

WHO'S WHO? in Florida Politics



NATIONAL LATINA
INSTITUTE FOR
REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH
Florida LAN
Salud | Dignidad | Justicia



Voting is a public way of saying, “Our families count, and our voices matter!”

Civic participation means getting everyday folks involved in the decisions that affect our families and communities. Election season is an especially important time for us to speak up, and there are many ways we can all get involved in the process, regardless of our citizenship status or whether we can vote.

CAN I VOTE?

You must be 18 and a US citizen to vote. You must also be a resident of the county where you submit the application.

- If you were convicted of a misdemeanor, you can vote.
- In Florida, a person convicted of a felony cannot vote, serve on a jury, or hold public office until their civil rights have been restored through the clemency process.

WHAT IF I CAN'T VOTE?

Regardless of your voting status, you can still make a difference!

- Encourage and educate people who can vote.
- Share this guide at your church or with your neighbors.
- Write letters to your local paper about issues you care about.
- Volunteer with the FL LAN to support voter engagement and education.

IMPORTANT ELECTION DATES

ELECTION DAY Tuesday, November 8, 2016

Last Day to Register to Vote: **Tuesday, October 18, 2016**

STATE MANDATORY EARLY VOTING PERIOD

- First Day: **October 29, 2016**
- Last Day: **November 5, 2016**

In addition, each county Supervisor of Elections may decide to offer additional days of early voting before Election Day. Check your county Supervisor of Elections website for county specific early voting dates or visit: makeaplantovote.com

- Miami-Dade and Broward County Early Voting:
October 24, 2016 – November 6, 2016

The last day to request a vote-by-mail ballot is 5 p.m. on the sixth calendar day prior to the election (**November 2, 2016**). If you have questions about voting early, please call 1-866-OUR-VOTE or visit: www.866ourvote.org

To make it easier to vote, Floridians can vote on Election Day, before Election Day at early voting locations, or by requesting a vote-by-mail ballot to be mailed to your home. You can choose to vote by mail or vote early for any reason.

WHAT TO BRING TO VOTE

Florida law requires all voters to present one of the following forms of photo identification (ID) with a signature. Any of the following valid or current ID is accepted (ID cannot be expired):

- Florida driver's license
- Florida ID card issued by the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles
- United States passport
- Debit or credit card
- Military or student ID
- Retirement center ID or neighborhood association ID
- Public assistance ID
- Veteran health ID card issued by the US Department of Veterans Affairs
- License to carry a concealed weapon or firearm issued pursuant to s. 790.06
- Employee ID card issued by any branch, department, agency, or entity of the Federal Government, the state, a county, or a municipality.

If you do not have proper ID, you can still cast a provisional ballot.

NATIONAL ELECTED POSITIONS

US PRESIDENT

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU

Heads the executive branch of the federal government. Serves for four years with a two-term (eight years) maximum.

- Nominates the heads of all executive departments and federal agencies, including Department of Homeland Security.
- Proposes the federal budget for approval by Congress.
- Has the power to veto (reject) bills passed by Congress; Congress can overturn a veto with a two-thirds majority vote.
- Serves as the Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces.
- Appoints federal judges.



The president sets enforcement priorities for immigration laws. For decades, presidents of both parties have deferred the deportation of millions of people who entered the country without documentation.



Recommends funding levels for programs such as childcare, health-care, and domestic violence services.



Nominates lifetime appointments of federal judges and justices, who rule on issues such as equal rights and privacy issues.

US CONGRESS • Congress is made up of two separate bodies: The US House of Representatives and the US Senate. Together they form the legislative (law-making) branch of the Federal Government. There are no limits on the number of terms that a member of Congress can serve.

US HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU

There are 435 members of the US House of Representatives. All seats in the House are up for re-election every two years. The number of representatives from each state is based on population. Currently Florida has 27 representatives.

- Makes and passes federal laws.
- Decides the budget for federal programs.
- Determines federal tax guidelines.
- Can propose changes to the Constitution.
- Has the power to declare war.



Decides whether to expand or cut funding for programs such as Head Start, Medicaid, Cash Assistance, Social Security, relief for victims of natural disasters, military spending, childcare, healthcare and domestic violence services.

