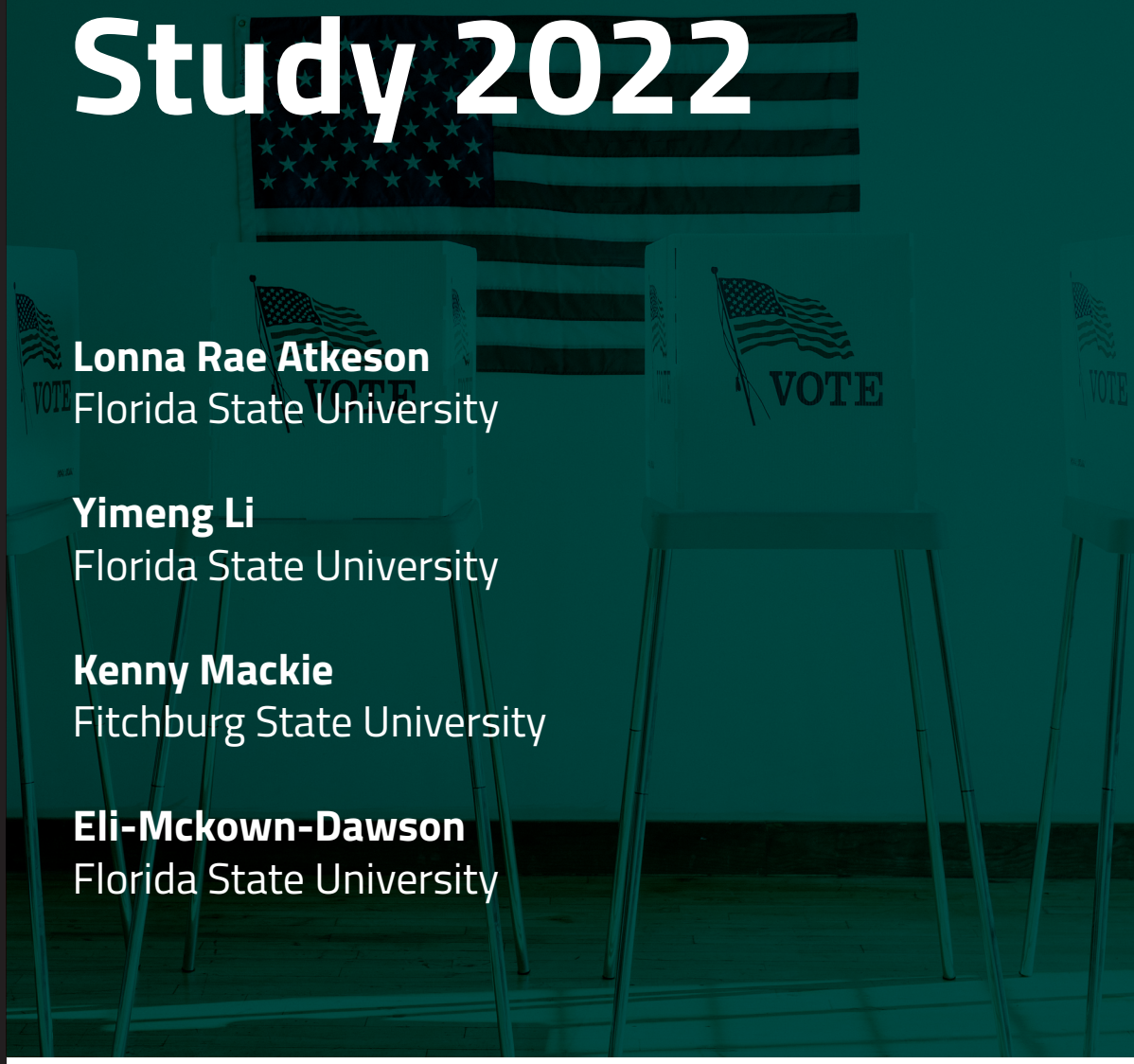
LeRoy Collins INSTITUTE

Florida Election Study 2022



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Executive Summary

The purpose of this 2022 Florida Election Study (FES), the second such semiannual study, is to provide the residents of Florida and the nation with a current and historical overview of the state of elections and election administration in Florida. It is also meant to be helpful to election administrators. It includes a number of recommendations based upon our election observations and a review of election processes and laws. The study combines information from different sources to provide context to the events and outcomes on the ground. These sources include the Florida Voter Registration File (FVRF), the Florida Secretary of State's Office and website, the Election and Administrative Voting Survey (EAVS), information on federal- and state-level campaign donations and spending from opensecrets.org, election observations completed by Florida State University (FSU) students in Leon County, and an original FSU-administered post-election public opinion voter survey. The public opinion survey assesses the experiences, confidence, and satisfaction of voters with the election ecosystem.

Summary of the 2022 Florida Midterm General Election found in Chapter 2

- In the 2022 general election, a total of 7,796,916 Floridians voted out of 14,503,978 who were registered, or some 53.8% of all registered voters.
- In the 2022 general election, turnout reached 49% of the voting-eligible population, which includes those who were not registered but were otherwise eligible to vote.
- In the 2022 general election, 33% of voters were registered as Democrats, 45% as Republicans, and 21% as NPAs and non-major party identifiers (i.e., Independents).
- In 2022, Republican Party voter registration surpassed Democratic Party registration for the first time. Republicans made up 36% of registered voters, Democrats made up 34%, and Independents made up 30%.
- Compared to the last midterm, in which the gubernatorial contest was closely contested, 2022 represented a substantial change, with GOP incumbent Governor Ron DeSantis winning the race easily with 59.4% of the vote compared to 49.6%.
- According to *Transparency USA*, contributions to Governor DeSantis's campaign over this election cycle totaled $202,048,288, making DeSantis the most heavily funded gubernatorial candidate in the nation's history.
- In comparison, Desantis' 2018 opponent Charlie Crist raised and spent $32,437,595, a more typical amount for a gubernatorial contest.
- The US Senate election outcomes also represented a substantial change in competitiveness, with incumbent Senator Marco Rubio receiving 58% of the vote compared to Val Demings' 41%.
- Florida received an additional Congressional seat as a result of reapportionment and redrawn Congressional district lines. The result was an increase in Republican-leaning districts. In 2020, Republicans held 16 seats and Democrats held 11, but after the 2022 election Republicans held 20 seats and Democrats held 8.

- Compared to 2020, when 43% of Floridians chose to vote by mail, only 36% of Floridians chose to cast their ballot this way in 2022. Meanwhile, 20% of voters chose to vote early in 2022, leaving 34% of voters casting their ballots on Election Day.

Summary of Key Findings found in Chapter 3 from the 2022 Florida Election Study Post-Election Survey

Vote-By-Mail (VBM) Voters

- Seven in 10 Florida voters (69%) cited convenience as the main reason for voting by mail, compared to 58% who did so in 2020. Only 9% of voters cited concerns about COVID-19, compared to 44% who had said this in 2020. Other reasons cited to vote by mail included disabilities (12%), being out of town (12%), work or school conflicts (9%), and other scheduling conflicts (10%).
- While almost 9 in 10 (88%) VBM voters filled out their ballot alone, roughly 1 in 10 (12%) filled it out with someone else.
- We find that 25% of voters dropped off their ballot at a post office box located at an official US Postal Service location, and another 36% had theirs picked up from their mailbox by the USPS. Additionally, 3% dropped off their ballot at an authorized voting center or precinct, 8% dropped it into a designated drop box, and 13% dropped it off at their Supervisor of Elections office.
- An overwhelming 97% of mail voters indicated that the instructions on how to vote by mail were very easy or somewhat easy to follow.
- About 56% of voters tracked their ballots through text or email messages. Given its popularity among those who used it, *we recommend a campaign to expand the number of voters using a ballot tracking program.*

In-Person Voters

- The average time it took for early voters to cast their ballot was 4 minutes, while for Election Day voters it was 5 minutes. Almost all voters – 95% – were able to do so in 30 minutes or less.
- Nearly all in-person voters (99%) either strongly agreed (83%) or agreed (16%) that their voting location was easy to find.
- Among in-person voters, 94% agreed they did not have to go far out of their way to vote.
- Once they arrived at their voting location, 93% of voters thought it was easy to park.
- Overall, nearly all voters (99%) agreed that their poll workers were helpful, with 74% strongly agreeing and 25% agreeing.
- We find that the vast majority of voters (94%) utilized a driver's license or state-issued photo ID to verify their identity. Just 1% reported showing a passport, while another 1%

reported showing another form of identification, and 4% of voters reported showing two different forms of ID to meet the requirements for both a signature and a photo.

- During our observation of the voter ID process, we found that poll workers strove to find a valid form of ID, including encouraging voters to sign the back or front of another ID in their presence even if that ID did not have a signature line – which we believe may not be consistent with the law. Therefore, *we recommend that poll worker training clarify what identification voters are allowed and not allowed to rely on as signature cards during this process.*
- Because of problems we encountered during our Election Day observation activities, *we recommend that university administrators communicate in advance with local election officials to better understand the process and how they can convey correct information to student voters to encourage their participation in the process.*
- Based upon what we witnessed during our election observations, *we recommend that counties encourage a uniform and efficient process across precincts to better serve voters by having one line for check-in and one line for processing voter address changes.*

All Voters

- Regarding the voting experience, almost all voters came away with positive feelings. The majority of VBM voters were satisfied, as reflected by the fact that when asked, "How would you rate your voting experience overall?" 67% of respondents rated their experiences as "excellent" while 30% said it was "good." Other types of voters had even more favorable experiences: 81% of early voters and 74% of Election Day voters said their experience was "excellent," while 17% and 24% indicated it was "good," respectively.
- Three-quarters (75%) of voters were very confident and 20% were somewhat confident that *their* vote was counted correctly. Thus, almost all voters (95%) were at least somewhat confident that their ballot was counted correctly. Only 5% of voters were not too confident or not at all confident that their ballot was counted correctly.
- However, we find that voter confidence declines as we move to larger units of government. Voters were slightly less confident in county-level results than they were regarding their own individual ballot, with 93% of voters indicating they were very (64%) or somewhat (29%) confident in county-level results. Only 7% reported being not too (5%) or not at all (2%) confident.
- A majority (56%) of voters indicated they were very confident of state-level results, and another 36% were somewhat confident. The remaining voters were not too (7%) or not at all (2%) confident.
- Voters were least confident of the nationwide results, with fewer than 1 in 3 voters (31%) indicating they were very confident and 27% reporting somewhat confident. More than 4 in 10 (42%) indicated they are not too (23%) or not at all confident (19%).

Summary of Key Findings found in Chapter 4 from the 2022 Florida Election Study Post-Election Survey

- Among vote-by-mail voters, 86% agreed that their ballot choices were kept private while filling out their ballot at home," while 99% of in-person voters agreed that their ballot privacy was protected.
- We asked voters if they observed any election anomalies. The highest portion of relevant answers was for the activity "Bribery or paying for votes," which 5% of respondents reported. Even fewer voters, 2%, reported observing voter intimidation at the polls, and less than 1% reported that they had seen anyone being denied the chance to vote, voting machines failing to record votes, someone using a false identity to vote, or someone stuffing ballots into an official drop box.
- A total of 4% of voters said they received a VBM ballot that did not belong to them or anyone in their household.
- We asked voters the following question: "Below is a list of possible illegal election activities that may or may not take place in Florida. How often do you think each event occurs in your state?" Voters believe that machine hacking is very unlikely, with 72% of voters indicating that it never or hardly ever happens. Voters also believe it is unlikely that ballots are tampered with and votes are changed by poll workers, with 71% believing it happens either never or hardly ever.
- More than one-third of voters (36%) believe that a voter is intimidated all or most of the time (5%) or some of the time (31%).
- More than one-third of voters (37%) believe that eligible voters are mistakenly removed from the rolls all or most of the time (5%) and some of the time (32%).
- About one-third of voters (34%) believe it is likely that a non-US citizen votes either all or most of the time (9%) or some of the time (25%), while 29% believe it is likely that voter fraud occurs with a false name and address all or most of the time (6%) or some of the time (23%).
- To assess attitudes toward the trade-off between vote fraud and greater access, we asked, "Thinking about elections and election reforms, which is more important to you: ensuring that everyone who is eligible has the right to vote or protecting the voting system against fraud?" A slight majority (56%) favor protection against fraud over system access.
- Voters strongly support voter file maintenance and purging voters who appear to have moved or are no longer participating. We asked, "Thinking about election administration, how important or not is it to ensure accurate voter registration rolls even if some eligible voters are removed and required to re-register for participation in future elections?" Nearly 4 in 5 (79%) responded that this was very important, with another 16% responding "somewhat important," for a total of 95% of voters indicating that clean voter rolls are important to maintain.

- We asked, “Do you support or oppose allowing voters to register on Election Day?” and 3 in 5 voters (60%) opposed Election Day registration, with 2 in 5 (40%) supporting Election Day registration.
- Voters do not support moving to all-mail elections. We find that almost 4 in 5 voters (79%) oppose moving to all-mail elections, with another 17% indicating they somewhat oppose.
- We asked, “When should a mail ballot have to arrive at the local election office to be counted?” Three in 10 voters (30%) indicated that ballots should arrive before Election Day, while just over 4 in 10 (42%) indicated on or before Election Day. Only one-quarter of voters (25%) supported counting ballots that arrived after Election Day with a postmark indicating that it had been sent on or before Election Day.
- Nearly 4 in 5 voters prefer machine counts (79%) to hand counts (21%).
- We find that 61% of voters strongly agree and another 29% somewhat agree that every state should have a post-election auditing process to ensure that votes were counted correctly. Only 1 in 10 indicate that they somewhat disagree (7%) or strongly disagree (3%).
- Overall, about 75% of Florida voters do not support compulsory voting, while 25% think compulsory voting is a good idea.
- Only 18% of Florida voters support extending voting rights to residents 16 or 17 years old. A total of 82% of voters do not support extending voting rights to residents 16 or 17 years old.

Chapter 1: Study Rationale, Background & Methodology

Florida has been in the election hot seat since 2000, when it was home to one of the closest presidential elections in US history: Republican candidate George W. Bush defeated Democratic nominee Al Gore in the final Florida tally by a mere 537 votes (just .009%). That year, two events marred the Florida election. First, in Palm Beach County, third-party candidate Patrick Buchanan received a larger share of the vote than anywhere else in the state due to voting errors caused by the county's confusing butterfly ballot design, which resulted in some voters incorrectly voting for Buchanan rather than Gore.[1] Second, the state was still using punch card ballots that led to incomplete or only partial detachment of candidate punches, also known as hanging or dimpled chads. This led to lawsuits between the political parties, prompting a statewide hand recount of the ballots. The recount stopped only when the US Supreme Court ordered the state to report its results to avoid the potential Constitutional crisis that could occur if Florida was unable to meet its "safe harbor" Electoral College deadline.

The chaos from the 2000 election ultimately led to the passage and implementation of the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) in 2002. The Act created the first national standards around voting, including the availability of provisional voting, a requirement for each state to have a statewide voter registration database, minimum rules around voter identification procedures, and administrative compliance procedures. HAVA also provided money for updating voting equipment and created the Election Assistance Commission (EAC), the second US Election Management Body (EMB) after the Federal Election Commission (FEC). Since 2000, Florida has continued to be an important state nationally due to its third-largest population, robust economy, diverse population, and consistently competitive presidential elections.

Although the 2022 Florida election had no major problems and was not in the post-election media spotlight, a highly polarized electorate still remains and the issue of free and fair elections continues to take center stage. Free and fair elections are one of the pillars of American democracy, but assuring a healthy democracy via a safe, secure, and efficient election process involves more than just ensuring that elections run smoothly. The public must perceive that voting is both accessible and secure and that results are determined fairly and accurately, without partisan bias or technological flaws.[2]

The Florida Legislature responded to the 2020 election with a series of election reforms, including SB 90 in the 2021 session and SB 524 in the 2022 session. The 2021 law made several changes to vote-by-mail (VBM). It also regulated the behavior of state officials during election litigation, prohibited the private funding of elections, restored the felon declaration of voting eligibility, and required the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles to assist the Florida Department of State in identifying voters who have moved. Election law changes

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[1] Jonathan N. Wand, Kenneth W. Shotts, Jasjeet S. Sekhon, Walter R. Mebane, Jr., Mchael C. Herron, Henry E. Brady, 2001, "The Butterfly Did It: The Aberrant Vote for Buchanan in Palm Beach County, Florida," *American Political Science Review* 95(4): 793-810.

[2] For research related to this question see Lonna Rae Atkeson, Eli McDown-Dawson, Robert Stein and Trey Hood, 2023, "The Cost of Voting and Voter Confidence," Southern Political Science Association, St. Pete's Beach, Florida, January 11-14.

passed in 2022 included establishing a special executive police force to investigate voter and election fraud, preempting or outlawing cities from using ranked-choice voting, and increasing the fines associated with certain election-related crimes, such as changing someone else's party registration.[3] [4] In mid-January 2023, the Office of Election Crimes and Security released an annual report that details its investigations of possible election law violations.[5] On May 6, 2023,[6] in a stunning and unexpected move, the Florida Secretary of State withdrew Florida from the Electronic Registration Information Center (ERIC), after it had joined the state-based institution in 2019.[7] ERIC is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization of state election officials whose primary purpose is to help the states maintain accurate voter rolls through data sharing and communication.[8]

In response to the recent events around elections, the LeRoy Collins Institute (LCI) at Florida State University (FSU) started a semiannual Florida Election Study (FES). The FES is to be completed after each federal election cycle and will examine and assess the quality of these elections by examining the experiences, confidence, and satisfaction of voters with the election ecosystem through a public opinion survey. In 2020, researchers used Florida opinion data from the national Integrity of Voting Survey, a survey project sponsored by the National Science Foundation.[9] In 2022, FSU funded, wrote, and administered its own post-election Florida Election Study Survey (FESS).

