



**Lisa Lewis**  
**Supervisor of Elections**  
**County of Volusia**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** July 25, 2018

**CONTACT:** Lisa Lewis, 386-878-6100

**Be Informed...Be Election Ready!**

In Florida, the deadline to register to vote or change your party affiliation is 29 days before an upcoming election. The deadline for the August 28, 2018 Primary is Monday, July 30, 2018. The Department of Elections office will be open until 7 pm on this day.

It is not required to declare a party preference. However, you should know Florida is a closed primary state. To vote in a partisan primary election, you must be registered in the party for which the primary is being held. If you are registered in a minor party or with no party affiliation, you limit your vote in the primaries to only non-partisan candidates and issues. In the general election, party affiliation is not an issue. You may vote for any candidate, regardless of party preference.

All county races in Volusia County are non-partisan with the exception of the Clerk of the Court. Municipal elections are non-partisan as well. There are races in the primary for everyone to vote on. For example; school board and judicial races are always on the primary ballot. Some races may even be decided in the primary election.

The mailing of vote by mail ballots begins on the 35<sup>th</sup> day before an election; July 24 was the initial mailing for the upcoming primary. Many are under the misconception that these ballots are not counted unless needed. In fact these are the first ballots tabulated in an election; beginning when the canvassing board convenes for their first meeting. Vote by mail ballots are tabulated daily; however, results are not released until the official closing of the polls.

When a ballot is received at the department, the signature is verified; ensuring each voter is given credit for voting. Once canvassing begins, ballots are opened utilizing two person teams. The ballots are transferred between the team members; thus ensuring anonymity. Once ballots are accounted for; another team will tabulate. All ballots are stored in a vault which takes two people to access. At no time is anyone alone with ballots or equipment.

In 2016, more people voted before Election Day; with 27% voting by mail and 35% at early voting. Throughout the state of Florida, we are seeing a trend of people voting prior to Election Day.