

Let Florida Vote:

Coronavirus is only the newest barrier to voting in Florida

Covid-19 has heightened awareness about the importance of easy, equitable voting access. While many of the struggles facing election administrators during this public health crisis seem unprecedented, they each represent an opportunity to refine local policies and practices to ensure every Floridian has the opportunity to vote – and to have that vote count.



ACLU

Florida

Contents

Executive Summary	5
Considerations in Assessing Local Election Administration.....	8
Barriers to Voting.....	12
Fair & Inclusive Vote by Mail	14
Early Voting Access.....	23
Equity in Polling Places	28
Ensure Access for All.....	34
Resources.....	38
» Recent Developments in Election Administration Law	39
» Local Voting Rights Advocacy 101	42
» Ensure Votes are Counted.....	43
» Expand Early Voting.....	45
» Ensure Equal Access to Polls	47
Appendix.....	48
» Dr. Daniel A. Smith & Anna Baringer, ACLU Florida: Report on Vote-by-Mail Ballots in the 2018 General Election	49
» State Table: How Floridians Vote	70
» County Tables:	71
» Voting Methods by County	71
» County Vote-by-Mail Performance.....	73
» County Vote-by-Mail Age Disparities	75
» County Vote-by-Mail Race Disparities.....	77
» Early Voting Access by County.....	79
» Polling Place Accessibility by County	81

Acknowledgements

The ACLU of Florida would like to acknowledge and thank several organizations and their staff including All Voting is Local, America Votes, Common Cause Florida, the League of Women Voters of Florida, Proxeme LLC, and ElectionSmith, LLC, who contributed data, information, analysis and editorial suggestions to this report, along with Diane Ward who provided design.

Executive Summary

As Floridians, like the rest of the world, navigate living and working during a pandemic, a risk to our democracy has emerged – how will we vote?

In answering this dilemma, it is useful to ask, how have we voted? The reality is that voting access in Florida has long been inconsistent and inequitable. How easy it is to vote, and have your vote counted, has depended on your age, your race, where you live and how much free time you have. These factors will be exacerbated by the current public health crisis.

These inequities are not consistent with our core values, or with protection of the fundamental right to vote; every eligible American should have access to the ballot. Many of the solutions to improve voting access are not only possible in the current crisis – they are necessary.

As such, this report offers insight for supervisors of election and their staff as they navigate administering elections in a public health crisis. It highlights where others can assist. For voters who want to push their local election officials to do the right thing, guides and one-page summaries are included. An appendix is available for those looking for a deeper understanding of these issues.

This report presents background information and policy recommendations for establishing four pillars of equitable voting access: reliable

& fair vote by mail, early voting access, equity in polling locations and access for all. Fair and reliable vote by mail and early voting policies, especially critical to voting access during this pandemic, are key to ensuring equal access to the ballot box even in the best of times.

Reliable & Fair Vote by Mail

Analysis from the 2016 and 2018 elections illustrates that voting by mail in Florida is neither reliable, nor fair. Tens of thousands of voters see their vote-by-mail ballots rejected each election because, in a lay person's opinion, they failed to replicate a signature they signed on a digital signature pad at the DMV years, even decades, ago. The Legislature attempted to improve this by allowing voters to "cure" rejected ballots by affidavit. Yet, in 2018, the **rejection rate of vote-by-mail ballots increased**.

Moreover, the risk of having a vote-by-mail ballot rejected is not equal. Whether a vote counts varies by age, race and county. Black voters, who are already more wary of voting by mail, see their mailed ballots rejected twice as often as their white neighbors. Young voters, between 18 and 21 years old, saw their mailed ballots rejected 2.5 times as often as other voters. Even uniformed service members stationed away from home, who have additional legal protections, saw their mailed ballots rejected more than three times as often as others voting by mail. While these disparities continued from 2016 to 2018, **rejection rates increased for every demographic**.

This is not acceptable. It is likely that vote by mail will be integral to elections until the risk of coronavirus subsides.

The state must provide signature matching software as a first step in signature matching analysis to reduce the number of false rejections. Every supervisor of elections must prioritize effectively administering vote-by-mail in a reliable and fair manner by taking the following steps:

- » Invest in robust voter education programs to educate voters on vote by mail and signature requirements and to remind voters to mail their ballot.
- » Provide prepaid postage vote-by-mail envelopes.
- » Provide robust vote-by-mail ballot tracking to alert voters by email and/or text message when their ballot is received and when their attention is needed.
- » Ensure a multi-step signature review process to minimize false rejections.
- » Provide robust notification when ballots are rejected and allow for remote signature curing.

Early Voting Access

Vote by mail is not enough. Some voters cannot vote by mail; based on past performance, some cannot trust that their vote would be counted. For these reasons, early voting will continue to be necessary to ensure voters can cast their ballots without enduring crowds, long lines, and schedule conflicts, especially with increased caregiver duties.

Counties vary dramatically in their approach to early voting. Under normal circumstances, this may make sense due to local demand, but it does not in the current public health crisis. Local supervisors of election must ensure that every Floridian who needs to vote in person can do so safely by taking the following steps:

- » Make early voting available for the entire period allowed by Florida law at as many locations as can be staffed to reduce the potential for crowds. Early voting should be available at enough locations, for long enough, that the county has no more than 300 voters per hour of early voting.
- » Ensure every early voting location has equitable hours.
- » Follow the practices employed in grocery stores during this crisis: use plexiglass barriers to separate poll workers and voters, sanitize voting booths and check-in stations between voters, and provide masks and gloves for poll workers.
- » Ensure SOE staff is accessible to voters by phone whenever early voting is open.

We can do this. The federal government has already given the state additional funding to administer elections safely during this time. Other states have already been conducting universal vote-by-mail elections with minimal rejections, while also offering accessible in-person voting. Florida counties and other states are already preparing to print vote-by-mail ballots for every registered voter and/or to hold extended early voting periods.

This pandemic is only highlighting the disparities in voter access in our state. Florida's election bureaucracies effectively block too many Floridians from voting. Voting is a fundamental right that we fought hard to secure for everyone. It should not be this hard. Florida policymakers are faced with a choice: take this opportunity to dismantle barriers to voting or do nothing and continue to be seen as a weak link in our democracy.

Considerations in Assessing Local Election Administration

While state and federal law govern elections generally, many decisions happen at the local level. In Florida, these decisions largely lie with each county's supervisor of elections. Florida is a very diverse state, with stark differences in population, demographics, and resources. These differences should be considered in assessing local election administration.

County Size

Past research has illustrated how differences in jurisdiction size can influence how election officials administer elections.¹ Voters in larger jurisdictions are more likely to cast provisional ballots and vote by mail than those in smaller jurisdictions. Likewise, larger jurisdictions have more issues managing poll workers.

Because of these demands and increased resources, election officials in larger jurisdictions are generally more open to innovations that reduce election day voting, such as early voting and vote-by-mail, than their counterparts in smaller jurisdictions.

Florida's diverse counties vary from small, rural communities to major metropolitan areas. The Florida State Association of Supervisors of

¹ David C. Kimball & Brady Baybeck, Are All Jurisdictions Equal? Size Disparity in Election Administration, 12 (2) Election Law Journal 130 (2013).

Elections divides itself into three categories, as illustrated in the table below, that can be useful in comparing local election administration performance and are used throughout this report. Most of Florida's counties, 32, are categorized as 'Small,' yet the majority of Florida's voters, 83%, live in 'Large' counties with more than 200,000 registered voters.

	Registered Voters	Counties	Percent of Voters
Small	Less than 75,000	32	5%
Mid-Size/Rural	Between 75,000 and 200,000	12	11%
Large	More than 200,000	12	83%

Supervisor of Elections – The Most Important Local Official You Need to Know

In Florida, each of our 67 counties has its own supervisor of elections (SOE) and that individual has a wide degree of discretion on issues governing elections and access to the polls. SOE's are responsible for conducting fair, honest and accurate elections and to assist Florida citizens to become better informed about voting and be prepared to participate in the electoral process. The public office of Supervisor of Elections holds significant power and vast influence in their jurisdictions over the conduct of voting. Supervisors make decisions daily about who gets to vote and participate in our civic life that impact thousands of individuals. In a real sense, these powers and responsibilities far exceed even the power of legislators and other local officials because of their immediate impact on all the residents of their respective counties.

Hurricane Recovery & Vote Centers

In addition to the differences between small and large counties, some panhandle counties continue to struggle with the aftermath of 2018's Hurricane Michael. Gulf and Bay counties, for example, continue to rely on Super Voting Sites and face unique challenges in election administration.² The performance of these counties can help inform voting during other crises, such as the COVID-19 crisis.

Any voter in the county can vote at a Super Voting Site, often called 'Vote Centers.' While such centers could expand voting access, there is potential for abuse. An example is Bay County, where the site in a predominately Black community was open for fewer early voting hours.

² Executive Order No. 19-262 (Nov. 25, 2019), available at <https://www.flgov.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/EO-19-262.pdf>

Read All Voting is Local's Report, [“Vote Centers: Potential Benefits for Voters, but Standards and Protections Must be in Place”](#) to learn more.

SOE Voting Method Preferences

Counties tend to prioritize vote by mail or early voting – as participation in early voting increases, participation in vote by mail decreases, and vice versa. While the effect was not strong, for the 2018 General Election, as the portion of voters voting in person on election day in a county increased, overall turnout decreased. To ensure voting access for all, counties should continue to increase early and vote-by-mail access.

	County	Early Voting	Vote by Mail	Election Day
Large	Polk	22.0%	32.4%	45.6%
	Marion	27.8%	32.4%	44.7%
	Palm Beach	29.3%	26.3%	44.4%
	Leon	39.8%	19.4%	40.9%
	Duval	43.1%	16.9%	40.0%
	Pinellas	12.5%	54.9%	32.5%
	Broward	41.8%	26.7%	31.5%
	Collier	32.1%	37.9%	29.9%
	Lee	23.1%	50.9%	26.0%
	Alachua	35.2%	27.1%	37.7%
Mid-Size	Hernando	21.0%	41.5%	37.4%
	St. Johns	41.8%	22.7%	35.6%
	Flagler	43.0%	27.4%	29.5%
	Bay	62.6%	18.4%	18.9%
	Glades	16.9%	23.8%	59.3%
	Levy	20.0%	31.7%	48.3%
	Monroe	26.6%	35.7%	37.7%
	Jackson	52.8%	21.9%	25.4%
Small	Gulf	56.1%	20.4%	23.4%

A stark example of this is **Pinellas County**, with 54.9% of votes sent by mail and only 12.5% cast early. This is due to policies and practices in the county. While early voting is available for 12 hours a day for the entire period of early voting, there are only five early voting sites – one for every 133,366 voters, more than 3.5 times as dense as the state average of one per 36,180. Conversely, Pinellas County is a model for vote by mail (VBM) election administration. Pinellas County only rejected

0.12 percent of VBM ballots, a tenth of the state average rejection rate of 1.2 percent. Pinellas County's ballot curing processes allowed initially rejected VBM ballots to be remedied in time to be counted. See the discussion of vote by mail on [page 14](#) to learn more.

Meanwhile, election day voting dominated in only four small counties: **Glades, Gilchrist, Holmes and Lafayette**. Of large counties, **Polk** (45.6%), **Marion** (44.7%) and **Palm Beach** (44.4%) saw the highest proportions of people voting in person on election day.



How People Vote

The demographics of voters voting early, by mail and in person vary. In the 2018 General Election:

- » White voters, especially white women, were the most likely to vote by mail – 34% of white voters voted by mail, compared to 22% of Black voters and 31% of Hispanic voters.
- » Voting by mail begins to increase around age 50, with voters 65 years old or older the most likely to vote by mail – 46% voted by mail, compared to 21% of those younger than 44.
- » Black voters were the most likely to vote early – 45% of Black voters cast their ballot early, compared to 31% of white voters and 32% of Hispanic voters.
- » Participating in early voting did not have as significant a relationship with age, but voters between the ages of 45 and 64 were slightly more likely vote early at 36%, compared to 30% of older voters and 31-32% of younger voters.
- » Hispanic voters were slightly more likely to vote at the polls on Election Day, 37% voted on Election Day, compared to 33% of Black voters and 35% of white voters.
- » Voting at the polls on Election Day gradually becomes less likely as voters age – 48% of voters between 18 and 29 years old, and 47% of those between 30 and 44, voted at the polls, while only 24% of voters 65 and older did so.

Barriers to Voting

Many of the trends in how people vote may be explained by predictable barriers to voting. Removing these barriers increases participation. Maintaining them amounts to voter suppression. More than half of those surveyed by the U.S. Census after the 2018 Election cited barriers that could be addressed through early voting and vote-by-mail (VBM) policies, such as schedule conflicts (27%), illnesses or disability (13%), out-of-town travel (9%) and transportation issues (3%).³

Indeed, 29% of VBM voters reported doing so because it was more convenient. Others cited travel conflicts (21%) or physical disabilities (18%).⁴

Waiting To Vote

When they can get to the polls, wait times exceeding 30 minutes are the most common obstacle voters report, as reported by the 2016 Survey of the Performance of American Elections (SPAEE), a nationwide survey.⁵ Similarly, 11% of early voters cited long waits. Wait times are not universal – 42% of white voters reported no wait at all in 2016, compared to only 26% of Black and 29% of Hispanic voters. This unequal treatment

³ U.S. Census. Voting and Registration in the Election of November 2018, Table 10 (Apr. 2019), available at <https://www.census.gov/topics/public-sector/voting/data/tables.html>

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ Charles Stewart, *2016 Survey of the Performance of American Elections*, Harvard Dataverse, V1 <https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/Y38VIQ> at 16.



and heavy cost to vote has been associated with reduced voter participation in future elections.⁶

Voter Confidence

Confidence that their vote will count is vital to ensuring continued voter participation. The way a voter casts their vote has been correlated with their confidence, with vote-by-mail voters having lower levels of confidence than their in-person voting peers.⁷ The use of web-based ballot tracking tools, like those used in **Pinellas County**, can help boost confidence.

There is also a disparity in confidence rates by voters' race and political party. While 70% of white voters responding to the SPAE reported being very confident that their vote was counted in 2016, 50% of Black voters had that same confidence. **Fifteen percent of Black voters were not confident that their vote counted, compared to only 5% of white voters.** As to political party, voters tend to be more confident their vote counted when their party's candidate wins.

The findings of analyses of 2018 and 2016 vote-by-mail rejection rates illustrates that the fears of those voting by mail and voting while Black are justified.⁸

⁶ David Cottrell, Michael C. Herron, and Daniel A. Smith. Forthcoming. *Voting Lines, Equal Treatment, and Early Voting Check-in Times in Florida*, State Politics and Policy Quarterly.

⁷ SPAE, *supra* n. 4 at 28.

⁸ Dr. Daniel A. Smith & Anna Baringer, Analysis of Vote-By-Mail Ballots in the 2018 General Election, University of Florida (2020), discussed *infra* at 10.

Fair & Inclusive Vote by Mail

“The whole signature thing needs to be totally reevaluated. There should not be all these untrained people—and you probably won’t get trained people there, because trained persons know you don’t compare one signature to another signature.”

-Patricia Fisher,
Board Certified
Forensic
Document
Examiner

Overview

Nearly a third of Floridians cast their ballots by mail instead of voting at the polls on Election Day. Any registered voter in Florida can vote by mail by requesting a vote by mail (VBM) ballot online and returning it by 7:00 pm on Election Day. In order to be counted, the voter’s signature on the VBM ballot must match their signature on file. Often the signature the SOE office has on file is the voter’s signature from the DMV. Such signatures are generally created using a digital signature pad and may be decades old. Handwriting changes over the years, as can names in the case of marriages or divorces.

Unfortunately, Florida rejects an excessive number of VBM ballots. Rejection rates increased in the 2018 General Election, despite the introduction of opportunities to cure rejected ballots. More than one out of every 100 VBM ballots was ultimately rejected – 32,176 ballots went uncounted. To put this into perspective, Florida’s 2018 Gubernatorial race was decided by 32,463 votes.

Rejection rates also vary by jurisdiction, age and race. New legal requirements that prohibit rejected VBM ballots without finding a signature mismatch beyond a reasonable doubt should improve this, local supervisors of election must fully implement the law and local procedures to ensure every vote counts. See Analysis of Vote-by-Mail Ballots in the 2018 General Election at [page 18](#) to learn more.

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

- » Any registered voter can vote by mail.
- » Voters must request VBM ballots at least 10 days before the election.
- » Supervisors of election must mail VBM ballots between 40 and 33 days before the election, or within 2 business days of receiving the request if received later.
- » A voter, and anyone they designate by filling out a form available online, may pick up their VBM ballot at the SOE's office. No doctor's note or other documentation can be required. On Election Day, a designee can pick up the voter's VBM ballot only if there is an emergency.
- » VBM ballots must be received by the SOE by 7 pm on Election Day.
- » VBM drop boxes must be placed at early voting sites and the supervisor of elections' office(s), and can be placed anywhere eligible to be used for early voting, so long as they are staffed by SOE staff or law enforcement.
- » There are special protections for military and overseas voters.

Signature curing

- » Supervisors of election must match the voter's signature on the VBM ballot to their signature on record.
- » VBM voters can update their signature on record until their VBM ballot is received.
- » VBM Ballots can only be rejected for signature mismatch if the Canvassing Board finds that the VBM signature does not match the signature of record **beyond a reasonable doubt**.
- » The SOE must notify a voter that their VBM ballot has been rejected as soon as practicable by either email, text message or telephone, in addition to first-class mail.
- » Voters have until 5 pm the second day after the election to submit ID and a signature cure affidavit.

Considerations

- » Handwriting analysis is a profession, not a seminar. Professional analysts examine multiple handwriting samples made at similar times under similar circumstances. Yet in Florida, election officials are trained in seminars to compare a signature on a ballot to a single signature made years ago, often on a digital signature pad. This introduces a significant risk that legitimate votes will be rejected. Every effort must be made to ensure only those signatures that do not match beyond a reasonable doubt are rejected.
- » Signature matching can only be as good as a county's cure process. Voters must be given a full and fair opportunity to correct signature mismatches in a timely manner. This requires adequate, swift notice by phone, email and/or text, so voters may exercise their right to correct their signature on file.
- » All VBM ballots can be tracked online through local SOE websites, but they vary in capabilities.
- » Vote by mail may not be accessible for all, so in-person voting, voter support, and drop-off facilities must be offered.
- » Mandating voting by mail has been shown to decrease the odds of an individual voting by 13%, with larger impacts on Hispanic voters, possibly due to language barriers.⁹
- » Mandating voting by mail seems to advantage resource rich voters – those who are older, more educated, and more interested.¹⁰
- » Resources: What is the election administration budget? Is it being sufficiently prioritized?

Recommendations

- » Establish a multi-step signature verification process, incorporating signature verification software, to reduce the opportunity for unnecessary rejections.
- » Provide voter education on the vote by mail process and signature matching requirements and invite voters to update their signatures.
- » Provide postage paid VBM envelopes. At least nine counties do.

⁹ Elizabeth Bergman & Philip A. Yates, *Changing Election Methods: How Does Mandated Vote-By-Mail Affect Individual Registrants?* ELECTION LAW JOURNAL, Vol. 10, N. 2 (2011).

¹⁰ Adam J. Berinsky, Nancy Burns, & Michael W. Traugott, *Who Votes By Mail? A Dynamic Model of the Individual-level Consequences of Voting-By-Mail Systems*, Public Opinion Quarterly, 65, 178–197 (2001). See also, Nathan W. Monroe and Dari E. Sylvester, *Who Converts to Vote-By-Mail? Evidence from a Field Experiment*, ELECTION LAW JOURNAL, Vol. 10, N. 1, (2011).

- » Send communications, such as reminders to return VBM ballots, by text or postcard, which has been found to increase turnout by as much as four percentage points.¹¹
- » Expand VBM ballot tracking to incorporate text and email notification.
- » Allow signature mismatches to be cured remotely.
- » Create a uniform, simple VBM return envelope in consultation with other supervisors of elections.
- » Ensure all voter instructions are written at the seventh-grade level.
- » Provide language assistance hotlines.
- » Record why a VBM or provisional ballot was rejected.

Lessons From All-Mail Voting States

Five states conduct all elections entirely by mail: Colorado, Hawaii, Oregon, Washington and Utah. Others, such as California, Nebraska and North Dakota, allow counties to offer all vote-by-mail elections. Some best practices that have emerged include:

- » Provide both vote by mail and in-person voting.
- » Universal distribution of VBM ballots (Colorado, Washington, some California counties)
- » Prepaid postage on VBM ballots (16 states currently require local election officials to provide return postage.).
- » Provide language assistance hotlines.
- » Establish a multi-step signature verification process, incorporating signature verification software, to reduce the opportunity for unnecessary rejections.

Signature Verification

One promising development is the use of signature matching software in the signature verification process. Handwriting analysis experts agree that comparing only two signatures is prone to mistake as so many variables impact our handwriting at any given moment. Mistakes are even more likely when the analysis is done with little training. With the addition of signature matching software, multiple signatures can be compared at once, leading to more accurate results. This also reduces the number of signatures people need to examine to those flagged by the software, which frees up resources to better train, or contract with trained, handwriting analysts.

