

# ELECTION NEWS

Osceola County Supervisor of Elections Newsletter

Summer 2019

## Bulldogs Visit Elections Office

Students from St. Cloud High School's transition class came by to visit us on May 10 for a look behind the curtain. Their teacher, Ms. Karen Best, thought it was important for them to have a basic understanding of the election process, as well as, what to expect when they decide to cast a ballot. Staff gave them a complete tour of the office where students were able to see equipment, processes taking place, meet staff members and ask questions. At the conclusion of the visit students participated in a mock election scenario where they presented their ID, they were issued a mock ballot and were allowed to vote it and place it into a machine. Students walked away feeling more confident about their role in the voting process and expressed that they felt ready to vote!

If you have a group that is interested in visiting us for a similar experience, contact Community Relations Manager Kari Ewalt at 407-742-6100.

*"Being able to show the students what we do was an excellent experience.*

*What was even better was to see their faces light up with excitement and having them ask all kinds of questions as we took them on their tour. Very rewarding!"*

*-Rosa Santiago,  
Community Relations  
Specialist on the Bulldog  
Field Trip*



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# Special Election Recap

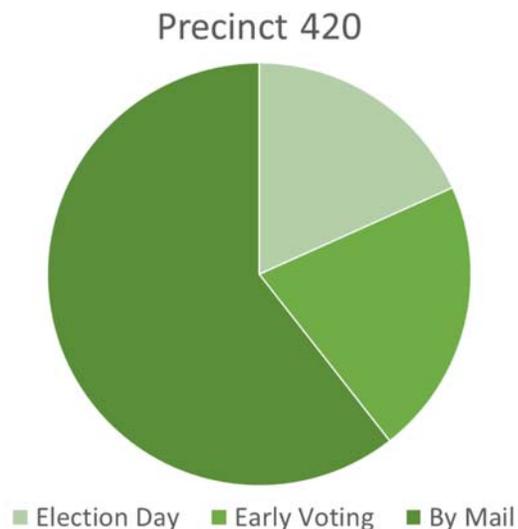
Our county held a special election on May 21. All 41 Election Day polling locations were open and we opened an additional Early Voting site at the Osceola Campus of Valencia College. Voting by mail was an option for voters this election, as usual. Here's a breakdown of which voting method people chose to use:

Election Day- 21%

Early Voting- 17%

Vote by Mail- 62%

Vote by Mail continues to be the most popular way to vote in our county. Without Vote by Mail, our voter turnout would have been much lower. In this election, we saw a turnout of only 18.66%. Of the 18.66% who voted, most live in Saint Cloud. The precinct with the highest voter turnout was precinct 420. It is obvious when looking at the visual above, that in the precinct with the highest turnout percentage, the majority of voters vote by mail. The trend countywide is that voters choose convenience voting— either by mail or early.



Voters chose not to pass the proposed tax referendum 67% to 33%.

## New Election Legislation

The 2019 Legislative session brought about a number of changes related to our elections process. Some of these changes were requested by the Supervisors of Elections in our state and others were not. House Bill 5 and House Bill 281 were both passed and signed into law by Governor DeSantis in June. Senate Bill 7066 passed into law on July 1.

House Bill 5 relates to ballot measures. This law creates additional requirements and procedures relating to the constitutional amendment initiative process. A constitutional amendment initiative is an idea for a law that is suggested by citizens and if enough citizens sign petitions saying would like the initiative to appear on the ballot, it is added to our ballot in the next general election to be voted on.

The second section of this bill mandates that all referenda to adopt or amend a local discretionary sales surtax be held at a general elections.

House Bill 281 amends public records exemptions for voter registration information. Current law exempts all voter information relating to the location a person registered to vote, the person's social security number, driver's license number, and Florida identification number. This law now makes all information concerning 16 and 17-year-olds who preregister to vote confidential and exempt from public inspection. Lastly, the new law exempts information about a voter's prior felony convictions and their method of registration.