The FESS was conducted online after the general election using the Florida Voter Registration File (VFRF); more details of the survey methodology can be found in Appendix A. Surveys were solicited and completed between November 11, 2022, and February 9, 2023. Responses were weighted to represent selected demographics from the FVRF including county, age, gender, race/ethnicity, education, vote mode, and party registration, and education information was taken from the Current Population Survey (CPS).

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[3] Lawrence Mower, March 9, 2022, "Florida Legislature Sends Voting Bill to Governor Ron DeSantis," *Tampa Bay Times*, available at: https://www.tampabay.com/news/florida-politics/2022/03/09/florida-legislature-sends-voting-bill-to-gov-ron-desantis-desk/, accessed April 25, 2022.

[4] C. A. Bridges, July 20, 2022, "Election 2022: How to vote in Florida under DeSantis' new law. What's changed?" *Tallahassee Democrat*, available at: https://www.tallahassee.com/story/news/politics/elections/2022/07/20/florida-elections-what-you-need-know-how-vote-under-new-desantis-election-law/10086583002/, accessed August 1, 2022.

[5] For a copy go to: https://files.floridados.gov/media/706232/dos-oecs-report-2022.pdf

[6] The press release from Secretary of State Byrd can be found here: https://dos.fl.gov/communications/press-releases/2023/press-release-florida-withdraws-from-electronic-registration-information-center-eric-amid-concerns-about-data-privacy-and-blatant-partisanship/#:~:text=PRESS%20RELEASE%3A%20Florida%20Withdraws%20From,Partisanship%20%2D%20Florida%20Department%20of%20State.

[7] See press release from Governor DeSantis making the announcement here: https://www.flgov.com/2019/08/21/governor-ron-desantis-announces-florida-to-join-the-electronic-registration-information-center-to-enhance-election-security-ensure-accurate-voter-rolls/.

[8] For information about ERIC go to: https://ericstates.org/.

[9] The co-principal investigators on the NSF grant are Lonna Atkeson, Florida State University, Robert Stein, Rice University, and Trey Hood, University of Georgia. Further information about the study can be found at https://voteintegrity.blogs.rice.edu/.

In addition to the public opinion survey of Florida voters, this 2022 Florida Election Study (FES) uses a combination of different information from a variety of sources to provide a current look at the most recent election, along with a historical look at the election landscape over time. These include data from:

- The Florida Voter Registration File (FVRF);
- The Florida Secretary of State's Office and website;
- The Election and Administrative Voting Survey (EAVS), written by the Election Assistance Commission;
- Leon County (Florida) Supervisor of Elections webpage;
- An original FSU-administered post-election public opinion voter survey (the 2022 FESS);
- Opensecrets.org;
- General Election observations in Leon County by students in an FSU graduate-level class on election science.

A Look Ahead

Chapter 2 examines the macro characteristics of Florida voters in the 2022 election. It includes a historical look at voter turnout, partisanship, and the demographic characteristics of voters. It dives deeply into the gubernatorial election, including an examination of turnout differences between 2018 and 2022 and campaign finance records. It also reviews the US Senate and US House contests. Chapter 3 uses a public opinion survey of Florida voters to examine voter experiences with the voting process and voter confidence. Chapter 4 uses the same data to describe voter beliefs about ballot privacy, the possibility of voter coercion, and attitudes toward election reforms.

Appendix A describes our survey methodology for the FESS, while Appendix B provides a top-line or frequency report of all the questions in our survey.

Chapter 2: Overview of the 2022 Florida Midterm General and Primary Elections

2.1 Introduction

Chapter 2 examines the characteristics of the Florida voting electorate during the 2022 midterm election cycle and places this information in a historical context. Specifically, we examine various facets of voting behavior, including turnout and voter registration, over multiple election periods and geographic areas. We examine data from the primary and general elections and look at data on party registration, vote mode, and key demographic variables such as age, race, and gender. We rely mostly on administrative data such as the Florida voter registration and vote history files, as well as election results data from the Florida Department of State and other state and national data sources. At times, we also utilize data from non-governmental organizations, including the United States Elections Project.[10]

2.2 Voter Turnout

According to the Florida Department of State's Division of Elections, out of 14,503,978 registered voters, a total of 7,796,916 Floridians voted in the 2022 general election – or 53.8% of registered voters.[11]

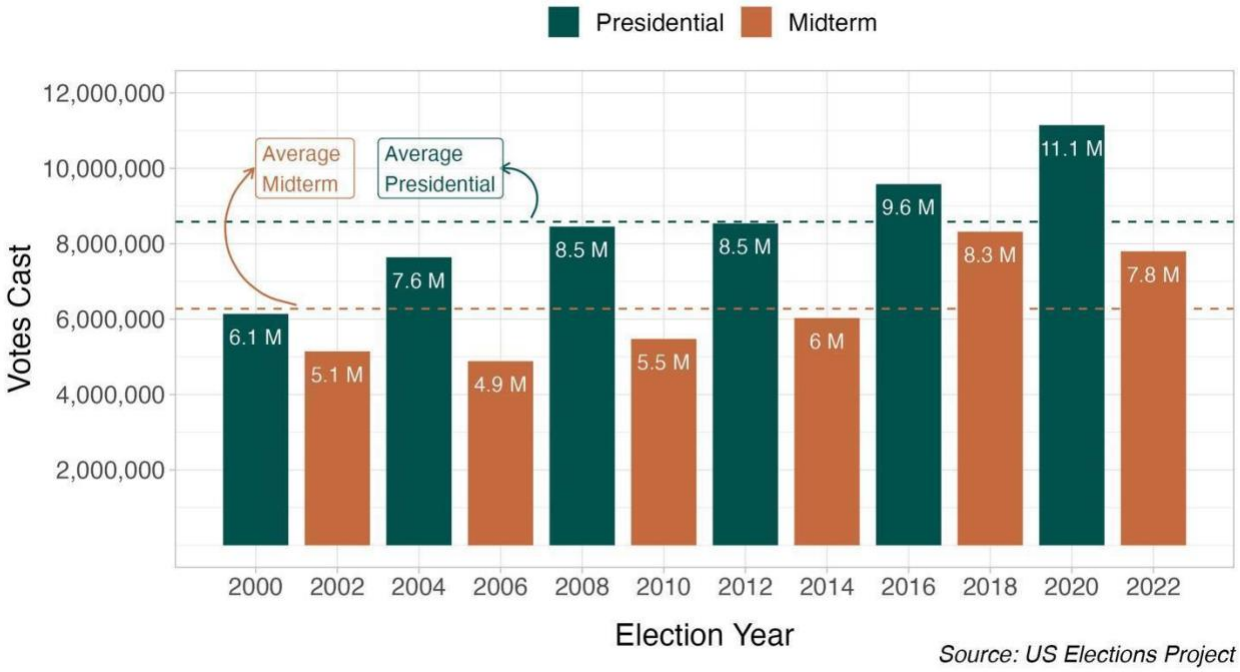
Figure 2.1 shows the rapid growth in the number of Floridians voting in elections between 2000 and 2022, with the dashed lines indicating the average number of voters across presidential and midterm elections.[12] Of course, presidential elections mobilize more voters than midterm elections, but the number of ballots cast in the last two midterm election cycles have been well above the long-term average – 1.5 million to 2 million higher. In part due to Florida's rising population, the number of voters has drastically increased over the past 20 years, with just over 5 million voters in the 2002 midterm election. This represents a nearly 60% increase in the number of voters turning out over the 20-year period.

[10] See https://www.electproject.org/

[11] Data available at: https://results.elections.myflorida.com

[12] Data available at: https://www.electproject.org/election-data/voter-turnout-data

Figure 2.1. FL Total Votes Cast in General Elections

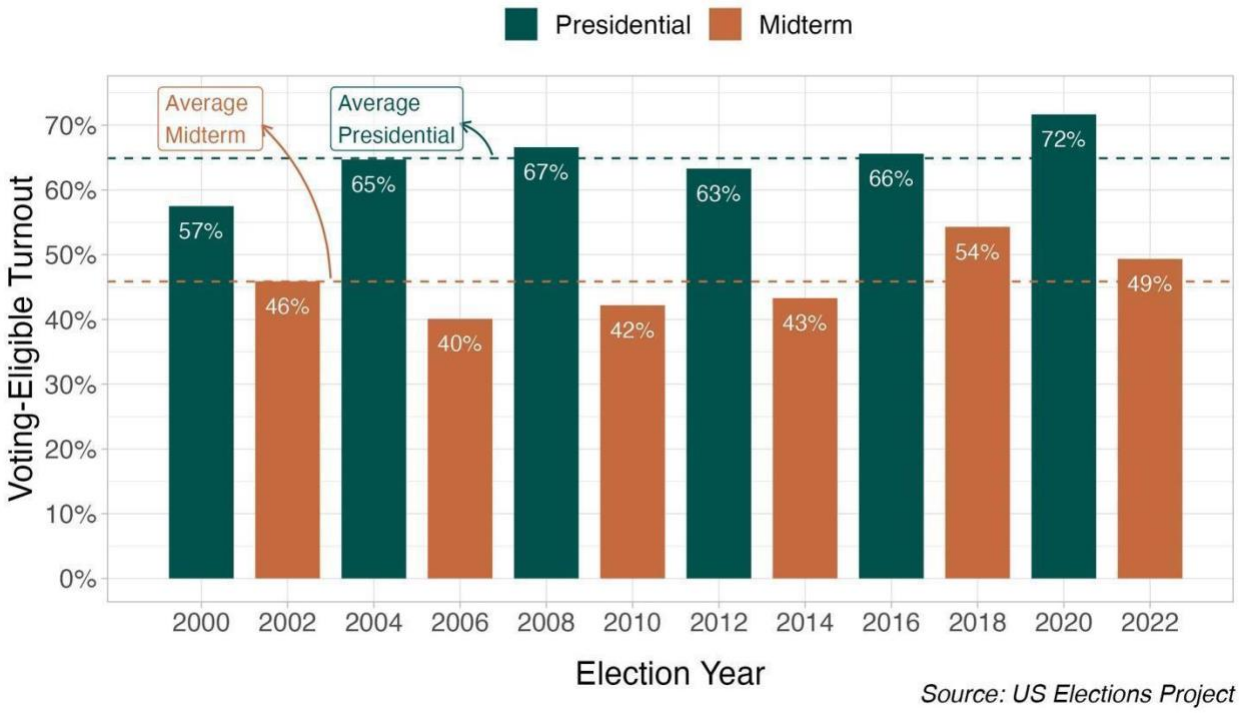


To account for changes in the size of the electorate, Figure 2.2 presents turnout as a percentage of eligible voters from 2000 to 2022. Eligible voters are considered to be all US citizens who are Florida residents at least 18 years old by the time of the election, barring restrictions due to criminal action or mental incapacitation. The figure includes the entire voting-eligible population (VEP) regardless of their registration status.[13]

The 2020 presidential general election had the highest turnout Florida has seen in over 20 years, with roughly 72% of voting-eligible Floridians participating in this historic election. The next highest VEP turnout was the 2008 election, with 66%. Both elections were presidential contests with substantial campaign activity against a backdrop of major economic and social crises (the Great Recession and COVID-19, respectively), and importantly in both years Florida was a battleground state.

[13] Notably, nearly 92% of the voting eligible population are registered to vote in the state – 14,503,978 registered voters out of 15,798,038 who are eligible. Data from 2022 voter file and US Elections Project, respectively.

Figure 2.2. FL Voting-Eligible Turnout Rate in General Elections



Source: US Elections Project

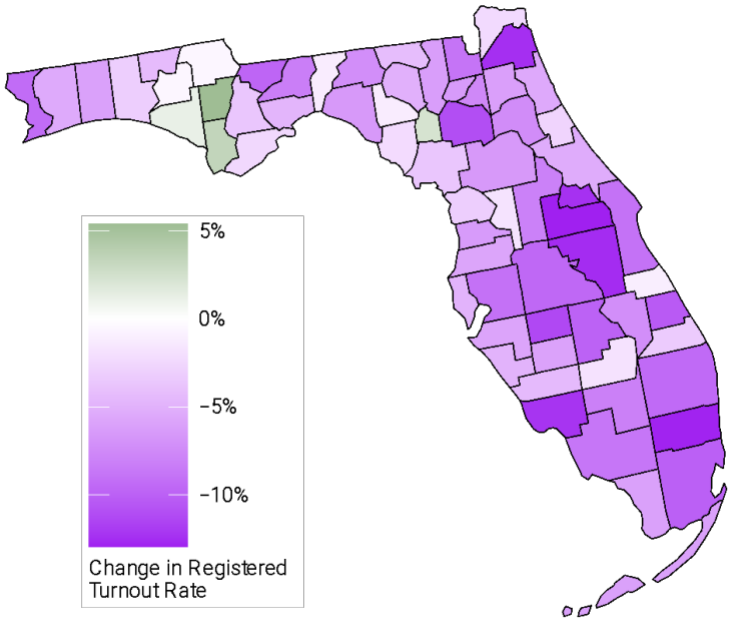
Midterm elections in Florida, however, generally show a precipitous drop-off in turnout — which mirrors trends seen nationally across election cycles. The average VEP turnout in the six presidential contests between 2000 and 2022 was 65%, while it was just 46% in midterm elections — a 19% difference. The 2006 midterm had the lowest VEP turnout at approximately 40%. The 2018 election had the highest midterm VEP turnout at about 54%, and the 2022 election reached 49%, the second highest midterm turnout in our time frame.

This reduction in turnout from 2018 to 2022 was not distributed equally across the state, with some counties even seeing modest increases. Figure 2.3 presents a heat map of the change in the turnout rate between 2018 and 2022 for each of Florida's 67 counties.[14] Counties with increased turnout rates are shown in green and those with decreased turnout are in purple. The darker the color, the more turnout increased (dark green) or decreased (dark purple). A couple of notable points stand out. First, we see that nearly every county had lower turnout rates in 2022 than in 2018. In fact, aside from Gilchrist County (the isolated green county around the Big Bend area), the only counties that saw an increase in their turnout rate were the three counties hit worst by Hurricane Michael, which made landfall on October 10, 2018 — less than a month before the election. Second, there does not appear to be a major geographic explanation for this change in turnout, such as between north and south, or coastal and inland counties. However, further

[14] This measure of turnout differs from the one used in Figures 2.2 and 2.4, as it uses the number of registered voters in the denominator instead of the number of voting-eligible residents. Since not every voting-eligible resident is registered to vote, the registered turnout rate will always be higher than the VEP turnout rate.

modeling of registered turnout found that "bluer" counties and those with larger numbers of registered voters saw greater declines in turnout.

Figure 2.3. Heat Map of Florida Counties Showing Change in Registered



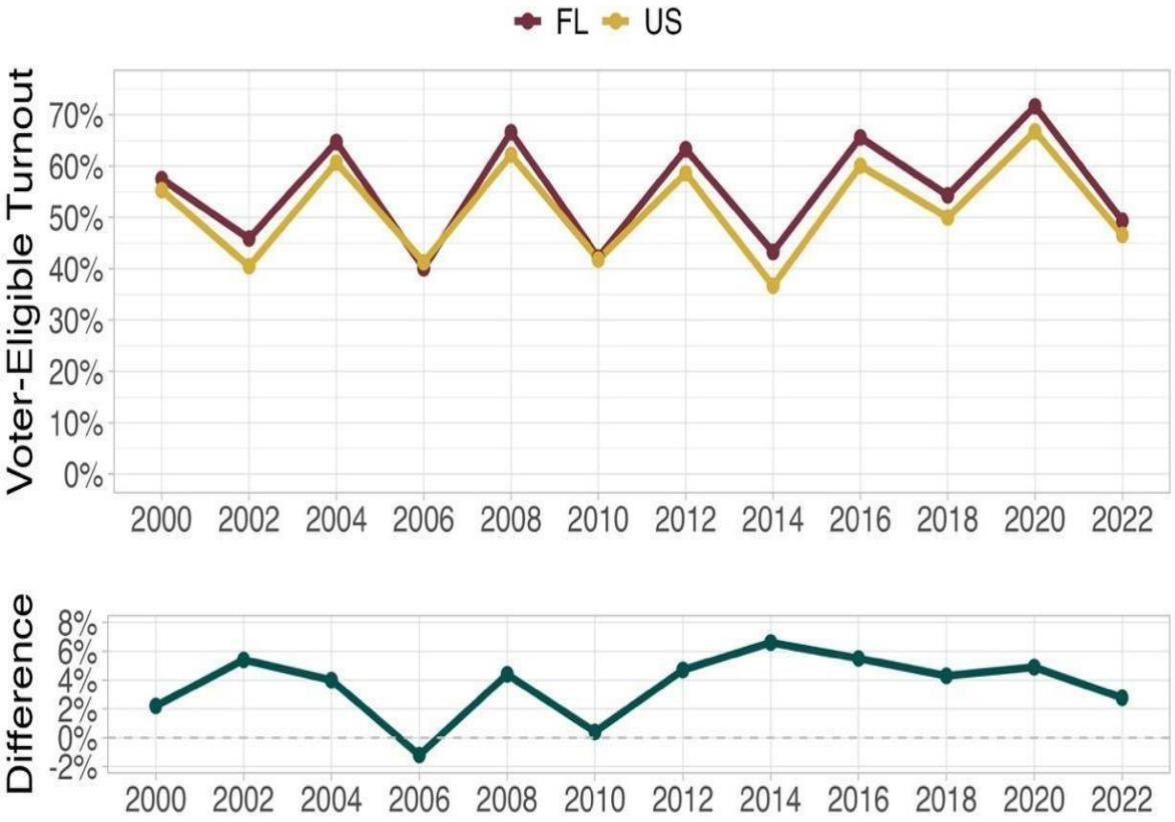
Source: FL DoS Election Reporting System

Turnout Rate 2018-2022

Figure 2.4 compares Florida's VEP turnout rate to the US average between 2000 and 2022. The top figure plots both Florida and US turnout together, while the bottom figure shows the difference between Florida's turnout rate and that of the US, with positive values indicating turnout was higher in Florida for that election. Other than in the 2006 election, Floridians have consistently turned out at higher rates than the nation, averaging roughly 4% over the national average during this time period.[15] This difference likely reflects Florida's history as a competitive two-party state in statewide elections — especially presidential elections — with a large number of electoral votes and Congressional representatives at stake, an older electorate, and a diverse constituency and economy.