Denver uses this approach, first running mailed ballots through

¹¹ Bergman & Yates, *supra* n. 12 at 122-123.

signature verification software that automatically matches between 30 to 45 percent of the signatures with existing records. A team of bipartisan election judges trained in signature verification then examines the remainder. If a mismatch is suspected, the ballot is flagged for examination by a second team. If the human reviewers agree that the signature doesn't match, the voter is notified by email or text immediately. The voter is also mailed a notice. Only 0.8 percent of Denver voters had a signature discrepancy that wasn't resolved, compared to Florida's 1.2% rejection rate.

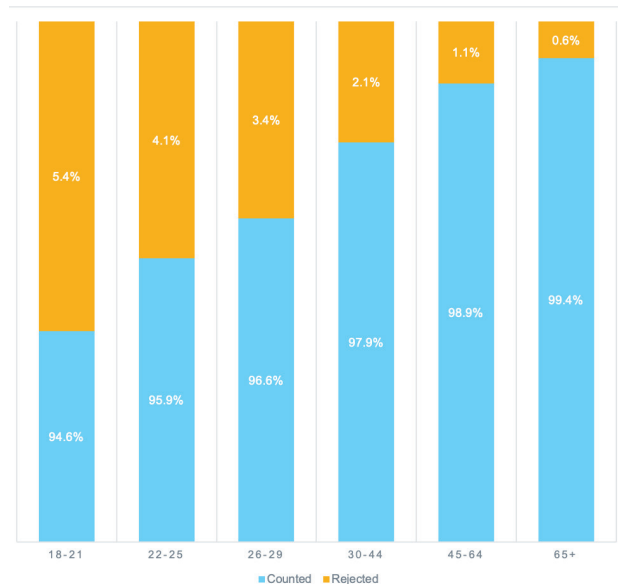
Analysis Of Vote-By-Mail Ballots in the 2018 General Election

Dr. Daniel A. Smith & Anna Baringer
University of Florida

*This is a summary.
The full report is available at www.acluf.org/publications/letfloridavote*

Nearly one third of Floridians vote by mail. These voters are more likely to not have their vote count than those who vote in person. Despite implementing reforms to allow voters the opportunity to address any issues with their vote-by-mail (VBM)

ballot,¹² the state rejected a higher percentage of VBM ballots in 2018 than in prior years. Ultimately, more than 32,000 voters mailed in their ballot in 2018, only to have their votes thrown out.



Demographics of Rejection

VBM rejection rates varied considerably by age and race. Voters who are older and white were more than twice as likely to have their VBM ballots counted than younger voters or those of color. **Such disparities increased in 2018.**

- » The youngest cohort, 18 to 21 year olds, saw 5.4% of their VBM ballots rejected.

¹² See ch. 2017-45, L.O.F., 2017 HB 105.

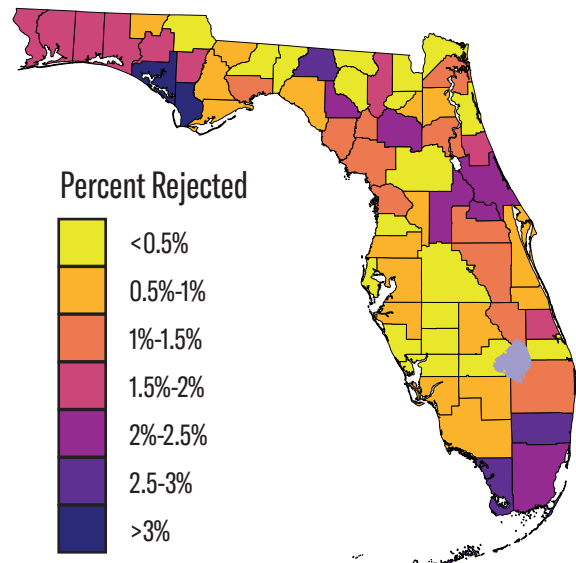
- » Among the 133,000 first-time voters who decided to vote by mail, 4,137 (3.1%) did not have their vote counted.
- » Although 18 to 29 year olds comprised only 2.1% of all those who voted by mail, they accounted for 9.2% of those whose VBM ballot was rejected.
- » The 2018 VBM rejection rates varied from a low of 0.6% of ballots from those 65-104 years of age to 5.4% of ballots from 18-21 year olds.
- » Rejection rates increased for every age cohort in 2018.
- » Rejection rates varied by race, with 0.9% of VBM ballots cast by white voters rejected and 2% of ballots from voters of color rejected.
- » Although voters of color cast less than 28% of VBM ballots, they accounted for 47% of rejected VBM ballots.

Voting Access by Geography

The rejection rates of VBM ballots cast in the 2018 general election, as in the 2016 and 2012 general elections, varied considerably across the state's 67 counties.

Three counties, **Baker**, **Hamilton** and **Jefferson**, rejected no VBM ballots. Ten counties rejected more than 2% of the VBM ballots they received: **Alachua** (736 rejected ballots), **Bay** (373), **Broward** (5,471), **Miami-Dade** (6,404), **Gulf** (40), **Madison** (33), **Monroe** (357), **Seminole** (1,217), and **Volusia** (1,960).

Voters of color were more likely to have their VBM ballot rejected in nearly every county, but the size of that disparity varied. **Collier County** had the highest disparity between the VBM rejection rates of Black and white voters, with white VBM ballots more than six times as likely to be counted, while **Marion County** Hispanic voters saw their ballots rejected more than four times as often as their white neighbors.





Vote by Mail Ballot Rejection Rates

	County	Black Voters	Hispanic Voters	White Voters	Overall Rate	Rejected Votes
	Volusia	4.4%	5.0%	2.0%	2.4%	1,960
	Lee	2.1%	1.7%	0.7%	0.8%	1,262
	Collier	3.9%	1.4%	0.6%	0.7%	428
	Manatee	1.4%	1.4%	0.5%	0.9%	386
Large	Pasco	1.0%	1.3%	0.4%	0.5%	365
	Alachua	3.0%	4.3%	1.8%	2.3%	736
	Bay	4.6%	4.9%	2.8%	3.0%	373
Mid-Size	Flagler	2.7%	3.5%	1.4%	1.7%	246
	Hernando	0.9%	1.0%	0.3%	0.4%	140
	Highlands	2.3%	1.2%	0.5%	0.7%	79
Small	Madison	4.6%	0	1.9%	2.7%	33

Younger voters in nearly every county were more likely to have their VBM ballot rejected. Despite a statewide rejection rate of more than 5% for younger voters, every 18 to 21 year old voting by mail in **Baker, DeSoto, Gadsden, Glades, Hamilton, Hardee, Jackson, Jefferson, Marion, Nassau, Suwannee, and Union** counties had their vote counted

Highest rejection rates for 18 to 21 year olds voting by mail:

- » **Broward County** rejected more than 11% – more than 500 ballots rejected.
- » **Miami-Dade County** rejected more than 9% - nearly 600 ballots rejected.
- » **Alachua County** rejected 8%, more than three times higher than the county's overall VBM rejection rate of 2.3%.

In 43 counties, 18 to 21 year olds were more than 2.5 times as likely to have their VBM ballot rejected as others.

Rejection of Uniformed and Overseas Civilians

The age and race disparities extend to VBM ballots returned by active duty service members, their families, and civilians living overseas, who enjoy ballot protections under the Uniformed and Overseas Civilian Absentee Voting Act of 1986 (UOCAVA). This law requires states to allow such voters to vote absentee.

In the 2018 General Election, 59,478 UOCAVA voters returned their ballot; nearly 2,000 did not have their vote counted.

This is especially troubling as nearly half of registered UOCAVA voters held legal residence in Florida, California and Washington. Florida has the most UOCAVA voters, 146,343, with 65.6% uniformed service members.¹³

Ballot Delivery Timing and Rejection Rates

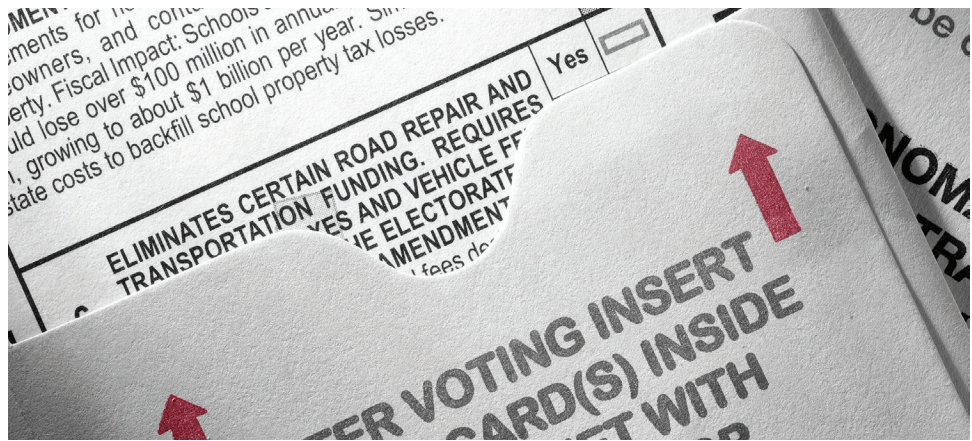
Under federal law, states must mail ballots to UOCAVA voters no later than 45 days before a federal election.¹⁴ Under Florida law, supervisors of elections (SOEs) must send a ballot within two business days of receiving a request.¹⁵

Despite these deadlines, it appears only 63.2% of UOCAVA voters who requested absentee ballots had their ballots delivered before September 22, 2018, 45 days before Election Day. While voters generally have to return their VBM ballot by Election Day to be counted, federal law allows UOCAVA up to 10 days after the election for their ballot to be received by the SOE. In the 2018 General Election, rejection rates for returned UOCAVA ballots fluctuated between 3 and 12 percent delivered fewer than 10 days before the election.

¹³ U.S. Election Assistance Commission, Election Administration and Voting Survey, 2018 Comprehensive Report (2018 EAVS Report), p. 86 (2019).

¹⁴ Military and Overseas Voter Empowerment Act (MOVE)

¹⁵ Fla. Stat. s. 101.62(4)(b).



Given the extra layer of federal VBM protections, it is surprising that UOCAVA ballots were rejected at more than double the rate than general VBM ballots

Best Practices: Curing Rejected VBM Ballots

Pinellas County, under Supervisor of Elections Deborah Clark, has led the way on processing VBM ballots. The detailed records that her office provided on the VBM ballots it received in the 2018 general election, including VBM ballots her staff initially flagged as having a mismatched voter's certificate on the envelope, as well as mismatched VBM ballots that were successfully cured by voters, offers a window into the "best practices" that other SOEs could follow to help remedy problematic VBM ballots.

Pinellas County ultimately rejected only 288 of slightly more than 241,000 VBM ballots – that's 0.12 percent – a tenth of the statewide average rejection rate.

Initially, roughly 600 VBM ballots were flagged by staff for signature mismatches. Of those, the Pinellas County Canvassing Board accepted 338 VBM ballots (56.5%) without requiring voter action. Of the remaining ballots, 200 voters (33.4%) successfully cured their signatures by submitting proper ID and a signed affidavit. Only 60 of the VBM ballots (10%) were ultimately rejected for signature mismatch.

An additional 340 voters returned their VBM ballot with no signature at all. Of these, 178 (52.3%) cured the ballot with a signed affidavit.

Even with this multi-step signature matching and curing process, voters of color saw their VBM ballots ultimately rejected disproportionately. While 44.6% of white voters whose ballot had been flagged ultimately cured the deficiency and had their vote counted, only 30.7% of Black voters and 30.5% of Hispanic voters cured their ballot. Similarly, cure rates varied depending on age, with voters age 45 or older more likely to cure their ballot.

Early Voting Access

Overview

Nearly a third of Floridians cast their ballot early – before Election Day, at an early voting location rather than their assigned precinct voting site. This is higher than the national average of 22% and also increased more than 10 percentage points since the 2014 elections.

Each supervisor of election decides what early voting will look like in their county. Florida law requires a minimum of 8 hours a day for 8 days, but county Supervisors of Elections can offer it for up to 14 days and some offer up to 12 hours per day. Longer hours and more days give voters more opportunities to cast their ballot while juggling their other responsibilities.

Early voting gives responsible Americans across the country the ability to have their voice heard, even if they can't make it to the polls on Election Day.

Supervisors of Election also get to choose how many early voting locations will be offered and where they will be in the county. There are state limits here too: they have to have at least as many locations as there were in the 2012 General Election, early voting has to be offered

at their office, and they have to use one of a list of specified location types, mostly public buildings. They each get one ‘wildcard’ location as well, in case a public building is not available. A restricted number of locations can lead to longer waits and travel times. Fewer locations also make choosing locations that are equally accessible by all of the county’s voters more important – and more difficult.

EARLY VOTING ACCESS

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

- » Must be offered at Supervisor of Election’s main or branch office.
- » Must be offered from 10 days before election through 3 days before election for 8 hours each day. May be offered from the 15th day before election through the 2nd day before election.
- » May also be offered at a city hall, permanent public library facility, fairground, civic center, courthouse, county commission building, stadium, convention center, government-owned senior center, or government-owned community center.
- » May be offered at a wildcard location in an area that doesn’t have any of the required building types. Such wildcard locations must be geographically located to allow equal access and provide sufficient nonpermitted parking.
- » Must be designated no later than 30th day before election

Considerations

- » Demand: How do early voting options and turnout compare to similar counties? What are wait times? Early voting has been growing in popularity, so if participation hasn’t increased locally, ask why?
- » Resources: What is the election administration budget? Is it being sufficiently prioritized?

Recommendations

- » Make early voting available for the entire period allowed by Florida law at as many locations as can be staffed to reduce the potential for crowds. Early voting should be available at enough locations, for long enough, that the county has no more than 300 voters per hour of early voting.
- » Ensure early voting locations are accessible to all.

- Black voters are most likely to vote early (45% did so in the 2018 General Election), as are voters between 45 and 64 years old (36% in 2018 General). Neighborhoods and business districts reflecting these demographics should have early voting sites to ensure access.
- Use college campuses as early voting sites to promote youth participation.
- » Prioritize keeping early voting open through the Sunday before the election.
- » Ensure SOE staff is accessible to voters on the weekends during early voting period, either in the office or by phone.



Early Voting Access in the 2018 General Election

The more election administrators can remove barriers and reduce the cost of voting, the more people can and will vote. Local SOEs vary in their approaches to early voting, with some prioritizing more locations, while others offer longer early voting periods or hours.

In the 2018 General Election, there were 367 early voting locations – an average of one for every 36,180 registered voters. Early voting was available for a total of 44,560 hours in the state – compared to the number of registered voters in Florida, that is 298 registered voters per hour of early voting. This varied substantially across the state. The availability of early voting was significantly correlated with the percentage of voters casting their ballots early: **as the number of registered voters per hour of early voting in the county increased, the percentage of voters casting their ballots early decreased.** This was especially true in larger counties.

Among larger counties, **Escambia County** offered early voting at nine locations for 13 days for a total of 1,170 hours – 182 registered voters per hour of available early voting. Yet, **Pinellas County** offered early

voting at only five locations for the full 14 days of early voting for a total of 840 hours – expecting to serve 794 registered voters for each hour of available early voting. The average number of registered voters per early voting hour in large counties was 372.

Mid-size counties averaged 267 registered voters per early voting hour, with the most early voting availability in **Sumter County**, which offered six locations for 12 days for a total of 648 hours – 149 registered voters per hour. **Hernando** and **Citrus** counties, on the other hand, offered early voting at a rate of 380 registered voters per hour.

Taylor	Madison		Pinellas	Orange
12,142	11,840	Registered Voters	666,876	798,373
1	4	Early Voting Locations	5	16
13	8	Early Voting Days	14	14
156	266	Total Hours	840	2,240
28.5%	42.9%	Percent Early Votes	12.5%	37.1%
65.8%	67.3%	Turnout	65.9%	60%

Among their like-sized peer counties, two stand out in their approach to early voting. **Madison County** offered the highest density of early voting locations with its four early voting locations, one for each 2,960 registered voters. But it only offered early voting during the mandatory period and for limited hours. **Pinellas County**, on the other hand, offered five early voting locations for a population more than 50 times as large – meaning there is one early voting location in Pinellas County for every 133,366 registered voters. But its early voting locations were open from 7 am to 7 pm daily for the entire two-week period of early voting. The result is only 12.5% of those who voted in Pinellas County voted early. It is important to note that Pinellas County has emphasized vote-by-mail, with 50.4% of its 2018 General Election voters voting by mail.

Ultimately, what matters is that enough early voting is available that voters can vote without missing work or incurring unnecessary child-care expenses. The fact that Black voters are the one demographic most likely to vote early makes limiting early voting availability especially troubling. Our state, and nation, has a record of disenfranchising our Black neighbors that it has yet to remedy. Expansive early voting is a relatively small step that would effectively ensure our democracy benefits from participation of all our citizens.



Where Early Voting is Held

Every Supervisor of Elections' main office must host early voting. Every county must also offer early voting at least as many locations as it did in the 2012 General Election.

In 2018, most of the state's 367 early voting locations were public libraries (145), followed by community centers (69), civic centers (21), city halls (15) and county commission buildings (13). In addition, 17 wild-card locations were used: (4) churches, (2) universities, a country club in **St. Johns County**, a **Madison County** fire department, a reception hall in **Lake County**, a skating rink in **Pasco County**, and a museum in **Polk County**.

Equity in Polling Places

Overview

While Florida law sets some limits and requirements, supervisors of elections ultimately decide where voting happens and have great influence on how many precincts a county has.

Supervisors of elections' decisions about where polling places are located and the number of precincts and polling places impact how many people, and who, votes on Election Day. Research has shown that voters are less likely to vote the further they must travel to their polling place, with estimates of 2%-5% reductions in turnout for every quarter mile increase. Factoring in other costs results in even higher rates of voter suppression.¹⁶

Reducing the number of polling locations likewise has been shown to reduce turnout, with one study finding a consolidation resulted in a 3% reduction.¹⁷ What sort of location is used for voting also matters. Voting in churches has been shown to influence voter choice on same-sex marriage, anti-abortion and other referenda on social issues¹⁸, while voting in schools seems to be related to increased support for school funding measures.¹⁹

16 Enrico Cantoni, *A Precinct Too Far: Turnout and Voting Costs*, *AMERICAN ECONOMIC JOURNAL: APPLIED ECONOMICS*, 12 (1): 61-85 (2020). See also John Gibson, et al, *Time to Vote?*, *Public Choice*, Vol. 156, No. 3/4 (2013).

17 Henry E. Brady & John E. McNulty, *Turning Out to Vote: The Costs of Finding and Getting to the Polling Place*, *THE AMERICAN POLITICAL SCIENCE REVIEW* 105:115-134 (2011).

18 Jordan P. LaBouff, Wade C. Rowatt, Megan K. Johnson, & Callie Finkle, *Differences in Attitudes towards Outgroups in Religious and Non-Religious Contexts in a Multi-National Sample: A Situational Context Priming Study*, *INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL FOR THE PSYCHOLOGY OF RELIGION* 22:1-9 (2012). *PSYCHOLOGY OF RELIGION* 22:1-9 (2012).

19 Jonah Berger, Marc Meredith & S. Christian Wheeler, *Contextual priming: Where people vote affects how they votes*, *PNAS* 105(26):8846-8849 (2008).

EQUITY IN POLLING PLACES

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

Polling Places

- » Public, tax-supported buildings must be available for use as polling places at request of supervisor of elections.
- » Can only be moved more than 30 days before election.
- » Must be within, or contiguous to, precinct.
- » If a polling place is moved, notice must be mailed to each voter at least 14 days before the election. Public notice in the newspaper and on the supervisor of election website must be posted between 30 days and 7 days before the election.

Precincts

- » Board of county commissioners decides, upon recommendation and approval of local supervisor of elections.
- » Must be contiguous and compact.
- » Cannot be changed without consent of supervisor of elections and a majority of county commissioners.

Recommendations

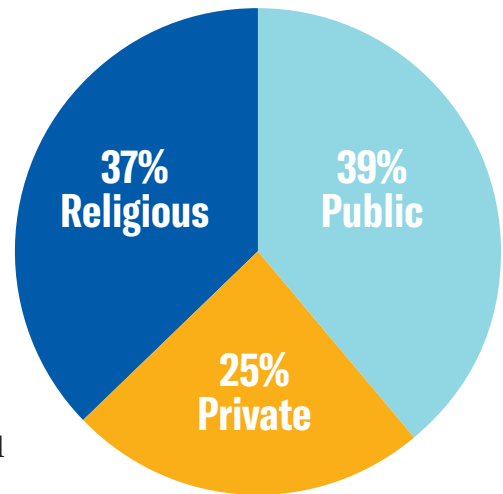
- » Equitably balance the number of eligible voters in each precinct.
- » Make sure there is an equitable number of voting machines and booths in each polling place.
- » Make any decision to move or close a polling location transparently, with public notice and invitation for public comment.
- » Prioritize the use of sites authorized for early voting.
- » Choose centrally located polling places.
- » Choose polling places that are easy to find and get in and out of quickly.
- » Review wait times to identify overburdened or under-resourced precinct and polling locations.
- » Replace polling places that require passing through gates and/or heightened security protocols not expected with voting.
- » Prohibit polling places from posting propaganda near voting areas.

