

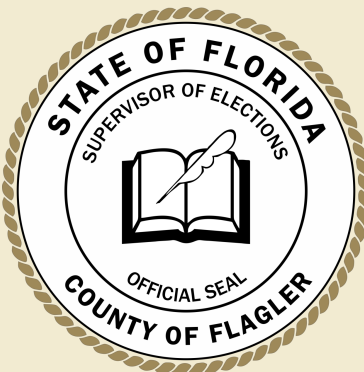
WHY SHOULD I VOTE?



A Practical Guide to Understanding the

Electoral System

FOR STUDENTS



Published By:

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Dear Students,

I hope you agree with me that **VOTING** is one of the most important privileges we have as Americans. The purpose of this booklet is to share with you basic information regarding the elections process in Florida and Flagler County.

As you learn about the government and the voting process, it is my wish that each of you would feel an obligation to do your share to support freedom. The more you learn about how the government in our country functions, the more important I hope our right to vote will become to you. Your opinions count!

I wish each of you the best of luck with your future plans and I hope you will remember the power of your vote!

Sincerely,

Kaiti Lenhart

Flagler County Supervisor of Elections





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THE SUPERVISOR OF ELECTIONS

In each county in Florida, there is a person charged with maintaining the voter registration files and conducting elections in a fair and honest way. In Flagler County, that person is Kaiti Lenhart.

The Supervisor of Elections is one of the five Constitutional Officers in Flagler County. The others include the Clerk of the Circuit Court and Comptroller, Property Appraiser, Tax Collector and Sheriff. These offices are elected every four years.

The Supervisor of Elections is responsible for carrying out voter registration according to the law. Voter registration laws are governed by the Florida Legislature and guidelines are set by the Department of State, Division of Elections in Tallahassee.

Another responsibility of the Supervisor is maintaining a mapping system of residential addresses, districts, and precincts. There are many types of districts: Congressional, Florida Senate and House of Representatives, Board of County Commissioners, School Board member districts, City government districts, and special districts. Your residential address is a point on the map, and your ballot is created based upon the representative districts in your area. When you vote, you choose among the officials up for election who represent you in each of those districts.

Precincts are geographical areas of the county which contain an Election Day polling place for voters. These polling places are open from 7:00 a.m. until 7:00 p.m. on Election Day.

Poll workers are hired and trained by the Supervisor of Elections to work on Election Day in these precincts, and during early voting at all of our early voting sites. There is one Clerk in charge of the polling place. Each precinct also has several inspectors who help people vote and assist the Clerk with various duties. Each precinct also has a deputy whose job it is to maintain order at the polling place. These are paid positions and we hire approximately 200 poll workers to work during each election.

The Supervisor of Elections in each county is also responsible for local candidate qualifying, voter eligibility and list maintenance, military and overseas voting, outreach and education, maintaining public records, and more!

VOTER REGISTRATION IS SIMPLE!

It is free to register to vote and you may pick up a Florida Voter Registration Application from a variety of places throughout Flagler County. You may also register to vote while you are at the Driver's License office. You must be registered to vote at least 29 days prior to an election in order to vote in that election. When you complete a voter registration application, your information is verified by the State of Florida and the Supervisor of Elections will mail a Voter Information Card.

Pick up a **Florida Voter Registration Application** at one of the following locations:

BUNNELL

Supervisor of Elections Office
In the Government Services Building
1769 E. Moody Blvd., Bldg. 2, Ste. 101
Bunnell, FL 32110