[15] See http://www.electproject.org/ for more information on the VEP and voter participation rates across the US over time.

Figure 2.4. Difference in Voting-Eligible Turnout Rates (FL–US) 2000- 2022



2.3. Registration Versus Turnout

Florida residents have a multitude of methods through which they can register to vote. These include online through the Florida Department of State website, via mail using the National Voter Registration Form, in person at their county Supervisor of Elections office, at a local library, or through any entity authorized by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission to issue fishing, hunting, or trapping permits. Would-be voters may also register when accessing the services of the Florida Driver License Office, Tax Collector's Office, or any other voter registration agency. Additionally, Floridians can submit voter registration information when renewing driver's licenses online through the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles' online renewal system.[16] Florida does not, however, offer Election Day registration. Only Floridians whose applications are received at least 29 days before Election Day are eligible to vote.

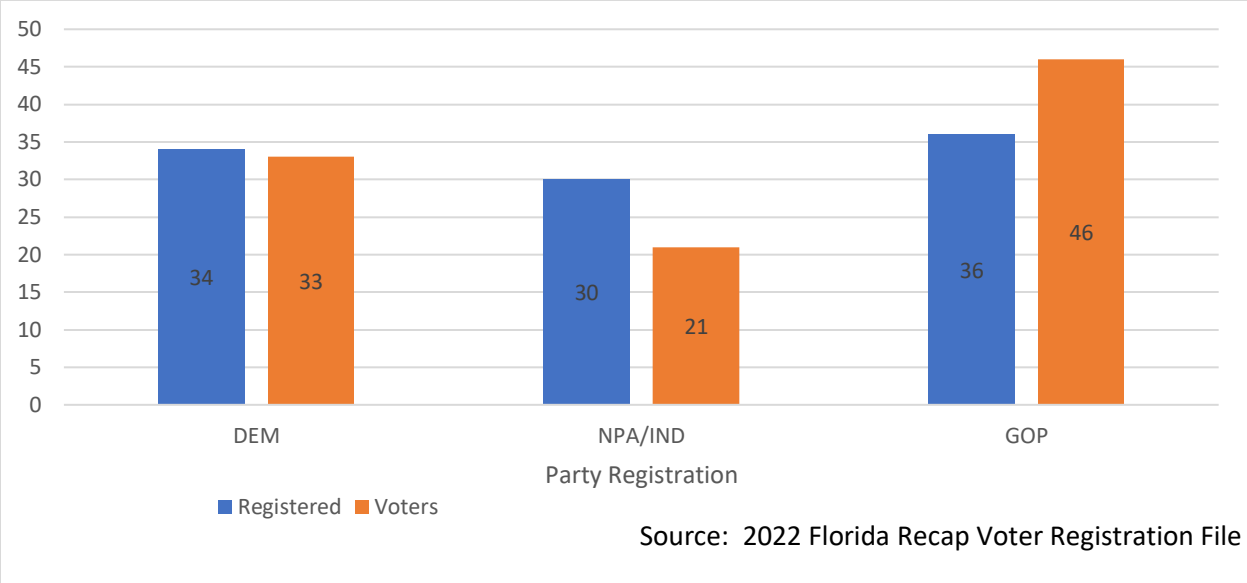
Figure 2.5 presents the percentage of registered and actual 2022 general election voters by political party. Whereas registered Democrats form roughly the same percentage of the electorate as their actual voters, NPA voters were substantially underrepresented relative to their

[16] https://dos.myflorida.com/elections/for-voters/voter-registration/register-to-vote-or-update-your-information/

registration numbers – with 30% of registered voters identifying as NPA but a substantially lower 21% midterm turnout rate.[17] This reflects a longstanding finding that individuals attached to one of the two major political parties in the US are significantly more likely to show up to vote than are those who identify as Independent or with a minor party.

A key part of any campaign is voter mobilization or the conversion of potential (registered) voters into actual voters. As such, which party is better able to turn out its core constituency can vary between elections and candidates. Partisans report that they are more likely to be contacted for mobilization than independents,[18] which helps boost turnout among partisans relative to NPAs – as we see in Figure 2.5.

Figure 2.5. Composition of FL Registered Voters and Midterm Voters in 2022 by Party Registration



Source: 2022 Florida Recap Voter Registration File

2.4. Is Florida Purple?

Presidential elections in Florida have been notoriously close, with no presidential contender winning by more than 5% of the vote in recent history. The state was also seen by many as a bellwether state[19] that for nearly a century was a signal of who would win the presidency. Florida voted for the winning candidate in 21 of the 23 elections between 1928 and 2020 — the last two times the state's electorate has supported the losing presidential candidate was in 1992 and 2020. The state's last gubernatorial race in 2018 harkened back to the notoriously close 2000 election, with Republican Ron DeSantis narrowly defeating Democrat Andrew Gillum by 32,463 votes (or

[17] Note that in 2020, this gap was around 3.5%, or nearly 1/3 the size as in the midterm. See the 2020 FES for more details: https://lci.fsu.edu//wp-content/uploads/sites/28/2022/09/Updated-Florida-2020-Election-Report-V3_Compressed_.pdf

[18] See Rosenstone, S. J., & Hansen, J. M. (1993). *Mobilization, participation, and democracy in America*. New York: Macmillan.

[19] For example, see https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/10/1/florida-is-the-uss-true-presidential-election-bellwether

about 0.4% of the vote).[20] These facts, among others, are often cited as reasons to suggest Florida is a swing state.

Yet despite Florida's reputation as a "purple state," there is more than meets the eye in the third largest state in the union. Looking at statewide and local election outcomes and changes in the electorate in recent years suggests very favorable conditions for the Republican Party moving forward — with the 2022 election certainly supporting that conclusion.

One indicator that Florida is not "purple" is the frequency of single-party control of the governorship and both chambers of the state Legislature, known in political circles as a "trifecta." Currently in the US, there are 22 Republican trifectas, 17 Democratic trifectas, and 10 states with divided government; Nebraska is not counted here, as it has an officially nonpartisan unicameral legislature.[21] Not only was Florida one of the 22 Republican trifectas in 2020, but it has been so every year since 1998.[22] Republican majorities in the state are also large, with 59% of the seats in the state House of Representatives and 60% of the Florida Senate held by Republicans.

Additionally, all of Florida's down-ballot statewide offices are currently held by Republicans. These include the Attorney General, Chief Financial Officer, and Agriculture Commissioner — an office that was held for four years by Democrat Nikki Fried before her unsuccessful 2022 gubernatorial primary campaign. Republicans recently gained control of both seats in the US Senate after long-time Democratic Senator Bill Nelson lost his re-election bid in 2018 to former Governor Rick Scott, and the party now holds 20 of Florida's 28 seats in the US House of Representatives. Altogether, 71% of seats in Florida's congressional delegation are held by Republicans.

Another way we can look at this question is by using voter registration data as a tool to understand the state's partisan flavor, especially since Florida incentivizes voters to select one of the two major parties by restricting who can vote for specific candidates in primaries.[23] Figure 2.6 presents the partisan composition of Florida's registered voters going back 50 years. Of note, the proportion of registered voters who are Democrats has declined nearly every year since 1972 — a time when Democrats represented almost 7 in 10 registered voters (69%). By 2022, Democrats made up only 34% of registered Floridians.

The first couple of decades of this shrinkage in the Democratic Party can largely be explained by the nearly 10% rise in the share of Republican identifiers over the decade of the 1980s. However, the share of Republican identifiers has also shrunk most years since its apex in 1994 — albeit,

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[20] https://www.politico.com/election-results/2018/florida/governor/

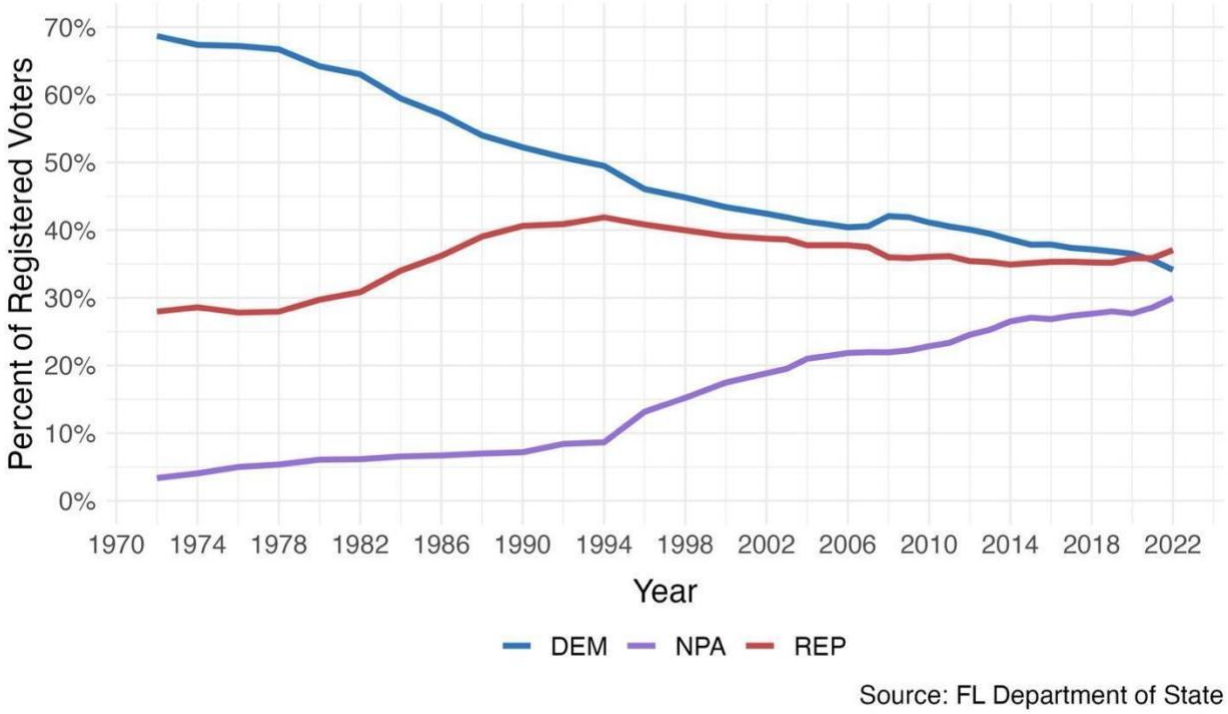
[21] https://www.ncsl.org/about-state-legislatures/state-partisan-composition#undefined

[22] Technically in 2010, Governor Charlie Crist changed his party affiliation from Republican to Independent. This is a trivial point and was in the final year of his term in office.

[23] In a closed primary state, registered voters are permitted to cast a ballot in the primary only for a candidate who shares their party identification (some exceptions apply). As such, NPA and other minority parties are ineligible to vote in Democratic and Republican primary contests.

not as consistently nor precipitously as with Democrats. Given these trends, it is unlikely that the Democratic Party's position in the state will substantially improve in the near future.

Figure 2.6. FL Party Affiliation 1972 – 2022



Source: FL Department of State

Instead, since 1994 there has been a substantial rise in the number of Floridians who choose not to identify with either of the two major political parties.[24] Over the 28 years from 1994 to 2022, the share of these registered voters has jumped from 9% to 30%. The changing nature of state partisanship, particularly the sharp rise in NPAs, suggests that Florida is not necessarily a deep red state, especially for statewide and federal offices. By nature of their large numbers and loose partisan affiliations,[25] NPAs provide space for split-ticket voting and to act as swing voters in critical elections.

2.5. The Gubernatorial and US Senate Statewide Campaigns

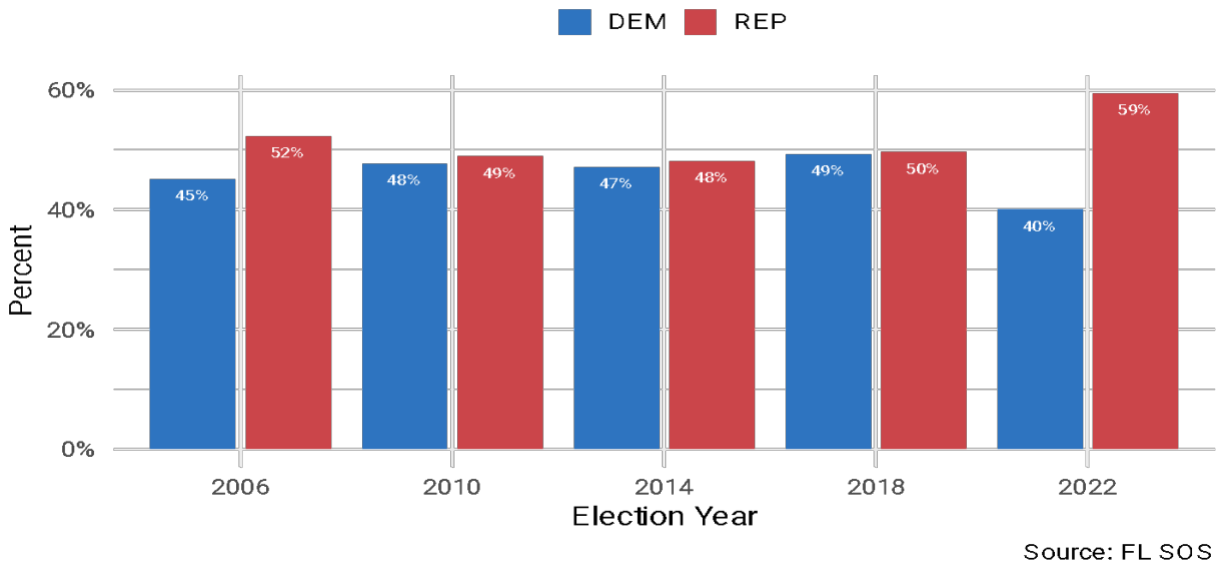
[24] The state of Florida officially recognizes some 14 different political parties, but very few voters select an option other than one of the two major parties or the No Party Affiliation (NPA) label. For simplicity, in our analyses we collapse these minor parties into the NPA category.

[25] Although, see Samara Klar and Yanna Krupnikov, 2016, *Independent Politics: How American Disdain for Parties Leads to Political Inaction*, Cambridge University Press, for a discussion about how most Americans that identify as an Independent (NPA) are best thought of as partisans. In short, political scientists find Independent leaners (roughly 2/3 of Independent identifiers) hold opinions and vote in similar fashion to the partisans they are closest with.

Gubernatorial Election

Compared to the last midterm, in which the gubernatorial contest was incredibly close, 2022 represented a substantial change, with GOP incumbent Governor Ron DeSantis winning the race with 59.4% of the vote. Figure 2.7 shows how prior elections were much closer. Indeed, if we average the GOP and Democratic vote share from 2010-2018, we find that the average is margin-thin, with 48.9% of the vote going to Republican candidates and 48.1% going to Democratic candidates. So what happened in 2022 that led to a 20-percentage point win for the Republican gubernatorial candidate?

Figure 2.7. Gubernatorial Outcomes 2006 – 2022



From Figure 2.6 above, we know that Republican Party registrations passed Democratic registrations for the first time ever in 2022, a sign of the state's increasing red tinge and one factor in the rise of support for statewide GOP candidates. But other factors were also important, including spending by political campaigns and changes in turnout, both of which we will now examine more closely.

