

May 28th, 2024

Seminole County Commissioners Lee Constantine, Bob Dalmatian, Andria Here, Amy Lockhart & Jay Zenbower

Seminole County Services Building
1101 E. First Street
Sanford, FL 32771

Dear Commissioners,

As community organizations working to safeguard our democracy and encourage access to the ballot box, we are writing to urge you to support a crucial, pro-voter initiative: providing paid postage for the return of vote-by-mail ballots in your county. In 2020, 109,704 voters in Seminole County utilized vote-by-mail. As organizations deeply committed to democratic participation and equitable access to voting, we believe that eliminating barriers to voting is essential for a fair and inclusive electoral process. Providing paid postage is one of the ways in which we can be one step closer to this goal.

The importance of vote by mail cannot be overstated, particularly in light of recent changes to voting in which voters are required to request their ballots each election cycle. However, we have observed that requiring voters to pay for postage on their mail-in ballots creates an unnecessary burden, especially for those who may already face financial, or other, barriers to voting. [A recent study by All Voting is Local found that](#) "only 28% of 18- to 29-year-olds have U.S. postage stamps at home, and just 36% have envelopes at home for mailing. Overall only 52% of all voters have U.S. postage paid stamps."

We've found that in neighboring counties with slightly larger populations like Brevard, the cost to provide paid postage for vote-by-mail was less than \$60,000. **By covering the cost of postage for mail-in ballots, your county can ensure that all eligible voters have equal access to participate in our democratic process and will encourage participation.** This investment will remove a potential obstacle to voting and help to promote voter turnout and engagement in Seminole County. Making it easier for voters to vote by mail also saves the election office money and administrative burdens, because it reduces the number of people who vote in person.

We recognize that implementing paid postage for vote-by-mail may require budgetary adjustments, but we firmly believe that the benefits far outweigh the very minimal costs. As partners dedicated to advancing civic participation and democratic values, we stand ready to

support and collaborate with you in this important endeavor. Together, we can take meaningful action to ensure that every voice is heard and every vote counts in Seminole County.

If you have any questions, please contact Brad Ashwell via email at brad@allvotingislocal.org. Thank you for your attention to this critical issue, and we hope you will support this important endeavor.

Sincerely,



Sources:

- <https://files.floridados.gov/media/706191/2022-ge-rptstatuscountsarchive-ev-vbm.pdf>
- <https://allvotingislocal.org/wp-content/uploads/All-Voting-Report -The-Cost-of-Voter-Suppression-APRIL-2024.pdf>