



September 20, 2017

The Honorable Ken Detzner, Florida Secretary of State

Email: [SecretaryofState@DOS.MyFlorida.com](mailto:SecretaryofState@DOS.MyFlorida.com)

The Honorable Maria Matthews, Director, Division of Elections

Email: [Maria.Matthews@DOS.MyFlorida.com](mailto:Maria.Matthews@DOS.MyFlorida.com)

The Honorable Christina White, Miami-Dade County Supervisor of Elections

Email: [christina.white@miamidade.gov](mailto:christina.white@miamidade.gov)

Subject: Appeal to Extend Election Day and Early Voting Hours in Miami-Dade County  
Special Elections Due to the Impact of Hurricane Irma

Dear Secretary Detzner, Director Matthews and Supervisor White,

Common Cause Florida, State Voices Florida, the League of Women Voters Florida, the American Civil Liberties Union of Florida, Engage Miami, SAVE, LatinoJustice and the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law are writing to make an urgent appeal that you take immediate action to extend the Election Day and early voting hours for the Senate District 40 and House District 116 special elections due to the continuing devastating impact of Hurricane Irma on voters who wish to exercise their right to vote in these important statehouse elections.

As you are aware, Miami-Dade County and its residents were severely impacted by this storm. Many residents heeded Governor Scott's urgent appeal to residents to evacuate and take shelter away from their homes in Miami-Dade in anticipation of the hurricane's destruction. Mayor Gimenez issued a mandatory evacuation order for most of Downtown Miami and many other parts of the County. By Wednesday, September 7<sup>th</sup>, the evacuation order covered 700,000 Miami-Dade residents at risk for the storm surge. See, <http://miami.cbslocal.com/2017/09/07/miami-dade-hurricane-irma-preps-carlos-gimenez/>.

President Trump also approved a Major Disaster Declaration for Florida and federal disaster assistance has been made available for continuing local recovery efforts. At Governor Scott's request, the Declaration was expanded to include individual assistance for residents of Miami-Dade.

Although you and your staff and other dedicated State of Florida and Miami-Dade County public servants are working hard to recover from the devastation of this storm, much more needs to be

accomplished until Miami-Dade County residents are able to resume a semblance of their lives prior to this disaster and fully recover from the impact of Hurricane Irma. This storm disrupted virtually all aspects of the lives of Miami-Dade County residents. Not only were many of the County's residents unable to return home, but those that did return home had no electricity, refrigeration, food, water, internet or phone. Many of the residents also faced challenges because of the storm's impact on their employers and ability to work. Some residents lost the ability to earn income at all as a result of the storm, particularly residents who work hourly jobs and could not go in to work because of the conditions following the storm or because their employers could not resume business.

Given the fact that more than 1000 Miami-Dade utility customers still do not have power, face challenges with transportation due to vehicles being destroyed or severely damaged by the storm and the fact many roads remain damaged or filled with debris, life remains difficult for many of the County's residents as a consequence of this deadly storm.

Notably, as evidence of the continuing havoc wreaked by Hurricane Irma in Miami-Dade County, Mayor Gimenez just issued an Executive Order yesterday in which he extended a state of emergency for Miami-Dade County (See attached). As indicated in this Executive Order, the post-hurricane conditions in Miami-Dade County are continuing to require extraordinary and immediate action to protect public health, safety and welfare. Mayor Gimenez also recently wrote to the President to request disaster relief assistance for the nearly three million residents of Miami-Dade.

Since it is foreseeable that many of the voters in Senate District 40 and House District 116 are continuing to struggle to restore their personal lives, return to work and rebuild their homes and communities, we respectfully urge you to extend the early voting hours for the Senate District 40 and House District 116 Special Elections to the full twelve hours per day authorized by Florida law to ensure that the voters severely impacted by this disaster and who need additional time to cast their ballots in the remaining days of early voting, will be able to participate in these important elections.