Polling Place Equity in the 2018 General Election

Where We Vote

In the 2018 General Election, most polling locations, 59%, were private buildings. More than a third were religious buildings. Only 41% of polling locations were public, with small counties using public buildings 45% of the time.

Ultimately, 40% of Florida voters are assigned to vote in religious buildings, with another 22% assigned to other private buildings. Voters must feel welcome and comfortable voting in these facilities. Local supervisors of elections must ensure that polling locations allow unencumbered public access and do not display propaganda in polling rooms that could influence or offend voters. They must also ensure public funds are not wasted on private facilities when public buildings are made available for voting by Florida law.



Ten large counties used religious sites for more than half their polling locations, with **Lee**, **Leon** and **Polk** counties relying on them most heavily. By contrast, only four large counties used public buildings for more than half their polling locations: **Osceola**, **Miami-Dade**, **Broward** and **Palm Beach**. **Pasco County** was the only large county that used private buildings more often than both religious and public buildings, while only 10% of **Miami-Dade's** polling locations were private, non-religious buildings.

Of the mid-size and rural counties, **Okaloosa**, **Hernando** and **Santa Rosa** counties relied heavily on religious locations. **Sumter**, **Flagler** and **Charlotte** counties used mostly public buildings.

Nearly half of the state's small counties used public buildings for polling locations at least half of the time. Notably, **Bradford County** was the only county in the state that did not use a public building as a polling location – 10 of its 14 polling locations were religious buildings.

Election administrators should examine local voter turnout trends and voter feedback to ensure the locations used for voting are accessible by all.



Precinct Density

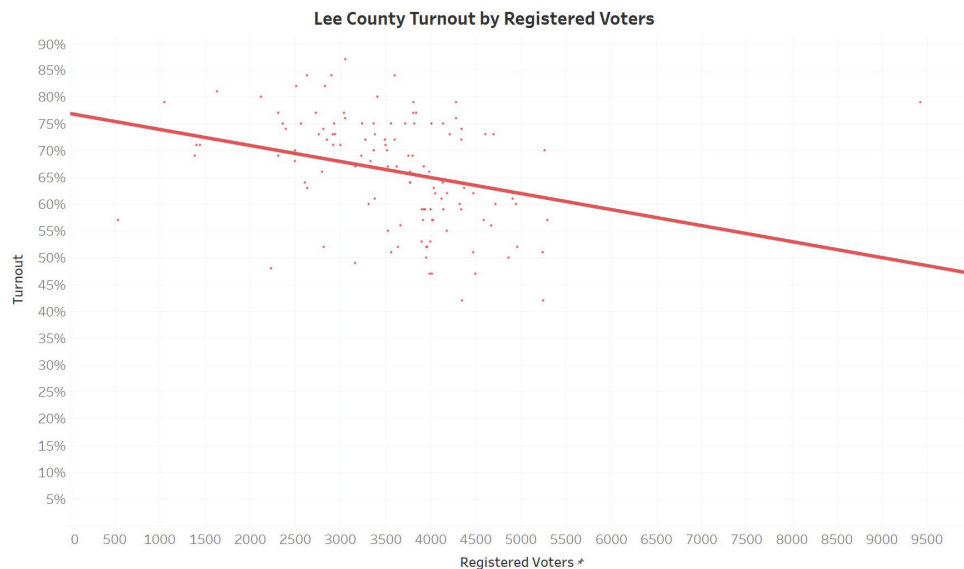
Previous research has identified disparities in the time voters wait to vote. One reason for longer waits can be that the precinct is too large – too many people are assigned to the same polling location. Such crowded facilities effectively suppress voting by increasing the cost of voting in the form of lost time, lost wages, and increased caregiver expenses. During the current pandemic, such crowds will further suppress voting as people weigh the risk of infection.

An average of 2,258 active registered voters were assigned to precincts in Florida during the 2018 General Election, with an average 500 votes cast at each precinct. Multiple precincts are sometimes assigned to the same polling place. Large counties assigned an average 2,232 registered people per polling location, while precincts in small counties averaged 1,467 active registered voters. Mid-size counties averaged the largest precinct size at 3,138.

- » In large counties, average precinct size varied from 1,182 registered voters per precinct in **Palm Beach County** to 3,796 per precinct in **Seminole County**.
- » In mid-size and rural counties, average precinct size varied from 2,082 per precinct in **Charlotte County** to 4,183 in **Hernando County**.
- » Small counties had the greatest variety, with a low of an average 522 registered voters per precinct in **Glades County** to a high of 4,453 per precinct in **Nassau County**.

The highest number of people assigned to a single polling place was the mid-sized **Indian River County**, where 13,415 registered voters were assigned to vote at the Intergeneration Recreation Center in Vero Beach. Ultimately, 3,139 voted on election day in the precinct, six times the state average. Within counties, there was much variety in precinct size.

Average Precinct in County				Largest Precincts		
	County	Registered Voters	Election Day Voters	Location	Registered Voters	Election Day Voters
Large	Pasco	3,200	796	Heritage Springs Clubhouse	8,974	2,385
	Sarasota	3,216	725	Sarasota Baptist Church	8,200	2,186
	Brevard	2,593	686	Moose Lodge #2073	6,671	2,106
	Escambia	2,696	719	Beulah Free Will Baptist Chrch	6,869	2,099
	Brevard	2,593	686	Veterans Memorial Complex	10,436	2,077
Mid-size	Indian River	3,151	705	Intergenerational Rec. Center	13,415	3,139
	St. Johns	4,068	1,017	St. Francis in the Field	10,411	2,728
	Santa Rosa	3,228	825	St. Sylvester's Catholic Chrch	11,096	2,349
Small	Walton	2,393	648	Good News U.M.C.	8,433	2,190
	Walton	2,393	648	Faith Assembly Church	9,679	2,021
	Highlands	2,371	631	Bible Fellowship Church	5,655	1,453



Statewide, the impact of the precinct size on overall turnout in the 2018 General Election negligible, but precinct size did appear to have a significant impact in some counties. A simple linear regression was calculated, by county, to predict turnout based on the number of registered voters assigned to a precinct. For example, in **Lee County**, a

significant relationship ($p < .001$) could explain about 10% of the variation in turnout ($r^2 = .100$), with larger precincts having lower turnout rates. However, in several smaller counties, the reverse was often true, with larger precincts having higher turnout rates.

Impact of Precinct Size on Turnout				
	County	Pearson Coefficient	P-value	R ²
Large	Lee	-.317	<.001	.100
	Lake	-.297	.002	.088
	Orange	-.160	.012	.026
	Alachua	-.312	.012	.097
	Charlotte	.271	.027	.073
Mid-size	Sumter	.484	.012	.235
Small	Lafayette	.935	.019	.874
	Madison	-.842	.001	.709
	Franklin	-.821	.012	.674

Ensure Access for All

Ballot Design

Several times over the last two decades, Florida has been in the headlines for ballot designs that thwarted voters' intent in close elections. While the Legislature has passed laws introducing some parameters and litigation has provided more, supervisors of elections should collaborate on basic, uniform design guidelines that are tested to ensure broad understandability.

Recommendations

- » Conduct focus groups to test ballot design and voter education materials to ensure they are understandable to diverse voters.
- » Instructions should be printed across the top.
- » All candidates for the same office should be listed on the same page and in the same column.
- » Ensure sample ballots match actual ballots.
- » Avoid all capital letters, centered text, small font sizes,
- » Use sans-serif fonts, such as Arial, Helvetica, or Clearview ADA, and stick to one font.
- » Write materials at the seventh grade level.
- » Allow nonpartisan organizations to review ballots before printing.

Accessibility

One in five voters has a disability. To ensure they can vote, Federal and state laws require voter registration and voting be accessible for people with disabilities:

- » A voter can have anyone, other than the voter's employer or union, help them vote. The Supervisor of Elections must also provide staff to help. Getting help at the polls does require an extra form, but staff can assist filling out the necessary paperwork.
- » Every polling location has to have a touch screen or other accessible device for marking ballots.
- » When voting by mail, a voter can have anyone, aside from their employer or union, help them complete the ballot.
- » Supervisors of Elections must offer supervised voting at assisted living facilities for groups of more than four at the request of the facility's administrator and can do so without a request.
- » Polling places must be accessible. The federal VOTE program provides grants to counties to help make polling places accessible.

Breaking Language Barriers

Federal law requires all election material available in English also be available in Spanish throughout Florida. Several counties are also subject to the requirement for locally produced materials – according to a recent court case, 32 of Florida's counties must do so.²⁰

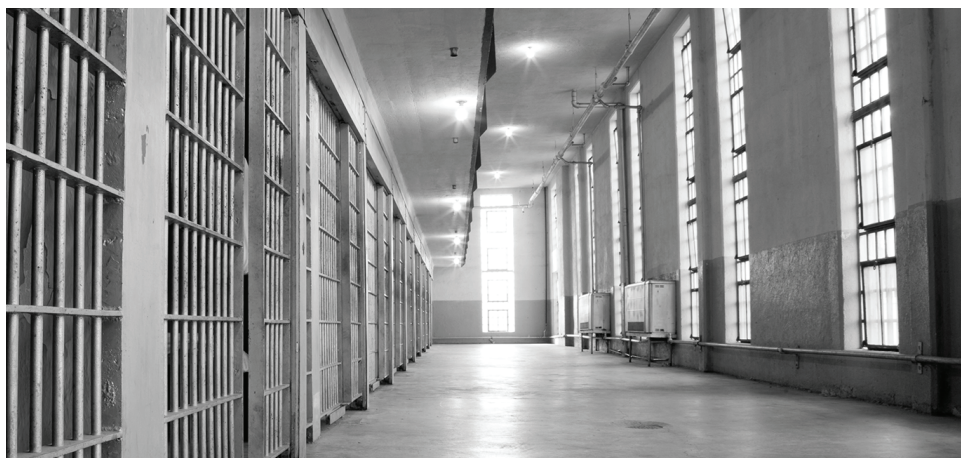
The Florida Department of State is adopting rules requiring Spanish-language ballots and materials in every county. The ballot must also be available in other languages, as required by federal law or court order. Supervisors of election have discretion to offer other translations.²¹

Recommendations

- » Staff offices and/or polling locations with bilingual staff or volunteers.
- » Provide language assistance hotlines.
- » Provide signage, materials and forms in Spanish and other frequently spoken languages in the community.
- » Work with community groups to ensure appropriate language voter education is available.

²⁰ *Rivera Madera v. Lee*, 1:18-CV-152-MW/GRJ, 2019 WL 2077037 (N.D. Fla. May 10, 2019).

²¹ See Rules 1S-2.032 and 1S-2.034 F.A.C., available at www.flrules.org.



Voting From Jail

Each election, there are a number of Floridians eligible to vote who are confined to jail. During the November 2018 General Election, more than 55,000 people were in Florida jails. Only 22% were in jail due to felony convictions.²² More than half were awaiting trial – innocent until proven guilty. In some counties, more than 90% of their jail population was awaiting trial.

These Floridians are eligible to register to vote by mail but going through that process can be difficult.²³

Recommendations

- » Visit the county jail regularly to ensure open communication and ease administration with jail administration.
- » Visit the jail to pick up VBM ballots.
- » Negotiate processes and policies with jail administrators to ensure voting access.
- » Provide educational materials, signage, necessary forms, and postage-paid return envelopes for ballots including at an Election Information Kiosk within the jail.

Potential Allies & Resources

Voting in Jail: An Organizer's Toolkit

www.acluohio.org/jailvoting

The ACLU of Ohio has published a toolkit to use in registration drives and advocacy.

²² Fla. Dept. of Corrections, *Florida County Detention Facilities Average Inmate Population*, November 2018.

²³ Fla. Op. Atty. Gen., 075-187, July 3, 1975. *See also O'Brien v. Skinner*, 414 U.S. 524 (1974).

Voting While Homeless

On an average day in January 2019, 28,591 Floridians were experiencing homelessness. Many are eligible to vote but face significant barriers. They may not have an address and assume that they cannot vote or register without one. They may not have access to transportation to their polling place.

Recommendations

- » Develop relationships with homeless shelters and service providers to ensure those experiencing homelessness have access to voter education and necessary forms.
- » Ensure early voting and polling locations are placed in communities accessible to those experiencing homelessness who may not have personal transportation.
- » Provide postage-paid return envelopes for vote-by-mail ballots and/or pick up ballots from shelters.
- » Provide forms, flyers, signage and guides for distribution.

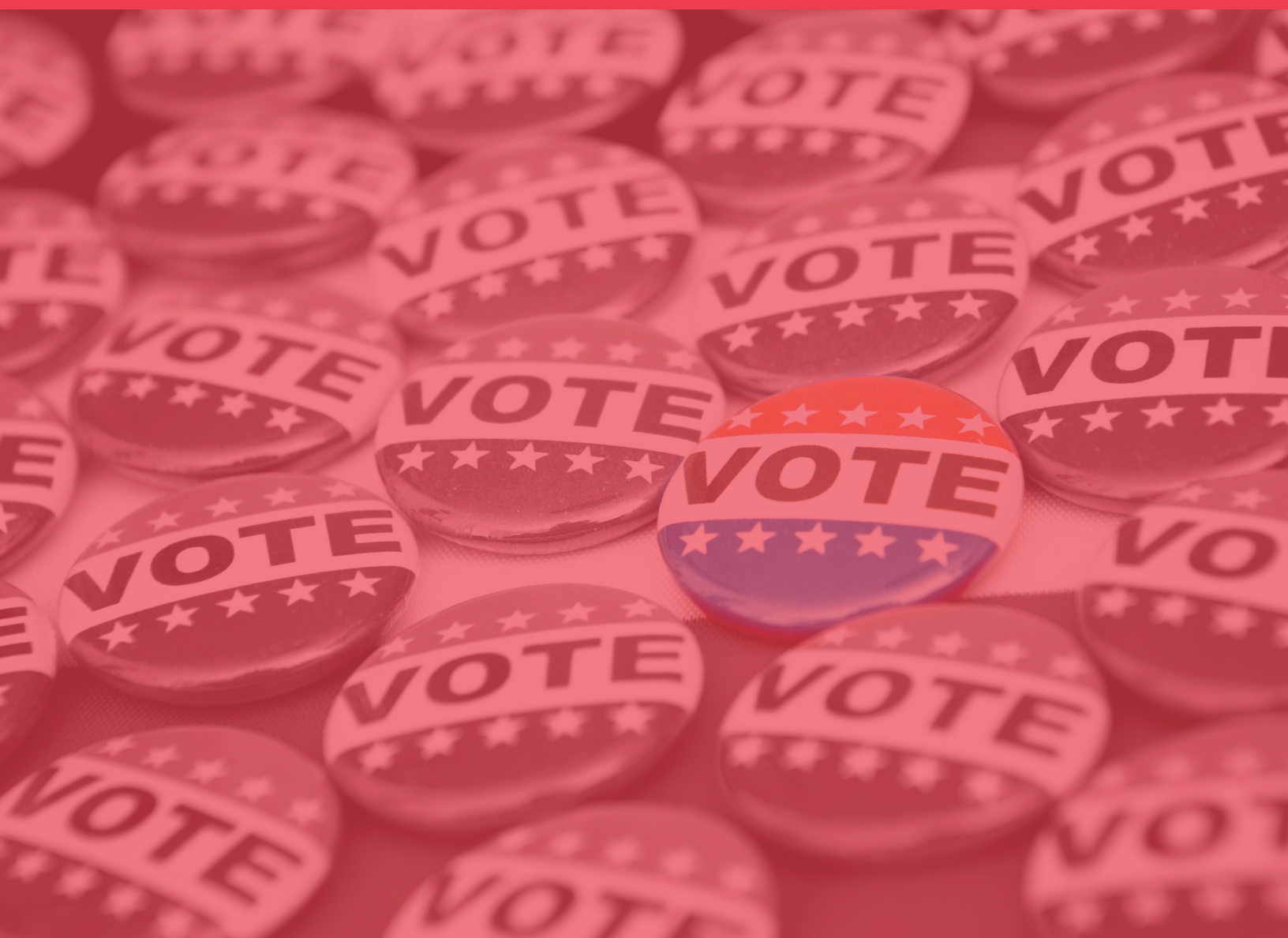
Potential Allies & Resources

National Coalition for the Homeless
www.nationalhomeless.org

[You Don't Need a Home to Vote Campaign](#)

promotes voter access for low income and homeless persons. It publishes resources to use in registration drives and advocacy.

Resources



Recent Developments in Election Administration Law

Election Calendar

In 2018, the Florida Legislature pushed the primary election date back by one week to allow more time for election preparations. Primary elections are now held 11 weeks before general elections.²⁴ Other dates, like qualifying periods and vote-by mail deadlines, have also changed.

Ballot Design

The U.S. District Court of the Northern District of Florida ruled a law requiring candidates from the Governor's party be listed first on the ballot is unconstitutional.²⁵ It is unclear how local supervisors of election will implement this. Some have suggested rotating the party order, while others have suggested listing candidates in alphabetical order.

In 2018, the Florida Legislature passed a law requiring ballot instructions be either centered across the top or in the leftmost column of the ballot and that all vote targets be ovals.²⁶

²⁴ Fla. Stat. § 100.061.

²⁵ *Jacobson v. Lee*, 4:18CV262-MW/CAS, 2019 WL 6044035 (N.D. Fla. Nov. 15, 2019) (finding Fla. Stat. § 101.151(2)(a) unconstitutionally burdened First and Fourteenth Amendment rights).

²⁶ Fla. Stat. § 101.151.

Foreign Languages

The Florida Department of State is adopting rules requiring Spanish-language ballots and materials in every county following a court ruling requiring local supervisors of elections in 32 counties to produce local election materials in Spanish.²⁷ The ballot must also be available in other languages, as required by federal law or court order. Supervisors of elections have discretion to offer other translations.²⁸

Vote By Mail

In 2018, the Florida Legislature revised vote by mail by:

- » Increasing the time available for processing VBM ballots from 15 days to 22 days before the election.
- » Requiring drop boxes for VBM ballots at early voting sites and SOE main and branch offices and requiring VBM instructions include drop-off locations.
- » Allowing voters to update their signature on file until a VBM ballot is received.

Significant changes were made to the signature match and cure process for both VBM and provisional ballots:

- » VBM and provisional ballots may only be rejected if the Canvassing Board finds that the VBM signature does not match the signature of record **beyond a reasonable doubt**.
- » The SOE must notify the voter **as soon as practicable** by first-class mail and by either email, text message or telephone.
- » To have their vote counted, a voter whose ballot has been rejected for signature mismatch must submit identification and a **cure affidavit by 5 p.m. the second day after the election**.

See discussion of vote by mail at [page 14](#) for more on current timelines and requirements.

Early Voting On Campuses

In April 2020, the State agreed to fully allow early voting on university campuses under a settlement in a lawsuit brought by the League of Women Voters.²⁹ Secretary of State Laurel M. Lee advised supervisors of elections that Florida law should be read to allow placing early voting sites on college campuses “consistent with the purpose of each county having a network ... of early voting sites placed ... to provide all voters ... an equal opportunity to cast a ballot.”³⁰

²⁷ *Rivera Madera v. Lee*, 1:18-CV-152-MW/GRJ, 2019 WL 2077037 (N.D. Fla. May 10, 2019).

²⁸ See Rules 1S-2.032 and 1S-2.034 F.A.C., available at www.flrules.org.

²⁹ Scott Powers, Early-voting lawsuit settled; elections supervisors can set-up early voting on college campuses, Florida Politics (April 3, 2020).

³⁰ Fla. Secretary of State Laurel M Lee, Directive 2020-01 (April 2, 2020).



Voting Technology

In 2018, the Florida Legislature required all votes be tabulated based on an electronic scan of a voter verifiable paper ballot. Because all voting equipment will need to meet the same accessibility requirements, voters with and without disabilities will now be using the same systems. Four counties, Glades, Jefferson, Miami-Dade and Palm Beach, were the only counties not already using compliant systems, and they have since adopted compliant systems.³¹

LOCAL VOTING RIGHTS ADVOCACY 101

WHY LOCAL

While national, or even state, voting rights issues get a lot of news coverage, many important decisions impacting your right to vote happen right in your community. Your Supervisor of Elections, who is an elected official, decides where you will vote, when you can vote early, who will help you on election day and how they will be trained, how your signature on your vote-by-mail ballot will be validated and just how much assistance you will be able to get navigating the voting process. For some populations, such as the elderly, those with disabilities, college students and others who move often, those without a permanent address or those held in jail, these decisions can result in insurmountable obstacles.

WHERE TO START

While many specifics will depend on the practices and political climate in your county, this roadmap can shed some light on your path.

Step 1. Research.

Use this report and other resources to understand voting access and identify the issues most important to you and your community. Take some time to research how the issue plays out in your community and understand local relationships and stakeholders. Visit the Florida Department of State's Division of Elections website, <https://dos.myflorida.com/elections>, to find your local supervisor of election and their website, which should be a good starting place for your research.

Step 2. Gather allies.