Download an application online:
www.FlaglerElections.gov

Bunnell Post Office
704 E Moody Blvd.
Bunnell, FL 32110

Health Department / WIC
301 Dr Carter Blvd.
Bunnell, FL 32110

FLAGLER BEACH / BEVERLY BEACH

Flagler Beach City Hall
105 S 2nd Street
Flagler Beach, FL 32136

Beverly Beach Town Hall
2735 N Ocean Shore Blvd
Flagler Beach, FL 32136

Flagler Beach Post Office
300 S. Daytona Ave.
Flagler Beach, FL 32136

Flagler Beach Library
315 7th Street S.
Flagler Beach, FL 32136

PALM COAST

Palm Coast Community Center
305 Palm Coast Parkway NE
Palm Coast, FL 32137

Tax Collector Branch Office
213 St. Joe Plaza Drive
Palm Coast, FL 32137

Palm Coast Post Office
2 Pine Cone Drive
Palm Coast, FL 32137

Flagler County Public Library
2500 Palm Coast Pkwy NW
Palm Coast, FL 32137

REQUIREMENTS TO VOTE

In order to register to vote in Flagler County, you must:

- ★ **Be A United States Citizen**
- ★ **Be A Flagler County, Florida Resident**
- ★ **Be 18 Years Old (You Can Pre-register at 16 Years Old)**
- ★ **Not Be A Convicted Felon or Adjudicated Mentally Incapacitated**



POLITICAL PARTIES

There are two major political parties in the United States, Republicans and Democrats. They have been in power for over 175+ years. The parties have different political philosophies which always strive to represent a broad range of ideological and geographical interests. Third parties, often called minor parties, sometimes focus on a specific issue or geographical region of the nation. It's important for voters to learn more about the ideology of political parties, and you may contact them directly.



Florida Democratic Party

Phone: (850) 222-3411
www.fladems.com



Florida Republican Party

Phone: (850) 222-7920
www.rpof.org

Minor Political Parties

<https://dos.fl.gov/elections/candidates-committees/political-parties>

ELECTION TYPES

General Election ★ An election to fill public offices.

Primary Election ★ An election before the General Election in which voters choose among candidates for partisan offices. In the state of Florida, our Primary elections are closed. That means candidates in partisan elections are selected by voters who share that party affiliation.

Open Primary ★ An election that permits voters to participate in any party primary they choose and is not based upon party affiliation. Florida is not an open primary state.

Closed Primary ★ You may only vote for the party in which you are registered. Florida is a Closed Primary state. However, nonpartisan races in Florida are open to all voters: School Board, municipal, and judicial offices are often decided in a Primary.

Universal Primary Contest ★ If all candidates in the race are of the same party and the winner will face no opposition in the General Election, all registered voters of any party can vote for any candidate they choose. Universal Primary Contests are common in Florida.

Presidential Primary Preference ★ A non-binding election held every four years to give voters the chance to instruct party delegates of their nomination for the President of the United States.



THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE & HOW OUR PRESIDENT IS ELECTED

The Electoral College is a process, not a place. The Founding Fathers established it in the Constitution, in part, as a compromise between the election of the President by a vote in Congress and election of the President by a popular vote of qualified citizens.



What is the process?

The Electoral College process consists of the selection of the electors, the meeting of the electors where they vote for President and Vice President, and the counting of the electoral votes by Congress.

How many electors are there? How are they distributed among the States?

The Electoral College consists of 538 electors. A majority of 270 electoral votes is required to elect the President. Your State has the same number of electors as it does Members in its Congressional delegation: one for each Member in the House of Representatives plus two Senators.

The District of Columbia is allocated 3 electors and treated like a State for purposes of the Electoral College under the 23rd Amendment of the Constitution. For this reason, in the following discussion, the word "State" also refers to the District of Columbia and "Executive" to the State Governors and the Mayor of the District of Columbia.

How are my electors chosen? What are their qualifications? How do they decide who to vote for?

Each candidate running for President in your State has their own group of electors (known as a slate). The slates are generally chosen by the candidate's political party in your State, but State laws vary on how the electors are selected and what their responsibilities are.

What happens in the general election? Why should I vote?

The general election is held every four years on the Tuesday after the first Monday in November. When you vote for a Presidential candidate you are actually voting for your candidate's preferred electors.

THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE, CONT'D.

Most States have a “winner-take-all” system that awards all electors to the Presidential candidate who wins the State’s popular vote. However, Maine and Nebraska each have a variation of “proportional representation.”

What happens after the general election?