Under Fla. Stat. § 101.657(d), the supervisor of elections has the clear legal authority to provide up to 12 hours per day for early voting. Under the current early voting schedule, only ten hours per day are allotted for September 21 and 22, and eight hours for early voting on September 23 and 24, 2017.

Therefore, we urge you to add two more hours per day for early voting on September 21 and 22, and four more hours on September 23 and 24, 2017 to ensure that voters severely impacted by Hurricane Irma are able to participate in these important elections and are not prevented from exercising their right to vote as a result of the aftermath of this deadly storm.

In addition, Governor Scott's Executive Order 17-236 gives the Secretary of State the authority to amend or suspend any deadline under Chapters 97-106 of the Florida Statutes to the extent the deadlines cannot be met by any County as a result of the emergency declared in Executive Order 17-235.

Therefore, there is ample legal authority to extend the Election Day and early voting hours under these difficult and unique circumstances to ensure that voters in Senate District 40 and HD 116, who continue to face challenges impacting their health, safety and welfare as result of this

emergency, will not be precluded from exercising their right to vote and participate in these elections.

Thank you for your attention and consideration.

Sincerely,

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State Chair, Common Cause Florida  
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2017 SEP 19 PM 1:51

CLERK, CIRCUIT & COUNTY OF  
MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLA.  
#1

**MIAMI-DADE COUNTY EXECUTIVE ORDER EXTENDING  
DECLARATION OF LOCAL STATE OF EMERGENCY**

WHEREAS, Chapter 252.38.(3)(a) Florida Statutes, authorizes political subdivisions to declare and enact a State of Local Emergency for a period of up to seven (7) days, thereby waiving the procedures and formalities otherwise required of the political subdivision by law; and;

WHEREAS, on September 5, 2017 at 12:30 p.m., County Mayor Carlos A. Gimenez declared a Local State of Emergency for all of Miami-Dade County for seven (7) days because of the threat posed by Hurricane Irma; and

WHEREAS, on September 10, 2017, Hurricane Irma began impacting Miami-Dade County causing severe weather conditions that left many County roadways blocked, rendering the majority of street signals inoperable and leaving approximately 1 million electrical customers in Miami-Dade County without power; and

WHEREAS, on September 12, 2017, the Mayor extended the State of Emergency for all of Miami-Dade County for an additional seven (7) days because of the impact of Hurricane Irma; and

WHEREAS, although conditions in Miami-Dade County have improved, thousands of County residents and businesses are still without electrical power and hundreds of traffic signals are inoperable, and

WHEREAS, Hurricane Irma created a significant amount of vegetative and other debris; and

WHEREAS, the County, cities and residents have promptly cleared much of the debris from roadways onto the swales adjacent to roadways all over the County; and

WHEREAS, although currently underway, removing the debris from the swales of roadways all over the County remains a massive task; and

WHEREAS, conditions continue to require extraordinary and immediate actions by Miami-Dade County in order to protect the public health, safety, and welfare; and

WHEREAS, Chapter 8B of the Code of Miami-Dade County authorizes the Mayor to extend the Local State of Emergency.

THEREFORE, as County Mayor of Miami-Dade County, I hereby extend the Declaration of a State of Local Emergency for an additional period commencing on September 19, 2017, and will continue for seven (7) days if not cancelled before that period of time. This Local State of Emergency includes all of Miami-Dade County.





Pursuant to this Declaration, further orders may be issued to protect the health, safety and welfare of the community. This specifically includes, but is not limited to, orders related to the items listed in the Declaration of Local State of Emergency issued by the Mayor on September 5, 2017.

Enacted:

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Ricardo A. Robles", written over a horizontal line.

COUNTY MAYOR

Date: 9-19-17 Time: 1:43 p.m.

Witness: \_\_\_\_\_

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "R. Robles", written over a horizontal line.

Cancelled:

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

COUNTY MAYOR

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Witness: \_\_\_\_\_

CLERK OF THE BOARD  
2017 SEP 19 PM 1:51  
LESLIE CIRIOU & COMPANY CP  
MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLA.  
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