



September 12, 2018

Dear College Administrator:

We are writing on behalf of Fair Elections Center's Campus Vote Project and NASPA - Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education to highlight an important opportunity to improve your students' civic participation. Because of recent legal changes in Florida, county supervisors of elections may now designate certain categories of campus facilities as early voting sites. To provide your students with improved access to voting and increase their civic participation, we urge you to collaborate with your local supervisors of elections to designate an appropriate location on your campus as an early voting site for the November 2018 election before the state's October 8 deadline to finalize elections plans.

In 2013, the Florida legislature passed a law allowing county supervisors of elections to designate as early voting sites, among other locations, permanent public library facilities, civic centers, stadiums, convention centers, and government-owned community centers.<sup>i</sup> Elections supervisors have been limited in their ability to locate early voting sites on campuses following a 2014 Florida Department of State (DOS) legal opinion that a student union at the University of Florida could not be considered a "convention center" or "government-owned community center" because the student union was a college- or university-affiliated facility.<sup>ii</sup>

Earlier this summer, a federal district judge held that DOS's legal opinion violated students' constitutional rights, leading to the recession of that DOS opinion. Therefore, the restriction on designating campus facilities as early voting sites is no longer in effect.<sup>iii</sup> County supervisors of elections may now designate any campus facility as an early voting site if it is a permanent public library facility, civic center, stadium, convention center, or government-owned community center (or otherwise falls under the statutory categories).<sup>iv</sup>

Early voting is important for Floridians, particularly college students, to access the ballot. In 2016, approximately 40% of Floridians who voted, cast their ballots at an early voting site. Student residences are often clustered on or near campus and typically contain some of the most densely populated areas of a community.<sup>v</sup> Given that students are disproportionately without access to cars, it can be difficult for them to reach off-campus early voting sites and Election Day voting sites.<sup>vi</sup> An early voting site on campus would mitigate these concerns and allow more students to have the same opportunity to vote as other Floridians.

Supervisors of elections must finalize the designation of early voting sites for the November 2018 general election by October 8, and many are already working on their plans. We encourage you to contact your local supervisor of elections office about hosting an early voting site on-campus as soon as possible.<sup>vii</sup> A list of the 67 county supervisors of elections can be found at <http://dos.myflorida.com/elections/contacts/supervisor-of-elections>.

If you would like assistance with advocating for an early voting site on your campus, please reach out to [mburns@campusvoteproject.org](mailto:mburns@campusvoteproject.org), and we would be happy to provide support.

Sincerely,

Mike Burns



National Director, Campus Vote Project



Kevin Kruger, Ph.D.

President, NASPA - Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education

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<sup>i</sup> Fla. Stat. § 101.657 (effective Jan. 1, 2014)

<sup>ii</sup> Florida Dep't of State, Advisory Op. DE-14-01, Re: DE 14-01 Early Voting- Facilities, Locations - §101.657, Florida Statutes (Jan. 17, 2014) (rescinded), *available at* <http://opinions.dos.state.fl.us/searchable/pdf/2014/de1401.pdf>

<sup>iii</sup> *Id.*; *League of Women Voters of Fla., Inc., v. Detzner*, No. 4:18-CV-2§51-MW/CAS, 314 F. Supp. 3d 1205 (N.D. Fla. July 24, 2018)

<sup>iv</sup> See Florida Dep't of State Advisory Op. DE-18-01, Re: Early Voting Sites *available at* [https://dos.myflorida.com/media/699780/sos\\_directive\\_2018-01.pdf](https://dos.myflorida.com/media/699780/sos_directive_2018-01.pdf)

<sup>v</sup> *League of Women Voters of Fla., Inc., v. Detzner*, No. 4:18-CV-2§51-MW/CAS, at \*8

<sup>vi</sup> *Id.*; See [www.federalreserve.gov/econresdata/notes/feds-notes/2016/the-young-and-the-carless-the-demographics-of-new-vehicle-purchases-20160624.html](http://www.federalreserve.gov/econresdata/notes/feds-notes/2016/the-young-and-the-carless-the-demographics-of-new-vehicle-purchases-20160624.html); See also [www.umtri.umich.edu/what-were-doing/news/more-americans-all-ages-spurning-drivers-licenses](http://www.umtri.umich.edu/what-were-doing/news/more-americans-all-ages-spurning-drivers-licenses); and <http://umtri.umich.edu/our-results/publications/update-percentage-young-persons-drivers-license-continues-drop>

<sup>vii</sup> <https://dos.myflorida.com/media/698197/elections-calendar-2017-2019.pdf>