

League of Women Voters State of Florida Zoom call May 1, 2020

Topic: Voter Registration and Vote by Mail (VBM)



Host Patti Brigham, President, LWVFL
Speaker Craig Lattimer, **Hillsborough County** Supervisor
of Elections (SOE), is now President of the Florida
Supervisors of Elections

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/politics/what-does-the-new-president-of-the-florida-supervisors-of-elections-think-of-vote-by-mail/ar-BB13AP3y>



Moderated very well by Patti and team, it was well organized. All participants were muted by admin except Patti and staff.

We were able to submit questions prior to call to lcalleja@lwvfl.org and during call we could submit questions via the Zoom Chat function. There were 261 attendees.

Lots of questions submitted prior to meeting and by chat. I was able to ask 2 questions, and both were answered. Per voting: all votes are provisional until your signature is checked. Vote is not accepted if in wrong precinct or you're not registered to vote. Few votes are rejected and none are 'lost' that Craig is aware of. They have staff professionally trained in handwriting recognition and if there is any question of signature, team reviews.

Hillsborough County (HC) is requesting that VBM flyers for parents be put into student Grab n Go lunches. The county pays the return postage on VBM, 26 early voting sites.

\$20M in CARES funds go to FL-\$4M in match may pay for return postage. I'm not clear now if that's for whole state on mail in votes or just Hillsborough. I assume because of the high \$\$ amount it is for whole state. 70% vote early in HC.

Mr Lattimer on 'integrity of VBM'. He retired as a Major from HC Sheriff's Dept after 35 years. Not seeing fraud. Secret ballot-so nothing can be on ballot to ID person. FL is a 'no reason' VBM state, i.e., anyone can VBM (Indiana, for instance, requires voters to put in a reason for requesting absentee voting-age, illness, travel). VBM is good for 2 general elections and if you vote, you'll continue to receive VBM documents. He has spoken to the FBI more times in the last 2 months than he did in his entire career in law enforcement, to discuss VBM and voting integrity. All areas of computer security are scrutinized. The servers that hold the final votes are separate and not connected to any network or the internet. Craig was very sincere and well-spoken. One audience concern was with coercion from a partner or spouse when filling in VBM forms. Not much we can do about that unless person is able to vote privately away from the controlling person.

I asked question about purging voter records. Over 30,000 address changes are made each year in HC. Florida joined the Erics Project which matches voter and driver's license info, this project catches deceased or moved. Most people do not think to contact election offices to notify of changes. Look through their web site for more info on how this project works. <https://ericstates.org/> There is no wholesale purge, per se. All voters are given 2 years to vote and multiple letters are sent before they are purged from the lists.

HC won't mail VBM to all 1.4M HC residents, too cost prohibitive, however, is using partners to notify. Signage on buses, billboards, library, city facilities, McDonalds bag fillers.

VBM uses signature on file with DMV (Dept of Motor Vehicles). 263,000 VBM forms were sent with 80-90% returned voting. If your signature has changed due to age or illness, you can rerecord your signature by contacting DMV or SOE.

Ex-felons-2 hrs prior to this call, Craig was named as defendant in trial. No direction on this issue so far from state. Not the job of SOE to check on felon status, no database (DB) exists. The subtle message is that anyone who is registered can vote as their felony status is not checked. But we do want ex-felons to explicitly have the right to vote.

Other ways SOE helps voting. Supervised voter-March 17 SOE worked with nursing home administrators. SOE had observers in homes. Florida ranks high in presidential voting rate, US 60%. FL 70%

This is short summary of the 1 hour Zoom call. I had pages of notes but wanted to hit the high points for our team. Mr Lattimer was very engaging and had answers for every question. He was thoroughly professional and gave us all confidence that at least in HC, VBM was very secure and achievable. I hope that Manatee County SOE, Michael Bennet, is taking lessons from HC.

Submitted by Terri Holsinger, LWVMC, Healthcare team
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