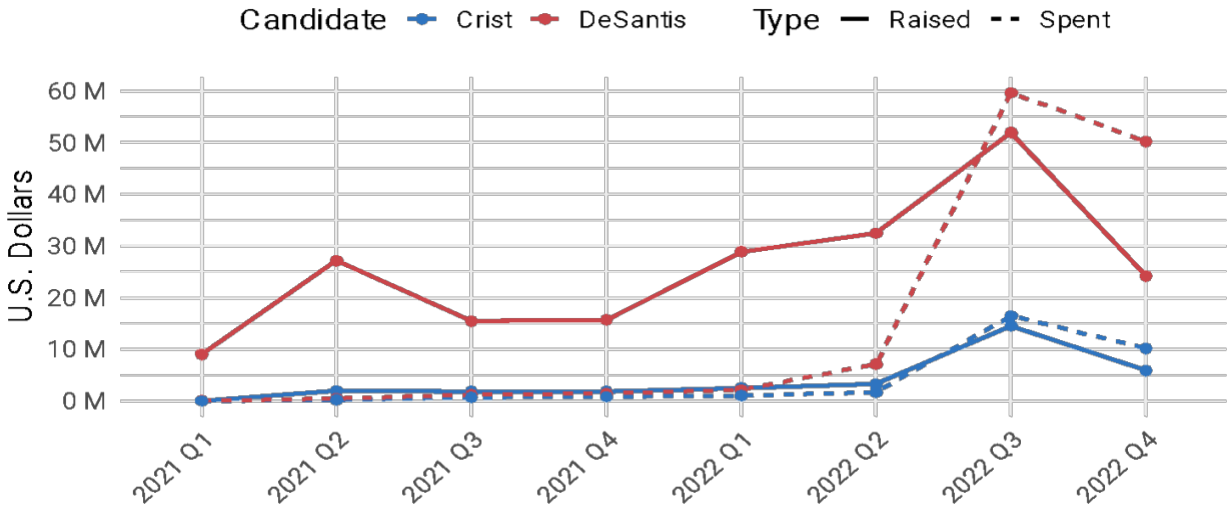
Campaign Finance: Gubernatorial Contest

When we consider funding between the two major party candidates, we can see that incumbent Governor DeSantis raised and spent much more money than former Governor Charlie Crist. Figure 2.8 shows the contributions raised and money spent for each campaign from the beginning of 2021 to the end of 2022.[26] According to *Transparency USA*, contributions to DeSantis over this election cycle totaled $202,048,288, making DeSantis the best-funded

[26] Contribution and expenditure amounts were taken from Transparency USA and can be found at: https://www.transparencyusa.org/fl/candidate.

gubernatorial candidate ever.[27] DeSantis actually spent $127,818,837, which left him with a large war chest at the end of this election in preparation for his subsequent presidential run in 2024.[28]

Figure 2.8. Money Raised and Spent by Each Gubernatorial Candidate by Quarter 2021-2022



Crist, on the other hand, raised and spent a typical amount of money for a gubernatorial contest, but it equaled only about 25% of DeSantis' funding. Crist received a total of $32,437,595 in contributions and his total expenditures were $32,314,461.[29]

With a gap in spending between the Republican and Democratic candidates of about 96 million, the benefits of a spending edge clearly went to DeSantis. This money likely went to a large mobilization campaign of party members that helped DeSantis and other statewide GOP candidates sail to victory with ease.

The US Senate Contest

Like the gubernatorial contest, outcomes in the US Senate election also represented a substantial change in competitiveness, with incumbent Senator Marco Rubio's vote totals suggesting he might have a safe seat given his 17-point lead against Congresswoman Val Demings in 2022. Rubio was also on the ballot in 2010, when he beat then-Governor Crist in both the primary and

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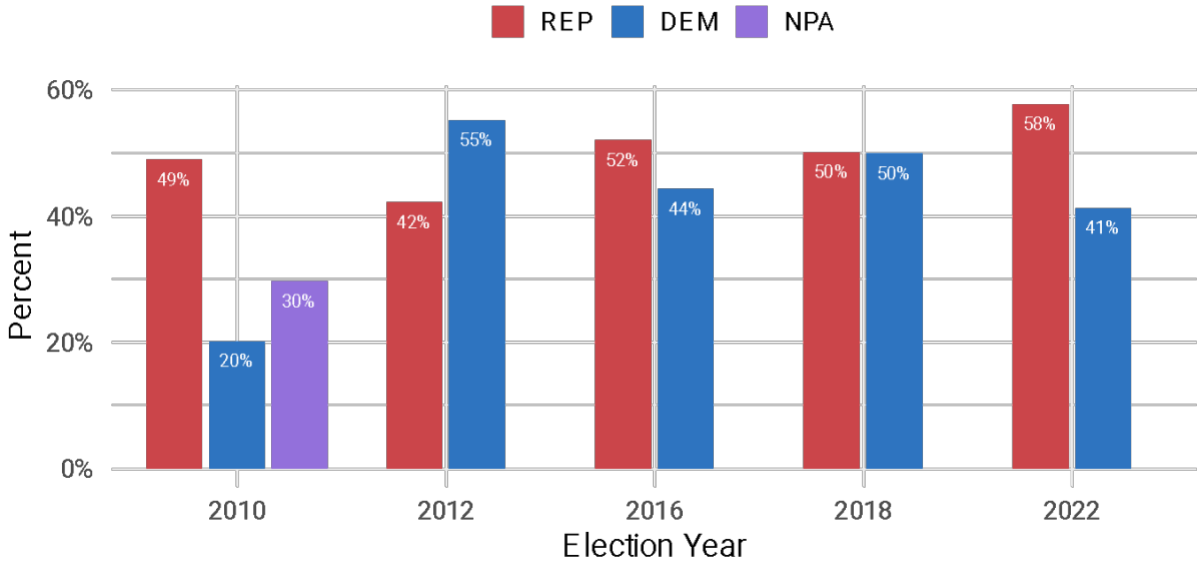
[27] Giorno, Taylor and Joria Siemons. 2022, Florida Governor Ron DeSantis break Gubernatorial Fundraising Record, *Open Secrets*, September 16, available at: https://www.opensecrets.org/news/2022/09/florida-gov-ron-desantis-breaks-gubernatorial-fundraising-record/

[28] Dixon, Matt, 2022, "'De Facto Frontrunner': DeSantis' $200 million Haul Positions Him for 2024 Run," *Politico*, November 3, Available at: https://www.politico.com/news/2022/11/03/desantis-record-breaking-haul-positions-him-for-2024-00065046

[29] This graph is taken from Transparency USA as well as the data on total contributions and expenditures. It can be found at: https://www.transparencyusa.org/.

general election,[30] and in 2016, when he comfortably beat Democratic challenger Patrick Murphy by 8 points. Yet in both election years, Rubio's support hovered around 50%. In 2012, incumbent Democratic Senator Bill Nelson easily beat Connie Mack III by 13 points. This was the last race in which a Democratic candidate won a US Senate seat in Florida.

Figure 2.9. FL Electoral Outcomes for US Senate 2010 - 2022



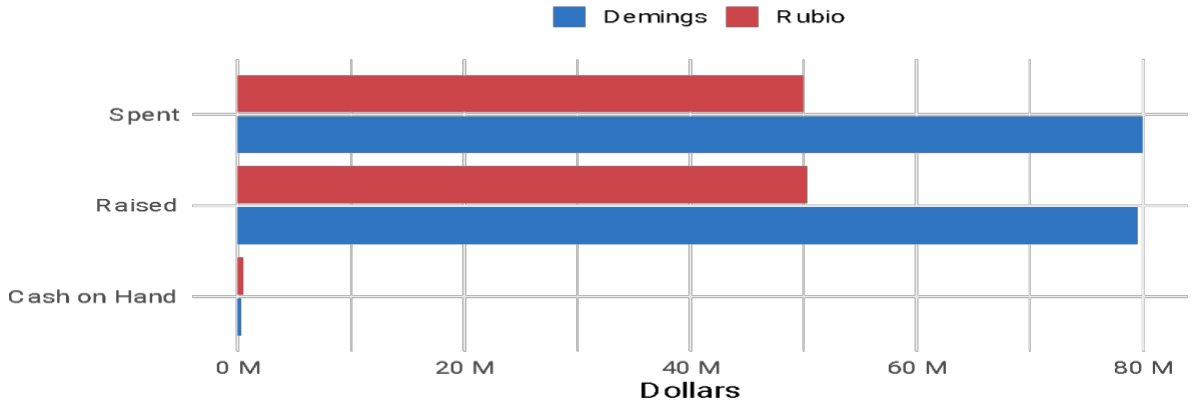
Source: FL SOS

Campaign Finance: Senate Contest

In 2022, Rubio's opponent, Congresswoman and former Orlando Police Chief Val Demings, raised and spent nearly $8 million, while Senator Rubio raised and spent only about $5 million. Even though Demings spent 58% more than her opponent, she was never able to translate her dollar advantage into statewide support, leading to her defeat and to a Republican Senator winning a third term in Florida for the first time.

[30] When Crist withdrew from the Republican primary, he changed his party affiliation and ran as an independent.

Figure 2.10. Money Raised, Spent, and Remaining by US Senate Candidates after 2022 Election



2.6. Congressional Contests in Florida

As a result of reapportionment following the 2020 Census, Florida gained a seat in the US House of Representatives, bringing its total to 28 Congressional seats. Consequently, the state redrew its Congressional maps.

Table 2.1 shows the number of Congressional seats and their party split over the last three federal elections. In 2018, there was close to parity between the two parties, with 14 Republican and 13 Democratic members of Congress. In 2020, and before redistricting, Florida Democrats lost and Florida Republicans gained two seats, making the totals 16 Republican seats and 11 Democratic seats. After redistricting in 2022, the partisan totals look even more lopsided, with 20 Republican seats (71%) and 8 Democratic seats (29%). This represents a dramatic change in party representation in Florida over a relatively short period of time. According to FiveThirtyEight, the new Florida Congressional District (CD) map created 18 GOP-leaning districts, 8 Democratic-leaning districts, and 2 competitive districts, which very neatly tracks with what we show here.[31]

Table 2.1. Florida Congressional District Party Control Over Last Three Elections

	GOP	GOP %	DEM	DEM%	Change
2022	20	71%	8	29%	R+3+1 (new)
2020	16	59%	11	41%	R+2
2018	14	52%	13	48%	

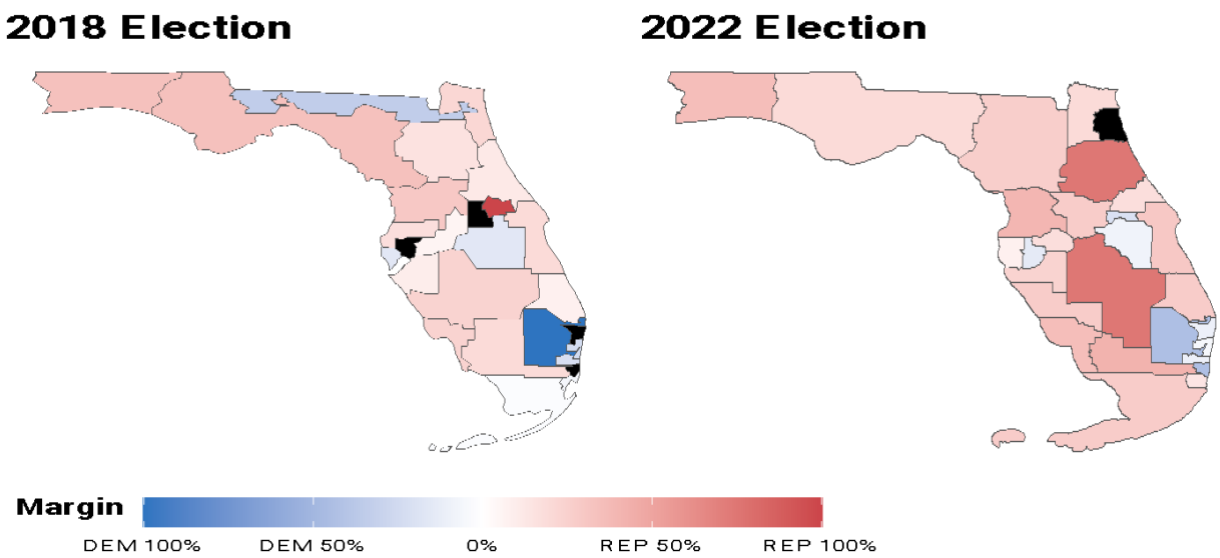
Figure 2.12 helps us understand what changed between 2018 and 2022 in the state's Congressional representation by presenting parallel heat maps of party vote margin for each contested district. The darker the red or blue a district is, the more voters supported the Republican or Democratic candidate. On both maps, uncontested districts are colored black.

[31] See https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/redistricting-2022-maps/florida/ for a discussion.

The 2018 map shows that there were 13 Democratic CDs, four of which were uncontested by Republicans in the general election and therefore did not appear on the ballot. In 2022, only one district (CD5) was uncontested, and it went to Republican incumbent John Rutherford.[32] Florida had a total of 29 contested seats for federal office in the 2022 midterm election, including one US Senate seat and 27 seats in the US House of Representatives.

What happened between midterms that explains these changes? One factor discussed above was that Republican candidates performed very well at the statewide level, and this was reflected in the success of GOP House candidates as well. Another was the role of redistricting and gerrymandering. One prominent example in the state was the change in CD5 in the north of the state, formerly held by Democratic Congressman Al Lawson. After the maps were redrawn by the Republican-dominated Legislature, this blue district (65% D) was partitioned into four other districts, all of which were carried by Republican candidates in 2022.

Figure 2.11. Margins of Victory in Florida Congressional Districts Between Midterm Elections

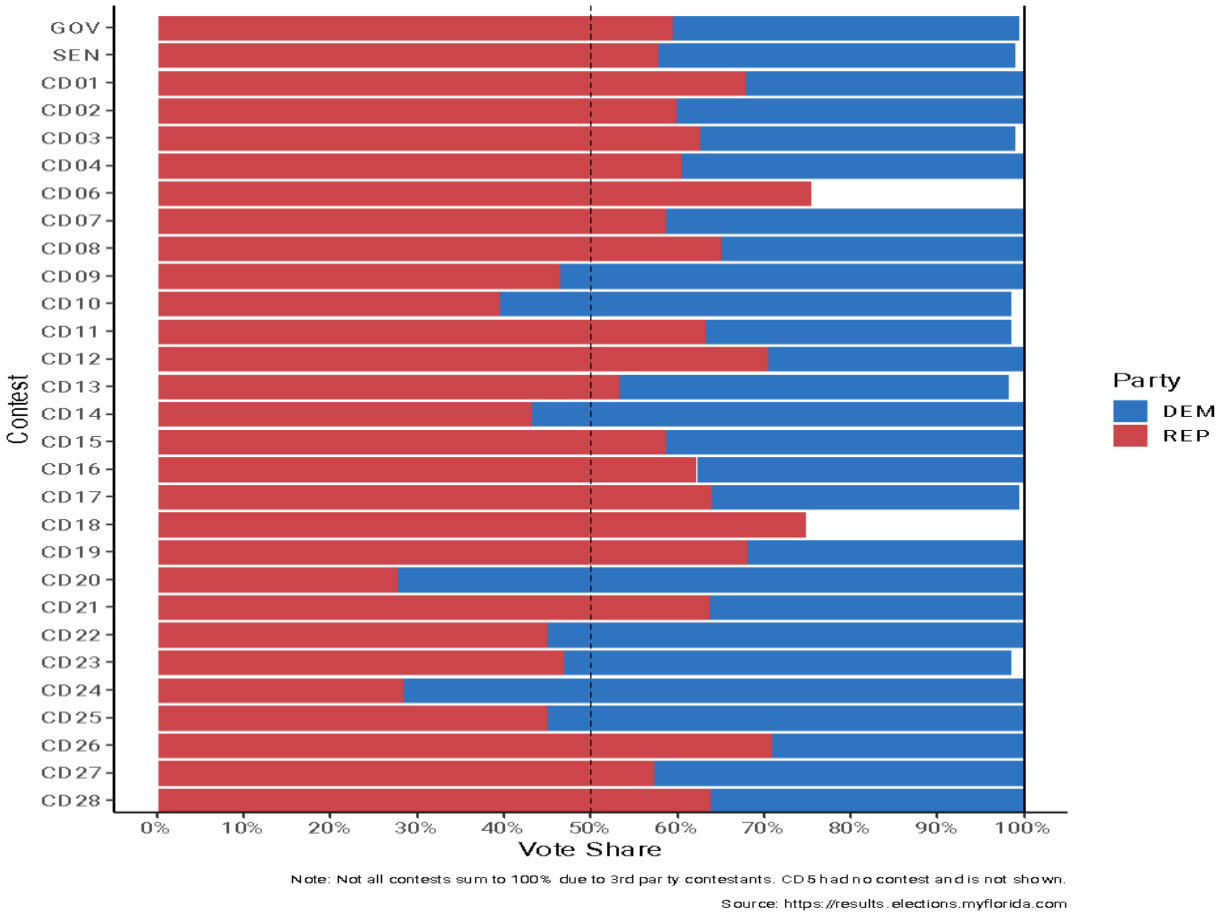


An obvious limitation of mapping electoral returns onto geographic space is the fact that land does not vote. Because Democratic voters are more concentrated in urban areas than are Republican voters, this could make the state look more Republican than it actually is. Figure 2.12 presents an alternative way of looking at the election results that does not depend on geographic area as a parameter. Vote summaries for each contested CD, the US Senate, and the governorship are provided in a horizontal bar plot with the X-axis showing the percentage of the vote that went to a Republican, Democratic, or third-party candidate. Note that CD6 and CD18 did not have a

[32] Representative Rutherford formerly represented the CD4 until redistricting in 2023 moved him to the CD5. In 2018, there were 4 uncontested districts (CD10, CD14, CD21, CD24) that were all held by Democrats.

Democratic challenger, and instead featured a Republican and a third-party candidate. Figure 2.12 shows the vote margin, further demonstrating the degree to which Democrats struggled to be competitive in most districts. Republicans won one district with no contest and two more without a Democratic challenger. Of the 17 remaining seats, the GOP won 11 (65%) by more than 10%. Compare this to Democrats, who won just 3 of their 8 districts (38%) by more than 10%.

Figure 2.12. Vote Margin for Gubernatorial & Federal Contests



2.7. Comparing Changes in Voters between the 2018 and 2022 Midterms

Turnout by Party Registration

We now evaluate changes in the voting electorate between the last two midterm elections in Florida. Table 2.2 shows the differences in turnout by presenting the total percentage of each group who turned out in each election, the change in turnout by party registration, party

registration vote counts, and the difference between the party registration vote counts in each election.[33]

Comparing 2022 turnout numbers by party registration with 2018 provides quite a bit of insight into the dramatic shift in support for the GOP in 2022 seen in the state gubernatorial and US Senate contests in Figures 2.7 and 2.10. The results show that the 2022 election had fewer voters than in 2018, with over half a million more voters participating in the 2018 election than in 2022 (see the far-right bottom corner). This is consistent with Figure 2.1, which shows that the voting-eligible population turned out less in 2022 than in 2018.