After the general election, your State’s Executive prepares a Certificate of Ascertainment listing the names of all the individuals on the slates for each candidate. The Certificate of Ascertainment also lists the number of votes each individual received and shows which individuals were appointed as your State’s electors. Your State’s Certificate of Ascertainment is sent to NARA as part of the official records of the Presidential election.

The meeting of the electors takes place on the first Tuesday after the second Wednesday in December after the general election. The electors meet in their respective States, where they cast their votes for President and Vice President on separate ballots. Your State’s electors’ votes are recorded on a Certificate of Vote, which is prepared at the meeting by the electors. Your State’s Certificate of Vote is sent to Congress, where the votes are counted, and to NARA, as part of the official records of the Presidential election.

Each State’s electoral votes are counted in a joint session of Congress on the 6th of January in the year following the meeting of the electors. Members of the House and Senate meet in the House Chamber to conduct the official count of electoral votes. The Vice President of the United States, as President of the Senate, presides over the count in a strictly ministerial manner and announces the results of the vote. The President of the Senate then declares which persons, if any, have been elected President and Vice President of the United States.

The President-elect takes the oath of office and is sworn in as President of the United States on January 20th in the year following the general election.

Based upon the 2020 Census, Florida now has 30 electoral votes.

California = 54 Texas = 40 Florida = 30 New York = 28
Illinois = 19 Pennsylvania = 19 Ohio = 17 Georgia = 16
North Carolina = 16 Michigan = 15 New Jersey = 15

Source: <https://www.archives.gov/electoral-college/about>

HOW DO PEOPLE DECIDE WHO TO VOTE FOR?

There are two very basic types of voting. Prospective Voting means "looking forward." The voters look at both candidates and evaluate how their future will be if they vote for each person. This requires looking closely at the issues.

Retrospective Voting means "looking backwards." The voter looks at how things have been in recent years. If things have been good, the voter is likely to re-elect the incumbents. If things are not so good, the voter is likely to vote for the challengers.

EVERY VOTE COUNTS

Democracy is for all of us and it takes all of us to make it work. Many voters go to the polls only to cast votes for the President and Vice President and do not vote for local candidates and issues.



Your single vote can be even more important in state and local races. Remember, for the things that count most in your everyday life - schools, highways, water supply, police and fire protection - your vote is just as important for local issues as it is in Federal elections.

In past Presidential Elections, over 60 million Americans did not vote. In an average group of American citizens, chances are that only one out of three people will vote for national candidates and in local elections, one out of ten might vote. Why do so many forfeit their right to vote? Many people falsely believe that one vote doesn't make a difference, so why bother!

As citizens of a free country, we have both the privilege and responsibility to make choices that determine how and by whom we will be governed. It is the right to vote in a secret ballot that makes a democracy strong or weak. **Know the issues and VOTE!**


 ONE
VOTE

DID YOU KNOW?

- ★ In 1829, in Illinois, James C. Allen defeated William B. Archer 8,452 to 8,451 for his seat in the House of Representatives.
- ★ In 1920, one vote passed the 19th Amendment which gave women the right to vote. Tennessee was the last state needed to ratify the Amendment, and it passed by one vote.
- ★ In 1948, one vote per precinct in California gave Harry Truman the presidency.
- ★ In 2009, one vote declared Jack McDonald the Mayor of Palm Beach, Florida.



STATISTICS

SENATORS

- ★ There are 2 U.S. Senators from Florida.
- ★ There are 40 State Senators in Florida.
- ★ Flagler County is a single district county with one State Senator who represents the entire county.

REPRESENTATIVES

- ★ There are 28 U.S. Representatives from Florida.
- ★ There is 1 U.S. Representative in Congressional District 7 who represents Flagler County.
- ★ Flagler County is a single district county with one State Rep who represents the entire county.

GOING BACK IN TIME

Here's a brief look at Voting Rights in America.

... From the adoption of the U.S. Constitution on September 17, 1787 until 1821, voters were white male citizens who owned property, age 21 or older.