It is important to build a coalition of allies who can meet regularly to plan your voting access advocacy campaign. Identify organizations working on civil rights, elections and similar issues, in your community, many of whom are identified in this report. Reach out to them and other sympathetic organizations that could help. Be sure to include faith leaders, business leaders, those with political connections or influence, and those impacted by existing barriers to voting in your working group.

Step 3. Prioritize and plan.

Within your working group, agree on a goal, strategy, and roles. What policy do you want adopted locally? Who is impacted by this policy? Who would oppose a change? What influence do people in your group, or their acquaintances, have with key policymakers and stakeholders?

Step 4. Develop your message.

Once your goal and path are set, develop a set of talking points to clearly convey your message to leaders, community members, and media. Partner organizations can help. Let these talking points guide your policy conversations to keep you focused on your goal.

Step 5. Build local relationships.

Schedule a meeting with your Supervisor of Elections to share your concerns and ask for the specific policy change(s). Be collaborative, but firm. Come with solutions but be open to their experience. You can also host a public forum, especially during election season, and ask the supervisor of elections, and any candidates, to attend. Be sure to invite local stakeholders, elected officials, community leaders, and media. Prepare questions ahead of time to highlight the importance of your policy goal. After each meeting or forum, regroup with your working group to plan the next round of advocacy.

Step 6. Get your message out.

Letters to the Editor, Editorials, news interviews and public forums are all great ways to engage and inform the public to grow support for your campaign.

ENSURE VOTES ARE COUNTED



Florida law requires votes be counted unless canvassing boards are convinced beyond a reasonable doubt that the VBM signature does not match the signature of record. Very few ballots should be rejected under this standard. Handwriting analysis is a profession, not a workshop.

Best Practices

Increase vote-by-mail participation

- » Include prepaid postage for VBM.
- » Launch a public education campaign to educate voters on VBM requirements.
- » Offer a voter assistance hotline.
- » Pick up VBM ballots at post office on election day.
- » Send reminders to those who have requested VBM ballots.
- » Offer online VBM tracking tools that incorporate text or email notifications.

Reduce unnecessary rejections

- » Incorporate computer-based signature matching software to reduce unnecessary rejections.
- » States that widely use vote-by-mail rely on computer-based signature matching and have very low reject rates.
- » Have a second review of VBM ballots that have been flagged for signature mismatch to correct false rejections.

2020 KEY DATES

PRIMARY

JULY 19

LAST DAY TO MOVE POLLING LOCATION

GENERAL

OCTOBER 4

LAST DAY TO MOVE POLLING LOCATION DAY TO REQUEST VBM BALLOT

AUGUST 20

DEADLINE TO CURE SIGNATURE MISMATCHES OR PROVISIONAL BALLOTS

GENERAL

SEPTEMBER 19

UOCAVA BALLOTS SENT

SEPTEMBER 24 – OCTOBER 1

VBM BALLOTS SENT

OCTOBER 12

VBM CANVASSING BEGINS

OCTOBER 24

LAST DAY TO REQUEST VBM BALLOT

NOVEMBER 5

DEADLINE TO CURE SIGNATURE MISMATCHES OR PROVISIONAL BALLOTS



Why?

- » Rejected VBM ballots hurt us all. Voter confidence is vital to continued civic engagement, and voters who choose to vote by mail already have less confidence that their vote counted. Having their ballot rejected confirms their fears.
- » Improves voting access for seniors, some disabled voters, and those with hectic schedules that make voting in person difficult.
 - 25% of Floridians who didn't vote cited schedule conflicts as the main reason they didn't vote in 2018.
 - 10% were out of town on election day.
- » Reduces strain on Election Day resources, resulting in shorter lines and easing stress on election officials, volunteers and voters.

But What About...



No budget for that

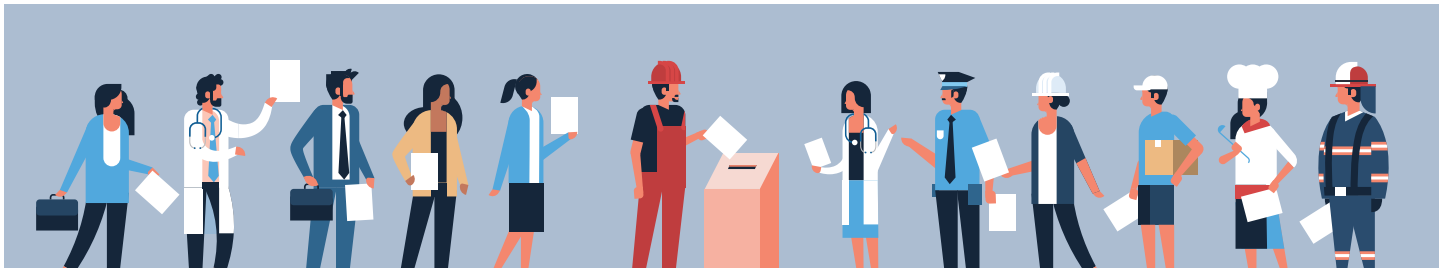
Similar counties are finding a way to make this work. Vote-by-mail relieves pressure on polling places on Election Day, reducing the need for additional polling locations. Have you asked the commission for more funding? What can the community do to help?



Personal Responsibility

Voting is a constitutional right, not a privilege. The State should do everything possible to make sure anyone who wants to vote, can vote, and can vote without paying the cost of missed work or additional childcare expenses.

EXPAND EARLY VOTING



Best Practices

- » Ensure early voting locations are accessible to all.
 - Prioritize communities where voters are most likely to vote early, such as Black neighborhoods and business districts.
 - Use college campuses as early voting sites to promote youth participation.
- » Offer enough early voting locations to prevent long wait times and offer non-business hours.
- » Prioritize keeping early voting open through the Sunday before the election.
 - Weekend voting has the highest use per hour, with Sunday being the highest.
- » Ensure SOE staff is accessible to voters on the weekends during early voting period, either in the office or by phone.

Early voting gives responsible Americans across the country the ability to have their voice heard, even if they can't make it to the polls on Election Day.

2020 KEY DATES

PRIMARY

JULY 19

DEADLINE FOR SOE TO DESIGNATE EARLY VOTING SITES

AUGUST 3

OPTIONAL EARLY VOTING PERIOD BEGINS

AUGUST 8 - AUGUST 15

MANDATORY EARLY VOTING PERIOD

AUGUST 16

OPTIONAL EARLY VOTING PERIOD

GENERAL

OCTOBER 4

DEADLINE FOR SOE TO DESIGNATE EARLY VOTING SITES

OCTOBER 19

OPTIONAL EARLY VOTING PERIOD BEGINS

OCTOBER 24 - OCTOBER 31

MANDATORY EARLY VOTING PERIOD

NOVEMBER 1

OPTIONAL EARLY VOTING PERIOD



Why?

- » Our democracy is stronger when every eligible voter can cast a vote.
- » Early voting makes voting more accessible for people for whom voting on election day is difficult.
 - 25% of Floridians who didn't vote cited schedule conflicts as the main reason they didn't vote in 2018.
 - 10% were out of town on election day.
- » Early voting relieves long lines on Election Day, easing stress on election officials, volunteers and voters.
- » Reduces the need for provisional ballots as voters can vote at any early voting location.
- » Early voting is increasing in popularity

But What About...



Staff needs a break

Other counties and businesses have learned to stagger workers in shifts so enough are available to cover new hours.



No budget for that

Similar counties are finding a way to make this work. Early voting relieves pressure on polling places on Election Day, reducing the need for additional polling locations. Have you asked the commission for more funding? What can the community do to help?



Sunday voting is anti-religious

Many churches have led the charge to increase access to the polls, organizing Souls to the Polls activities to encourage civic engagement. Jewish and Seventh-day Adventist voters celebrate the sabbath on Saturday.



Personal Responsibility

Voting is a constitutional right, not a privilege. The State should do everything possible to make sure anyone who wants to vote, can vote, and can vote without paying the cost of missed work or additional childcare expenses.

ENSURE EQUAL ACCESS TO POLLS



Best Practices

- » Ensure a transparent, highly publicized, decision to close or move any polling place.
- » Prioritize the use of sites authorized for early voting.
- » Choose polling places that are easy to find and get in and out of quickly.
- » Replace polling places that require passing through gates and/or heightened security protocols not expected with voting.
- » Review wait times to identify overburdened or under-resourced precinct and polling locations.
- » Ensure precincts have similar voting populations and polling places are centrally located.
- » Prohibit polling places from posting propaganda near the voting area.

2020 KEY DATES

PRIMARY

JULY 19

LAST DAY TO MOVE POLLING LOCATION

GENERAL

OCTOBER 4

LAST DAY TO MOVE POLLING LOCATION

Why?

- » Our democracy is stronger when every eligible voter can cast a vote.
- » Every voter should have an equal opportunity to vote.
- » Black voters, low-income voters and those living in more densely populated areas are more likely to wait, and wait longer, to vote.

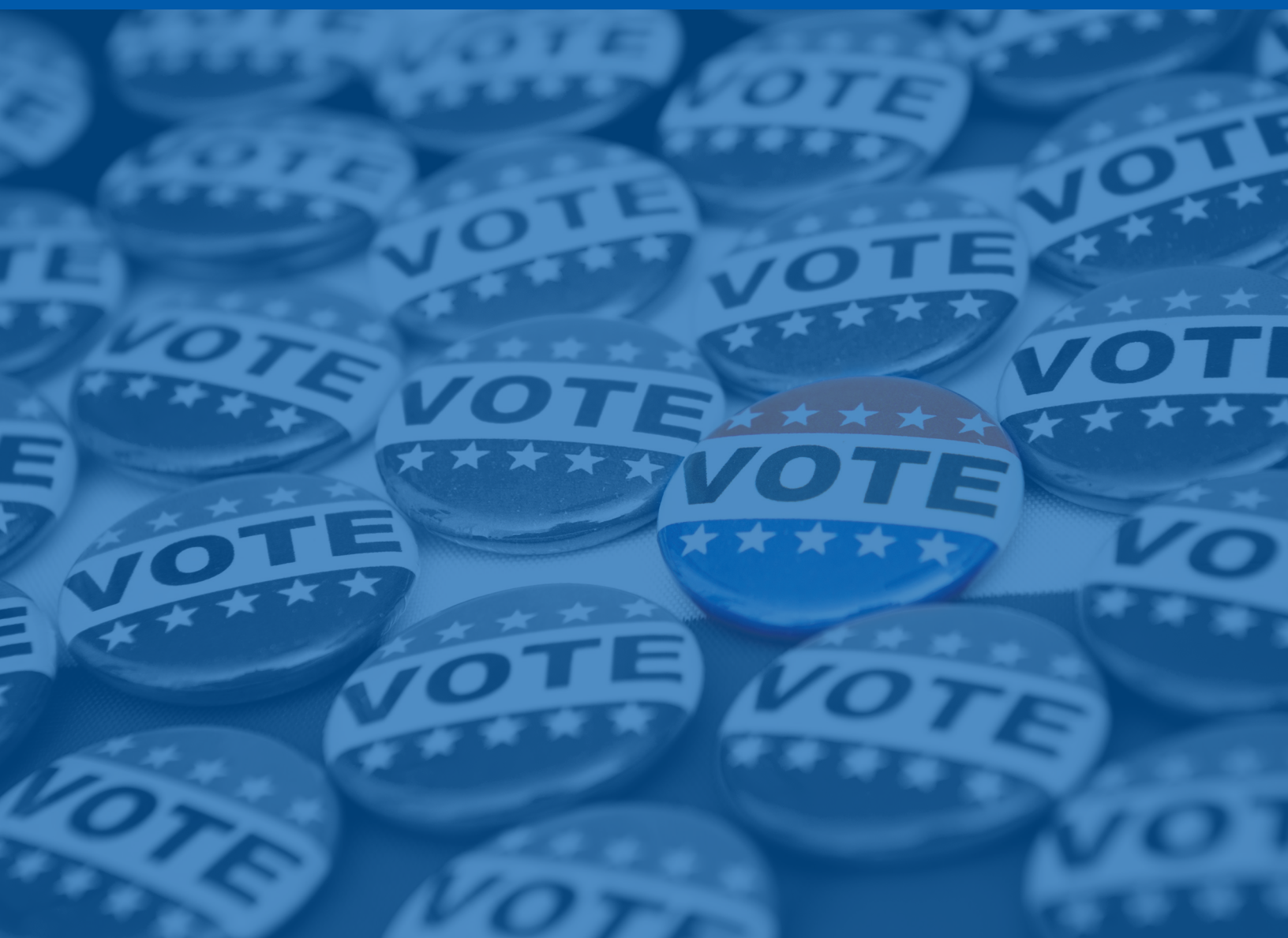
But What About...



No budget for that

Similar counties are finding a way to make this work. Early voting relieves pressure on polling places on Election Day, reducing the need for additional polling locations. Have you asked the commission for more funding? What can the community do to help?

Appendix



ACLU Florida: Report on Vote-by-Mail Ballots in the 2018 General Election

Dr. Daniel A. Smith & Anna Baringer

University of Florida

Summary

This report examines the rates of rejected vote-by-mail (VBM) ballots cast in Florida's 2018 General Election. It provides statewide VBM rejection rates cast by age cohorts, racial and ethnic groups, overseas (military and civilian) voters, domestic military voters, and first-time voters. It compares these rates across Florida's 67 counties. We find that younger voters, first-time voters, and voters from racial and ethnic minorities are much more likely to cast VBM ballots that are rejected by county Canvassing Boards. A high rate of overseas voters also have their VBM ballots rejected, particularly military voters stationed overseas, but also those stationed in the U.S. There exists substantial variation across the state's 67 counties in the rejection rates of VBM ballots, indicating a non-uniformity in the way VBM ballots are verified by SOEs and county Canvassing Boards. The report also finds continued problems with the processing of VBM ballots initially deemed invalid by SOEs due to a mismatched or missing signature on voter's certificate on the return envelope, but highlights the best practices employed by Pinellas County to allow voters to cure these ballots that are initially "rejected as illegal."

Principal Findings

- In the 2018 general election, as in past elections, Florida voters were much more likely to have their vote tabulated and validated if they cast their ballot in person at an Early Voting site or at their assigned Election Day precinct than if they cast a mail ballot (commonly referred to as "Vote by Mail" (VBM) ballot or absentee ballot);
- Younger, first-time, and racial and ethnic minority voters, as well as overseas and military voters, who cast VBM ballots are all at least twice as likely as older and white voters to have their VBM ballot rejected in the 2018 general election;
- Despite changes in the ability of voters to 'cure' their rejected VBM ballots, the likelihood of younger and minority voters casting a mail ballot that was rejected increased in 2018 compared to 2016, while the rejection rate of VBM ballots cast by white voters decreased from 2016;
- There is continued variation in the rejection rates of VBM ballots cast across the state's 67 counties.

Policy Recommendations

To ensure that all eligible voters have an equal access to the voting process and to have their VBM ballot processed, tabulated, and accepted as valid:

- There should be greater statewide uniformity and simplicity in the design of return VBM envelopes;
- There should be greater uniformity in the procedures and training of Supervisors of Elections (SOEs), their staff, and Canvassing Boards when processing, validating and, if necessary, allowing voters to cure their rejected VBM ballots;
- The Florida Secretary of State should provide a memorandum to SOEs with standardized procedures that county election officials must follow when notifying voters of a rejected VBM ballot and the cure process for missing and mismatched signatures;
- The Florida statewide voter history file (the FVRS database) should include information about why a voter's mail ballot was rejected, including whether it was rejected because it lacked a signature or the voter's signature was mismatched, and if the voter attempted to cure the VBM ballot if it was flagged as invalid, and if that cure was successful;
- The Florida Division of Elections should provide "best practices" guidelines, drawing on the procedures of counties with the lowest rejection and highest cure rates of VBM ballots.

Voting by Mail in the Sunshine State

Vote-by-mail (VBM) ballots, also known as mail ballots and absentee ballots, have become a staple of Florida elections. Over 2.67 million Floridians, or 31.9% of all ballots cast in the 2018 general election, were VBM ballots. Yet, when compared to the rejection rates of ballots cast early in-person and on Election Day, voters who vote by mail in the Sunshine State are disproportionately more likely to have their ballot rejected by a county Canvassing Board. As this report documents, there is considerable heterogeneity in the rejection rate of VBM ballots in Florida, not only across the state's 67 counties, but equally importantly, within a counties across age groups, across racial and ethnic groups, among military and civilian overseas voters, and among first-time voters.

Compared to previous general elections, the statewide rejection rate of VBM ballots cast in Florida in 2018 was even higher than in the 2012 and 2016 presidential elections. In both the 2012 and 2016 presidential elections, the VBM rejection rate was roughly the same—1 percent of all VBM ballots cast were rejected. Despite changes in Florida law allowing voters to have more opportunities to “cure” their VBM ballots if they have a problem with the signature on the return envelope, the overall statewide rejection rate of the 2.67 million VBM ballots cast in the 2018 general election was 1.2 percent. This rejection rate excludes mail ballots that were received by local election officials after the 7:00pm Election Day cutoff time that domestic VBM ballots must arrive in the Supervisor's office.

Notwithstanding opportunities for voters to “cure” a missing or mismatched signature on a VBM return envelope in the 2018 general election, more than 1/100 VBM ballots cast in the 2018 contest were ultimately rejected by local elections officials, amounting to some 32,176 ballots that did not count in the election. Recall that incumbent U.S. Senator Bill Nelson lost to challenger, then Governor Rick Scott, by roughly 10,000 votes in the 2018 U.S. Senate race.

As in previous general elections the rejection rate of mail ballots differs considerably across age cohorts and racial and ethnic groups, as well as for military and civilian voters overseas and first-time voters. The rejection rate of VBM ballots also differs substantially across the state's 67 counties. Younger voters, first-time voters, as well as racial and ethnic minorities in Florida, are disproportionately more likely to cast VBM ballots that are “rejected as illegal” by county Canvassing Boards—but the rates are considerably higher in some counties than in others.

In addition, there is considerable variation from county to county in the process of allowing voters to correct rejected VBM ballots with a “Vote-by-Mail Ballot Cure” Affidavit. Without question, voters casting a VBM ballot that has a signature issue should be held accountable for their rejected VBM ballot. Voters who cast ballots by mail assume responsibility to follow instructions when filling out their ballots and returning their envelopes, just as county officials assume responsibility to make sure every valid VBM ballot is counted. Eligible voters should be responsible to make sure they cast a valid ballot, taking care to update their signature on file with their local election official and to follow instructions on how to complete the voter's certificate on the return envelope to avoid mistakes that might spoil their ballot. At the same time, county election officials who are entrusted with processing and validating VBM ballots have considerable discretion in processing and validating absentee ballots. As such, local election officials, need to be held accountable for ensuring that all voters have equal access to cast a mail ballot, have that mail ballot tabulated fairly, and foster a transparent process to make sure the validation (and possible curing) of mail ballots is fairly administered for all eligible voters.

When significant variation occurs across counties in the rate of rejected VBM ballots, especially among different groups of voters (for example, within categories of age, race/ethnicity, military, and overseas), it is important to investigate whether all county election officials are providing clear instructions on how to return a VBM ballot, and to ensure that VBM return envelopes are easy to complete. SOEs should also provide the necessary time and equal opportunity for voters to cure their VBM ballot if their signature on the return VBM envelope is missing or appears to be mismatched.

In this report, drawing on data from publicly available files, we document the rejection rates of VBM ballots in the 2018 general election, as well as the cure rates across counties.

Why Might Rejection Rates of VBM Ballots Differ?

Why might validation rates of VBM ballots differ across age cohorts and racial/ethnic groups? It is a given that some voters will fail to follow instructions when filling out their ballot and return envelope. When mailing back their VBM ballots, some voters may fail to sign their name on the back of the official mailing envelope as it appears in the county's official voter registry. Absentee voters may disregard an affidavit or date that is required, or simply sign the return envelope incorrectly. Some VBM voters may neglect to sign the vote by mail ballot envelope at all.

It is certainly possible that the differential rates of rejected VBM ballots cast across demographic groups may be related to how SOEs process mail ballots, or how the state's 67 county canvassing boards interpret the voter's certificate signature and other information on VBM return envelopes. Regardless of whether the cause of rejected VBM ballots is voter error or less than adequate procedures established by local election administrators, in theory, the rate of rejected VBM ballots across demographic groups (e.g., age cohorts and racial/ethnic minorities, or first-time voters) should not differ substantially across counties. Even if there are correlations with age and race and ethnicity (such as education) that might lead to higher rates of rejected VBM ballots for some demographic groups, VBM rejection rates across demographic groups should be consistent across counties; that is, if equal standards are being applied by SOEs, their staff, and Canvassing Boards.

Furthermore, there should be comparable VBM cure rates across counties of ballots cast across age cohorts, racial and ethnic groups, and other groups of voters who have their VBM ballot initially rejected by a SOE or a Canvassing Board. In the 2018 general election, voters who neglected to sign the voter's certificate on the VBM envelope, or who signed the voter's certificate on the envelope but their signature did not match their signature in the registration books, all had an opportunity to cure their invalid ballot. Yet the rejection rates of VBM ballots were worse in 2018 than in 2016 or 2012.

