

Elections You Can *Trust*

In Florida, elections are conducted within a framework of laws that protect your vote. Let's walk through some of the reasons you can trust our elections.

Paper Ballots. All votes in Florida must be cast on paper ballots and retained for 22 months. That means we have the original, public paper record of every vote that was cast. §§ 101.56075, 101.545 Fla. Stat.

State-Certified Equipment. We are required to tabulate election results using equipment that has been rigorously tested and certified by the Florida Secretary of State. §§ 101.5601 – 5614, Fla Stat.



“In the 2020 presidential General Election, we tabulated the choices of more than 717,000 voters on 70 different races and issues. Reliable, state-of-the-art technology allowed us to count those votes efficiently and accurately, and to check our work.”

Independent Oversight. A County Canvassing Board is named for each election, made up of the County Commission Chair, a County Court Judge and the Supervisor of Elections (or their substitutes/alternates). Members cannot serve if they are involved in any races or issues on the ballot. The Canvassing Board holds public meetings to make key election decisions and certify election results. §§ 102.141, 102.141(1), Fla. Stat.

Transparency. There are opportunities to observe what we do at every stage of the election process. Canvassing Board meetings, testing, audits and recounts are open to the public. Poll watchers appointed by candidates and political organizations are allowed to be stationed inside voting sites to observe in-person voting. Candidates and political organizations and their designees may also observe work we do during verification and tabulation of Vote By Mail ballots. §§ 102.141, 101.5612, 101.591, 102.166, 101.131, 101.572, 101.5612(2), Fla. Stat.

Documented Processes. Security procedures that ensure secure ballot custody are submitted to the Florida Department of State for approval before every election, and a Conduct of Election Report is filed by the Canvassing Board at the end of every election. §§ 101.015(4)(b), 102.141(10), Fla. Stat.

Pre-election Logic and Accuracy Testing. Before every election, we invite the public to watch as we place pre-marked ballots in a randomly selected sample of our machines to make sure they're reading every position on the ballot and counting the votes accurately. §§ 101.5612, Fla. Stat.

Vote By Mail Safeguards. Vote By Mail ballots are only sent to registered voters who request them, and voters must provide identifying information to make the request. The voted ballot is returned inside an official envelope that must be signed. Then, we match that to the signature in the voter registration record to verify their identity before accepting the ballot. §§ 101.68(1), 101.5612(2), Fla. Stat.

“Voters who want to vote by mail must submit a new request each countywide election cycle.”

Unofficial Election Night Reporting. On Election Night, unofficial results are securely transmitted from each precinct to a stand-alone server in our central office. These unofficial results are backed up twice – by paper results tapes that are posted on the doors of each polling place and driven to our central office, and by the original paper ballots. Before becoming official, results are checked against the tapes and reconciled to the number of voters who checked in to vote in each precinct. §§ 102.071, 101.56075, 101.545, Fla. Stat.

Automatic, Public Recounts. If a candidate or issue would be defeated by .5% or less, the Canvassing Board must conduct a recount – retabulating all the votes in that race – before the results can be certified. Then, if a candidate or issue would be defeated by .25% or less, they conduct a manual recount and every ballot that had an overvote, undervote or unreadable mark in that race is physically reviewed in a public meeting. Candidate and political party representatives participate in the review. §§ 102.141(7), 102.166, Fla. Stat.

Post-Election Audit. After every election, we conduct a public post-election audit. In Hillsborough County, we audit 100% of our ballots by digitally scanning them through an independent system (completely separate from the main voting system) to verify our results. In other words, we double-check the tabulation of every single ballot. §§ 101.591, Fla. Stat.

“You read that correctly. We double-check the tabulation of every single ballot.”



Craig Latimer
Supervisor of Elections



VoteHillsborough.gov