... Voters in 1850 were white male citizens, age 21 or older.

... Voters in 1870 were white or black male citizens, age 21 or older.

... Voters in 1920 were white or black male citizens and female citizens, age 21 or older.

... Voters in 1924 were white, black or native American males and female citizens, age 21 or older.

... Voters in 1971 were all American citizens, age 18 or older.



U.S. VOTING RIGHTS

When the Constitution was written, only white male property owners (about 10 to 16 percent of the nation's population) had the right to vote. Over the past two centuries, the term "government by the people" has become a reality. During the early 1800s, states gradually dropped property requirements for voting. Later, groups that had been excluded previously gained the right to vote. Other reforms made the process fairer and easier.



1700

1790

Only white male adult citizens who own property have the right to vote.

1800

1810

Last religious prerequisite for voting is eliminated.

1850

Property ownership and tax requirements were eliminated by 1850, almost all adult white males could vote.

1855

Connecticut adopts the nation's first literacy test for voting. Massachusetts follows suit in 1857. The tests were implemented to discriminate against Irish-Catholic immigrants.

1870

The 15th Amendment is passed. It gives former slaves the right to vote and protects the voting rights of adult male citizens of any race.

1889

Florida adopts a poll tax. Ten other southern states will implement poll taxes.

1890

Mississippi adopts a literacy test to keep African Americans from voting. Numerous other states—not just in the south—also establish literacy tests. However, the tests also exclude many whites from voting. To get around this, states add grandfather clauses that allow those who could vote before 1870, or their descendants, to vote regardless of literacy or tax qualifications.

1900

1913

The 17th Amendment calls for members of the U.S. Senate to be elected directly by the people instead of State Legislatures.

1915

Oklahoma was the last state to append a grandfather clause to its literacy requirement (1910). In *Guinn v. United States* the Supreme Court rules that the clause is in conflict with the 15th Amendment, thereby outlawing literacy tests for federal elections.

1920

The 19th Amendment grants women the right to vote.

1924

Indian Citizenship Act grants all Native Americans the rights of citizenship, including the right to vote in federal elections.

U.S. VOTING RIGHTS, CONT'D



1944

The Supreme Court outlaws "white primaries" in *Smith v. Allwright* (Texas). In Texas, and other states, primaries were conducted by private associations, which, by definition, could exclude whomever they chose. The Court declares the nomination process to be a public process bound by the terms of 15th Amendment.

1957

The first law to implement the 15th amendment, the Civil Rights Act, is passed. The Act set up the Civil Rights Commission—among its duties is to investigate voter discrimination.

1960

In *Gomillion v. Lightfoot* (Alabama) the Court outlaws "gerrymandering."

1961

The 23rd Amendment allows voters of the District of Columbia to participate in presidential elections.

1964

The 24th Amendment bans the poll tax as a requirement for voting in federal elections.

1965

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., mounts a voter registration drive in Selma, Alabama, to draw national attention to African-American voting rights.

1965

The Voting Rights Act protects the rights of minority voters and eliminates voting barriers such as the literacy test. The Act is expanded and renewed in 1970, 1975, and 1982.

1966

The Supreme Court, in *Harper v. Virginia Board of Elections*, eliminates the poll tax as a qualification for voting in any election. A poll tax was still in use in Alabama, Mississippi, Texas, and Virginia.

1966

The Court upholds the Voting Rights Act in *South Carolina v. Katzenbach*.

1970

Literacy requirements are banned for five years by the 1970 renewal of the Voting Rights Act. At the time, eighteen states still have a literacy requirement in place. In *Oregon v. Mitchell*, the Court upholds the ban on literacy tests, which is made permanent in 1975. Judge Hugo Black, writing the court's opinion, cited the "long history of the discriminatory use of literacy tests to disenfranchise voters on account of their race" as the reason for their decision.

1971

The 26th amendment sets the minimum voting age at 18.

1972

In *Dunn v. Blumstein*, the Supreme Court declares that lengthy residence requirements for voting in state and local elections is unconstitutional and suggests that 30 days is an ample period.

