Traditionally, as Supervisor of Elections, I go out of my way to avoid controversy and conflict. My job is to implement new laws and manage elections, no matter what laws or rules may change. But there was some legislation that passed in the 2011 session that was, in my humble opinion so egregious that I felt I had to bring it to the attention of all interested citizens. That law change has to do with third party voter registration. It was brought to the forefront in my office last week when the Department of Elections received by mail a packet of 50 completed applications of pre registrations from a public high school in Volusia County. These applications were from high school seniors who were 17 years old and are allowed to pre register. They were dated at the beginning of the school year (late), organized by a teacher (non registered 3rd party), and served as a civics lesson to those students who assisted (non-registered 3rd party as well). It was an emotional day when I had to forward this information to the Division of Elections as being non compliant.

Some of the highlights of the change in F.S. 97.0575 and Rule 1S-2.042 are as follows:

• Before engaging in any voter registration activities, any public interest group, candidate, sorority, fraternity, political party, church or anyone else who wants to collect voter registration applications must register with the State Division of Elections. The teacher in question was unaware of this.

• The division or the supervisor of elections is required to make voter registration forms available to third-party voter registration organizations which shall include information identifying the organizations. This is unenforceable. The applications in question were probably picked up at the library, post office city or county building, or on line.

• Each supervisor of elections shall provide to the division information on voter registration forms assigned to and received from third-party voter registration organization. This is unenforceable as there is no way to identify who picks up or prints the applications at satellite locations. In addition, there is no way to know who mails them in or drops them off at the department.

• A third party voter registration organization shall deliver to the division or supervisor of elections within 48 hours. A high school at the beginning of the year is a busy place. The Department of Elections, every year makes contact at least once to offer voter registration drives, but never at the beginning of the school year.

• There are fines ranging from $50 for each application up to $1000 assessed against the third party agent of record.

• The division shall adopt rules to ensure the integrity of the registration process. Some of those rules are:
  o The registration agent shall print the date and time that the applicant completed the application in a conspicuous space. Redundancy-The applicant is already placing the date he/she signed it.
  o By the 10th day of each month each organization shall submit to the division a form to account for the number of state and federal voter registration applications processed. This is an unnecessary restriction placed on volunteers.
  o Each supervisor of elections shall report to the division by noon of the following business day the number of voter registration applications provided to and received from each organization. This is unenforceable. How does one know if they are mailed in or dropped off and placed in a drop box?

What does this mean to everyone who is actively registering people to vote?

The Department of Elections can no longer give out blank applications to any non registered 3rd party organization. An inventory must be kept on a daily basis of all applications issued to an organization as well as those received. The questions that beg to be asked is how is this accomplished when packs of completed applications are mailed in or dropped off and left on the counter? How is this accomplished when the Department of Elections, on a regular basis provides applications to county and city government offices, post offices, wal marts, k marts, etc. How is this accomplished when anyone who has a computer can print blank applications from the Department of Elections web site @ www.volusia.org/elections? What about the increased cost to the county general fund as it relates to printing applications, postage, increased voter education requests, etc? Should I just set up a drop box for after hours applications to make it easier on all groups?

As Bob Dole used to say: WHERE IS THE OUTRAGE?