



September 18, 2023

Dear Commissioner Pritchett,

The Florida Today newspaper recently reported that “(t)he Brevard County Commission has voted to eliminate funding for the mailing of sample ballots to all registered voters, as well funding for prepaid return postage on vote-by-mail ballots, from Supervisor of Elections Tim Bobanic's 2023-24 budget.”¹ We urge you to reconsider this decision at the Commission’s final budget hearing tomorrow, September 19, and to fully fund the Brevard County Supervisor of Elections’ budget request. Running secure elections that serve all voters requires secure funding, and it’s critical that voters are provided with the services and resources they need to access the ballot.

Brevard County voters like to vote by mail. In fact, nearly a third of voters (32.9 percent) voted by mail in the 2022 general election. All of these voters benefitted from the elections office providing paid postage for the return of their ballots. Paid postage for vote-by-mail ballots helps all voters, but it is especially helpful for elderly and disabled voters and others with health issues that impact their mobility. It also improves access for voters who are otherwise unable to go to a postal office to obtain postage to return their ballots. Given the statutory limits on who can help a voter return their vote-by-mail ballots under FLST 101.62, a voter’s ability to reach a post office should not be a determining factor on their ability to cast their vote in their preferred method.²

1

https://news.yahoo.com/brevard-county-commissions-3-2-092459808.html?guccounter=1&guce_referrer=aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuZ29vZ2xlLmNvbS8&guce_referrer_sig=AQAAAEBoDkdMnES5Bpdo_1a4Xlxi428DvgJNpUn6HEyPwTwc-Q8SW7E3h678NbjwEpeFXTczXJHT8_HQD4Akk9LRrGH7GA7oD7_sd6DVSV_7CubQzPxEPPrXvKxfjFDY9zY9qZqLJj5SNGbMcDaBuW2W0k_MYTyY-aeC_pgrX-K7xnK

² http://www.leg.state.fl.us/statutes/index.cfm?App_mode=Display_Statute&URL=0100-0199/0101/Sections/0101.62.html

Sample ballots are commonly used in counties throughout the state for good reason. Ballots can be confusing, as they not only contain candidates running for elected positions, but also contain municipal, county, and statewide amendments that voters may be unfamiliar with. Sample ballots allow for voters, *especially those who prefer to vote in person*, to familiarize themselves with their ballots and to be able to make the best-informed choice when they cast their vote. Many voters fill out their paper sample ballot at home and then take it to the voting booth with them to ensure that they make the right choices. This speeds up the process for themselves and other voters. Providing sample ballots digitally would not serve this purpose for all voters, particularly for seniors, those who are less tech savvy, and those without internet access. The Brevard County Commission should ensure appropriate funding to keep voters informed and educated about what their ballots will look like.

It's important to note that September 19 is National Voter Registration Day. Unfortunately, the Brevard County Commission is making budget decisions that will negatively impact all registered voters in their jurisdiction instead of giving them more resources. We urge you to fully fund the elections office so voters can receive sample ballots and paid postage to return their mail ballots. It is critical that not only voters be provided with the services and resources they need to access the ballot, but also that election supervisors get the funding they need as our elections officials throughout the state are struggling to cope with the rising costs of compliance with new state election laws and the upcoming presidential election.³

Sincerely

Brad Ashwell
Florida State Director
All Voting is Local Action