



CHRIS ANDERSON SEMINOLE COUNTY SUPERVISOR OF ELECTIONS

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House Administration and Elections subcommittee

Good morning Chairwoman Lee, and to all members of 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 I was elected into office in 2020, as the first African American constitutional officer in the history of Seminole County as Supervisor of Elections. I will also become the first Supervisor of Elections serving the voters of Seminole County to graduate with his Master Florida Certification in elections administration from the nationally awarded Florida Certified Election Professionals Program (MFCEP) facilitated by Florida State University.

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 Anderson. We have three beautiful children, Christopher, Christiana and Christian. It is my distinct honor to be here.

I'd like to take a moment to share some statistics from Seminole County. Currently, Seminole County has a total of 345,141 voters. There are 117,204 Republicans, 114,490 Democrats and 113,447 NPA/minor party affiliated voters, essentially, a third, a third, and a third. Of our voting population, there are 37,336 African American registered voters and 57,871 registered Hispanic voters. During the 2022 election cycle, 22,213 African Americans and 28,264 Hispanic voters cast a ballot.

As election officials across the country are presently preparing for the extremely busy 2024 election cycle, we pause to reflect on the lessons and improvements Florida has undertaken to transform itself from a punchline in 2000 to the gold standard for elections in 2022.

Over the last two decades, Florida has put the needs of the voter first, culminating in easy and accessible access to the ballot, as well as timely and accurate reporting of results.

We offer a no-excuse vote-by-mail option that has proven to be quite popular, especially in 2020, with heightened health concerns. Setting Florida apart from many other states, vote-by-mail ballots are allowed to be verified, opened, and tabulated in the weeks prior to the election. This process allows us to publish nearly complete vote-by-mail totals as soon as polls close on election night. In addition, if there is an issue with a mail ballot signature, we have more 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. As an early adopter of in-person Early Voting, Florida forged its own path, creating a model uniquely serving all 67 counties, large and small.



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All counties are required to offer Early Voting, but each county has the freedom and flexibility to determine the length of time, the voting hours, and the number of Early Voting sites that will work best for its size.

Echoing lessons learned from 2000, Florida has also revamped its 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.

Understanding that professional partnerships are crucial to the enhancement and continued refinement of our procedures, Florida's supervisors, legislators, and stakeholders have come together to ensure that Florida's elections remain safe, secure, efficient, and accurate while facing the challenges of administering elections in the 21st century.

In recent years election security has become a top priority. Partnerships between local, state, and federal agencies have strengthened 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 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 incredibly successful.

There have also been significant efforts in raising the professionalism of election officials. Since 2000, over 1,300 election professionals have received their national Certified Elections Registration Administrator designation, with 119 of those from Florida. I am proud to say I am well on my way to gaining the Certified Elections and Registration Administrator certification as well.

Going a step further, the Florida Supervisors of Elections Association developed the nationally awarded Florida Certified Elections Professional program. The FCEP program consists of 30 core courses, renewal courses, and 120 hours of content instructed by experts on topics such as voter registration, election law, election worker recruitment, and more.

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

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