MARK S. EARLEY
SUPERVISOR OF ELECTIONS
LEON COUNTY, FLORIDA

Leon County Canvassing Board Information

Canvassing Overview

The Canvassing Board is a group of local elected officials who oversee important parts of the election. This ensures that critical decisions about the election are made by a group rather than a single person.

The Canvassing Board is its own governing body. It is separate from either the Supervisor of Elections Office or the Board of County Commissioners. The primary function of the Board is the fair, accurate, and timely counting of ballots. The Chair leads each Board meeting. In addition to Board meetings, members oversee a variety of activities related to the election.

Membership

The membership of the 2026 Leon County Canvassing Board is:

- Honorable Nina Ashenafi-Richardson, Leon County Judge (Sitting member and Chair)
- Honorable Brian Welch, Leon County Commissioner (Sitting member)
- Honorable Mark S. Earley, Supervisor of Elections (Sitting member)
- Honorable LaShawn Donald, Leon County Judge (Alternate member)
- Vacant alternate member

Members cannot serve on the Board for an election if they are a candidate who has opposition in the election being canvassed or are an active participant in a campaign. If this happens, a substitute member replaces them for that election.

Per Division of Election's Advisory Opinion DE 09-07, an "active participant" means that a canvassing board member undertakes an effort intentionally to demonstrate or generate public support of a candidate beyond merely making a campaign contribution. The following activities would make a canvassing board member an "active participant" in the candidate's campaign or candidacy:

- Being a member of an election or re-election committee for a candidate
- Public endorsement with or without financial support of a candidate
- Holding campaign signs, wearing a campaign tee-shirt, or other public display of support for a candidate
- Signing an endorsement card for a candidate
- Attending a candidate's campaign fundraiser
- Chairing or co-chairing an ongoing election campaign or fundraiser for a candidate

However, the mere giving of a campaign contribution would not make a canvassing board member an "active participant."

P.O. BOX 7357 TALLAHASSEE FL 32314-7357 (850) 606-VOTE (8683) FAX (850) 606-8601 WWW.LEONVOTES.GOV

Canvassing Election Integrity

The Leon County Supervisor of Elections Office is committed to election integrity. We follow many safeguards to ensure the security of ballots during canvassing activities.

- At least one member of the Canvassing Board oversees any and all canvassing activities.
- Ballots and other election materials are kept in locked cages with one-time-use numbered seals.
- Whenever materials are unsealed, at least two staff members are present.
- Only red ink pens are used in the Canvassing Room. The tabulator does not read red ink.
- The canvassing room is under 24-hour video surveillance.
- All voting equipment is tested prior to use to ensure that it is working properly and accurately recording votes.
- Voting equipment is not connected to the internet. This includes both tabulators and audit/recount scanners.

Citizen Input

- Any person wishing to make a public comment during a Board meeting shall first complete a public comment card and provide it to an elections staff member at the Board meeting.
- The Chair will call on each speaker to provide comment during the agenda item relevant to the topic as indicated on the guest's comment card. Any comments not germane to any item on the agenda will be handled under other business.
- The Chair has the discretion to either extend or reduce the amount of time a speaker has, based on the number of speakers and the needs of the Board to process election materials in a timely manner.
- When the speaker's name is called, the speaker shall stand up and shall give the following information: name; place of residence or business address; whether they represent a group or a third party, and if so, the name of that group or third-party. Speakers should make their comments concise and to the point and present any data or evidence they wish the Board to consider.
- After the speaker has spoken, no questions shall be asked except through the Chair.