Table 2.2 Differences in Voting Electorate between Midterm Cycles by Party Registration

	Democrat	NPA/Other Party	GOP	Total
2022 Midterm	33.3%	21.2%	45.5%	100%
2018 Midterm	38.5%	21.3%	40.2%	100%
Difference	-5.2%	-.1%	+5.3%	
2022 Midterm	2,599,266	1,649,479	3,547,942	7796687
2018 Midterm	3,200,922	1,766,363	3,334,369	8301654
Difference	-601,656	-116,884	213,573	-504967

Given the relative similarity in the size of the voting electorate, the changes we see in party turnout are very interesting and tell a story about Republican resurgence and Democratic decline. We note first that Figure 2.5 showed that while the Republican share of the turnout was higher than the party's share of registered voters, turnout was about equal between registration and turnout for Democrats. Consistent with turnout history, NPAs turned out at a lower rate than their registration portion would suggest.

The data in Table 2.2 provides much more detail about this story, as turnout by party changed substantially between midterm election years. Democratic voters in 2022 made up 5.2% less of the voting electorate than they did in 2018, while NPAs represented roughly the same amount — and GOP voters increased their share by 5.3%. In terms of raw numbers, Table 2.2 shows that a little over 600,000 fewer Democrats and almost 117,000 fewer NPAs turned out in 2022 than in 2018, while Republicans increased their numbers by almost 214,000 voters.

These results suggest that while there was a clear collapse in Democratic voter turnout, there was also a modest but notable rise in turnout by Republican identifiers. Thus, the 2022 story is a tale of party mobilization on the one hand, with Republicans able to increase their numbers, but with the main character being party demobilization among Democrats and NPA identifiers. The differences also help explain the large increase in support for Republican candidates across the state, especially for statewide offices, where we see large increases in support. While in 2018

[33] These numbers were taken from the recap voter registration file provided by the Florida Department of State, which is the state's summary of the 2018 election. The numbers are slightly different than the recap voter history file, which is an additional state summary of the 2018 election and shows 8,301,673 voters. The state archives online digital archives show turnout at 8,309,929.

Democratic and Republican turnout was much closer, with only a slight Republican edge of 133,447 voters, the Republican advantage in 2022 was almost 1 million (exactly 948,676) voters.

We expect to see an upward tick in Democratic turnout in 2024, believing that a presidential race will more likely mobilize these voters. In 2022 the state politics did not play out here, with the Democratic gubernatorial ticket headed by a former Republican who was personally pro-life but politically pro-choice, in an election year where the Supreme Court's Dobb decision was front and center in other states. Neither the Democratic National Committee nor the Democratic Senatorial Committee spent money here to challenge the GOP incumbents. This state context left Democratic voters demobilized and at home.

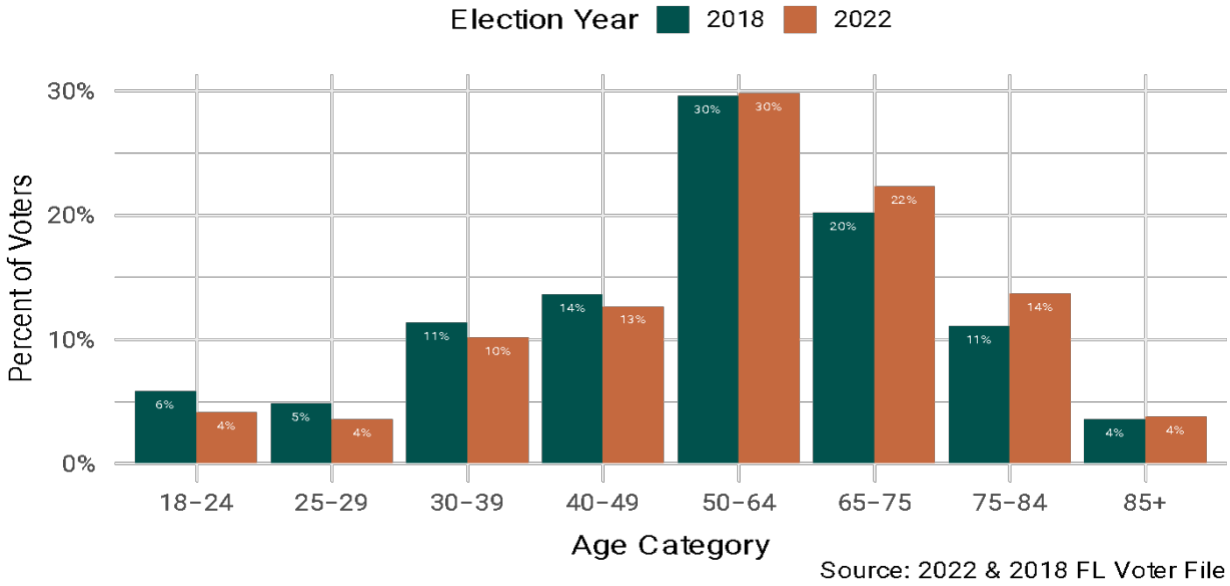
Turnout by Demographic Composition of Voters

We now compare the composition of voters by age category, race/ethnicity, and gender. This provides useful insights into who the major players are among the electorate, and how changes in the relative size of a group can help explain election outcomes.

Figure 2.14 shows the composition of voters in the 2018 and 2022 midterm elections by age category. The first takeaway from the figure is that most voters in Florida are older than 50, with both the median and modal age category of voters being 50-64. The second takeaway is what changed — younger Floridians made up a smaller share of voters in 2022 than in 2018. Those 18-24 years old had the largest drop in share, going from 6% to 4% of voters, while Floridians ages 25-29, 30-39, and 40-49 each dropped by 1 percentage point. On the other hand, those ages 75-84 rose from 11% to 14% of voters, and Floridians ages 65-75 increased their share from 20% to 22%. With 65% of younger voters (18-29) nationwide supporting Democratic House candidates and just 44% of older voters (65+) doing the same, this large shift in the age of the voting electorate in 2022 helps explain changes in electoral fortunes for the two parties over the last two midterms.[34]

[34] Table 2 from: https://catalist.us/whathappened2022/

Figure 2.13. Composition of Voters by Age Category in 2018 & 2022



Source: 2022 & 2018 FL Voter File

Table 2.3 shows the differences in percentage and raw numbers across race/ethnicity and sex.[35] This will also help us understand the changes we see in outcomes, as minorities and women represent a larger share of the Democratic Party than they do the GOP, and whites and men represent a larger share of the Republican Party than they do the Democratic Party. Table 2.3 is organized slightly differently than Table 2.2, with the total percentage represented as the top number and the total number of voters for each group in parentheses just below the percentage. The top section of the table shows the results by ethnicity, while the bottom half shows the same comparison by sex.

Starting with race and ethnicity, Table 2.3 shows that whites increased their share of voters by 3.3% even while decreasing their raw numbers by about 63,000, while Blacks lost 3% of their vote share, moving from 13% to 10% of voters and with a decline of 300,000 voters. Hispanics and others' vote share remained about the same, with a decline for Hispanics of only .4% and about 100,000 voters and of just .1% for others, with only a roughly 36,000 voter difference. Turnout losses among Black Americans — who are a big part of the Democratic coalition — and relative stability in white voters shows how coalition turnout shifts among one group can cause large changes in election outcomes. Keep in mind that DeSantis won 59.4% of the vote in 2022 but only 49.6% in 2018. Figure 2.15 visually presents this change in the racial/ethnic composition of voters between elections. A majority of voters in Florida are white (non-Hispanic), and even though about 63,000 fewer white voters participated in the 2022 election, their share of the voting electorate rose from 67% to 71%.

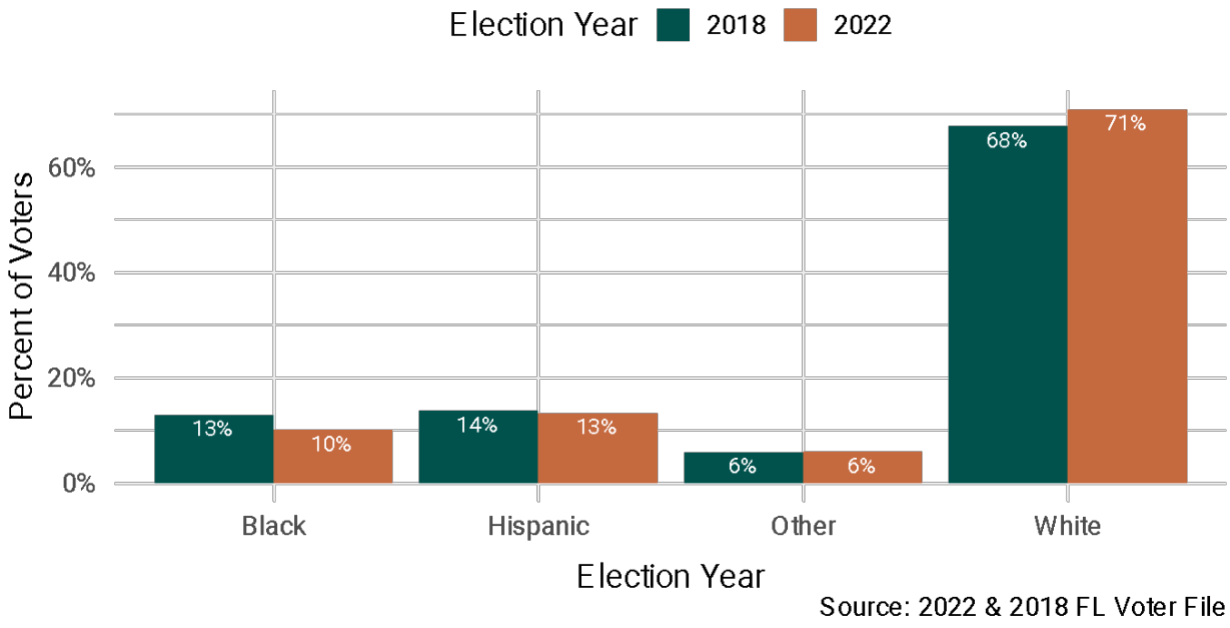
[35] Voters who were not Black, White, or Hispanic including American Indian, Alaskan Native, Asian or Pacific Islander, other, multiracial or unknown are coded as "other." Voters with sex defined as NA or U in the voter file were set to "missing."

Table 2.3. Differences in Voting Electorate Between Midterm Cycles by Race/Ethnicity and Sex

Race/Ethnicity	White	Hispanic	Black	Other
2022 Midterm	70.9% (5,531,910)	13.1% (1,021,839)	10.1% (785,654)	5.9% (457,284)
2018 Midterm	67.4% (5,594,479)	13.5% (1,124,965)	13.1% (1,088,191)	6.0% (493,941)
Difference	+3.5% (-62,569)	-0.4% (-103,126)	-3.0% (-302,537)	-0.1% (-36,657)
Sex	**Female**	**Male**		
2022 Midterm	53.6% (4,099,169)	46.4% (3,547,051)		
2018 Midterm	54.8% (4,449,877)	45.2% (3,675,739)		
Difference	-1.2% (-350,708)	+1.2% (-128,688)		

Note: Raw totals are in parentheses. Percentages are with respect to total voters in that election cycle.

Figure 2.14. Composition of Voters by Race from 2018 & 2022

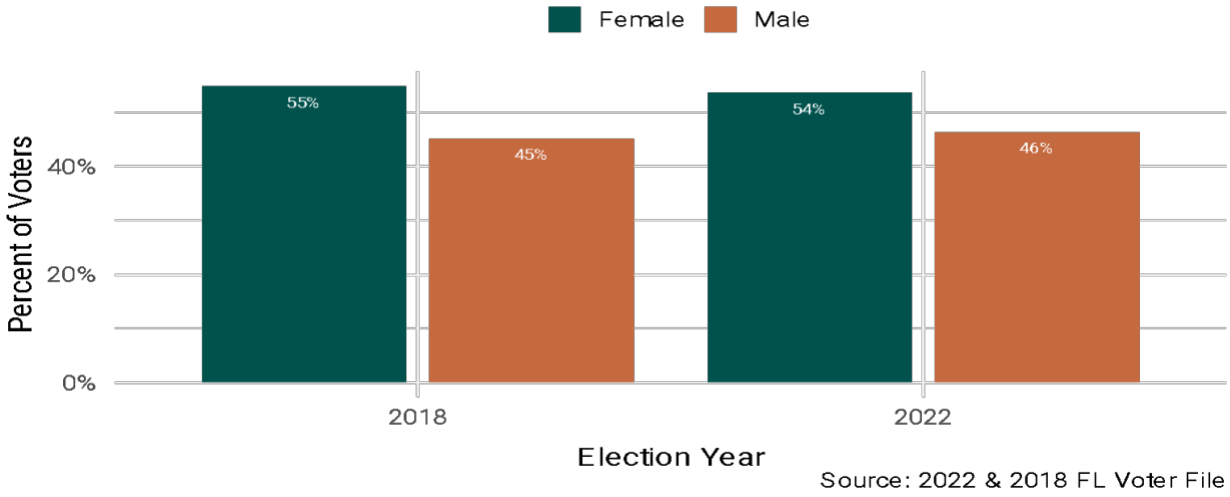


Source: 2022 & 2018 FL Voter File

Looking at gender also provides insight into how the changing of the voting electorate explains election outcomes. Compared to 2018, some 416,000 fewer women voted in 2022, while men increased their numbers by nearly 180,000. Figure 2.16 presents the composition of voters over this time, and we see that while women still compose a much larger share of the voting electorate

in 2022 — representing about 54% of all voters — their decline from 55% of the electorate helped to increase votes for GOP candidates statewide, including both DeSantis and Rubio.

Figure 2.15. Composition of Voters by Gender in 2018 & 2022



2.8. Voting Mode

Florida statute allows voters to cast their ballot in one of three different ways, known as the voting mode. This includes voting in person on Election Day at the voter's assigned precinct, voting early at any of the early voting locations in a voter's county, and voting by mail (often known as absentee voting). Mirroring trends across the country, Florida voters have cast their ballots increasingly prior to Election Day, either in person or by mail.

Florida voters who request a mail ballot can change their minds and cast a regular ballot in person. To do so, they take their mail ballot to the polls to turn it in, and instead cast a regular ballot. If the voter does not bring the mail ballot, the Supervisor of Elections office would attempt to confirm that the ballot had not already been submitted. If confirmed, the voter is allowed to vote using a regular ballot at the polling place. If the office finds that the absentee ballot has already been submitted, or cannot confirm either way, the voter would not be able to vote in person. However, if the voter believes they have not submitted the vote-by-mail ballot and the office is unable to confirm, then the voter is provided the opportunity to submit a provisional ballot instead, which will be counted after the election if no other ballot is found.

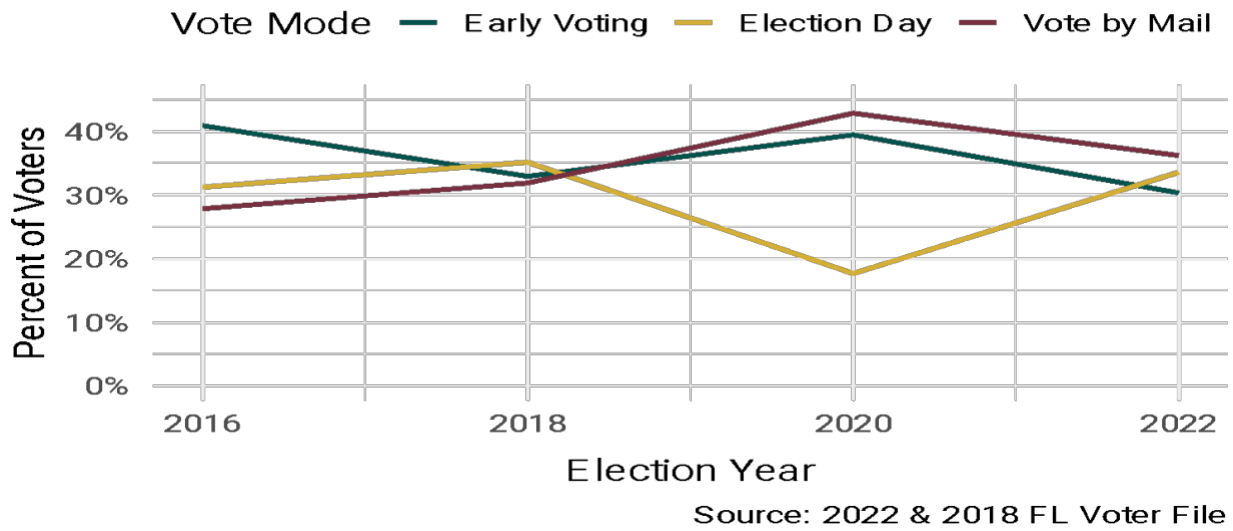
To be counted, a Florida vote-by-mail (VBM) voter's ballot must arrive by Election Day. A ballot may be dropped off at a ballot drop box when staff is present, returned by USPS, or dropped off at the election center. Florida mail voters whose ballots are rejected for signature mismatches can "cure" the problem up to two days after an election. The Supervisor of Elections is required to notify voters if their signature is missing or did not match the one on record. To rectify the discrepancy, voters are then able to complete a "Vote-by-Mail Ballot Cure" affidavit

that includes a copy of their identification. This document is required to be returned by 5 pm on the second day after an election.[36]

It is hard to overstate how much COVID-19 became a defining feature of the 2020 election cycle, as it affected nearly every aspect not just of politics, but of election administration as well. Election administrators worked hard to process mail ballot requests and create a safe election space for in-person voting. Mail voters, who made up about 30% of all Florida voters between 2014 and 2018, increased by one-third to 43% of all ballots cast. Yet the growing utilization of early voting in Florida began years before the pandemic. In 2010, just 20% of Florida voters went to the polls early; since 2018, it has oscillated between 30% and 40% of ballots cast. While 57% of voters voted on Election Day in 2010, this number dropped sharply over the next decade, with only 18% voting on Election Day in 2020.[37]

As we entered the second election since the COVID-19 pandemic began, questions remained about whether voters would revert to the way they voted pre-pandemic, or whether these trends would continue. Figure 2.17 presents vote mode between 2016 and 2022, and at first glance appears to tell a story of reversion to pre-pandemic vote-by-mail and early voting behavior, with upward trends for Election Day voting. While a record 43% of voters in 2020 chose to vote by mail, 2022 saw a modest reduction to 36% of ballots cast. Election Day voting rates nearly rebounded to pre-pandemic levels, going from 35% in 2018 down to 18% in 2020, but then reaching 34% of all ballots cast in 2022. Early voting declined substantially since its 2016 apex, from 41% of votes cast that year down to 30% in 2022. Although nearly 40% of ballots were cast at early voting locations in 2020, this likely reflected many Election Day voters who opted to vote early due to public safety concerns but then returned to voting on Election Day in 2022.

