

**Subcommittee on Elections of the Committee on House Administration
Hearing Titled: “Voting in America: Access to the Ballot in Florida”**

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**Testimony Submitted by
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Supervisor of Elections for Seminole County, Florida**

Good morning Chairman Butterfield, Ranking Member Steil and the Committee. Thank you for inviting me to testify today.

I’m Chris Anderson. I was appointed to office by Governor Ron DeSantis in 2019 and was elected into office in 2020, as the first African American constitutional officer in the history of Seminole County as Supervisor of Elections.

Prior to my appointment, I served in the United States Army serving in combat in Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. I am a former law enforcement professional serving as a major crimes detective, background investigator and truth verification examiner. Most importantly, I’ve been married for over 20 years to my high school sweetheart, Ebony and we have three beautiful children, Christopher, Christiana and Christian, who are witnessing my testimony today. It is my distinct honor to be here.

Recognizing that the 2022 elections are imminent and that election officials across the country are preparing for what is shaping up to be the most scrutinized mid-terms in our country’s history, it is important to highlight the steps we have taken in Florida to improve our election code.

It’s fair to say that most of us in this room recall the 2000 General Election. In the 20 years since, Florida and many other States have made great strides, culminating in an extremely accurate and administratively successful 2020 General Election.

Florida made improvements to allow voters more flexible voting options. We offer a no-excuse vote-by-mail option, that has proven to be quite popular, especially in 2020 with heightened health concerns. One of the things that set Florida apart from many other states in 2020 is the fact that vote-by-mail ballots are verified, opened, and tabulated in the weeks prior to the election. This process allows us to publish nearly complete vote-by-mail totals on election night. In addition, if there is an issue with a mail ballot signature, we have time to contact the voter, providing them an opportunity to “CURE” their ballot. This early opening process is advantageous to both election administrators and voters.

We also added an in-person Early Voting option. Since Florida was an early adopter of this method, we had to develop our own model which serves our extremely diverse population very well.

All counties are required to offer Early Voting, but each county has the flexibility to determine

the length of time, the voting hours and the number of Early Voting sites that will work best for its size.

Florida also has well-developed laws and procedures for recounts and post-election audits. This system provides clear guidelines for election administrators and candidates and gives certainty to voters when election results are close.

As Supervisor of Elections, I have witnessed the Florida Legislator, in particular my own delegation, work well with local election officials and our partners to improve the process.

There have also been significant efforts in raising the professionalism of election officials.

Since 2000, over 1,300 elections professionals have received their national Certified Elections and Registration Administrator designation, with 119 of those from Florida.

The Florida Supervisors of Elections association developed the nationally awarded Florida Certified Elections Professional program. The FCEP program consists of 30 core courses plus renewal courses, and 120 hours of content instructed by experts on topics such as voter registration, election law, election workers, and more.

Since its inception in 2009, we have had over 800 participants, with 245 obtaining their Master Florida Certified Elections Professional designation.

In recent years election security has become a top priority. Partnerships between local, state, and federal agencies have been deepened to strengthen our ability to defend against cyberattacks from nation state actors and other groups.

In 2017, the Department of Homeland Security designated elections as critical infrastructure, and the Center for Internet Security formed the Elections Infrastructure Information Sharing and Analysis Center (EI-ISAC). Through the EI-ISAC, election officials have access to a cyber defense suite, including sector-specific threat intelligence products, incident response and remediation, threat and vulnerability monitoring, cybersecurity awareness and training products, and tools for implementing security best practices. Florida has used HAVA dollars to fund election security grant programs for local offices, where they have been used with success.

Recently, Supervisor of Elections across Florida are working on reprecincting which occurs after redistricting is completed. Supervisors are tasked with completing reprecincting, a requisite that occurs as a result of population growth and redistricting, is necessary to ensure that every voter has an equal opportunity to cast their ballot. This work directly impacts voters and it's our job to make sure Election Day voting precincts are reasonably placed to give every voter access to democracy.

I'd like to take a moment to share some statistics from Seminole County keeping in mind that our voting population is essentially divided into thirds.

Currently, Seminole County has a total of 335,035 voters. There are 114,826 Republicans,

113,667 Democrats and 99, 849 NPA/minor party affiliated voters. Of our voting population, There are 35,521 African American registered voters and 54,709 registered Hispanic voters.

During the 2020 election cycle, 36,213 Hispanic voters cast a ballot and 24,302 African American registered voters cast a ballot.

I'd like to thank you again for the opportunity to appear before the Committee today, and I look forward to your questions.