P.O. BOX 7357 TALLAHASSEE FL 32314-7357 (850) 606-VOTE (8683) FAX (850) 606-8601 WWW.LEONVOTES.GOV

Room Access

- Candidate, party, and committee representatives, members of the media, and members of the public are welcome to attend Canvassing Board meetings or observe canvassing activity.
- The full schedule of Board meetings and canvassing activity is publicly noticed.
- The meeting room has capacity limits. If seating or space is limited, priority will be given to credentialed candidate, party, and committee representatives. Other persons may observe through the viewing gallery adjacent to the meeting room.
- Persons attending Board meetings or observing canvasing activity shall remain within the public seating area or viewing gallery.
- Firearms and weapons are not permitted in the Elections Center during Canvassing Board meetings, canvassing activity periods, or other voting activity. A concealed weapons license does not exempt someone from this prohibition. However, the Board may authorize law enforcement to provide security during Board meetings or canvassing activity, and such sworn officers are exempt from this prohibition.

Decorum

- The Chair shall preserve order and decorum at Board meetings.
- Outside of Board meetings, the Board member responsible for overseeing operations within the canvassing room shall preserve order and decorum.
- Individuals attending Board meetings or observing canvassing activities must silence their phones and other electronic devices.
- Order must be preserved. No person shall, by speech or otherwise, delay or interrupt the proceedings or the peace of the Board or disturb canvassing operations. No person shall refuse to obey the orders of the Chair or Board member responsible for preserving order, or the rules of decorum.
- Members of the public shall not interrupt Board meetings, except to make a reasonable objection as provided by law or to respond to an inquiry from the Chair.
- Any person making irrelevant, impertinent, or slanderous remarks or who becomes boisterous shall not be considered orderly.
- Any person who becomes disorderly during a Board meeting shall be cautioned by the Chair. Any person failing to comply as cautioned shall be barred from making any additional comments during the meeting by the Chair.
- Any person who becomes disruptive or interferes with the orderly business of the Board or of canvassing activity may be removed from the canvassing room or other meeting room for the remainder of the meeting or processing period and all future meetings of the ongoing election cycle.

P.O. BOX 7357 TALLAHASSEE FL 32314-7357 (850) 606-VOTE (8683) FAX (850) 606-8601 WWW.LEONVOTES.GOV

- If the Board member responsible for preserving order declares an individual out of order, he or she will be requested to leave Elections Center. If the person does not do so, he or she is subject to removal and may be arrested by the Sheriff subject to Section 810.08(1), Florida Statutes.

Public Inspection of Election Materials

Per 101.572(1), F.S., unopened Vote-by-Mail ballot certificate envelopes are available for public inspection before each canvassing board meeting. These public inspection periods generally take place in the hours before each meeting of the Canvassing Board. Inspection periods end at the scheduled time so that staff and the Board can continue its primary function of fair, accurate, and timely counting of ballots. The full schedule is available at www.leonvotes.gov/Your-Elections-Office/Canvassing-Board

Observers may not physically handle Vote-by-Mail ballot envelopes, ballots, or other election materials. Voter signatures may only be viewed; they may not be copied, photographed, or recorded.

Per 101.572(2), F.S., candidate, party, and political committee representatives can request to inspect corresponding voter signatures during one of the public inspection periods. Individuals who wish to inspect corresponding voter signatures must make a written request by completing a request form. We must receive written requests no later than noon on the day before the inspection period will occur. Observers can submit requests by email to Vote@LeonVotes.gov, in person, or by mail. If requested, inspection periods will generally occur before each Board meeting.

During requested inspection periods, staff can provide a list of Vote-by-Mail ballot envelopes they will present to the Board at its upcoming meeting. The observer who requested a meeting can request to view an individual Vote-by-Mail ballot envelope and corresponding voter signature from the list. If there are more observers who have submitted requests to view election materials on the same day than available viewing stations, the observers must take turns between each individual request to view an item.

Observers may make a reasonable challenge to an individual document by completing a Challenge/Objection Form. Reasonable challenges or objections to Vote-by-Mail ballot envelopes, duplicated ballots, or other materials must be in writing and include all information required by Florida law. Upon receipt of the written challenge or objection, staff will segregate the challenged material and present the material and challenge to the Board for consideration at an upcoming Board meeting.

