

**Kaiti Lenhart** ★ FLAGLER COUNTY SUPERVISOR OF ELECTIONS

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**PRESS RELEASE:**  
**YOUR VOTE MATTERS IN THIS PRIMARY**  
**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – August 14, 2018**

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## **Your Vote Matters In This Primary**

By Kaiti Lenhart, Flagler County Supervisor of Elections

Each election year, it seems that election officials have the same conversations with voters to debunk the myths and rumors spread about the voting process. Voters would hear that absentee ballots are only counted when a race was close. Not true, I'd say. Mail ballots are counted in every election and are among the first results you see at 7:00 P.M. on election night.

This year is different. Now conversations are about our defensive posture against cyber-attacks and spear phishing. Voters are asking, "What are you doing to protect my vote?"

Election administration is now considered part of our nation's critical infrastructure. This designation, made early last year by the Department of Homeland Security, has opened a floodgate of resources for elections officials. It has changed the way we approach technology and conduct elections. Your Flagler County Elections Office has partnered with the DHS for a risk and vulnerability assessment of our network. We also participate in weekly network testing to ensure the voter registration database is protected. Our application for Federal grant funding to improve election security was recently approved for Flagler's portion of 19 million dollars allocated for Florida. This funding is vital as jurisdictions across Florida have made final preparations to harden their elections infrastructure in time for the 2018 election cycle.

In Flagler County, we're already ahead of the curve in terms of technology. Our voting system was upgraded last year to replace 19-year-old optical scan tabulators and touch screen electronic tabulators. Now every voter in Flagler County casts his or her vote using a paper ballot. Paper ballots cannot be hacked. The state mandates retention of every voted paper ballot, preserving the opportunity for a full audit of an election. Many voters do not realize that manual audits are required in Florida. After each election, the Canvassing Board randomly selects one race and one precinct for a manual, hand count of the ballots for comparison to the machine totals. Our rigorous testing procedures prior to an election and this manual audit afterward ensures each ballot has been counted exactly as each voter intended. In my experience over the past nine years, every manual audit in Flagler County has been 100% accurate.



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While the physical voting equipment has been upgraded, the vote tabulation server remains in a closed network and is not connected to the Internet. The voter registration database and vote tabulation database are maintained on separate servers, which allows for a full reconciliation of voter history versus ballots cast. This reconciliation also happens in polling sites throughout the day during early voting and on Election Day. Each of Florida's 67 counties maintain their local voter registration database and voting system. There is no single point of entry to affect outcome. In my opinion, the paper ballot, off-line tabulation and decentralized process are the greatest strengths of elections in Florida.

The mission of the Supervisor of Elections Office is to enhance public confidence, encourage citizen participation and increase voter awareness. Why? Your vote matters. Florida is the largest swing state in the nation. Our elections are so close that recent polling shows several races in this midterm could go either way. Your trust in the electoral process is essential for the success of democracy. Voter confidence has been shown as a strong indicator for higher turnout in elections. In other words, if you believe your vote is counted and makes a difference, you are more likely to show up at the polls. I believe that a well-informed and active electorate builds a healthy community.

Did you know that only 19.25% of eligible voters cast a ballot in our last midterm Primary Election? Your vote this year will send partisan candidates to the General Election for our next US Senator, US Representative in Congress, Governor, Attorney General, Commissioner of Agriculture and County Commission. At least one local, nonpartisan race (School Board, District 4) will be decided during this Primary on August 28. Party affiliation aside, every voter in Flagler County is eligible to vote for Circuit Judge and School Board races. All voters within the city limits of Palm Coast are eligible to vote for the next Palm Coast City Council Member in District 4. Let's make history and show the world that Flagler County cares about these national, state and local elected offices. If you have not voted in a Primary election before, I personally challenge you to vote this year. Every election is important! Voting has never been easier or more accessible than it is today. You can choose to vote by mail, vote early or vote on Election Day, August 28. Early voting begins this Saturday, August 18. Make your voice heard, vote in every election!

### ***Kaiti Lenhart***

#### **Flagler County Supervisor of Elections**

Office located in the Government Services Building

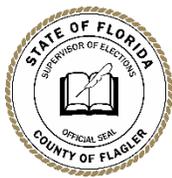
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 2018 Election Security Fact Sheet: <https://www.FlaglerElections.com/Security>



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### **2018 Primary Election Information:**

<b>EARLY VOTING SCHEDULE</b>	<b>VOTE BY MAIL INFORMATION</b>
<p><b>SATURDAY      SATURDAY</b> <b>AUGUST 18 - AUGUST 25</b></p> <p><b>10:00 A.M. - 6:00 P.M.</b></p> <p>Each day, including weekends.</p> <p><b>Early Voting Locations:</b></p>	<p>Any registered and qualified voter in Flagler County may choose to vote by mail. You may request a mail ballot in person, by mail, fax, online or by telephone. You must provide your name, address, date of birth, address to which ballot is to be mailed (and signature, if a written request). Mail ballot request deadline is August 22, 2018.</p> <p><b>Request your mail ballot and track the status the delivery online: <a href="http://www.FlaglerElections.com/VBM">www.FlaglerElections.com/VBM</a></b></p>
<p><b>1</b>      <b>Flagler County Public Library</b> Corner of Belle Terre and Palm Coast Pkwy 2500 Palm Coast Pkwy NW, Palm Coast</p>	<p><b>ELECTION DAY • PRECINCT VOTING</b></p> <p>You must vote at your assigned precinct on Election Day. All polling locations will be open from 7:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m. on Election Day: <b>August 28, 2018.</b></p> <p><b>Find your precinct online:</b> <b><a href="http://www.FlaglerElections.com/Precinct-Finder">www.FlaglerElections.com/Precinct-Finder</a></b></p>
<p><b>2</b>      <b>Palm Coast Community Center</b> Corner of Palm Coast Pkwy &amp; Club House Dr. 305 Palm Coast Parkway NE, Palm Coast</p>	
<p><b>3</b>      <b>Flagler County Supervisor of Elections</b> In the Government Services Building 1769 E. Moody Blvd., Bldg. 2, Ste. 101, Bunnell</p>	