Figure 2.16. FL Vote Mode by Election 2016 - 2022

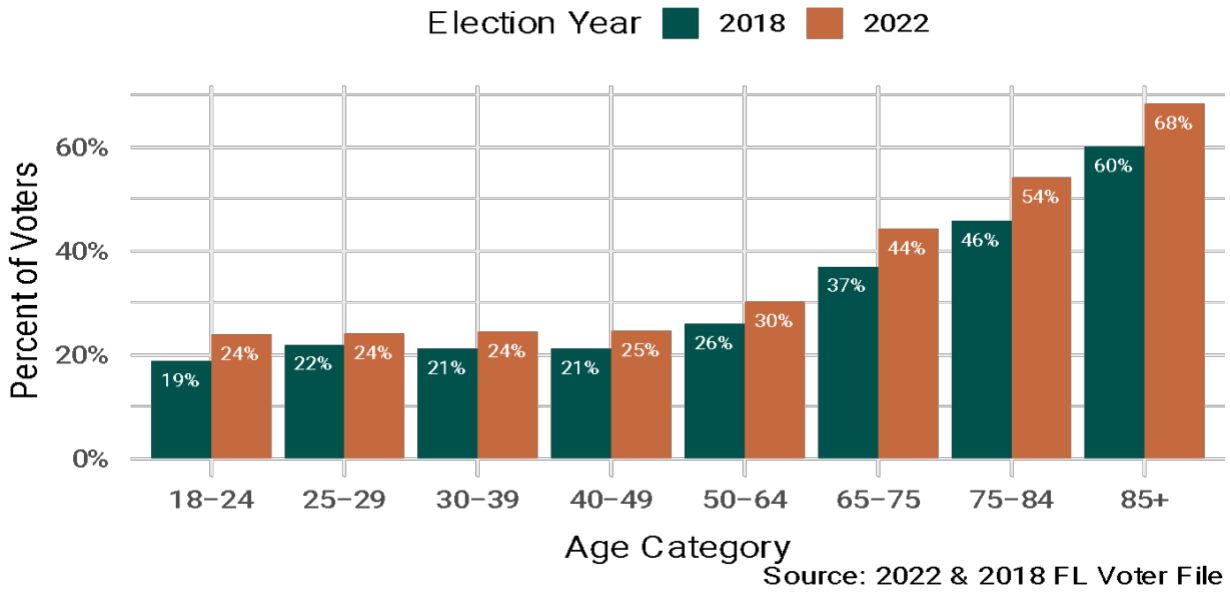


[36] https://dos.myflorida.com/elections/for-voters/voting/vote-by-mail/

[37] See the LeRoy Collins Institute's "*2020 Florida Election Study*" for a figure showing vote mode from 2010-2020. Report can be accessed here: https://lci.fsu.edu//wp-content/uploads/sites/28/2022/09/Updated-Florida-2020-Election-Report-V3_Compressed_.pdf

Figure 2.17 shows the relationship between age and vote-by-mail rates in the 2018 and 2022 elections. In both years, voters older than 50 were more likely to use VBM and became more likely to do so as the age of the voter increased. Whereas voters ages 18-49 utilize vote-by-mail at similar rates (~20-25%), those older than 50 use it at an increasing rate with age — from 30% for those ages 50-64 to nearly 70% for those 85 and older. But among virtually every age group, usage of VBM was similar between the two election cycles.

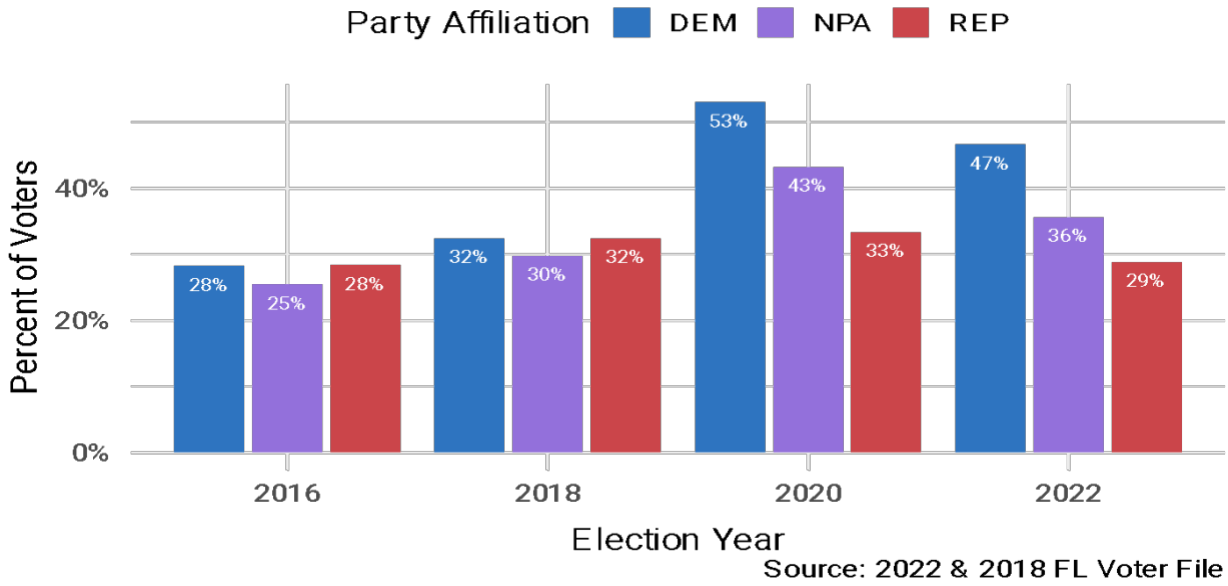
Figure 2.17. FL Vote-by-Mail Usage by Age Group 2018 – 2022



Yet the analysis gets more complex when dissecting the data by partisanship. Figure 2.18 shows the percentage of Democrats, Republicans, and NPAs who voted by mail in the four most recent elections. Interestingly, in both 2016 and 2018, Democrats and Republicans voted by mail at approximately the same rate, with Republicans slightly more likely to use VBM in 2016 and Democrats moreso in 2018. However, by the 2020 election, a large partisan gap emerged with Democrats (53%) and NPAs (43%) becoming much more likely to vote by mail than Republicans (34%). This is likely due in part to differences in voting-method messaging between the two parties. Democrats promoted mail voting aggressively, while Republican messaging was more mixed — especially from President Donald Trump, who routinely criticized mail voting as a mechanism for voter fraud.[38]

[38] See Atkeson, Lonna Rae, Wendy Hansen, Maggie Toulouse Oliver, Cherie Maestas, and Eric Weimer, 2022, "Should I vote-by-mail or in-person? The impact of COVID-19 risk factors and partisanship on vote mode decisions in the 2020 presidential election, *PLoS ONE* 17(9); Scheller, Daniel. 2021. "Pandemic Primary: The Interactive Effects of COVID-19 Prevalence and Age on Voter Turnout." *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties* 31(1): 180-190. Also, see Atkeson, Lonna Rae, Wendy L. Hansen, Cherie D. Maestas, Maggie Toulouse Oliver, Eric Weimer. 2023. "The Pandemic and Vote Mode Choice in the 2020 Election**,"** *Hindsight is 2020: Lessons Learned from the 2020 US Presidential Election,* edited by Joseph Coll and Joseph Anthony, Palgrave Macmillan.

Figure 2.18. FL Vote-by-Mail by Party Registration from 2016 - 2022



Source: 2022 & 2018 FL Voter File

As discussed at the start of this section, there was much speculation as to how persistent changes in voting behavior would be in 2022 and onward. Figure 2.19 shows the decline in mail voting rates as observed above in Figure 2.16 but with a more nuanced conclusion. Usage rates may have reverted in the aggregate, but this reflects the emergence of polarization on vote mode more than a process of returning to a long-term equilibrium. Whereas all groups reduced their usage of mail voting in the 2022 election relative to 2020, both Democrats and NPAs were still using it at higher rates than in 2018 (47% vs. 36% and 36% vs. 34%, respectively).[39] On the other hand, the decline in Republican use of VBM was a continuation of a downward trend that began during the 2020 election. In 2018, a total of 36% of Republicans voted by mail, dropping to 33% in 2020 and 29% in 2022. Notably, there are many questions about the degree to which this polarization will continue to occur — for example, there may be a limit to how polarized vote mode can become, as age is also a major correlate of vote mode and with opposite implications than with partisanship.

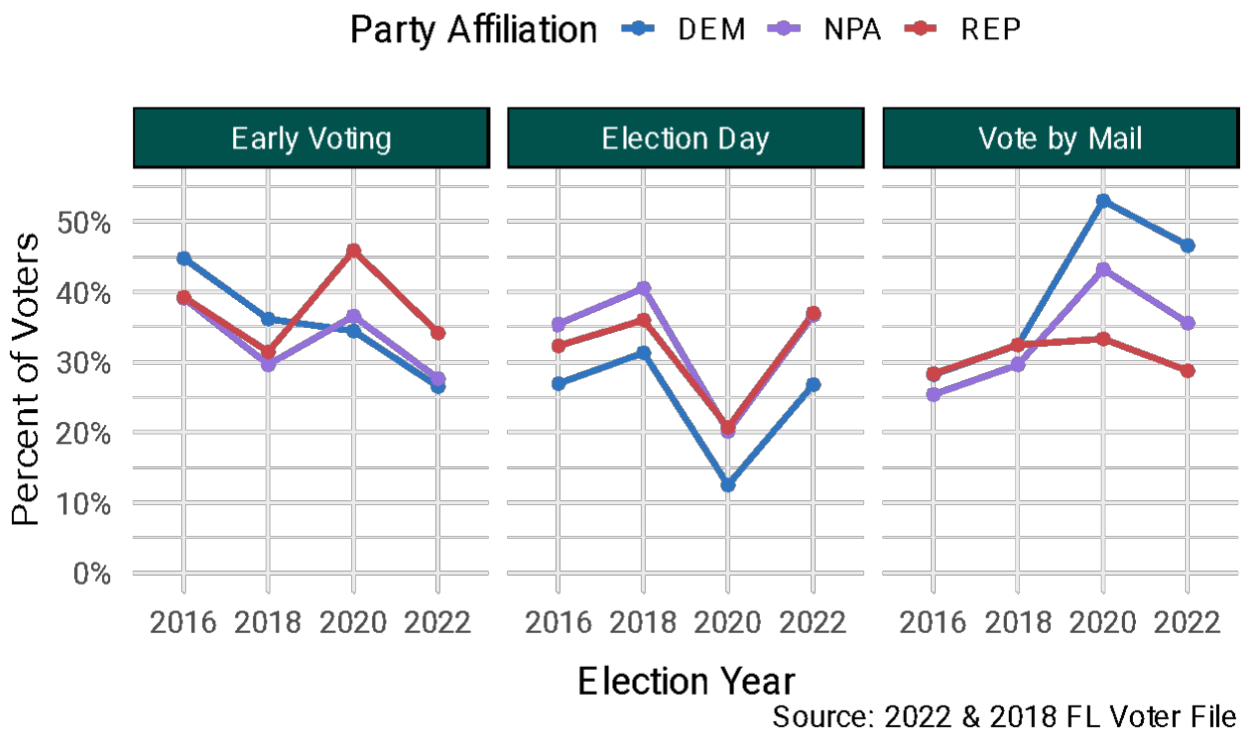
To take a broader look at the relationship between vote method and party affiliation, Figure 2.19 compares rates of VBM, early in-person voting, and in-person Election Day voting across parties for each of the four most recent elections. As discussed above, Floridians increasingly used vote-by-mail and decreasingly voted in person on Election Day between 2016 and 2020, with the sharp rise in VBM rates during the pandemic due solely to a rise by Democratic and NPA voters. What Figure 2.19 adds to this story is that Republicans — and to a lesser degree NPAs — responded to the COVID-19 pandemic by instead electing to vote early. As a result of these

[39] See 2020 Florida Election Study available at: https://lci.fsu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Florida-Election-Study-2020-UPDATED-v4cover.pdf and Atkeson, Lonna Rae, Wendy L. Hansen, Cherie D. Maestas, Maggie Toulouse Oliver, Eric Weimer. 2023. "The Pandemic and Vote Mode Choice in the 2020 Election," *Hindsight is 2020: Lessons Learned from the 2020 US Presidential Election,* edited by Joseph Coll and Joseph Anthony, Palgrave Macmillan.

changes in voting behavior, voters from all political identities substantially curtailed their use of Election Day voting, with each group's use declining by 10-15 percentage points.

The story coming out of the 2022 election is that, although voters overall appear broadly similar to their pre-pandemic levels, they have become more sorted by vote mode. Democrats, who used to lead in rates of early voting, are now the least likely group to use it — reflecting a near linear trend in downward usage from 44% in 2016 to just above 26% in 2022. NPAs are less likely to turn out than party identifiers (see Figure 2.5), with several reasons including fewer mobilization efforts targeted toward this group by campaigns, higher levels of ambivalence about candidates and parties, and less political interest. For similar reasons, NPAs generally have been greater users of Election Day voting in Florida than either Democrats or Republicans, waiting until the very last moment to cast their ballots. For example, in both 2016 and 2018, roughly 35% of Election Day voters were NPA, while 31-32% were Republican and 26-28% were Democratic. As Election Day voting rates recovered following the apex of the pandemic in 2022, Republican voters surpassed their pre-pandemic usage and tied with NPAs at 37% of Election Day voters. These changes in early voting and Election Day voting usage between parties is never more obvious than when looking at VBM. The right panel in Figure 2.19 clearly demonstrates how politically divided VBM became, and remains, following the pandemic. Whereas Democrats and Republicans were virtually tied at 35% in 2018, the gap in 2020 and 2022 was a stunning 15 percentage points.

Figure 2.19. Vote Mode by Party Registration from 2016 - 2022



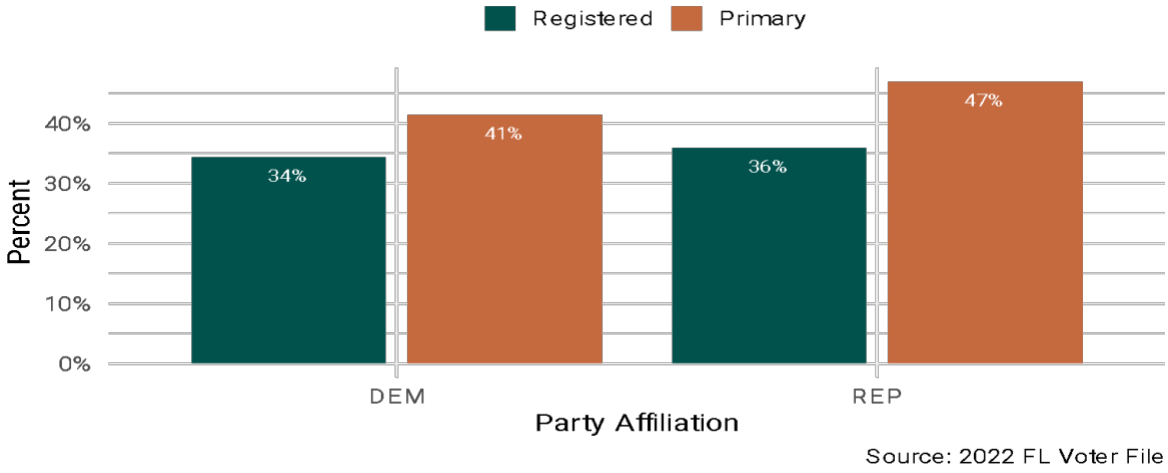
2.9. Primary Election Turnout by Party and Demographic Composition

Florida is one of nine states that have 100% closed primaries.[40] This means voters are allowed to cast a ballot only for primary candidates who are affiliated with the same political party, except for nonpartisan contests, races that have no opposing party challenger, and local referenda. As such, this limits the ability of independents and members of minor parties to participate in many of the most consequential contests in a primary. Given this, it may be surprising that the number of Floridians who choose not to associate with one of the two major political parties has risen so much in recent decades, as seen in Figure 2.6. However, it is consistent with a general trend in the US where Americans have become more reluctant to explicitly identify with a political party, due to negative opinions about partisanship and political rancor.[41]

In this section, we look at voters who turned out to cast a ballot in the primary election, focusing mainly on comparing how 2022 differed from the last midterm election in 2018, and comparing the composition of the electorate across demographic variables including gender, age, and race.