Rates of Rejected VBM Ballots Cast in the 2018 General Election by Age Cohort

In the 2018 general election, a total of nearly 2.6 million Florida voters cast valid and invalid ballots. As Table 1 shows, however, compared to the 2012 and 2016 presidential elections (as shown in Table 2 and Table 3), a higher percentage of VBM ballots were rejected in the 2018 midterm election, despite the ability of voters to “cure” their VBM ballot if it was initially flagged as invalid by a county SOE. Based on calculations derived from statewide voter files following each election, in the 2012 and 2016 presidential elections, 1 percent of all VBM ballots were rejected by county Canvassing Boards. In 2018, the rate increased to 1.2 percent. More than 32,400 VBM ballots were rejected in 2018—more than in either of the previous two presidential elections, when roughly 27,700 (2016) and 23,900 (2012) VBM ballots were rejected, respectively.

The rejection rates of VBM ballots in all three general elections vary considerably across six age cohorts (18-21, 22-25, 26-29, 30-44, 45-64, 65-105), but in all three elections, younger voters were disproportionately more likely to have their mailed ballot rejected. In the 2018 general election, as Table 1 shows, the rate of rejected VBM ballots cast by the youngest cohort, 18-21 year-olds, was 5.4 percent, more than eight-times greater than that of the oldest cohort. Although 18-29 year-olds comprised only 2.1 percent of all voters who cast a VBM ballot in Florida in 2018, they accounted for 9.2 percent of all rejected VBM ballots in the midterm election.

It should be noted that the rejection rate among the state’s youngest voters (18-21 year-olds) in the 2018 election was even higher than in the 2012 or 2016 elections, where 4.2 and 4.0 percent of ballots were not counted, respectively. Even amongst the oldest cohort, rejection was higher in 2018 at 0.64% of ballots “rejected as illegal,” compared to only the 0.5 percent rejected in the 2016 and 2012 elections.

Among the approximately 133,000 first-time voters, 4,137 did not have their ballots counted, a rejection rate of 3.1 percent. First time voters accounted for 4.98 percent of the electorate in 2018, yet they accounted for 12.7 percent of the rejected ballots.

Table 1
Vote-by-Mail Ballots and Age, 2018 General Election

Age	Accepted VBM	Rejected VBM	Total VBM	VBM Rejection Rate
18-21	52,597	2,978	55,575	5.4
22-25	63,794	2,727	66,521	4.1
26-29	70,736	2,494	73,230	3.4
30-44	313,441	6,708	320,149	2.1
45-64	850,765	9,249	860,014	1.1
65-104	1,288,220	8,277	1,296,497	0.6
Total	2,639,553	32,433	2,671,986	1.2

Table 2
Vote-by-Mail Ballots and Age, 2016 General Election

Age	Accepted VBM	Rejected VBM	Total VBM	VBM Rejection Rate
18-21	71,374	2,984	74,358	4.0
22-25	82,667	2,980	85,647	3.5
26-29	93,736	2,883	96,619	2.8
30-44	312,904	5,030	317,934	1.7
45-64	793,996	5,897	799,893	0.8
65-104	1,015,405	5,088	1,020,493	0.5
Total	2,713,053	27,707	2,740,760	1.0

Table 3
Vote-by-Mail Ballots and Age, 2012 General Election

Age	Accepted VBM	Rejected VBM	Total VBM	VBM Rejection Rate
18-21	67,491	2,941	70,432	4.2
22-25	57,903	2,094	59,997	3.5
26-29	93,736	2,883	96,619	3.0
30-44	312,904	5,030	317,934	1.6
45-64	793,996	5,897	799,893	0.7
65-104	1,015,405	5,088	1,020,493	0.5
Total	2,341,435	23,933	2,365,368	1.0

Rejected VBM Ballots by Racial and Ethnic Groups

The differential patterns of rejected VBM ballots by age groups are as glaring as the rates of rejected mail ballots cast by racial and ethnic minorities. In the 2018 general election, roughly 0.9 percent of all VBM ballots cast by white voters were “rejected as illegal” by local Canvassing Boards. In contrast, 1.96 percent of VBM ballots cast by Black voters did not count; 2.05 percent of VBM ballots cast by Hispanics were rejected; and 2.06 percent of VBM ballots cast by voters of other racial or ethnic identities were “rejected as illegal.”

In the 2018 election, the more than 240,000 Black voters who voted with mail ballots accounted for nearly 9.0 percent of all VBM ballots cast, but they made up 14.5 percent of all the VBM ballots that were rejected. Over 356,000 Hispanics cast absentee mail ballots in the election, roughly 13.4 percent of all VBM ballots cast statewide, but Hispanic mail ballot voters accounted for 22.6 percent of all the VBM ballots that were not counted. Voters of other racial and ethnic groups accounted for only 5.6 percent of all absentee mail ballots cast in the election, but they cast 9.4 percent of all the rejected ballots. In contrast, in the 2018 general election, white voters cast nearly 1.9 million VBM ballots, 72.1 percent of all absentee mail ballots; yet, they were responsible for only 53.5 percent of those that were rejected by county canvassing boards.

Relatively speaking, VBM ballots cast by Black, Hispanic, and other racial and ethnic minorities were more than twice as likely to be rejected as VBM ballots cast by white absentee mail voters in 2018. As Table 4 and Table 6 display, the rejection rates of VBM ballots cast by racial and ethnic minorities cast in the 2018 general election were even higher than in the 2016 and 2012 General Elections.

Table 4
Vote-by-Mail Ballots by Race and Ethnicity, 2018 General Election

Race/Ethnicity	Accepted VBM	Rejected VBM	Total VBM	VBM Rejection Rate
Black	235,541	4,713	240,254	1.9
Hispanic	349,592	7,325	356,917	2.1
White	1,909,279	17,340	1,926,619	0.9
Other	145,141	3,055	148,196	2.1
Total	2,639,553	32,433	2,671,986	1.2

Table 5
Vote-by-Mail Ballots by Race and Ethnicity, 2016 General Election

Race/Ethnicity	Accepted VBM	Rejected VBM	Total VBM	VBM Rejection Rate
Black	240,094	4,683	244,777	1.9
Hispanic	375,345	6,696	382,041	1.8
White	1,950,770	13,558	1,964,328	0.7
Other	146,844	2,770	149,614	1.8
Total	2,713,053	27,707	2,740,760	1.0

Table 6
Vote-by-Mail Ballots by Race and Ethnicity, 2012 General Election

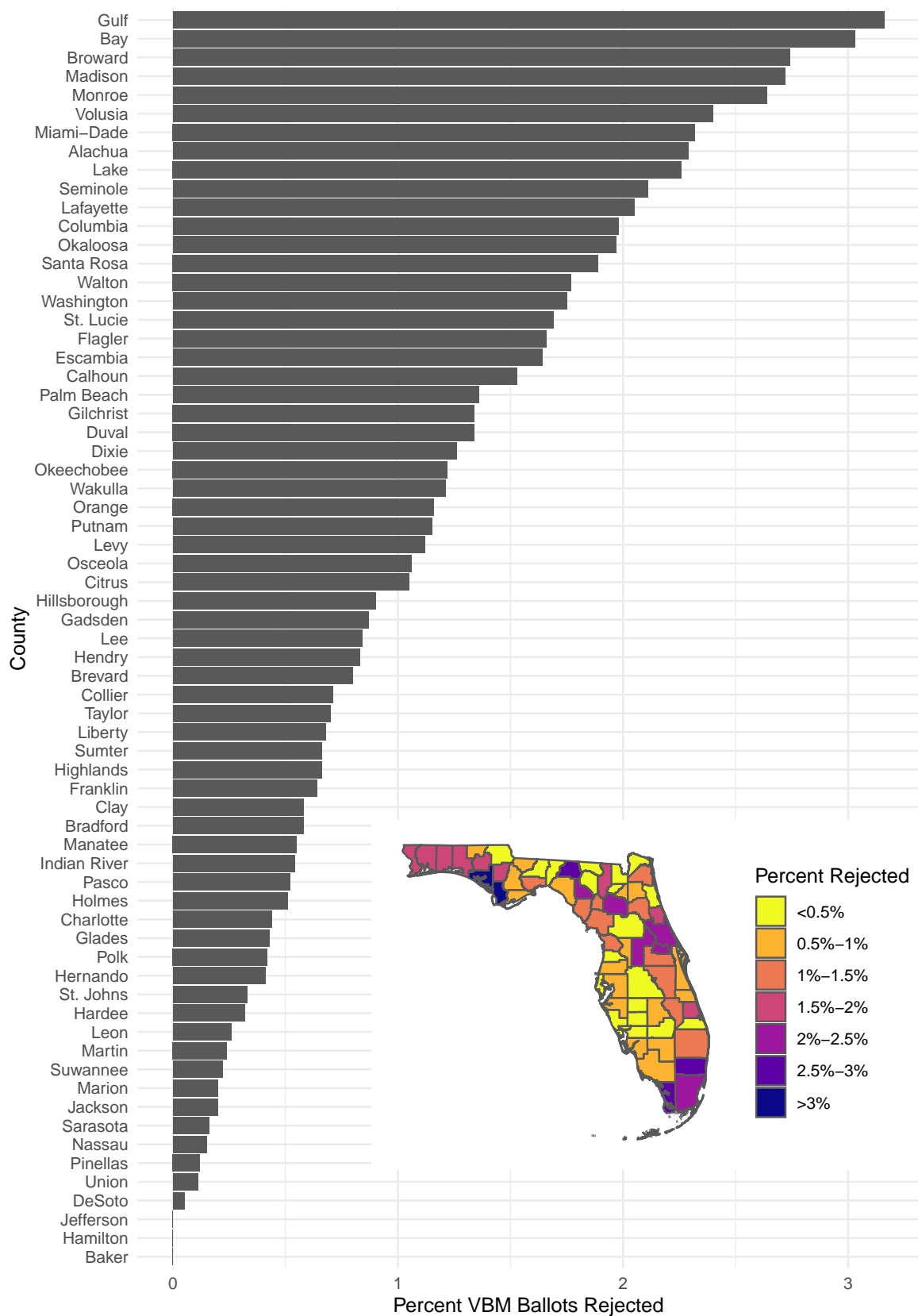
Race/Ethnicity	Accepted VBM	Rejected VBM	Total VBM	VBM Rejection Rate
Black	219,325	3,358	222,683	1.5
Hispanic	250,750	3,310	254,060	1.3
White	1,761,034	15,204	1,776,238	0.9
Other	110,326	2,061	112,387	1.8
Total	2,341,435	23,933	2,365,368	1.0

Rejected VBM Ballots by County

The rejection rates of VBM ballots cast in the 2018 general election, as in the 2016 and 2012 general elections, varied considerably across the state's 67 counties. There are several possibilities for variable rejection rates of absentee ballots across local election administration jurisdictions. First, the design of the mail ballots themselves, or their return envelopes (including their physical layout and instructions), differ across counties. Second, Supervisors of Elections, their staff, and county Canvassing Boards may have different processes in place when processing and validating the VBM ballots they receive. Third, it is possible that voters across counties differ in their capacity to properly fill out and return their VBM ballots.

As noted above, in the 2018 general election, 1.21 percent of the more than 2.6 million VBM ballots cast—the votes of over 32,000 Floridians—were rejected as illegal. However, the percentage of rejected VBM ballots across the 67 counties ranges from three counties with no rejected VBM ballots (Baker, Hamilton, and Jefferson), to 10 counties that rejected more than 2 percent of all VBM ballots (Alachua, Bay, Broward, Miami-Dade, Gulf, Madison, Marion, Seminole, and Volusia). Figure 6 displays the percent of rejected VBM ballots in the 2018 general election across counties, with the inset map of Florida showing the geographic distribution of these rejected VBM ballots.

Figure 1
VBM Ballot Rejection Rate by County (2018)



County Rejected VBM Ballot Rates by Racial and Ethnic Groups

As the previous section reveals, there is considerable variation in the rejection rates of VBM ballots across the state 67 counties. When it comes to the casting of invalid VBM ballots, however, there is arguably even greater variation within counties when we break down rejected VBM ballots along racial and ethnic groups. Although only 0.9 percent of all VBM ballots cast by white voters were rejected in the 2018 election, 1.96 percent of VBM ballots cast by Black voters were rejected, and 2.05 percent of VBM ballots cast by Hispanic voters were rejected. Figure 2 reports the percentage of VBM ballots cast by Black voters that were rejected in the 2018 general election and Figure 3 reports the same for rejected VBM ballots cast by Hispanics in the mid-term election in those counties that had at least 10 rejected VBM ballots cast by Black and Hispanic voters, respectively.

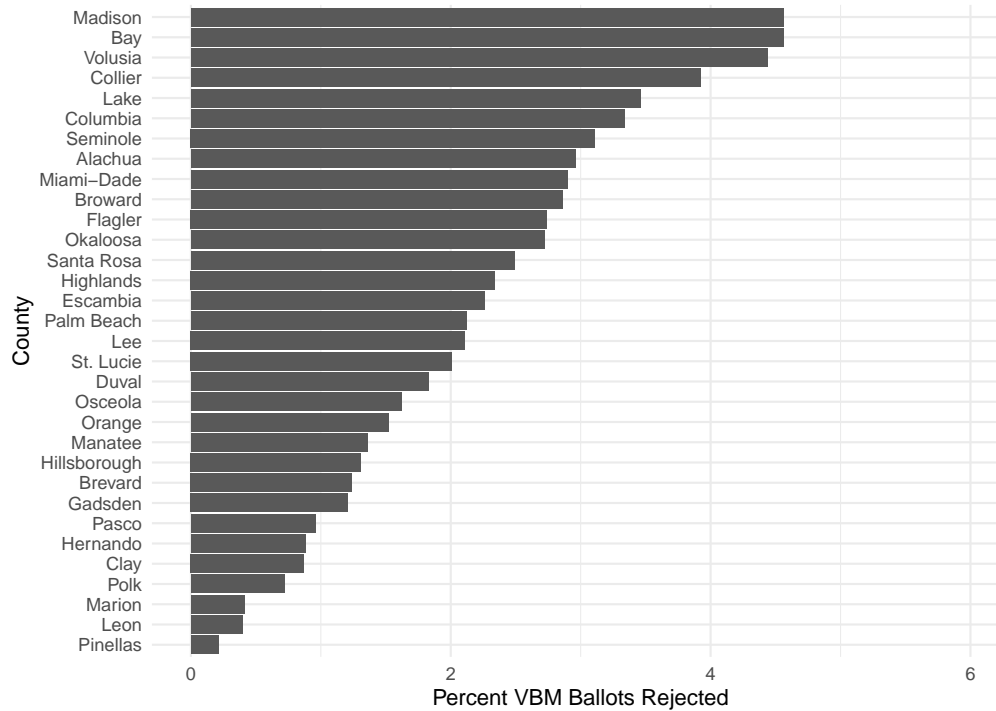
Across that state's 67 counties, the VBM ballot rejection rates for Black voters range from highs of 4.6 percent in Bay and Madison counties, to 2.1 percent in Palm Beach county, to a low of 0.2 percent in Pinellas County, as shown in Figure 2. There was a similar wide range across the counties of rejected VBM rates for Hispanics casting a mail ballot, as depicted in Figure 3. In Volusia County, 5 percent of VBM ballots cast by Hispanic voters were rejected, followed by Bay County at 4.9 percent. Among the other counties that had at least 10 rejected VBM ballots cast by Hispanic voters, Pinellas again had the lowest rejection VBM ballot rate, just 0.2 percent.

In order to more easily visualize the sizeable disparity in the rates of rejected VBM ballots cast by Black and Hispanic voters across Florida's counties, Figure 4 and Figure 5 display the percentage of rejected VBM ballots cast by Black and Hispanic voters in a county, respectively, compared to the percentage of rejected VBM ballots cast by White voters in the county. In both plots, if the VBM ballot rejection rates were the same for White and Black (or Hispanic) voters, all the counties would fall along the diagonal 45 degree dashed lines. In both plots, the horizontal (x-axis) is the rejection rate of VBM ballots (from 0 percent to 5 percent) cast by White voters in a county. Along the vertical (y-axis) is the rejection rate of VBM ballots cast by Black voters (Figure 4) or Hispanic voters (Figure 5) in each county, respectively.

It is clear from both plots that the nearly every county falls above the 45 degree line, indicating that the VBM rejection rates for racial and ethnic minorities greatly exceeds that of White voters across Florida's counties. Among counties with at least 10 rejected VBM ballots cast by Black voters, the VBM rejection rate for Black voters ranges from a high of 4.6 percent in Bay County, to 2.9 percent in Miami-Dade County and 1.8 percent in Duval County, to a low of 0.2 percent in Pinellas County. There is a similar range of county rejection rates for Hispanic mail ballot voters, as shown in Figure 3. In Volusia County, for example, 5.0 percent of VBM ballots cast by Hispanic voters were rejected, followed by Bay County at 4.9 percent. Among the other counties that had at least 10 rejected VBM ballots cast by Hispanic voters, Pinellas again had the lowest rejection rate—only 0.2 percent of VBM ballots were rejected.

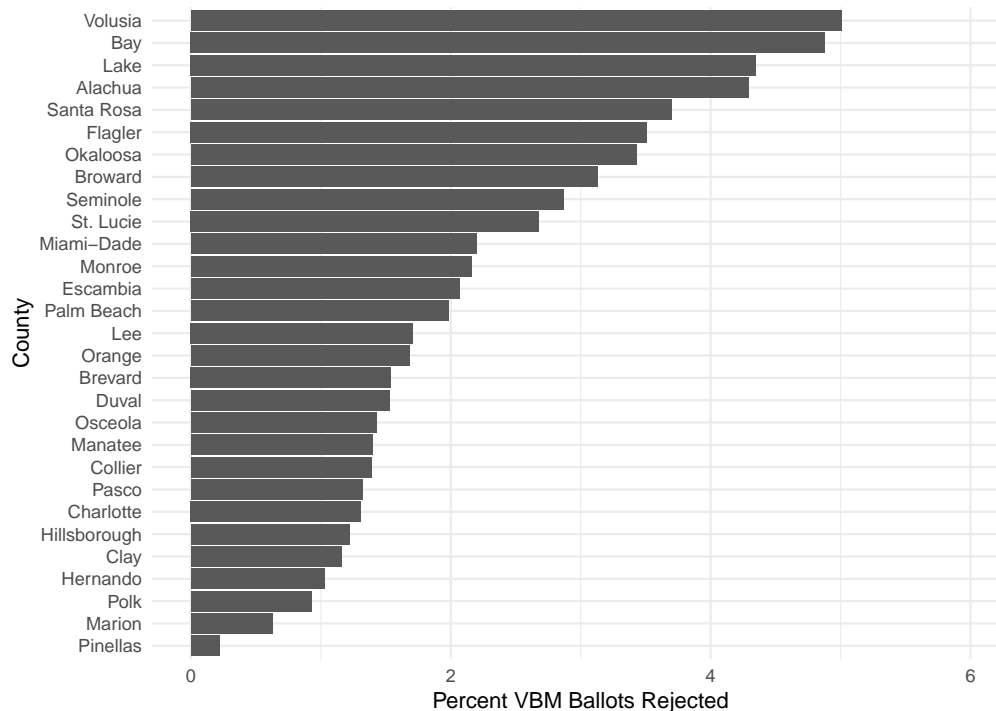
The persistent variance in the rate of rejected absentee mail ballots across Florida's 67 counties suggests at a minimum that the VBM ballot envelope design, the civic education efforts by SOEs, or evaluation standards used by county SOEs and their Canvassing Boards are not uniform across the state.

Figure 2
VBM Rejection Rate of Black Voters by County (2018)



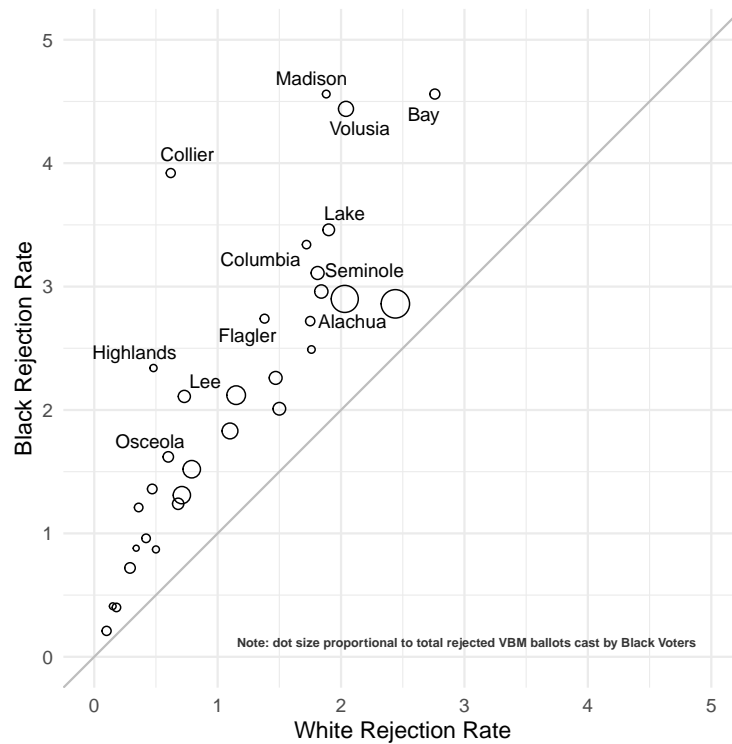
Note: Excludes counties with less than 10 rejected VBM ballots cast by Black voters.