Creates federal laws governing immigration, healthcare, education, criminal justice, student loan interest rates, and labor and environmental protections

US SENATE

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU

There are 100 members of the US Senate. Each state elects two senators in a statewide election for six-year terms. Senate races are staggered so that only one senator in a state is up for election at a time.

- In addition, the Senate approves the president's appointments to important positions, including the US Supreme Court and the Cabinet (the body that advises the President, consisting of top officials from key departments).

Same as House of Representatives (above).

FLORIDA STATEWIDE ELECTED POSITIONS

STATE LEGISLATURE • The Florida legislature is divided into two parts: the Florida State Senate and the Florida House of Representatives. Proposed laws must be approved by both bodies and signed by the governor to become law. The legislature meets every year for sixty days. Special sessions can be called, as needed.

FLORIDA STATE SENATE

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU

The state is divided into 40 Senate districts and each district elects one senator. State Senate seats are up for election every four years, with a two-term limit (eight years).

- Initiates state laws in areas such as state taxes, business regulation, education, childcare, and conservation of natural resources.
- Shares budget-making responsibilities with the governor.
- Can override a veto by the governor with a two-thirds majority vote in the legislature.



Decides how much of the state budget should support public schools, higher education, or the CHIP program for low-income children.



Can propose expanding Medicaid, allowing low-income people to receive federal subsidies for health insurance.



Can propose laws to limit or expand access to healthcare, including reproductive healthcare; to raise the minimum wage; to ensure equal pay; and to oppose discrimination.

FLORIDA STATE REPRESENTATIVES

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU

The state has 120 House districts. Each district elects one Representative. All House seats are up for election every two years, with a two-term limit (eight years).

Same as Florida Senate (above).

LOCAL ELECTED POSITIONS

SCHOOL BOARDS (AND SOME SUPERINTENDENTS)

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU

Each of the 67 Florida counties has its own school district, and each one has a locally elected school board. School board members serve staggered, four-year terms so that the entire board is not up for election at the same time. Most are non-partisan (no party listed on ballot) elections.

- Adopts policies to guide the school district.
- Approves the annual budget.
- Serves as the public voice in the school system.
- In 26 districts the school board is responsible for selecting the superintendent, including Miami/Dade. In 41 districts the superintendent is elected independently.



Approves curriculum for use in the district on all subjects, including science, history, sexuality education, and civics.



Determines if district will use corporal punishment (paddling).



COUNTY COMMISSION

Serves as the governing body of the county and has broad powers to set policy for county services. Commissioners are usually elected by residents in specific “districts,” or are elected “at large” by voters in the entire county.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

- Determines policies for all services provided by county agencies.
- Provides metropolitan services like garbage and recycling, public transportation like buses and rail, public housing, and libraries.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU

-  Can provide financial support to community services, which support low-income women and families.
-  Makes zoning decisions that can either promote or prevent the development of low-income housing.



CITY COUNCIL OR COMMISSION

Creates city policies and ordinances. City council members are usually elected by residents living in specific “districts,” or are elected “at large” by voters in the entire city.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

- Sets city taxes and manages the city budget.
- Oversees all construction and improvement projects in the city
- Works with the mayor and city staff to develop city’s strategic plan.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU

-  Can provide financial support to community services, which support low-income women and families.
-  Makes zoning decisions that can either promote or prevent the development of low-income housing.


THE NATIONAL LATINA INSTITUTE FOR REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH (NLIRH) is the only national reproductive justice organization dedicated to building Latina power to advance health, dignity, and justice for 28 million Latinas, their families, and communities in the United States through leadership development, community mobilization, policy advocacy, and strategic communications.

NLIRH is part of **STRONG FAMILIES**, a national initiative to change how we think, feel, act, and make policy about families. Strong Families is a project of Forward Together.

THE FLORIDA LATINA ADVOCACY NETWORK (FL LAN) operates as an extension of NLIRH, serving as the voice and advocacy presence in Florida. The FL LAN works with activists throughout Miami-Dade County to organize our communities around issue-based campaigns that impact our families and our lives.

For more information, contact NLIRH at 786-664-8310 or 786-571-7973

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