

THE FLORIDA SENATE
2023 SUMMARY OF LEGISLATION PASSED
Committee on Ethics and Elections

CS/SB 7050 — Elections

by Fiscal Policy Committee; Ethics and Elections Committee; and Senator Hutson

The bill continues Florida’s commitment to the integrity of elections. The bill increases the security of vote-by-mail ballots, makes changes to enhance the accuracy of Florida’s voter rolls, and improves access to reports and data to boost voter confidence.

Specifically, the bill:

- Requires signature matching training for any person whose duties require verification of signatures of vote-by-mail ballots, affidavits, and petitions, and clarifies requirements related to voter signature updates.
- Strengthens regulations related to third-party voter registration organizations to protect individuals who entrust their personal information and voter registration applications to them.
- Requires additional information to be included on voter information cards.
- Implements recommendations from the Department of State’s vote-by-mail report to:
 - Require a uniform statewide application form to request a vote-by-mail ballot.
 - Require a vote-by-mail ballot mailing envelope to be clearly marked “Do Not Forward.”
 - Revise requirements for picking up a vote-by-mail ballot in person.
 - Provide that if two or more vote-by-mail ballots for the same election are returned in one mailing envelope, none shall be counted.
- Facilitates efficient identification of voters who have moved by enhancing processes for address list maintenance activities.
- Enhances frequency and content of information other governmental entities must provide to the Department of State and supervisors of elections for list maintenance activities that ensure eligibility of voters.
- Specifies that a voter undergoing eligibility review must vote a provisional ballot and provides implementing requirements.
- Enhances content of and revises timeframes for required post-election reports.
- Requires candidates to disclose specified information about outstanding fines related to elections or ethics violations.
- Requires specified information to be provided for presidential electors.
- Clarifies the felony for casting more than one ballot.
- Personally attaches fines imposed against a political committee to the committee chair if the committee fails to pay the fine within 30 days.
- Increases allowable fines for election law violations.
- Creates a new framework regulating voter guides.

The bill modernizes and streamlines campaign finance requirements by:

- Revising reporting frequency for political committees, candidates, and electioneering communications organizations to quarterly outside of the active election cycle.

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- Preempting local governments from enacting a reporting schedule that differs from that provided in statute.
- Adding text messages to the list of services and costs that do not constitute contributions that count toward specified limits.

The bill also:

- Saves from repeal under the Open Government Sunset Review Act an exemption for certain voter registration information received from another state or the District of Columbia.
- Prescribes requirements for use of a candidate nickname on the ballot and specifies how candidates with the same surname running for the same office in a general election may be distinguished on the ballot.
- Clarifies that resign-to-run requirements, which apply to persons who qualify for office, do not apply to persons seeking the office of President or Vice President because such persons do not qualify for office under statutory requirements.
- Clarifies the amount supervisors of elections can charge to verify signatures on local issue petitions vs. statewide initiative petitions.
- Modernizes notice requirements throughout the Election Code by authorize notice to be published on specified government websites instead of in a local newspaper.
- Modernizes requirements for precinct boundary data maintained by supervisors.
- Conforms the deadline by which provisional, special vote-by-mail ballots must be cured to the deadline for other provisional ballots.
- Modifies timeframes for meetings of the Elections Canvassing commission, submitting of county returns by county canvassing boards, and certification of presidential electors.
- Makes procedural and clarifying changes to county canvassing board provisions.
- Allows state committeemen and committeewomen to prequalify.
- Clarifies the required number of alternate members of county canvassing boards.
- Requires public, tax-supported buildings to be made available for use as early voting locations upon the request of a supervisor of elections.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2023, except as otherwise provided.

Vote: Senate 28-12; House 76-34