P.O. BOX 7357 TALLAHASSEE FL 32314-7357 (850) 606-VOTE (8683) FAX (850) 606-8601 WWW.LEONVOTES.GOV

Reasonable objections and challenges regarding matters being considered during a Canvassing Board meeting may be made orally during the Board meeting at the discretion of the Chair. The individual raising such a challenge or objection must record it in writing immediately thereafter as required by law.

Voters whose ballots have been challenged are entitled to due process under the law. As required by statute, our office notifies voters when their ballots are challenged and provides them with a copy of the written challenge filed against them. Staff will notify challenged voters to ensure they have ample time to dispute the challenge and provide any relevant evidence to our office.

Canvassing Board Meeting Information

In the weeks before and after Election Day, the Canvassing Board meets to conduct business. During meetings, the Board reviews Vote-by-Mail ballots, duplicated ballots, and provisional ballots. The Board also certifies the Logic and Accuracy Test, certifies the results of the election, conducts a post-election audit, and, if needed, conducts a recount.

The Canvassing Board holds periodic meetings in the weeks before and after each election. You can find information about the timing of meetings by viewing the canvassing schedule.

Read below for additional information on some of the activities that occur during Board meetings.

Vote-by-Mail Ballot Signature Review

We must verify the identity of a voter before they cast their ballot. When a voter casts a Vote-by-Mail ballot, staff verify their identity by comparing the signature on the outside of the sealed envelope with the signature on file in the voter registration database. (When a voter casts a ballot in person, we verify their identity by checking their photo identification.)

If the signature matches, staff present the sealed envelope to the Canvassing Board. The Board then votes to accept a batch of envelopes, authorizing staff to open them and tabulate the ballots within.

If there is no signature on the Vote-by-Mail envelope, or if the signature does not match, the voter can still ensure their ballot is counted. We contact any voters with missing or mismatched signatures, so they can correct the problem. The voter must complete a Cure Affidavit and send it to us along with a copy of their ID. The deadline to cure the signature issue is 5 p.m. on the Thursday after Election Day. If completed by the deadline, this cures the signature issue and staff present the envelope to the Canvassing Board for acceptance.

Once the deadline passes, staff present any uncured envelopes to the Canvassing Board for review, determination, and possible rejection.

P.O. BOX 7357 TALLAHASSEE FL 32314-7357 (850) 606-VOTE (8683) FAX (850) 606-8601 WWW.LEONVOTES.GOV

Provisional Ballot Review

If election workers are unable to confirm that a voter is eligible to vote at an Early Voting site or Election Day polling place, the voter has the option to complete a provisional ballot. The provisional ballot is a back-up voting option that protects the right to vote while also preventing fraud. After Election Day, election staff research and review the provisional ballot certificate and voter registration information. The voter can provide additional evidence to support their eligibility to vote until 5p.m. on the Thursday after Election Day. Staff presents their findings, along with any additional evidence provided by the voter, to the Canvassing Board. Based on the research and evidence, the Canvassing Board votes to accept or reject each provisional ballot. Staff will unseal the accepted ballots and tabulate them, while rejected provisional ballots remain within their envelopes.

Canvassing Activities Information

The Canvassing Board oversees a variety of election related activities. Candidate and party representatives, members of the media, and members of the public are welcome to observe these activities from the public seating area or through the viewing window.

Read below for information about the activities you may observe. Observers may not disrupt any of the canvassing activities. Check the schedule for the dates and times of specific activities.

Logic and Accuracy Test

The Logic and Accuracy process ensures that voting equipment is working correctly. This test checks both the voting and audit machines used to count ballots. During the test, election staff run hundreds of test ballots through voting equipment used at Election Day polling places, Early Voting sites, central count tabulators used for Vote-by-Mail ballots, and the recount/audit system scanners.

Testing is open to the public and anyone can observe the process. We welcome members of the public to assist us by randomly selecting Election Day machines to be tested.

Opening Vote-by-Mail Ballot Envelopes

After the Board accepts Vote-by-Mail envelopes, staff process them. Staff open each envelope and remove the ballot, which is concealed by a privacy sleeve. Staff then remove the ballots from the privacy sleeves.