Figure 3
VBM Rejection Rate of Hispanic Voters by County (2018)



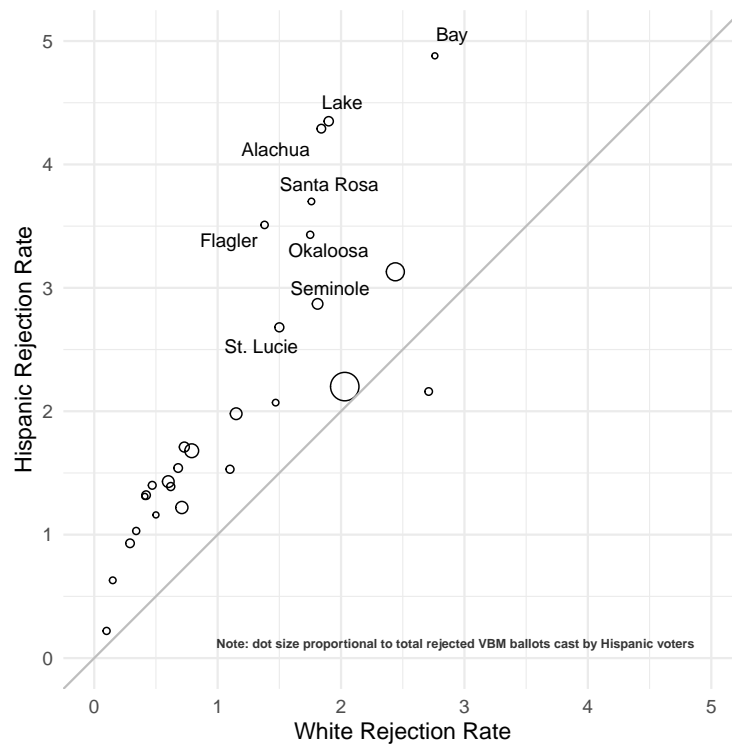
Note: Excludes counties with less than 10 rejected VBM ballots cast by Hispanic voters.

Figure 4
Percent of Rejected VBM Ballots Cast by White and Black Voters, by County (2018)



Note: Excludes counties with less than 10 rejected VBM ballots cast by Black voters.

Figure 5
Percent of Rejected VBM Ballots Cast by White and Hispanic Voters, by County (2018)



Note: Excludes counties with less than 10 rejected VBM ballots cast by Hispanic voters.

County Rejected VBM Ballot Rates by Age

Similar patterns of VBM rejection rates exist across counties in the when broken down by age cohorts. Although the statewide VBM rejection rate among 18-21 year-olds was over 5 percent in the 2018 general election—five times the statewide rate of all rejected mail ballots cast—in a dozen mainly smaller counties (Baker, DeSoto, Gadsden, Glades, Hamilton, Hardee, Jackson, Jefferson, Marion, Nassau, Suwannee, and Union) every VBM ballot cast by a voter in the youngest age cohort was accepted as valid.

In stark contrast, in Broward County, over 11 percent of VBM ballots cast by the youngest cohort of voters in the 2018 election were rejected as invalid by the Canvassing Board, amounting to more than 500 mail ballots that did not count in the election. In Miami-Dade County, over 9 percent of ballots cast by 18-21 year-olds, nearly 600 mail ballots, were rejected. Alachua County, home to Florida's flagship university, had VBM rejection rates of about 8 percent for the 18-21 age cohort, more than 3 times higher than the county's overall rejection rate of 2.3 percent. However, 43 other counties had even higher ratios of the youngest cohort rejection rate to the overall VBM rejection rate, including Liberty, Hendry, Indian River, and Highlands counties.

Figure 6 provides a breakdown of rejected VBM ballots across the five age categories. Again, it is important to put the raw number of rejected VBM ballots across the 67 counties in perspective. Overall in 2018, voters in the three youngest age cohorts accounted for a fraction of all the absentee ballots cast in the state. Of the more than 2.6 million VBM ballots cast statewide, voters in the three youngest age cohorts cast only 2.1 percent of all VBM ballots; yet, they accounted for 9.2 percent of all rejected VBM ballots cast statewide. In several counties, the proportion of all rejected VBM ballots was even higher for these youngest voters.

To better visualize the difference in the rejection rates of VBM ballots cast by younger and older voters, Figure 7 plots VBM ballot rejection rates by those under and over the age of 30 in a 45 degree plot. If VBM ballot rejection rates were equal for voters under 30 years old and 30 years-old and older, all 67 counties would align along the 45 degree dashed line in Figure 6. Along the horizontal (x-axis) is the rejection rate of VBM ballots (from 0 percent to 12.5 percent) cast by voters 30 and older in each county. Along the vertical (y-axis) is the rejection rate for the same range of VBM ballots cast by voters younger than 30 years old in each county. If absentee ballot rejection rates were the same in a county, all 67 counties would fall along the diagonal 45 degree.

As Figure 7 displays, however, there is an obvious pattern: younger voters in nearly every county have a considerably higher likelihood of having their VBM ballot rejected by a county's SOE and Canvassing Board in the 2018 general election than those 30 and older. In several counties, the VBM rejection rate of young voters is more than three times as great compared to older voters. In Broward County, for example, roughly 7 percent of mail ballots cast by voters under 30 were rejected, compared to less than 2.5 percent of those cast by voters 30 and over. The disparity is even higher in Lafayette, Monroe, Santa Rosa, Volusia, and Walton counties.

Figure 6
VBM Rejection Rate by County, by Age (2018)

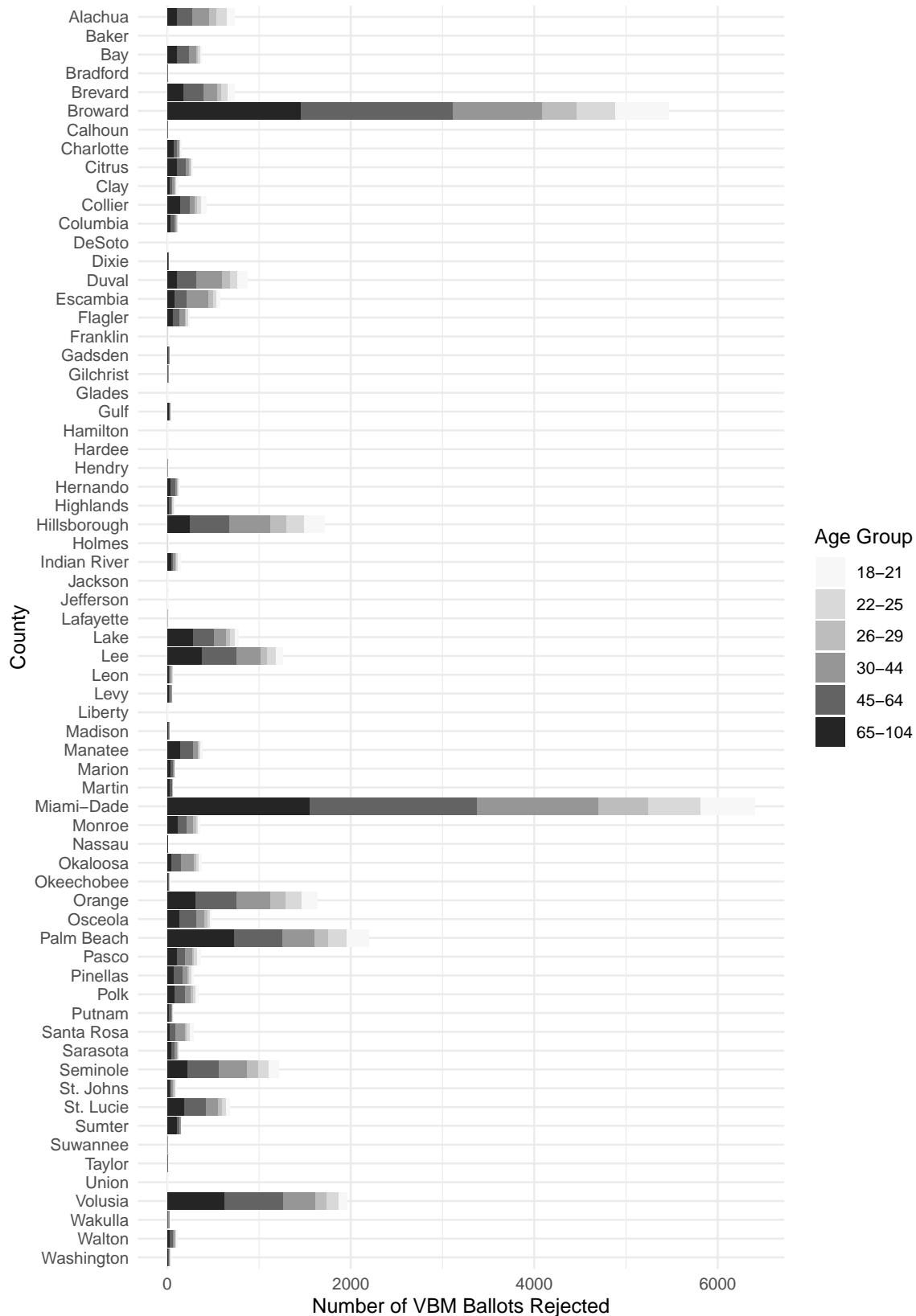
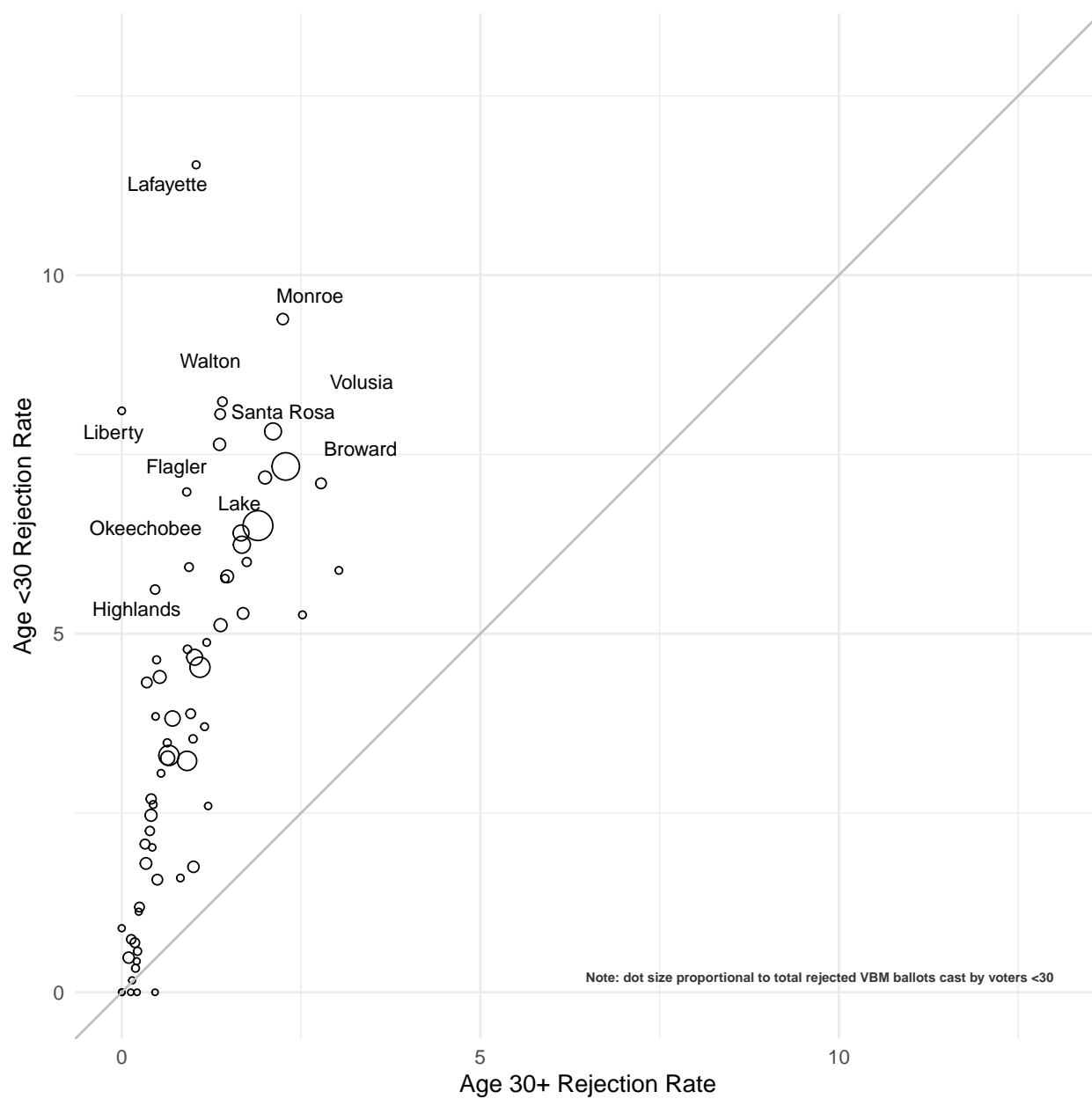


Figure 7
VBM Rejection Rates by County, by Age (2018)



Rejected VBM Ballots for Uniformed and Overseas Civilians

The differential patterns of rejected VBM ballots are perhaps the most blatant when it comes to mail ballots cast by civilian overseas and military personnel. The Uniformed and Overseas Civilian Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA) of 1986 provides ballot protections for civilian overseas, members of the uniformed service in active duty, and their dependents, allowing them to cast absentee ballots. According to Federal Voting Assistance Program, if active service members live outside their voting jurisdictions, they can vote absentee in all federal elections. In 2009, Congress passed the Military and Overseas Voter Empowerment Act (MOVE) to additionally require election offices to mail ballot to UOCAVA voters no later than 45 days before each federal election. Florida Statute 101.62 (4)(b) mandates that each SOE mail VBM ballots to voters who have requested a ballot within two business days of receiving the request. Given the laws governing absentee ballot mailing, we can safely assume that UOCAVA voters who submitted an absentee ballot request before the 47th day prior to an election should be sent a ballot 45 days before the election.

Using VBM data uploaded by SOEs on November 21, 2018, it appears that only 63.2 percent of UOCAVA voters with absentee ballot requests actually had their ballots delivered before September 22, 2018, 45 days before Election Day. Unlike other citizens who vote by mail, under federal law, UOCAVA voters are permitted up to 10 days after the election to have their VBM ballot received and processed by a local election office. As shown in Figure 8, between 3 and 12 percent of UOCAVA VBM ballots SOEs delivered 10 or fewer days before election day were rejected. As would be expected, UOCAVA ballot rejection rates are lower the further out from Election Day they were delivered to voters.

Given the various protections in place for overseas and uniformed personnel under UOCAVA, it is especially surprising that mail ballots returned by these voters are rejected at a rate higher than for voters overall in Florida. Roughly 3.2 percent of mail ballots cast by military and overseas voters—those covered under UOCAVA—were rejected by county Canvassing Boards, compared to 1.2 percent of mail ballots cast in 2018. The ballot rejection rate is higher regardless of civilian or military status. All overseas voters, civilian and uniformed, had 1.7 percent of their ballot rejected. This rejection rate is consistent whether or not the voter is a uniformed personnel or simply an overseas civilian.

Domestic military voters, however, have the highest rate of rejection of VBM ballots. As Table 7 shows, at 4.2 percent, the rejection rate in the 2018 election for VBM ballots cast by domestic military voters was higher than any rejection rate broken down by race or ethnicity. It is possible that some of these voters are not covered under UOCAVA, which only applies to voters who are members of the uniformed services on active duty, and because of their membership in the service, are absent from their voting jurisdiction. Even if the voters marked as members of the military are not in active service and therefore not protected under UOCAVA, this group's abnormally high ballot rejection rate is cause for concern.

Figure 8
UOCAVA VBM Rejection by Ballot Delivery (2018)

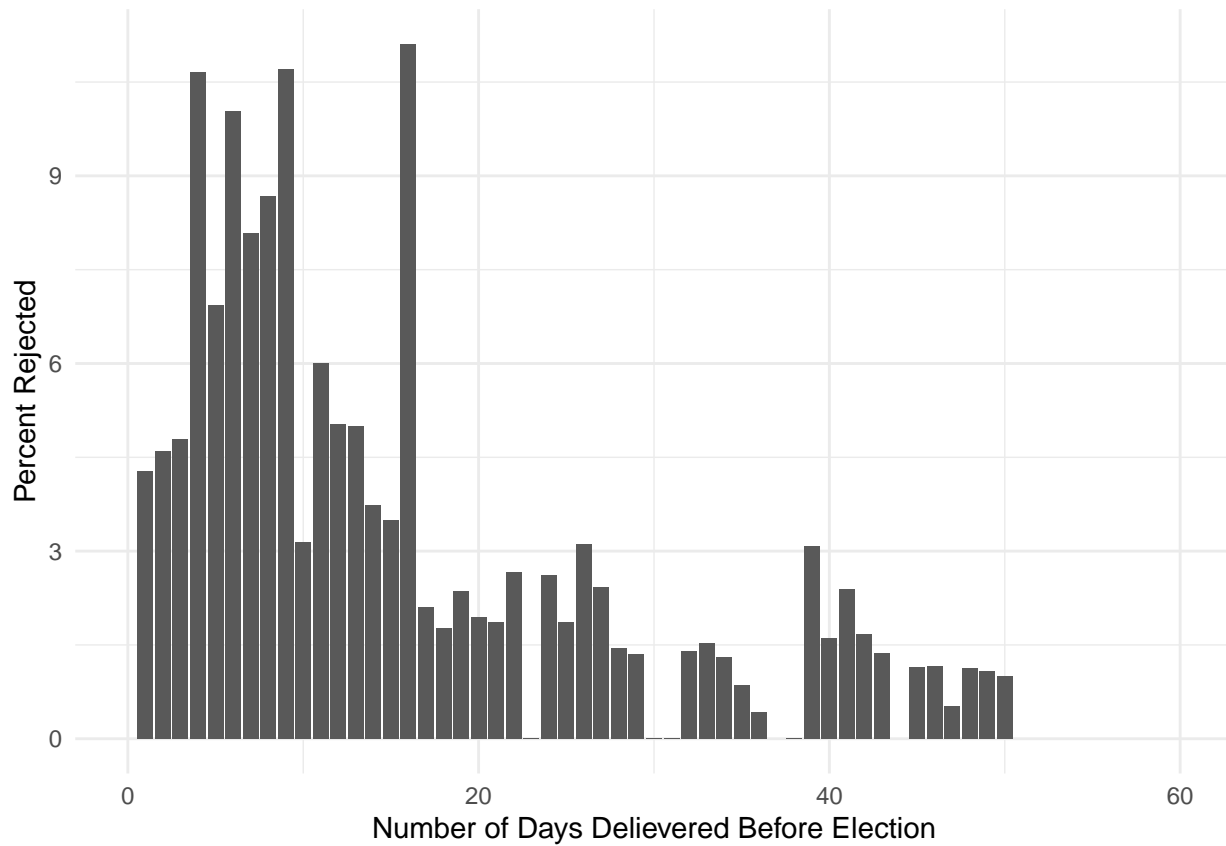


Table 7
Military/Overseas Vote-by-Mail Rejection, 2018 General Election

Group	Accepted VBM	Rejected VBM	Total VBM	VBM Rejection Rate
All Overseas	22,015	378	22,393	1.7
Military Overseas	3,443	61	3,504	1.7
Civilian Overseas	18,572	317	18,889	1.7
Domestic Military	35,540	1,545	37,085	4.2
Military or Overseas	57,555	1,923	59,478	3.2

Curing Rejected “Missing” and “Mismatched” VBM Ballots

Although it offers information on voters casting VBM ballots deemed by county canvassing boards to be rejected as illegal, Florida’s statewide voter file and vote history files do not detail *why* a VBM ballot is rejected. The data provided to the public from the FVRS does not provide any information about whether a VBM ballot was returned with no signature or a mismatched signature, or whether a voter casting a problematic VBM ballot tried—and was eventually successful—at curing a VBM ballot initially flagged as invalid.

In order to get a sense of how well the VBM cure process works, it is important to examine the procedures SOEs put in place in the 2016 general election to handle VBM ballots with mismatched signatures. Unfortunately, there is no standalone record on how each of the 67 SOEs attempted to contact voters who cast VBM ballots prior to Election Day that were initially flagged as having a missing or mismatched signature on the envelope. Furthermore, there is no statewide database on how many voters who cast VBM ballots that had signature problems were actually contacted by SOEs, much less how many of these mail voters replied with an affidavit and proof of identification to cure their ballot. There is also no statewide database on the number of absentee mail voters who had their absentee ballot flagged for a signature problem who successfully cured their VBM ballot.