Figure 2.21 compares registration rates and turnout between Democrats and Republicans in the primary. While Democrats and Republicans represent roughly the same proportion of registered voters in the state (34% and 36% respectively), Republicans made up a greater share of primary voters (47%) than Democrats (41%). This is surprising considering the two highest profile contests this election cycle, a seat in the US Senate and the office of the Governor, featured incumbent Republicans who ran unopposed within their party and therefore were not on the primary ballot.

Figure 2.20. Composition of Registered Voters and Primary Voters by Party Registration in 2022



[40] According to the National Conference for State Legislatures (NCSL), these 9 states include Delaware, Florida, Kentucky, Maryland, Nevada, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, and Pennsylvania. The NCSL classifies states into seven different categories ranging from completely closed primaries to open primaries with candidate advancement criteria not based on partisanship.

[41] See Samara Klar and Yanna Krupnikov, 2016, *Independent Politics: How American Disdain for Parties Leads to Political Inaction*, Cambridge University Press.

Figure 2.21 shows that the gender composition of voters across the 2018 and 2022 primary elections stayed the same. In both primary elections, 55% of voters were female and 45% were male.

Figure 2.21. Composition of 2018 & 2022 Primary Voters by Gender

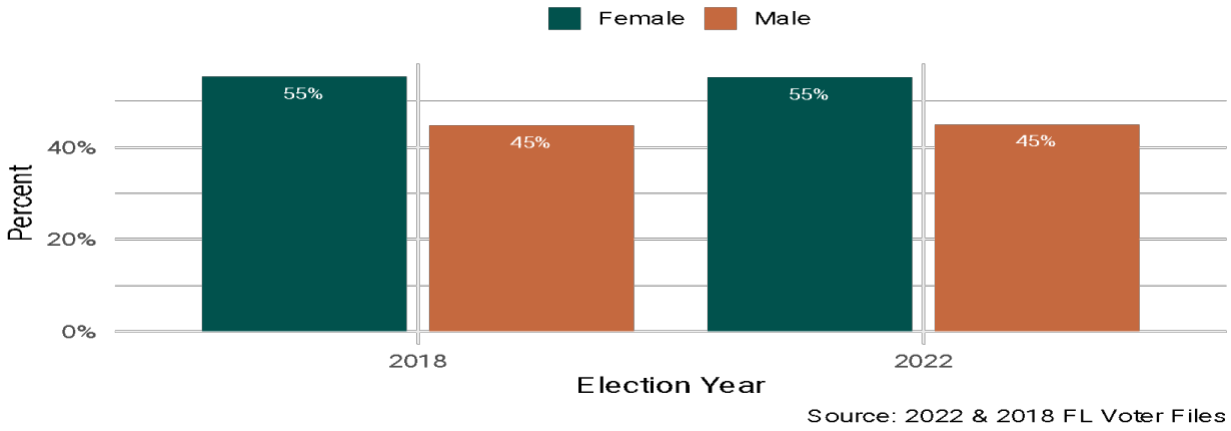


Figure 2.22 shows the composition of primary voters by age category in 2018 and 2022. The first takeaway is that primary voters in Florida are mostly older, with the median and modal-aged voter being 65-74 years old. Second, unlike in the shift observed in the general election, Florida primary voters were, on average, younger in 2022 than they were in 2018. Primary voters ages 75+ saw their share of the voting electorate drop 7 percentage points, from 30% (21% from 75-84 and 9% from 85+) in 2018 to 23% (18% + 5%) in 2022. The greatest rise was among primary voters ages 18-24 and 50-64, which each gained 2 percentage points. Although those in the 18–24-year-old bloc made up just 1% of primary voters in 2018, it is noteworthy that this group tripled its share of primary voters in 2022.

Figure 2.22. Composition of 2018 & 2022 Primary Voters by Age Category

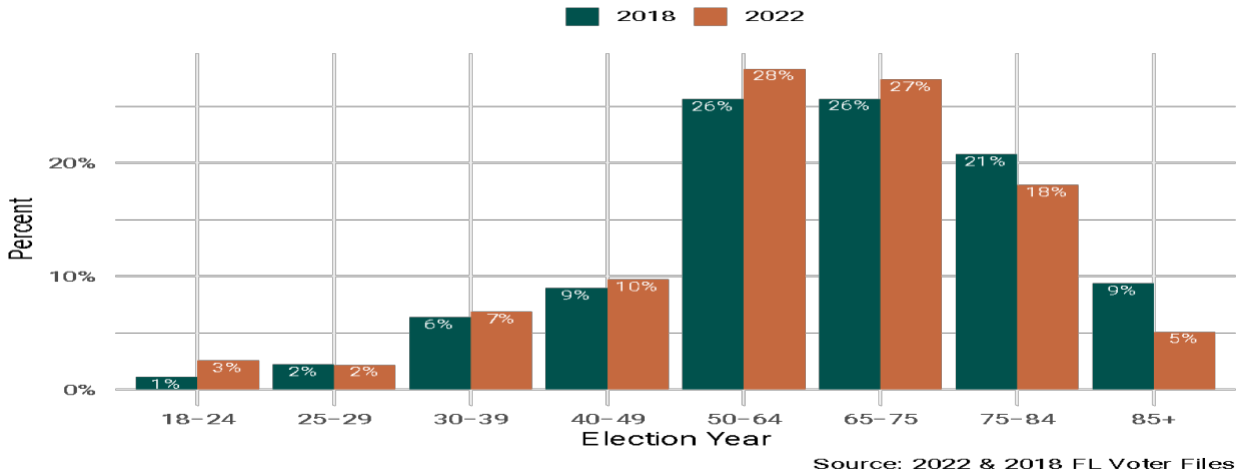
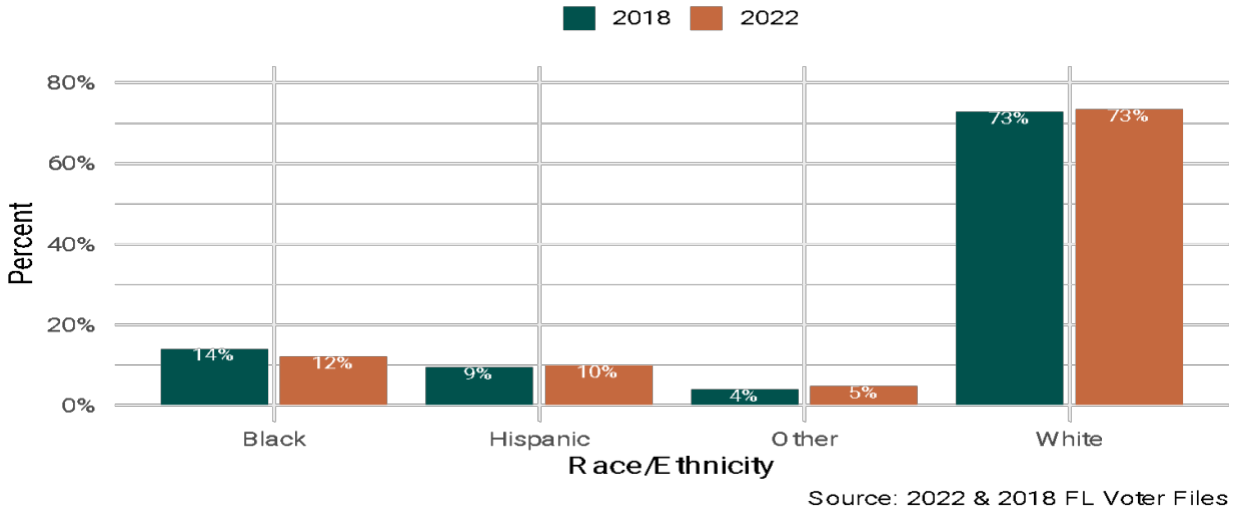


Figure 2.23 presents the composition of primary voters by their race/ethnic self-identification as reported in the voter file. White (non-Hispanic) Floridians made up 73% of primary voters in 2018 and 2022, while Hispanic Floridians and Floridians of other races/ethnicities each increased their representation by 1 percent, with Hispanics moving from 9% of voters in 2018 to 10% in 2022. Similar to the general election, Black Floridians saw a reduction in their share of the primary vote, falling from 14% of voters in 2018 to 12% in 2022.

Figure 2.23. Composition of Primary Voters by Race/Ethnicity in 2018 & 2022



Source: 2022 & 2018 FL Voter Files

Chapter 3: Voter Experiences with the Voting Process and Voter Confidence

Voters are the cornerstone of democracy. Therefore, their experiences with voting are central to understanding the larger Florida election ecosystem. Assessing voter experiences with, and attitudes toward, the election process provides important information on the effectiveness and efficiency of election administration procedures. Voter experiences with ballot delivery, ballot counting, the quality of the polling site, and interaction with poll workers provide important evidence about the voting process and the quality of both the voter experience and the election system. These experiences are the primary means through which election officials influence voter confidence. When voters have problems — for example, because poll workers are unhelpful or because they had problems requesting an absentee ballot — they are likely to feel less confident that their votes will be counted correctly.[42] Similarly, when voters have positive experiences and feel that their ballot kept private and processed smoothly, their voter confidence increases. This chapter contains an examination of Florida voters' attitudes surrounding the voting experience.

Data used in this chapter come from the Florida Election Study Survey discussed in Chapter 1 (see Appendix A for our survey methodology and Appendix B for our frequency report). Our sample included Florida voters from each vote mode (in-person early, in-person Election Day, and vote-by-mail). It is important to note that when discussing survey results using party identification, we follow long-standing precedents in political science and use a branching question that probes respondents who select "Independent" to identify with a party. These so-called "leaners" are considered to be partisans of the mentioned party, and only those who do not lean toward either party are labeled as true independents. This will differ from the numbers reported using the official voter registration file, which were used in Chapter 2, because there we used the state's party registration variable.

In 2008, Florida replaced the state's touch-screen ballot system with a uniform paper ballot system. The touch-screen system had come under scrutiny for failing to provide a paper trail should a recount be needed. Following adoption of the paper system, votes would come with a paper record.[43] Federal law requires that paper ballots be kept for 22 months following Election Day, after which they are destroyed.

Florida requires an identification process for all voters. Mail voters are authenticated through signature matching, while in-person voters are authenticated through a valid photo ID that includes a signature.

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[42] See Lonna Rae Atkeson and Kyle L. Saunders, 2007, "Voter Confidence: A Local Matter?" *PS: Political Science & Politics* 40(October):655-660; Thad E. Hall, J. Quin Monson, and Kelly D. Patterson, 2007, "Poll Workers and the Vitality of Democracy: An Early Assessment," *PS: Political Science and Society*, 647-654; Thad E. Hall, J. Quin Monson, and Kelly D. Patterson, 2009, "The Human Dimension of Elections: How Poll Workers Shape Public Confidence in Elections," *Political Research Quarterly* 62(2): 507-522; Sances, Michael and Stewart III, Charles, Partisanship and Voter Confidence, 2000-2010 (April 5, 2012). Midwest Political Science Association, 2012, MIT Political Science Department Research Paper No. 2012-12, Available at SSRN: https://ssrn.com/abstract=2035513.

[43] Terry Aguayo and Christine Jordan Sexton, 2007, "Florida Acts to Eliminate Touch Screen Voting System," *New York Times*, available at: https://www.nytimes.com/2007/02/02/us/02voting.html, accessed August 3, 2023.

Early voting in Florida must begin at least 10 days before Election Day and cannot end prior to the third day before Election Day. Early voting dates vary by county.[44] It is important to note that these dates varied in Lee, Charlotte, and Sarasota counties in 2022 due to the impact of Hurricane Ian — specifically, Governor DeSantis' Executive Order 22-234 allowed these counties to expand early voting locations, to have absentee ballots sent to a different home address, to move polling locations, and to expand the pool of eligible poll workers.[45]

This chapter includes the following sections:

- Section 3.1 examines voters' experiences with voting by mail.
- Section 3.2 discusses voters' experiences with voting in person, either early or on Election Day.
- Section 3.3 discusses voters' experiences with photo ID requirements.
- Section 3.4 examines voter confidence at various levels, including confidence in their own ballot and ballots at the county, state, and federal levels.

3.1. Vote-by-Mail

In 2022, vote-by-mail (VBM) voters made up 37% of all Florida voters. A substantial 94% of VBM voters had used this method previously, while 6% indicated it was the first time they voted by mail. This was much lower than in 2020, when 33% of VBM were new to the process.

We asked voters to explain why they chose VBM. Almost 7 in 10 voters (69%) cited convenience as the main reason for voting by mail, compared to 58% in 2020. While COVID-19 was a significant factor (44%) in decisions to vote by mail in 2020, only 9% of voters cited such concerns in 2022. Other reasons cited to vote by mail included disabilities (12%), being out of town (12%), work or school conflicts (9%), and other scheduling conflicts (10%).

Returning VBM Ballots

Voters may return their VBM ballots by mailing them via the USPS or dropping them off at their county Election Supervisor's Office, polling locations, or designated ballot drop boxes. To understand how Florida VBM ballots were returned, we asked respondents in our survey: "How did you return your ballot?" The results are shown in Table 3.1.

We find that 25% of voters dropped off their ballot at a post office box located at an official US Postal Service location, and another 36% had theirs picked up from their mailbox by the USPS. Just 3% dropped their ballots off at an authorized voting center or precinct, and 13% dropped theirs off at their Supervisor of Elections office.

[44] https://www.vote.org/early-voting-calendar/

[45] Zac Anderson, 2022. "DeSantis issues order making voting easier in counties impacted by Hurricane Ian." Tallahassee Democrat, available at: https://www.flgov.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/EO-22-234.pdf., accessed August 3, 2023.

Table 3.1. How did you return your absentee ballot?

Picked up by the postal worker who delivers mail to my home	36%
Post office box at a US Postal Service location	25%
Dropped it off at the Supervisor of Elections Office	13%
Official post office box not at a US Postal Service location	11%
A drop box used only for ballots	8%
Other	4%
Dropped in off on Election Day at a voting center or election precinct	3%
Email	0%

We asked voters who did not use any of the USPS resources to return their completed ballot why they chose not to do so. A total of 14% said they wanted to be confident their ballot arrived, 5% said they did not trust the USPS to deliver it on time, and 9% said it was more convenient to drop it off.

Voters were also asked who returned your ballot and if they returned anyone else's ballot. These are separate questions because someone could return their own ballot and could also return someone else's ballot. These responses are shown in Table 3.2 and Table 3.3. Fully 9 in 10 voters (90%) returned their own ballot, while 9% had an immediate family member return their ballot. Only a handful of voters had their ballot returned by a roommate (0.1%), friend (0.2%), or someone else (1%).

Table 3.2. Who returned your ballot?

	Who returned yours?
I did	90%
Immediate family member	9%
Roommate	0.1%
Friend	0.2%
Political party or interest group	0%
Stranger	0%
Other	1%

Voters were also asked if they returned someone else's ballot. Table 3.3 shows the frequencies for the 22% of respondents who reported returning someone else's ballot. Of these, 55% returned their spouse's or partner's ballot. Some voters returned a ballot for their parents (4%), child (4%), roommate (0.1%), friend (1%), other family member (5%), or for some other person (1%).

Table 3.3. Whose ballot(s) did you return?

	Who returned yours?
Spouse	55%
Parent(s)	4%
Child or children	4%
Roommate	0.1%
Friend	1%
Other family member	5%
Other	1%

We also asked voters who returned someone else's ballot: "How many ballots did you return?" A relatively small portion, 13% of voters, indicated that they returned only one additional ballot, while 78% said they returned two ballots and 7% returned three. Far fewer voters returned four (0.4%), five (1%), or six or more (0.4%) ballots.

Following Instructions and Ballot Tracking

To assess how respondents felt about voting by mail, we first asked: "Overall, how difficult was it to follow all the instructions necessary to cast your ballot and return it to be counted?" We find overwhelmingly that VBM voters saw the process of casting and returning their ballot as easy. Specifically, 97% said that the instructions were very easy (78%) or somewhat easy (19%).

To provide more information to voters, Florida hosts an online voter portal through which voters can track their mail ballot. A majority (56%) of VBM voters took advantage of this resource. Table 3.4 provides information on the reasons Floridians utilized this portal. Of the Florida voters who tracked their ballot, 65% did so because they believed the election was too important to risk their ballot being rejected. Other reasons cited for ballot tracking include being automatically signed up for tracking (27%), being concerned their ballot would get lost (28%), and other reasons (16%).

Table 3.4. Which of the following describes the reason you chose to track your ballot?

I believed the 2022 election was too important to risk my ballot being rejected	53%
I was automatically signed up for ballot tracking	27%
I was concerned my ballot would be lost in the mail	28%
I was concerned my ballot would be rejected	12%
Other, please describe why you chose to track your ballot	16%

Table 3.5 describes why other voters did not utilize this portal. Among this group, 40% said they were not aware of the portal, while 46% trusted that their ballot would be received and counted. A smaller number of voters did not feel comfortable tracking their ballot information (2%), did not care if their ballot failed to arrive on time (1%), or were worried about giving away their contact information (4%).

Given the overall popularity among those who used the tracking system and the fact that most voters who did not use it did not realize it was an option, *we recommend a campaign to expand the program and get more VBM voters signed up for the tracking system.*

Table 3.5. Which of the following describes the reason you chose NOT to track your ballot?