While opening envelopes, staff will occasionally find two ballots in the same envelope or an empty envelope. In these situations, staff will set aside the materials and present them to the Board for review.

P.O. BOX 7357 TALLAHASSEE FL 32314-7357 (850) 606-VOTE (8683) FAX (850) 606-8601 WWW.LEONVOTES.GOV

Tabulating Ballots

Staff tabulate Vote-by-Mail ballots here in the Elections Center (Early Voting and Election Day ballots are tabulated at each voting site). We use a high-speed central count tabulator to quickly and accurately count the votes from batches of Vote-by-Mail ballots.

The tabulator cannot scan certain ballots, such as damaged ballots with heavy folds, tears, or stains. In addition, the tabulator will initially not scan ballots that appear blank, have overvotes (too many votes in a single race), or ambiguous marks. Staff manually review all of these unscanned ballots and sort them for additional review and processing.

Duplicating Unscanned Ballots

Staff review each ballot that the tabulator did not scan. Staff then duplicate those with clear voter intent by copying the voter's marks onto a new ballot. The duplication process does not mean that the votes are counted twice. Instead, this provides an undamaged and clear copy of the original ballot that the tabulator can scan. Staff mark both the old and new ballot with a serial number so that they can be tracked. After duplication by staff, the Board reviews the ballots before they are tabulated. If there are any ballots with unclear voter intent, staff present them to the Board so the Board can review and duplicate them.

Physically present candidates, political party officials, political committee officials, and authorized designees thereof may observe the ballot duplication process. They must first complete an affidavit affirming they understand that disclosure of election results discerned from observing the duplication process is a felony.

If an observer believes that staff have not duplicated a ballot properly, they may make a reasonable objection by completing an objection form. If an observer objects to the duplication of a ballot while it is being duplicated, the duplicated ballot, the corresponding original ballot, and the objection form will be set aside and presented to the Board at its next meeting. If an observer objects to the duplication of a ballot during a Board meeting, the Board will address the objection during the meeting.

Scanning Ballots into Recount/Audit System

In Leon County, we utilize Clear Ballot to assist with conducting audits and recounts. After the voting machine tabulates ballots, staff scan them into Clear Ballot. Clear Ballot is an independent tabulation system entirely separate from the voting system. Scanning of ballots occurs daily, soon after the ballots have been tabulated by the voting system. This allows us to rapidly conduct the audit and any required recounts.

P.O. BOX 7357 TALLAHASSEE FL 32314-7357 (850) 606-VOTE (8683) FAX (850) 606-8601 WWW.LEONVOTES.GOV

Post-Election Audit

After every election, the Board audits the results. Since ballots are scanned into the audit system daily, the audit process can happen very soon after the Board approves the official election results.

Florida law requires counties to audit ballots from at least 1% of the precincts, chosen at random by the Canvassing Board. Here in Leon County, we exceed that requirement by conducting a 100% audit of every election using a second certified system. Instead of examining a small percentage of ballots, we double check every voter's ballot to make sure that every vote in every race has been counted accurately.

Recounts

A recount does not mean that there was a problem or suspected fraud in an election. Florida law automatically requires a recount when election results are very close. There are two types of recounts: a machine recount and a manual recount.

If the unofficial results show that a race was decided by 0.5% or less, the Board oversees a recount of the ballots by machine. Since we have already scanned ballots into the recount/audit system, we can review and use those results for the machine recount.

If the results of the machine recount show that that a race was decided by 0.25% or less, the Board moves on to a manual recount. In the manual recount, the Board reviews all the ballots where the voting machines found either no votes or too many votes in a race. This makes certain that no votes have been missed, even those that have been poorly marked

The outcome of the recount is part of the official election results. The recount process ensures that everyone can be confident that their vote was counted properly in close elections. Like all Canvassing Board activities, recounts are open to the public.

P.O. BOX 7357 TALLAHASSEE FL 32314-7357 (850) 606-VOTE (8683) FAX (850) 606-8601 WWW.LEONVOTES.GOV