Senate bill 7066 is the largest election bill we've seen in some time. Some changes in this bill include:

- The No Solicitation Zone moves from 100 feet to 150 feet
- Voters can take photos of their own ballot while voting
- Defines procedures around Amendment 4
- Expands dates regarding Vote by Mail

## Supervised Voting

You probably have never heard of supervised voting and yet it happens every election in every county in Florida. Prior to each election cycle, our staff sends out packets to all of the assisted living facilities and nursing homes in Osceola County. These packets include voter registration applications so residents can update their address and signature if needed, a sign-up sheet for supervised voting, Vote by Mail request forms and a letter explaining what supervised voting is and how to participate.

Our outreach staff will set up dates and times to visit all of the facilities that respond. The residents that indicate that they would like to participate will request to receive a Vote by Mail ballot. Our staff will bring the residents' Vote by Mail ballots to the facility on the scheduled date for supervised voting. Our outreach staff can then assist any voter who requires assistance to vote their ballot. This assistance might include reading the ballot and/or filling in the ovals next to the voter's choice for candidate or issue. Staff comes in teams of two. The two staff members are of opposing party affiliation.

Supervised voting is important because it allows voters who might not be able to get out to a polling location the opportunity to vote. It also allows voters the ability to receive impartial assistance, if needed.



We will come out to your facility to conduct supervised voting

## Election Workers Needed

This fall staff will begin actively seeking election workers for the 2020 Election Cycle. Election workers are essential to the election process. These citizens staff every one of our polling locations on Election Day and throughout Early Voting. It takes between 500 and 600 workers every election to pull off the monumental task of providing an opportunity for each registered voter to cast a ballot.

One of the biggest myths about election workers is that they are volunteers. In Osceola County we pay our workers for their time. If you are interested in becoming an election worker, please visit our website

[www.voteosceola.com/election-worker-information](http://www.voteosceola.com/election-worker-information)

to get more details regarding the process and to apply to work for us. We will reach out to all applicants in the fall to invite them to an orientation session. Training for the March election will begin in January. Please don't wait to sign up!



# Recent Events

## April

In April four members of our staff attended their second session of FCEP classes. FCEP stands for Florida Certified Election Professional. These classes are part of our overall effort to be continually educated in our field and provide the best possible voting experience for our voters. This month also saw the end of the Sunshine State Young Readers elections with visits to Partin Settlement Elementary School and Denn John Middle School. Outreach staff continued to visit high schools for voter registration and made two visits to Valencia College to discuss the election process. Towards the end of the month, Kari and Rosa, from the outreach department, made the first Supervised Voting visit for the Special election. On the 28<sup>th</sup>, staff had a table at the Caribbean Fusion Festival at the Kissimmee Lakefront.

## May

Training of election workers kicked off the first week in May. This training lasted for two weeks. Tammy Smith, the Election Worker Coordinator, held 2-3 trainings per day in this period. The Canvassing Board began meeting during the second week in May, Early Voting began the third week and Election Day was on May 21. In the middle of election duties, staff also attended roundtable events with other counties from around the state on May 7 and 8 to discuss best practices. There was a field trip to our office on May 10 and two staff members attended our state election conference May 19 to May 23. This was a busy month!

## June

June kicked off with the Poinciana Outreach Festival on June 1 at the Gym and Aquatic Center in Poinciana. The following week, our four FCEP attendees went to three more days of classes. On May 14, Kari and Rosa from the outreach team visited WIC offices in Kissimmee to train the employees there on voter registration. All government agencies that provide assistance are also required to provide voter registration. On June 18, Rosa and Tammy from our outreach team were at the City of Kissimmee Employee Wellness Fair and Kari and Supervisor Arrington were at a training workshop focused on voter outreach. During the last week of the month, staff attended Active Shooter Training and Cybersecurity training.

## Upcoming Events

Our office will be closed on July 4, 2019 in observance of Independence Day.

If you have an event that you'd like to see us at, please contact Kari Ewalt at 407-742-6100 or [kari.ewalt@votesceola.com](mailto:kari.ewalt@votesceola.com).



## Contact Us

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Visit us on the web at [www.votesceola.com](http://www.votesceola.com) or give us a call for more information at (407) 742-6000