Due to the lack of a statewide protocols for cataloguing the processing of rejected VBM ballots in Florida, it is extremely difficult to obtain, much less systematically assess, how many voters cast VBM ballots that were initially flagged as having a missing or mismatched signature were ultimately rejected in the 2018 General Election, much less how many voters casting VBM ballots were able to cure their initially rejected VBM ballot. Despite public records requests, only 21 of the state’s 67 SOEs responded to requests for data on the number of rejected and cured VBM ballots cast in the 2018 general election and the number of successful affidavits to cure a problematic VBM. It should be noted, too, that the data that were provided by the 21 counties had significantly varying details.

The analysis that follows examines the cure rates of VBM ballots initially rejected due to mismatched signatures in Pinellas County. Pinellas County, under Supervisor of Elections Deborah Clark, has led the way on processing VBM ballots. The detailed records that her office provided on the VBM ballots it received in the 2018 general election, including VBM ballots her staff initially flagged as having a mismatched voter’s certificate on the envelope, as well as mismatched VBM ballots that were successfully cured by voters, offers a window into the “best practices” that other SOEs could follow to help remedy problematic VBM ballots.

Curing Vote-by-Mail Ballots: Best Practices of Pinellas County

Pinellas County, led by SOE Deborah Clark, is the state’s undisputed leader in voting by mail. Of those Pinellas County voters whose age on Election Day (according to the statewide voter file) was between 18 and 104 years old, slightly more than 241,000 voters cast VBM ballots in 2018. The county’s Canvassing Board rejected only 288 of all VBM ballots, just 0.12 percent of the total, which was by far the lowest rejection rate of all counties with medium or large populations. Besides a simple VBM return envelope design, one of the reasons for Pinellas County’s low rejection rate was the high cure rate of VBM ballots with signatures that were initially flagged as mismatched.

Ms. Clark's office initially identified roughly 600 VBM ballots that had signatures that appeared not to match those on file. Of those, 200 voters (33.4 percent) successfully cured their signatures by submitting proper ID and a signed affidavit. In addition, the county Canvassing Board accepted 338 VBM ballots (56.5 percent) that had initially questionable signatures without requiring the voter to submit an affidavit. The Canvassing Board rejected 60 of the VBM ballots initially screened by staff to have a mismatched signature (10.0 percent).

In the county, 340 voters returned a VBM ballot with no signature at all, as initially screened by staff. 178, or 52.3 percent of these, cured their ballot via an affidavit. It appears that the Canvassing Board accepted 35 VBM ballots (10.3 percent) that initially had no signature, although there is no record that it required the voters to submit an affidavit. The Pinellas County Canvassing Board rejected only 36.7 percent, or 128 ballots, of the VBM ballots initially screened by staff that had no signature on the return envelope.

The likelihood of having a ballot cured does depend on race. As Table 8 shows, White voters returned affidavits and had their vote-by-mail ballots accepted 44.6 percent of the time; in contrast, only 30.7 percent and 30.5 percent of Black and Hispanic voters, respectively, had their VBM ballots validated after initially being flagged. The cure rate is the lowest for people identifying with another race or ethnicity, at only 24.1 percent. Table 9 provides the breakdown of cure rate by age cohorts in Pinellas County.

Figure 9 reveals the relationship between the date on which the Pinellas County election office mails an affidavit to a voter with a problematic VBM ballot, and the number of affidavits returned. When affidavits are mailed further from the election, more are returned than not. When an affidavit is mailed out closer than a week to the election, more are not returned. The rate of affidavits being returned but not accepted again is very small, regardless of time of mailing.

Conclusion

In Florida, when it comes to voting a VBM ballot, voters—particularly those younger and those persons of color—have a much greater likelihood of having their absentee ballot rejected compared with older voters or White voters. Overseas and military voters are also more prone to having their VBM ballot rejected. If the rejection rates of VBM ballots were consistent across the state's 67 counties, one might chalk these disparities in VBM rejection rates up to the failings of younger voters and people of color to cast their absentee ballot properly. But the great disparities across the counties suggests that the onus of responsibility for absentee ballots to be validated in the Sunshine State also falls on county Supervisors of Elections and county Canvassing Boards.

It is well past time for uniform standards to be put into place in Florida, not only for the return envelope design of VBM ballots, but also for the processing of VBM ballots by SOEs and their staff, and the validating of signatures by the 67 Canvassing Boards. The cure process for VBM ballots with problematic signatures is now in place, but the standards by which counties are to issue and verify affidavits remains much to be desired.

Figure 9
VBM Affidavit Status, Pinellas (2018)

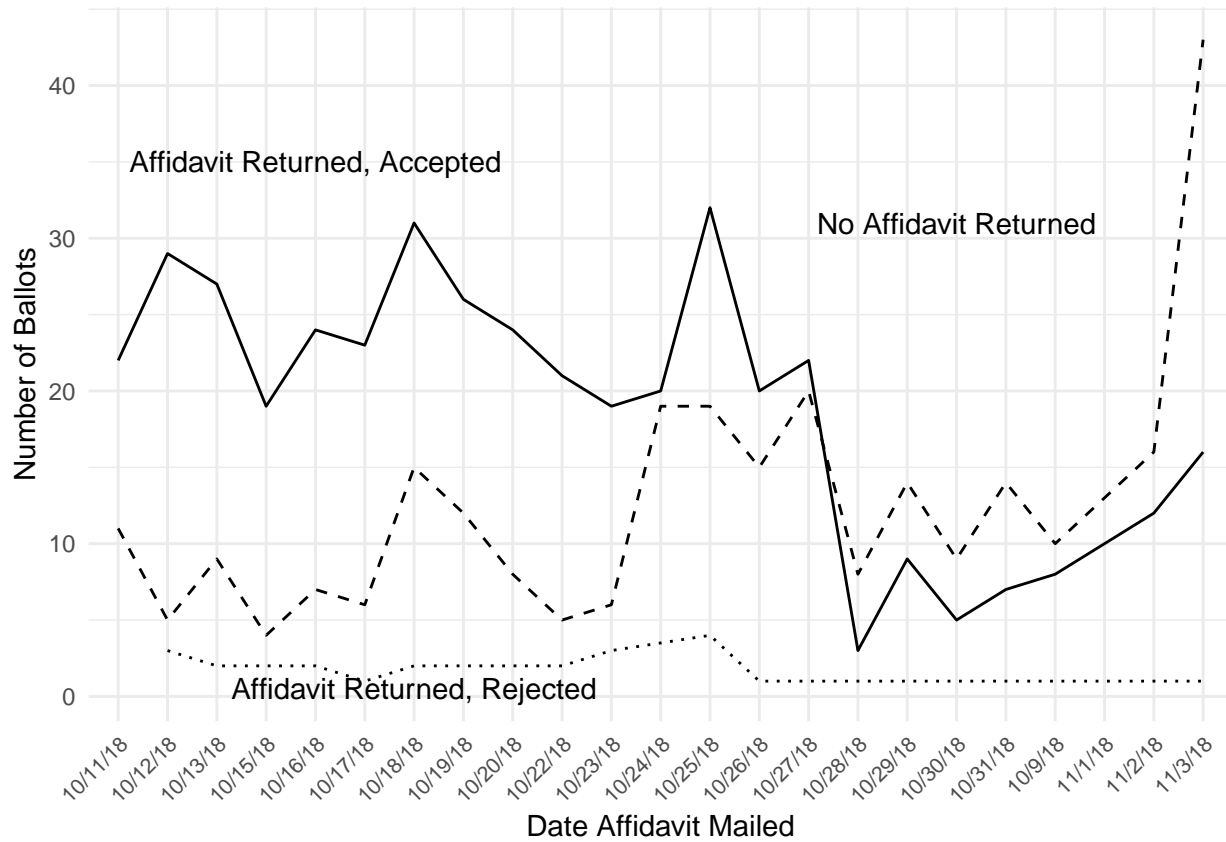


Table 8
Pinellas Vote-by-Mail Ballot Cures by Race and Ethnicity (2018)

Age	Number Flagged	Cured	Cure Rate
Black	31	101	30.69
Hispanic	18	59	30.51
White	312	699	44.64
Other	21	87	24.14
Total	946	382	40.38

Table 9
Pinellas Vote-by-Mail Ballot Cures by Age (2018)

Age	Number Flagged	Cured	Cure Rate
18-21	21	66	31.82
22-25	14	78	17.95
26-29	25	69	36.23
30-44	63	188	33.51
45-64	137	286	47.90
65-104	122	259	47.10
Total	946	382	40.38

Appendix B: State Table: How Floridians Vote

Demographic		Mailed	Early	Election Day
Race				
	American Indian or Alaskan Native	32.0%	30.1%	37.9%
	Asian Or Pacific Islander	34.5%	32.0%	33.5%
	Black, Not Hispanic	21.9%	44.9%	33.2%
	Hispanic	31.4%	31.6%	37.0%
	Multi-racial	27.0%	34.8%	38.1%
	Other	28.5%	35.0%	36.5%
	White, Not Hispanic	34.1%	30.5%	35.4%
	Unknown Race	26.9%	33.3%	39.8%
Age				
	18-21	20.4%	32.6%	47.1%
	22-25	22.5%	30.0%	47.5%
	26-29	21.6%	29.6%	48.7%
	30-44	21.4%	31.8%	46.8%
	45-65	27.6%	35.9%	36.5%
	65 or older	45.6%	30.1%	24.3%
Sex				
	Female	32.9%	32.2%	34.9%
	Male	30.2%	33.7%	36.1%
	Unknown Gender	44.8%	52.8%	2.3%

Notes

Figures calculated from analysis of Florida Voter File, January 2019 extract, 2018 General Election.

Appendix C: Voting Methods by County

Large Counties

County	Registered	Turnout	Voting Method		
			Mailed	Early	Election Day
Brevard	422,606	67.3%	31.8%	28.2%	40.0%
Broward	1,175,328	60.9%	26.7%	41.8%	31.5%
Collier	213,664	73.5%	37.9%	32.1%	29.9%
Duval	607,386	61.2%	16.9%	43.1%	40.0%
Escambia	212,987	64.6%	26.5%	29.9%	43.6%
Hillsborough	857,266	63.6%	35.5%	32.8%	31.7%
Lake	236,078	65.6%	21.3%	35.8%	42.9%
Lee	446,273	66.2%	50.9%	23.1%	26.0%
Leon	213,195	61.8%	19.4%	39.8%	40.9%
Manatee	245,088	64.3%	41.9%	21.0%	37.2%
Marion	243,088	56.9%	27.5%	27.8%	44.7%
Miami-Dade	1,428,856	53.7%	33.2%	37.1%	29.7%
Orange	798,373	60.0%	29.3%	37.1%	33.7%
Osceola	218,754	53.1%	37.8%	30.1%	32.1%
Palm Beach	933,572	63.9%	26.3%	29.3%	44.4%
Pasco	351,949	60.6%	32.3%	26.5%	41.1%
Pinellas	666,876	65.9%	54.9%	12.5%	32.5%
Polk	417,217	59.3%	32.4%	22.0%	45.6%
Sarasota	318,384	67.0%	38.7%	27.6%	33.7%
Seminole	303,668	66.2%	27.7%	39.5%	32.8%
St. Lucie	203,131	61.7%	31.0%	33.4%	35.6%
Volusia	382,408	60.4%	34.5%	27.5%	38.0%

Mid-Size & Rural Counties

County	Registered	Turnout	Voting Method		
			Mailed	Early	Election Day
Alachua	180,934	64.2%	27.1%	35.2%	37.7%
Bay	120,851	52.9%	18.4%	62.6%	18.9%
Charlotte	134,545	65.3%	39.2%	34.2%	26.6%
Citrus	109,388	65.4%	36.2%	28.2%	35.5%
Clay	153,119	61.4%	21.5%	39.8%	38.7%
Flagler	82,611	71.0%	27.4%	43.0%	29.5%
Hernando	133,853	67.8%	41.5%	21.0%	37.4%
Indian River	113,426	57.5%	34.2%	31.8%	34.0%
Martin	114,132	67.9%	35.3%	30.5%	34.1%
Okaloosa	135,563	62.5%	21.9%	37.4%	40.7%
Santa Rosa	132,357	57.6%	19.7%	35.8%	44.4%
St. Johns	187,125	70.4%	22.7%	41.8%	35.6%
Sumter	96,497	77.7%	31.0%	50.1%	18.9%

Appendix C: Voting Methods by County

Small Counties

County	Registered	Turnout	Voting Method		
			Mailed	Early	Election Day
Baker	15,108	70.2%	15.9%	43.8%	40.3%
Bradford	16,317	64.9%	27.6%	26.0%	46.4%
Calhoun	8,695	53.6%	18.6%	36.2%	45.3%
Columbia	40,375	62.0%	23.1%	42.2%	34.8%
DeSoto	16,735	60.6%	23.8%	32.6%	43.6%
Dixie	9,670	62.9%	29.2%	25.6%	45.2%
Franklin	7,783	68.5%	28.1%	32.8%	39.1%
Gadsden	29,450	63.2%	17.6%	42.8%	39.7%
Gilchrist	11,751	57.1%	23.9%	24.3%	51.9%
Glades	6,784	58.3%	23.8%	16.9%	59.3%
Gulf	10,198	59.4%	20.4%	56.1%	23.4%
Hamilton	7,727	52.8%	26.0%	26.3%	47.7%
Hardee	12,239	50.5%	14.4%	38.4%	47.1%
Hendry	17,773	60.8%	19.7%	41.6%	38.7%
Highlands	59,272	61.5%	29.0%	31.5%	39.5%
Holmes	10,751	66.1%	25.6%	24.3%	50.2%
Jackson	27,996	75.6%	21.9%	52.8%	25.4%
Jefferson	9,791	65.5%	17.7%	32.9%	49.4%
Lafayette	4,356	66.2%	18.1%	29.9%	52.0%
Levy	27,859	62.6%	31.7%	20.0%	48.3%
Liberty	4,374	64.8%	16.0%	34.5%	49.5%
Madison	11,840	67.3%	15.4%	42.9%	41.7%
Monroe	53,869	68.8%	35.7%	26.6%	37.7%
Nassau	66,798	65.6%	25.0%	39.3%	35.7%
Okeechobee	20,552	55.3%	21.6%	35.9%	42.5%
Putnam	47,218	60.0%	20.6%	33.1%	46.3%
Suwannee	25,813	62.1%	25.2%	28.9%	45.8%
Taylor	12,142	65.8%	26.8%	28.5%	44.7%
Union	7,396	66.3%	18.0%	33.1%	48.9%
Wakulla	20,810	68.8%	20.6%	37.1%	42.3%
Walton	50,263	60.8%	19.9%	35.6%	44.5%
Washington	15,817	57.7%	22.9%	30.9%	46.1%

Notes

Bottom 25% in each size category highlighted for percent of votes mailed and cast early, while top 25% highlighted for percent of votes cast on election day. Percent of ballots cast calculated from Fla. Dept. of State, Division of Elections, 2018 General Election Reports: [Early Voting and Vote by Mail Report](#) and [Official Results, Voter Turnout](#).

Appendix D: County Vote-By-Mail Performance

Large Counties

County	Mailed Ballots	Percent Mailed	Rejected Ballots	Rejection Rate
Brevard	91,538	31.8%	730	0.8
Broward	199,379	26.7%	5,471	2.74
Collier	60,258	37.9%	428	0.71
Duval	65,554	16.9%	878	1.34
Escambia	35,362	26.5%	580	1.64
Hillsborough	190,205	35.5%	1,713	0.9
Lake	34,322	21.3%	777	2.26
Lee	150,919	50.9%	1,262	0.84
Leon	27,675	19.4%	72	0.26
Manatee	70,644	41.9%	386	0.55
Marion	43,617	27.5%	86	0.2
Miami-Dade	276,123	33.2%	6,404	2.32
Orange	141,079	29.3%	1641	1.16
Osceola	45,472	37.8%	482	1.06
Palm Beach	161,095	26.3%	2193	1.36
Pasco	70,560	32.3%	365	0.52
Pinellas	241,005	54.9%	288	0.12
Polk	81,192	32.4%	340	0.42
Sarasota	83,088	38.7%	131	0.16
Seminole	57,796	27.7%	1,217	2.11
St. Lucie	40,074	31.0%	678	1.69
Volusia	81,546	34.5%	1,960	2.4

Mid-Size & Rural Counties

County	Mailed Ballots	Percent Mailed	Rejected Ballots	Rejection Rate
Alachua	32,121	27.1%	736	2.29
Bay	12,306	18.4%	373	3.03
Charlotte	34,954	39.2%	155	0.44
Citrus	26,260	36.2%	275	1.05
Clay	20,661	21.5%	119	0.58
Flagler	14,830	27.4%	246	1.66
Hernando	34,462	41.5%	140	0.41
Indian River	25,931	34.2%	140	0.54
Martin	28,030	35.3%	67	0.24
Okaloosa	18,919	21.9%	373	1.97
Santa Rosa	15,410	19.7%	291	1.89
St. Johns	29,974	22.7%	99	0.33
Sumter	23,736	31.0%	157	0.66

Appendix D: County Vote-By-Mail Performance

Small & Rural Counties

County	Mailed Ballots	Percent Mailed	Rejected Ballots	Rejection Rate
Baker	1,675	15.9%	0	0
Bradford	2,946	27.6%	17	0.58
Calhoun	849	18.6%	13	1.53
Columbia	5,905	23.1%	117	1.98
DeSoto	2,141	23.8%	1	0.05
Dixie	1,749	29.2%	22	1.26
Franklin	1,566	28.1%	10	0.64
Gadsden	3,580	17.6%	31	0.87
Gilchrist	1,790	23.9%	24	1.34
Glades	929	23.8%	4	0.43
Gulf	1,264	20.4%	40	3.16
Hamilton	1,198	26.0%	0	0
Hardee	937	14.4%	3	0.32
Hendry	1,804	19.7%	15	0.83
Highlands	11,892	29.0%	79	0.66
Holmes	1,757	25.6%	9	0.51
Jackson	3,534	21.9%	7	0.2
Jefferson	1,309	17.7%	0	0
Lafayette	537	18.1%	11	2.05
Levy	5,549	31.7%	62	1.12
Liberty	442	16.0%	3	0.68
Madison	1,214	15.4%	33	2.72
Monroe	13,531	35.7%	357	2.64
Nassau	11,006	25.0%	16	0.15
Okeechobee	2,457	21.6%	30	1.22
Putnam	5,925	20.6%	68	1.15
Suwannee	4,074	25.2%	9	0.22
Taylor	2,150	26.8%	15	0.7
Union	880	18.0%	1	0.11
Wakulla	2,983	20.6%	36	1.21
Walton	6,201	19.9%	110	1.77
Washington	2,115	22.9%	37	1.75

Notes

Best performing counties highlighted in blue, with worst performing highlighting red. Percent of ballots cast calculated from Fla. Dept. of State, Division of Elections, 2018 General Election Reports: [Early Voting and Vote by Mail Report](#) and [Official Results, Voter Turnout](#). Vote-by-mail analysis of Florida Voter File, January 2019, 2018 General Election, performed by Dr. Daniel A. Smith and Anna Baringer, *University of Florida*.

Appendix E: County Vote-By-Mail Age Disparities

Small Counties

County	VBM Ballots Cast						Rejection Rate					
	18-21	22-25	26-29	30-44	45-64	65+	18-21	22-25	26-29	30-44	45-64	65+
Baker	41	38	38	224	548	786	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bradford	58	62	71	336	934	1,485	-	-	-	-	-	-
Calhoun	27	24	31	92	246	429	-	-	-	-	-	-
Columbia	97	114	139	540	1,973	3,042	-	8.77	-	2.96	2.23	1.18
DeSoto	28	37	47	151	565	1,313	-	-	-	-	-	-
Dixie	26	20	31	166	581	925	-	-	-	-	-	1.08
Franklin	21	30	27	100	483	905	-	-	-	-	-	-
Gadsden	71	77	103	415	1,149	1,765	-	-	-	-	1.04	-
Gilchrist	39	40	56	174	638	843	-	-	-	-	-	-
Glades	20	23	19	67	274	526	-	-	-	-	-	-
Gulf	24	18	26	100	402	694	-	-	-	-	4.23	1.87
Hamilton	21	20	21	121	426	589	-	-	-	-	-	-
Hardee	24	37	28	87	257	504	-	-	-	-	-	-
Hendry	56	42	53	184	611	858	-	-	-	-	-	-
Highlands	149	166	148	633	2,811	7,985	6.71	6.02	-	-	0.82	0.28
Holmes	24	44	31	187	615	856	-	-	-	-	-	-
Jackson	85	76	77	337	1,094	1,865	-	-	-	-	-	-
Jefferson	29	36	35	122	405	682	-	-	-	-	-	-
Lafayette	16	18	18	62	139	234	-	-	-	-	-	-
Levy	74	97	112	458	1,821	2,987	-	-	-	3.06	0.93	0.70
Liberty	15	11	11	59	134	212	-	-	-	-	-	-
Madison	19	35	41	113	369	637	-	-	-	-	2.71	2.04
Monroe	203	278	286	1,516	4,915	6,333	9.36	7.19	11.54	5.01	1.95	1.78
Nassau	197	190	217	1,176	3,588	5,638	-	-	-	-	-	-
Okeechobee	40	50	39	209	798	1,321	-	-	-	-	-	0.91
Putnam	62	87	104	477	1,860	3,335	-	-	-	-	1.18	0.69
Suwannee	78	74	79	314	1,267	2,262	-	-	-	-	-	-
Taylor	26	51	54	177	734	1,108	-	-	-	-	-	-
Union	18	30	35	135	315	347	-	-	-	-	-	-
Wakulla	64	77	89	403	1,023	1,327	-	-	-	-	1.08	-
Walton	124	108	108	633	2,195	3,033	9.68	-	-	3.00	1.59	0.92
Washington	40	61	55	209	718	1,032	-	-	-	-	1.81	-

Notes

Rates not calculated for categories with fewer than 10 rejected ballots. Largest age disparities, comparing age group to all older voters, highlighted in red. Vote-by-mail analysis of Florida Voter File, January 2019, 2018 General Election, performed by Dr. Daniel A. Smith and Anna Baringer, *University of Florida*.