1995

The Federal "Motor Voter Law" takes effect, making it easier to register to vote.

2003

Federal Voting Standards and Procedures Act requires states to streamline registration, voting, and other election procedures.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q ★ When can I register to vote?

A ★ You can pre-register at 16 years old by completing a Florida Voter Registration Application. The week of your 18th birthday, you will receive a voter registration card.

Q ★ What is the benefit of pre-registering?

A ★ If your birthday falls within the 29 day window of an election, you are eligible to vote. If you have not received a voter information card before the election, you are still able to vote so long as you are 18 and bring a form of both photo and signature identification, such as a driver's license or Florida ID card.

Q ★ How do I vote if I am away at college or in the Armed Forces?

A ★ You may request an absentee/mail ballot by phone, mail or online. If you leave the county or state permanently, contact the Elections Office to cancel your registration and be sure to register in your new county and state. If you are moving to a new county in Florida, you only need to make an address change on the voter registration application.

Q ★ How do I decide party affiliation or for whom to vote?

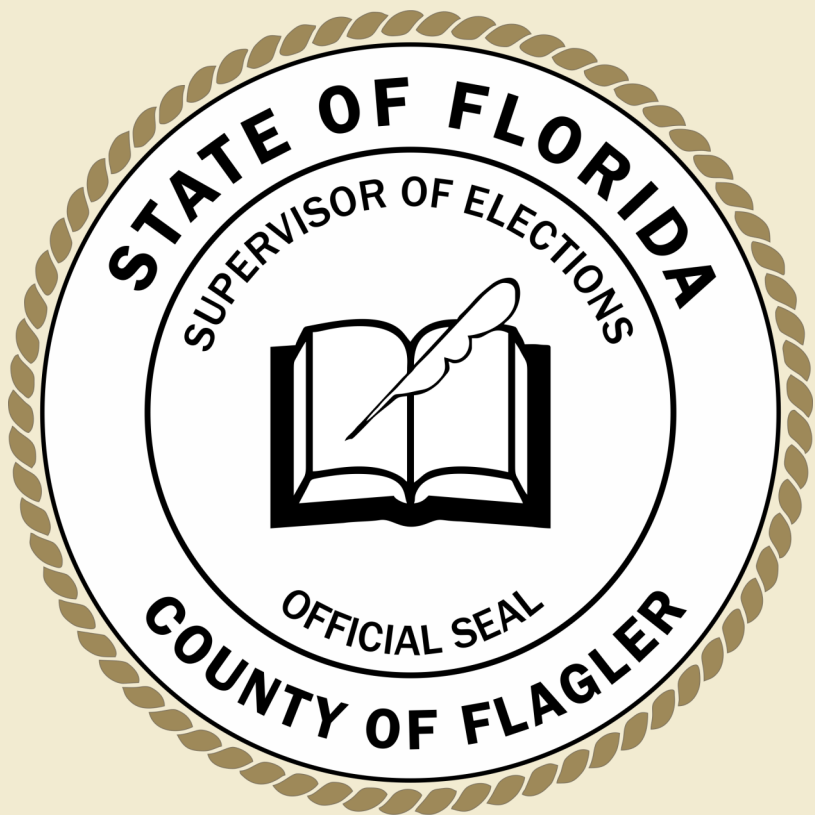
A ★ This is a personal choice. Contact the different parties and candidates to request information on their platforms. Study the issues that are important to you and make your choice accordingly.

Q ★ How do I know when and where to vote?

A ★ Your voter information card will have your precinct number and polling location listed. The newspaper will publish election dates and information. If you have any questions, you can always call the Elections Office at (386) 313-4170 or view current and updated election information on our Web site: www.FlaglerElections.gov

Q ★ What do I do if I lose my voter information card or move?

A ★ You may request a new card or make an address change by calling or writing the Elections Office. You may download a Florida Voter Registration Application to make changes to your voter registration on our Web site, www.FlaglerElections.gov



*Exercise Your Right... **VOTE!***



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