughout the day and ballots are securely removed daily. From our website, you can sign up for BallotScout, an online tool that allows you to track your ballot like an Amazon package with options to receive text or email alerts throughout the process. Pasco County was first in the state to utilize BallotScout which is available here: <https://www.pascovotes.gov/TrackYourBallot>. In the case of substantial signature variance or missing signatures on returned ballots, we will notify you with instructions to cure your signature and BallotScout will also alert you. The deadline to cure a vote-by-mail ballot signature is the 2nd day after the election.

Florida has had no excuse absentee voting since 2002, and in 2016 the term absentee was officially changed to vote-by-mail by unanimous vote of the Florida legislature. Much of the social media discussion is confusing the terminology and using the terminology interchangeably with an all-mail ballot election (mass mailing ballots to all electors). For reliable information on the vote-by-mail process in Florida, see our FAQ and other resources at <https://www.pascovotes.com/Elections/Ways-to-Vote/Vote-by-Mail>. To request your vote-by-mail go to <https://www.pascovotes.gov/Vote-by-Mail/Request-a-Ballot-2>, or call 800-851-8754.

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