Appendix E: County Vote-By-Mail Age Disparities

Large Counties

County	VBM Ballots Cast						Rejection Rate					
	18-21	22-25	26-29	30-44	45-64	65+	18-21	22-25	26-29	30-44	45-64	65+
Brevard	1,664	1,845	2,094	8,710	30,860	46,365	4.39	3.52	2.15	1.76	0.70	0.39
Broward	5,676	6,450	6,708	28,630	71,076	80,839	10.34	6.50	5.59	3.42	2.33	1.80
Collier	1,022	952	869	3,684	15,575	38,156	5.87	4.41	2.65	1.52	0.65	0.38
Duval	1,541	1,957	2,475	10,263	21,594	27,724	7.07	4.24	3.52	2.75	0.98	0.38
Escambia	605	829	1,164	5,424	11,258	16,082	6.61	4.70	4.64	4.33	1.17	0.50
Hillsborough	4,729	6,125	7,102	32,693	68,356	71,200	4.72	3.04	2.59	1.36	0.63	0.34
Lake	550	612	663	3,035	9,733	19,729	7.82	7.19	6.64	4.48	2.38	1.41
Lee	1,809	2,186	2,370	12,023	44,894	87,637	4.26	4.39	2.95	2.21	0.83	0.43
Leon	1,135	1,621	1,586	4,599	7,930	10,804	0.70	0.62	0.76	0.30	0.16	0.14
Manatee	1,062	1,152	1,225	5,901	22,346	38,958	2.26	1.39	1.14	0.86	0.60	0.38
Marion	522	645	624	2,641	10,939	28,246	-	0.47	0.48	0.49	0.25	0.14
Miami-Dade	6,981	9,079	10,186	41,441	90,326	118,110	8.44	6.25	5.42	3.19	2.01	1.32
Orange	4,225	5,491	6,307	25,942	51,669	47,445	4.09	3.33	2.55	1.43	0.87	0.65
Osceola	1,194	1,410	1,569	7,514	17,649	16,136	1.34	2.13	1.72	1.17	1.06	0.83
Palm Beach	4,132	4,488	4,398	17,188	45,895	84,994	5.78	4.37	3.52	2.01	1.16	0.85
Pasco	1,146	1,244	1,419	8,114	23,194	35,443	3.32	2.89	1.41	0.91	0.40	0.29
Pinellas	3,754	4,993	5,957	27,473	86,956	111,872	0.69	0.38	0.44	0.19	0.10	0.07
Polk	1,304	1,482	1,834	8,409	25,251	42,912	2.45	1.48	1.58	0.78	0.42	0.20
Sarasota	1,203	1,146	1,173	4,956	20,707	53,903	0.42	1.22	0.60	0.54	0.15	0.09
Seminole	1,587	1,937	2,116	9,017	20,422	22,717	6.81	5.94	6.10	3.32	1.71	0.96
St. Lucie	625	701	795	3,969	12,308	21,676	6.56	5.42	5.53	3.43	1.90	0.85
Volusia	1,204	1,506	1,650	7,264	25,754	44,168	7.97	8.57	7.03	4.90	2.49	1.41

Mid-Size & Rural Counties

County	VBM Ballots Cast						Rejection Rate					
	18-21	22-25	26-29	30-44	45-64	65+	18-21	22-25	26-29	30-44	45-64	65+
Alachua	1,094	1,696	1,613	5,301	9,379	13,038	7.40	7.02	5.08	3.41	1.80	0.80
Flagler	214	249	312	1,585	3,948	5,998	7.48	7.63	6.41	5.11	3.17	1.87
Citrus	301	342	335	1,487	9,465	23,024	3.99	2.05	0.90	1.48	0.45	0.30
Clay	270	254	274	1,329	7,031	17,102	4.81	3.15	3.65	3.01	1.45	0.60
Okaloosa	530	485	506	2,661	7,407	9,072	3.58	2.06	2.37	0.98	0.31	0.32
Bay	197	227	221	1,006	4,208	8,971	7.61	11.01	5.43	5.67	1.81	0.68
Santa Rosa	489	565	591	2,710	10,534	19,573	2.45	1.95	1.86	0.70	0.45	0.20
Charlotte	419	441	390	1,684	6,821	16,176	6.44	3.40	3.08	1.31	0.35	0.25
Hernando	614	513	446	2,007	7,810	16,640	0.49	0.78	0.45	0.35	0.29	0.17
Indian River	415	475	681	3,819	5,988	7,541	6.99	5.26	4.26	3.67	1.72	0.62
Martin	377	393	552	2,871	5,236	5,981	11.14	8.91	4.35	3.59	1.15	0.45
St. Johns	1,110	872	712	4,305	9,905	13,070	1.35	0.80	1.40	0.53	0.19	0.19
Sumter	59	87	84	517	3,702	19,287	5.08	4.60	1.19	2.71	0.81	0.54

Appendix F: County Vote-By-Mail Racial Disparities

Large Counties

County	VBM Ballots Cast				Rejected Ballots				Rejection Rate		
	Black	Hispanic	White	Other	Black	Hispanic	White	Other	Black	Hispanic	White
Brevard	5,788	3,895	77,591	4,264	72	60	526	72	1.24	1.54	0.68
Broward	38,453	34,345	110,170	16,411	1,098	1,076	2,683	614	2.86	3.13	2.44
Collier	790	2,940	54,787	1,741	31	41	339	17	3.92	1.39	0.62
Duval	12,046	2,622	46,276	4,610	220	40	509	109	1.83	1.53	1.10
Escambia	4,997	580	27,768	2,017	113	12	408	47	2.26	2.07	1.47
Hillsborough	21,763	23,956	130,802	13,684	286	293	926	208	1.31	1.22	0.71
Lake	2,315	2,045	28,352	1,610	80	89	538	70	3.46	4.35	1.90
Lee	4,362	7,445	133,899	5,213	92	127	975	68	2.11	1.71	0.73
Leon	6,011	845	19,302	1,517	24	7	35	6	0.40	-	0.18
Manatee	2,859	2,350	62,783	2,652	39	33	292	22	1.36	1.40	0.47
Marion	2,953	2,055	37,174	1,435	12	13	56	5	0.41	0.63	0.15
Miami-Dade	33,366	169,761	57,224	15,772	968	3,738	1,164	534	2.90	2.20	2.03
Orange	19,378	27,390	80,345	13,966	294	461	636	250	1.52	1.68	0.79
Osceola	3,270	17,307	21,611	3,284	53	248	129	52	1.62	1.43	0.60
Palm Beach	16,822	12,579	120,824	10,870	357	249	1,387	200	2.12	1.98	1.15
Pasco	2,605	4,394	60,145	3,416	25	58	255	27	0.96	1.32	0.42
Pinellas	15,055	8,158	206,227	11,565	32	18	213	25	0.21	0.22	0.10
Polk	7,654	6,366	63,483	3,689	55	59	184	42	0.72	0.93	0.29
Sarasota	1,571	1,817	75,924	3,776	8	6	104	13	-	-	0.14
Seminole	3,731	5,757	43,619	4,689	116	165	788	148	3.11	2.87	1.81
St. Lucie	5,275	2,833	30,095	1,871	106	76	450	46	2.01	2.68	1.50
Volusia	4,215	4,088	69,904	3,339	187	205	1,424	144	4.44	5.01	2.04

Mid-Size & Rural Counties

County	VBM Ballots Cast				Rejected Ballots				Rejection Rate		
	Black	Hispanic	White	Other	Black	Hispanic	White	Other	Black	Hispanic	White
Alachua	4,255	1,444	24,101	2,321	126	62	443	105	2.96	4.29	1.84
Flagler	1,058	656	12,286	830	29	23	170	24	2.74	3.51	1.38
Citrus	452	492	24,386	930	6	5	245	19	-	-	1.00
Clay	1,501	864	17,108	1,188	13	10	85	11	0.87	1.16	0.50
Okaloosa	1,248	554	15,794	1,323	34	19	277	43	2.72	3.43	1.75
Bay	1,008	205	10,576	517	46	10	292	25	4.56	4.88	2.76
Santa Rosa	643	324	13,640	803	16	12	240	23	2.49	3.70	1.76
Charlotte	967	765	32,066	1,156	9	10	130	6	-	1.31	0.41
Hernando	1,245	1,850	30,218	1,149	11	19	102	8	0.88	1.03	0.34
Indian River	990	773	23,254	914	8	4	121	7	-	-	0.52
Martin	627	719	25,944	740	3	4	56	4	-	-	0.22
St. Johns	1,140	866	26,585	1,383	5	5	83	6	-	-	0.31
Sumter	494	277	22,377	588	4	4	145	4	-	-	0.65

Appendix F: County Vote-By-Mail Racial Disparities

Small Counties

County	VBM Ballots Cast				Rejected Ballots				Rejection Rate		
	Black	Hispanic	White	Other	Black	Hispanic	White	Other	Black	Hispanic	White
Baker	140	7	1,487	41	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
DeSoto	148	88	1,875	30	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
Franklin	123	8	1,421	14	1	-	8	1	-	-	-
Gadsden	2,058	35	1,390	97	25	1	5	-	1.21	-	-
Glades	29	32	841	27	-	-	4	-	-	-	-
Hamilton	262	12	902	22	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Hardee	42	82	788	25	1	2	-	-	-	-	-
Hendry	183	275	1,284	62	1	4	9	1	-	-	-
Holmes	21	7	1,691	38	-	-	9	-	-	-	-
Jackson	697	28	2,713	96	1	-	6	-	-	-	-
Jefferson	366	12	910	21	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Lafayette	5	8	519	5	1	-	9	1	-	-	-
Liberty	40	-	391	11	-	-	3	-	-	-	-
Suwannee	277	51	3,653	93	1	-	8	-	-	-	-
Union	69	8	793	10	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
Monroe	296	1,299	11,467	69	7	28	311	11	-	2.16	2.71
Highlands	599	752	10,193	348	14	9	49	7	2.34	-	0.48
Madison	373	10	797	34	17	-	15	1	4.56	-	1.88
Columbia	688	128	4,931	158	23	5	85	4	3.34	-	1.72
Bradford	256	18	2,585	87	-	-	15	2	-	-	0.58
Calhoun	82	9	735	23	1	1	11	-	-	-	1.50
Dixie	38	7	1,664	40	-	-	22	-	-	-	1.32
Gilchrist	17	26	1,711	36	2	1	19	2	-	-	1.11
Gulf	140	5	1,095	24	6	-	32	2	-	-	2.92
Levy	245	115	5,072	117	5	1	55	1	-	-	1.08
Nassau	530	158	9,932	386	1	-	14	1	-	-	0.14
Okeechobee	109	139	2,132	77	3	5	22	-	-	-	1.03
Putnam	582	129	5,048	166	9	4	53	2	-	-	1.05
Taylor	285	13	1,804	48	3	-	12	-	-	-	0.67
Wakulla	271	37	2,604	71	7	-	25	4	-	-	0.96
Walton	171	89	5,716	225	3	3	97	7	-	-	1.70
Washington	205	13	1,835	62	3	-	30	4	-	-	1.63

Notes

Largest racial disparities highlighted in red. Vote-by-mail analysis of Florida Voter File, January 2019, 2018 General Election, performed by Dr. Daniel A. Smith and Anna Baringer, *University of Florida*.

Appendix G: County Early Voting Access

Large Counties

County	Early Voting Access				Early Voting Performance	
	Locations	Days	Total Hours	Voters per Hour	Early Votes	Percent Early
Brevard	9	8	666	635	80,050	28.2%
Broward	21	14	3,528	333	299,154	41.8%
Collier	9	10	810	264	50,483	32.1%
Duval	20	14	2,250	270	164,682	43.1%
Escambia	9	13	1,170	182	39,052	29.9%
Hillsborough	20	14	3,360	255	172,818	32.8%
Lake	10	13	1,040	227	55,972	35.8%
Lee	10	13	1,040	429	67,760	23.1%
Leon	9	14	1,008	212	56,121	39.8%
Manatee	5	11	550	446	34,567	21.0%
Marion	9	10	900	270	43,445	27.8%
Miami-Dade	28	14	4,704	304	302,068	37.1%
Orange	16	14	2,240	356	177,643	37.1%
Osceola	6	10	600	365	34,936	30.1%
Palm Beach	14	14	2,352	397	174,427	29.3%
Pasco	11	11	1,452	242	56,634	26.5%
Pinellas	5	14	840	794	54,988	12.5%
Polk	9	11	891	468	54,412	22.0%
Sarasota	6	13	780	408	58,903	27.6%
Seminole	7	14	1,176	258	79,437	39.5%
St. Lucie	5	14	560	363	41,887	33.4%
Volusia	5	9	540	708	63,541	27.5%

Mid-Size & Rural Counties

County	Early Voting Access				Early Voting Performance	
	Locations	Days	Total Hours	Voters per Hour	Early Votes	Percent Early
Alachua	6	13	702	258	40,882	35.2%
Bay	6	9	648	186	40,015	62.6%
Charlotte	3	14	504	267	30,103	34.2%
Citrus	4	9	288	380	20,181	28.2%
Clay	6	9	540	284	37,410	39.8%
Flagler	3	13	312	265	22,941	43.0%
Hernando	4	11	352	380	17,137	21.0%
Indian River	3	13	312	364	23,844	31.8%
Martin	7	8	504	226	24,001	30.5%
Okaloosa	5	13	650	209	31,660	37.4%
Santa Rosa	4	13	520	255	27,316	35.8%
St. Johns	7	11	770	243	55,011	41.8%
Sumter	6	12	648	149	37,562	50.1%

Appendix G: County Early Voting Access

Small Counties

County	Early Voting Access				Early Voting Performance	
	Locations	Days	Total Hours	Voters per Hour	Early Votes	Percent Early
Baker	1	10	100	151	4,646	43.8%
Bradford	1	14	126	130	2,751	26.0%
Calhoun	1	14	132	66	1,685	36.2%
Columbia	2	8	144	280	10,565	42.2%
DeSoto	1	13	104	161	2,936	32.6%
Dixie	1	9	88	110	1,500	25.6%
Franklin	2	9	180	43	1,811	32.8%
Gadsden	4	14	488	60	8,622	42.8%
Gilchrist	1	8	78	151	1,800	24.3%
Glades	1	8	64	106	653	16.9%
Gulf	2	9	216	47	3,339	56.1%
Hamilton	1	8	64	121	1,207	26.3%
Hardee	1	10	80	153	2,483	38.4%
Hendry	2	13	228	78	3,729	41.6%
Highlands	3	10	240	247	12,639	31.5%
Holmes	1	8	71	151	1,662	24.3%
Jackson	3	9	243	115	8,504	52.8%
Jefferson	1	13	104	94	2,433	32.9%
Lafayette	1	8	64	68	853	29.9%
Levy	1	13	130	214	3,443	20.0%
Liberty	1	13	104	42	945	34.5%
Madison	4	8	266	45	3,295	42.9%
Monroe	5	13	520	104	9,748	26.6%
Nassau	4	9	288	232	17,210	39.3%
Okeechobee	1	13	104	198	4,074	35.9%
Putnam	3	10	270	175	9,373	33.1%
Suwannee	3	9	216	120	4,635	28.9%
Taylor	1	13	156	78	2,280	28.5%
Union	1	8	78	95	1,623	33.1%
Wakulla	1	8	80	260	5,303	37.1%
Walton	4	8	256	196	10,889	35.6%

Notes

Best performing counties highlighted in blue, with worst performing highlighted in red. Early voting hours and locations from Fla. Dept. of State, Division of Elections, 2018 General Election Early Voting Locations and Times Report. Percent of ballots cast calculated from Fla. Dept. of State, Division of Elections, 2018 General Election Reports: Early Voting and Official Results, Voter Turnout.

Appendix H: County Polling Place Accessibility

Large Counties

County	Polling Location Type				Precinct Size	
	Precincts	Private	Religious	Public	Average	Largest
Brevard	171	12%	47%	40%	2,639	10,409
Broward	576	30%	14%	57%	2,044	8,775
Collier	59	36%	36%	29%	3,695	6,877
Duval	198	18%	55%	27%	3,057	8,390
Escambia	79	22%	52%	27%	2,700	6,879
Hillsborough	390	18%	54%	28%	2,211	7,640
Lake	102	47%	37%	16%	2,309	8,668
Lee	125	17%	65%	18%	3,555	9,424
Leon	161	14%	61%	24%	1,385	7,705
Manatee	70	36%	50%	14%	3,501	7,626
Marion	125	39%	41%	20%	1,943	5,334
Miami-Dade	783	10%	21%	68%	1,876	7,473
Orange	247	24%	52%	24%	3,250	6,840
Osceola	95	17%	15%	68%	2,588	10,687
Palm Beach	872	28%	22%	50%	1,185	3,808
Pasco	113	56%	27%	17%	3,188	9,596
Pinellas	300	22%	45%	33%	2,228	6,414
Polk	167	22%	61%	17%	2,489	7,984
Sarasota	99	25%	53%	22%	3,211	11,096
Seminole	80	15%	59%	26%	3,796	7,940
St. Lucie	66	33%	33%	33%	3,168	11,508
Volusia	125	14%	48%	38%	3,048	6,391

Mid-Size & Rural Counties

County	Polling Location Type				Precinct Size	
	Precincts	Private	Religious	Public	Average	Largest
Alachua	63	14%	49%	37%	2,889	7,266
Bay	44	14%	50%	36%	2,747	5,801
Charlotte	79	27%	18%	56%	2,002	5,785
Citrus	31	42%	39%	19%	3,554	8,710
Clay	47	30%	47%	23%	3,247	8,597
Flagler	23	13%	22%	65%	3,269	5,700
Hernando	39	31%	62%	8%	4,167	8,646
Indian River	38	26%	55%	18%	3,150	13,415
Martin	30	10%	40%	50%	3,790	6,054
Okaloosa	52	15%	69%	15%	2,609	9,038
Santa Rosa	41	12%	56%	32%	3,225	11,413
St. Johns	46	20%	39%	41%	4,045	10,411
Sumter	26	12%	12%	77%	3,730	7,528

Appendix H: Polling Place Accessibility

Small Counties

County	Polling Location Type				Precinct Size	
	Precincts	Private	Religious	Public	Average	Largest
Baker	9	11%	22%	22%	1,678	3,242
Bradford	14	29%	71%	0%	1,165	1,754
Calhoun	11	36%	0%	64%	588	1,411
Columbia	26	35%	0%	65%	1,838	5,511
DeSoto	15	7%	67%	27%	1,116	2,781
Dixie	10	30%	0%	60%	969	2,697
Franklin	8	25%	25%	50%	976	1,685
Gadsden	26	23%	54%	23%	1,189	2,688
Gilchrist	10	10%	0%	90%	1,171	1,722
Glades	13	15%	0%	85%	524	1,280
Gulf	9	0%	11%	89%	1,078	1,907
Hamilton	8	0%	13%	88%	963	1,555
Hardee	12	8%	50%	42%	1,019	2,223
Hendry	10	40%	20%	40%	1,775	3,690
Highlands	26	35%	31%	35%	2,381	5,709
Holmes	8	38%	13%	13%	1,334	2,314
Jackson	14	29%	21%	50%	1,994	3,401
Jefferson	15	27%	60%	13%	631	1,035
Lafayette	5	0%	0%	100%	864	1,100
Levy	13	15%	31%	38%	2,143	3,510
Liberty	8	13%	0%	50%	541	1,000
Madison	11	9%	9%	82%	1,075	2,255
Monroe	34	35%	24%	41%	1,613	3,103
Nassau	15	0%	40%	60%	4,435	6,392
Okeechobee	11	36%	45%	18%	1,843	3,357
Putnam	35	29%	26%	46%	1,346	3,013
Suwannee	16	44%	25%	31%	1,612	2,246
Taylor	14	7%	21%	71%	857	1,368
Union	11	55%	9%	36%	593	1,496
Wakulla	12	42%	0%	58%	1,717	5,289
Walton	22	32%	36%	32%	2,406	9,721
Washington	17	18%	12%	71%	1,307	3,701

Notes

Multiple precincts may vote at a shared polling place. Counties in the top 25% of their size category for largest precinct size highlighted in red.

Analysis of Fla. Voter File, January 2019, 2018 General Election, precinct addresses as published by the Fla. Dept. of State, Division of Elections and property parcel data from the Fla. Dept. of Revenue, performed by Proxeme, LLC.