I was not aware that I could track my ballot	40%
I fully trusted my ballot would be received and counted by the election	46%
I did not feel comfortable tracking my ballot information online or through text messages	2%
I did not care if my ballot was rejected or did not arrive on time	1%
I was worried my contact information would be used for non-election purposes	4%
Other, please describe why you chose NOT to track your ballot	14%

We also asked Florida voters who voted my mail how difficult it was to follow the VBM instructions. Table 3.6 shows that while a supermajority of all voters (78%) indicate it was very easy to follow the VBM instructions, there was some variation by party. While 89% of Republicans reported a very easy time following instructions, only 79% of NPA and 70% of Democrats reported a very easy time.

Table 3.6. Overall, how difficult was it to follow all the instructions necessary to cast your ballot and return it to be counted? by Party Identification

Response	Republican	NPA	Democrat
Very hard	0%	2%	1%
Somewhat Hard	1%	3%	2%
Somewhat easy	9%	16%	28%
Very Easy	89%	79%	70%

3.2. In-Person (Early and Election Day) Voter Experience

In-person voters could cast their ballot early at vote centers in their county between October 19 and November 1, 2022. In Lee, Charlotte, and Sarasota counties, which were affected by Hurricane Ian, early voting was extended through Election Day on November 8. These three counties were also allowed to utilize additional polling locations. Since in-person voters vote at a precinct or vote center, we focus on voter experiences there to evaluate the quality of their voting experience.

Wait Times

The American Voting Experience Report and Recommendations by the Obama Presidential Commission on Election Administration addresses the issue of wait times, recommending that voters wait no longer than 30 minutes to cast their ballot.[46] As shown in Table 3.7, nearly all Florida voters (95%) were able to vote within this 30-minute time frame. While Election Day voters waited in slightly longer lines, averaging 6 minutes, compared to early voters who averaged 4 minutes, only 5% of Florida voters indicated they waited in lines longer than 30 minutes. Wait times in off-year elections tend to be shorter than in presidential years. In 2020,

[46] See https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/going-out/voting-tips.html and https://www.nga.org/center/publications/election-health-safety-COVID-19/.

16% of early voters and 12% of Election Day voters indicated they waited in line for longer than 30 minutes.

Table 3.7. About how many minutes did you wait in the check-in line before you were able to vote? By Vote Mode

Response	Early voting	Election Day	Total
0 Minutes	21%	15%	18%
1-5 Minutes	60%	56%	58%
6-15 Minutes	10%	16%	13%
16-30 Minutes	3%	7%	5%
31-60 Minutes	1%	1%	1%
Over 60 Minutes	4%	4%	4%
Average	4 min	6 min	5 min

Polling Location Experience

Election administration is a complex process that involves multiple actors including voters, local election officials and their staff, and citizens who work as poll workers. Voters are aware of their voting experience through interactions with the voting equipment, the facilities, the ballot, the poll workers, and other voters. They knew whether the election was running smoothly or not when they checked in to vote, whether the vote tabulators were working, and whether they were greeted kindly. These experiences help to inform their voter confidence.

- Nearly all in-person voters (99%) strongly agreed (83%) or agreed (16%) that their voting location was easy to find, and 94% either strongly disagreed (71%) or disagreed (23%) that they did not have to go far out of their way to vote.
- Once they got to their voting location, 93% thought it was easy to park.
- Overall, nearly all voters (99%) agreed that their poll workers were helpful, with almost three-quarters strongly agreeing (74%) and another one-quarter (25%) agreeing.

Ballot Completeness

Returning to an examination of all voters, we begin by looking at how much of the ballot Florida voters completed. More than 8 in 10 voters (81%) voted in all contests presented to them on their 2022 ballot, with "nearly all" as the second most common response (11%). In our analysis of the primary ballots as part of our Leon County Election Audit project, we found that 81% of voters completed 100% of their ballot, consistent with this self-estimate.[47]

3.3. Voter Identification for In-Person Voters

[47] This matches the results we find in our election audit project at https://2022voterdata.lci.fsu.edu/, suggesting it is an accurate assessment.

In Florida, in-person voting requires a valid and current photo ID with a signature, whether voting early or on Election Day. Voters who do not have a signature on their photo ID will need to present a second form of identification that shows a signature. If a voter forgets their ID, they can still vote using a provisional ballot, if they are eligible to do so and vote at the correct precinct. If the signature on the provisional ballot matches the voter registration record, the vote will be counted. Today, Florida voters have 12 options to choose from for voter ID:

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

In 2022 we asked: "What type of voter ID did you show when you went to the polls?" Table 3.8 shows the results. Virtually all voters showed some sort of required ID to vote. Thus, the law appears to be applied consistently across the state.

- We find that nearly all voters utilized a driver's license or state-issued photo ID to verify their identity (94%).
- A passport was used as identification by 1%, while another 1% reported showing another form of identification.
- A total of 4% reported showing two different forms of ID to meet the requirements for both a signature and a photo.

Table 3.8. What type of voter ID did you show when you went to the polls?

Driver's license/state-issued ID	94%
I showed 2 forms of ID. One ID had my signature on it, the other had my photo	4%
Passport	1%
I showed some other form of identification	1%
College ID	0%
I didn't show any photo ID	0%

We observed the voting process as part of our work on election administration in Leon County. We observed how helpful the two forms of ID rule is to successfully processing voters and ensuring that they vote a regular ballot rather than a provisional one. Poll workers worked hard to find a valid form of ID, including encouraging voters to sign the back or front of another ID in their presence — even if that ID did not have a signature line — which we believe may not be

consistent with the law. While signing an identification card that does not require a signature is likely an over-administration of the law, we understand poll workers' desires to process as many regular voters as possible. *We, however, recommend that poll worker training clarify what forms of identification they are allowed and not allowed to accept as signature cards during this process.*

In addition, we observed the implementation of a rule that allows voters to change their address in person during early and Election Day voting. In general, we found this to be a very successful policy, which many voters took advantage of. This was especially popular among college students, who often move annually. During early voting, if voters moved within the same county, this was a terrific process as it led to them having the correct ballot for their geography and they could complete their ballot at the same location.

On Election Day, this was a bit more complicated because voters vote in precincts based on their geography, and when voters' geography changes their precinct is also likely to change. While this system still worked well in the early hours of voting, as Election Day progressed we observed that in some neighborhoods voters were discouraged by the late hour and having to locate to a different precinct. This especially created a problem at the university voting precinct after Florida State University administrators sent an email in the early morning to all students encouraging them to vote on campus without consideration of their geography and precinct location! *We recommend that university administrators communicate in advance with local election officials to better understand the process and how they can communicate correct information to student voters to encourage their participation in the process.*

We saw precincts tackle this problem differently. Some precincts increased efficiency by making a separate line for voters who needed address changes, while others had voters go through the regular check-in line and then enter a second line to complete the address change. *We recommend that counties encourage a uniform and efficient process across precincts to better serve voters by having one line for check-in and one line for address changes.*

3.4. Attitudes Toward Voter Identification

Only qualified electors can vote, so voter authentication and identification are vital in election administration. In 2001, the Help America Vote Act established a threshold of voter identification, requiring first-time voters who did not verify their identity to show proof of identification. Since then, 36 states have adopted voter ID policies, with most requiring a valid photo ID that includes a signature. In Florida, voters must show an ID with their signature and a valid photo. These do not have to be the same document. For example, these can include a Florida driver's license, Florida state ID (or passport), which contain both, or debit card or credit card with a signature, and another photo ID — such as a student ID or retirement center ID.

We asked several questions regarding the requirements for voter identification. Attitudes toward voter ID are complicated and take different forms, depending on the framing of the question. Therefore, we asked respondents, "Do you support or oppose requiring all people to show a photo ID when they vote?"

- Fully 9 in 10 Florida voters (90%) support photo voter ID requirements.
- Only 6% did not support this policy, while the remaining 4% were unsure.

Partisanship informs support for voter ID law (see Table 3.9). More than three-quarters (76%) of Democrats supported voter ID laws, while 15% did not. Virtually all Republicans (99.7%) supported voter ID. Independents also overwhelmingly supported voter ID laws (91%). While still a supermajority, Democrats are less likely to support voter ID than are Republican and Independent voters.

Table 3.9. Do you support or oppose requiring all people to show government-issued photo ID when they vote? by Party Identification

Response	Republican	Independents	Democrat
Support	100%	91%	76%
Oppose	0%	5%	15%
Don't know	0%	4%	9%

We asked voters about their perceptions of the requirements of the Florida law: "Florida's in-person voter ID requires voters to show a photo ID and a signature. Do you think this requirement is: too strict, just right, or not strict enough?" Overall, 82% of voters felt the requirements were just right, 7% believed it was too strict, and 11% felt it was not strict enough.

We also asked voters about their perception of the signature authentication requirement: "Florida's vote-by-mail law requires voters to sign their ballot envelope and poll workers match the signature to those on file to verify their identity. Do you think this requirement is too strict, just right, or not strict enough?" Two-thirds of voters (66%) feel this is just right, while 8% feel it is too strict and 27% feel it is not strict enough.

3.5. Voter Confidence

For a democracy to function effectively, its voters must be confident in the electoral process even when their preferred candidate loses. Voter confidence is the belief that the democratic process is fair, legitimate, and transparent.[48] Even when election outcomes are different than some voters would have preferred, voters should still be confident that the election process was honest and fair. We asked voters four questions about their confidence in the electoral process:

- First, we asked: "How confident are you that YOUR vote in the General Election was counted as you intended?" Response options were "very confident," "somewhat confident," "not too confident," and "not at all confident." The personal vote is the most crucial level of voter confidence because it represents how voters feel about their voting experience and its accuracy.

[48] Atkeson, Lonna Rae, R. Michael Alvarez, and Thad E. Hall. "Voter Confidence: How to Measure It and How It Differs from Government Support." *Election Law Journal: Rules, Politics, and Policy* 14, no. 3 (June 18, 2015).

- The second level is voter confidence in the county's election system, and was placed in a grid format with the other two remaining levels of voter confidence. A county is the primary election administrative unit of the state. It is responsible for all matters related to election administration, including poll worker training, logistics, accuracy testing of the tabulating machines, the counting of ballots, the qualification of provisional ballots, the qualification of absentee ballots, the county canvass, etc.
- The third level is confidence in the process at the state level. The states have a consistent set of laws that are used for all voters even if those are administered somewhat differently across counties, and as such represents an important administrative unit for election administration.
- The fourth level is the confidence that all ballots were counted correctly nationwide. At this level, voters have relatively little knowledge of election processes of other states.

The responses to these questions are presented in Table 3.14 and show both the frequency of response and the confidence averages across levels of administration for each voting mode (Election Day, early in-person, and VBM) and by party identification. We focus on vote mode because different ways of voting result in very different experiences. We also focus on party because we know there is historically a winner and loser effect on voter confidence, such that voters who voted for the winning candidate show higher levels of confidence and voters who supported the losing candidate have decreased confidence.[49] In this case, we would hypothesize that Republicans were the "winners" in this election because their candidate won the gubernatorial election.

The variables are coded on a 4-point scale, from 1 to 4, so that a higher average indicates greater confidence. Overall, the results show that voters have very high confidence that their votes were counted correctly at the individual level, but confidence tends to decrease for larger election-administrative units, especially at the national level.

- Three-quarters (75%) of voters were very confident and 20% were somewhat confident that *their* vote was counted correctly. Thus, almost all (95%) voters were at least somewhat confident that their ballot was counted correctly. Only 5% of voters were not too confident or not at all confident that their ballot was counted correctly.
- As we move up in the level of government, we find that voter confidence declines. County-level confidence is slightly lower than personal voter confidence, with 93% of voters indicating they are very (64%) or somewhat (29%) confident. Only 7% reported being not too (5%) or not at all (2%) confident.
- A majority (56%) of voters indicated that they were very confident of state-level results, and another 36% were somewhat confident. The remaining voters were not too (7%) or not at all (2%) confident.

[49] See Atkeson and Saunders, 2007; R. Michael Alvarez, Thad E. Hall, and Morgan Llewellyn (2008), "Are Americans Confident Their Ballots are counted?" *The Journal of Politics* 70, 3: 754–66 and Atkeson, Lonna Rae, (2014) "Voter Confidence Ten Years after Bush V. Gore," in *Ten Years after Bush V. Gore*, edited by R. Michael Alvarez and Bernard Grofman, (Cambridge University Press), Charles Bullock and M.V. Hood III, (2005) "Punchcards, Jim Crow and Al Gore: Explaining Voter Trust in the Electoral System in Georgia , *State Politics and Policy Quarterly* 5: 283-94; Betsy Sinclair, Steven S. Smith, and Patrick D. Tucker, (2018) "It's Largely a Rigged System": Voter Confidence and the Winner Effect in 2016," 2018, *Political Research Quarterly* 71(4):854-68.

- Voters were least confident of the nationwide results, with only 3 in 10 voters (31%) indicating they were very confident and 27% reporting somewhat confident. Another 42% indicated that they are not too (23%) or not at all confident (19%).

At the bottom of Table 3.10, average voter confidence levels are broken down by voting mode and party. When we look at VBM voters, they are more confident than in-person voters at all election-administrative levels, with the difference being greatest at the national level. Previous research suggests that VBM voters are less confident than in-person voters, but in 2022 VBM voters were more confident than in-person early and Election Day voters. Similarly, early voters were more confident than Election Day voters, and Election Day voters had the lowest confidence overall.

Table 3.10. Personal, County, State, and National Voter Confidence

	Your Vote	Votes in your county	Votes in your state	Votes nationwide
Frequency				
(4) Very confident	75%	64%	56%	31%
(3) Somewhat confident	20%	29%	36%	27%
(2) Not too confident	3%	5%	7%	23%
(1) Not at all confident	2%	2%	2%	19%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%
Averages (1-4)				
Overall Average	3.8	3.7	3.5	3.0
Early voters	3.8	3.7	3.5	2.8
Absentee voters	3.8	3.7	3.5	3.3
Election day voters	3.7	3.6	3.5	2.7
Democrats	3.9	3.8	3.6	3.6
NPA/Others	3.7	3.6	3.5	3.1
Republicans	3.7	3.5	3.5	2.2

In 2022, 50% of Democrats and 37% of Independents voted absentee, while early in-person voting was the most common among Republicans (42%). These differences in behavioral choices led to very different partisan responses when voter confidence was assessed by voting mode, with VBM voters having the highest level of confidence. In-person voters were the least confident, especially Election Day voters who identified as Republican.

- For example, the average Democratic voter evaluated personal voter confidence at a high 3.9 on a 4-point scale, close to "very confident." Thus, on average, Democrats appear very confident their ballot was counted correctly.
- The average personal voter confidence for Republicans was 3.7, also indicating very confident, on our 4-point scale. But we hypothesized that they would be more positive because they were more likely to support the winning candidate. This may suggest a longer-term effect of partisanship on voter attitudes.[50]
- The personal confidence for NPA/Others was also 3.7 on our 4-point scale.

[50] See Atkeson, Lonna Rae, R. Michael Alvarez, Andrew Sinclair, Thad E. Hall. 2014. "Balancing Fraud Prevention and Electoral Participation: Attitudes Toward Voter Identification." *Social Science Quarterly* 95(5): 1381-98.

We see a drop in nationwide voter confidence among all partisan and vote-mode groups.

- Democrats' confidence dropped from an average of 3.9 at a personal level to 3.6 at the national level, a relatively small drop.
- The drop in NPA/other confidence was more significant, resulting in an average .6 gap from 3.7 to 3.1.
- The drop in Republican confidence was, by far, the most substantial, moving from 3.7 to 2.2, a one-and-a-half-point average decline.

Vote mode in the 2022 election was highly correlated with partisanship due to polarization among elites. For example, the pandemic led Congressional Democrats to introduce legislation to expand no-excuse VBM and early voting in all the states, while messages from Republican elites, especially President Trump, highlighted concerns that ballots cast remotely by mail could result in lost, fraudulent, or miscounted votes.

Previous research has found that voting mode can influence voter confidence and there can be strong winner and loser effects.[51] These effects were not as prevalent in 2022 as they were in 2020.

Finally, we examine the correlation between voter demographics and voter confidence. As in 2020, gender, race/ethnicity, and age had small and uninteresting differences and insignificant correlations with voter confidence.

- Voter confidence was about the same regardless of age group. An overwhelming 95% of voters ages 18-40 were either "somewhat" or "very" confident, as were 97% of voters ages 65+, and 94% of voters ages 41-64 were somewhat or very confident their ballot was properly counted.
- Voters with college degrees reported slightly higher levels of confidence in their ballot being counted: 97% of college-educated voters felt somewhat or very confident compared to 94% of non-college-educated voters.
- Voter confidence was similar among different racial/ethnic groups: 96% of white voters reported feeling somewhat or very confident, compared to 93% of black and 93% of Hispanic voters (see Table 3.11).
- Men and women had similar levels of personal confidence, with 95% of men and 94% of women feeling somewhat or very confident.

[51] See Atkeson and Saunders, 2007; R. Michael Alvarez, Thad E. Hall, and Morgan Llewellyn (2008), "Are Americans Confident Their Ballots are counted?" *The Journal of Politics* 70, 3: 754–66 and Atkeson, Lonna Rae, (2014) "Voter Confidence Ten Years after Bush V. Gore," in *Ten Years after Bush V. Gore*, edited by R. Michael Alvarez and Bernard Grofman, (Cambridge University Press), Charles Bullock and M.V. Hood III, (2005) "Punchcards, Jim Crow and Al Gore: Explaining Voter Trust in the Electoral System in Georgia , *State Politics and Policy Quarterly* 5: 283-94; Betsy Sinclair, Steven S. Smith, and Patrick D. Tucker, (2018) "It's Largely a Rigged System": Voter Confidence and the Winner Effect in 2016," 2018, *Political Research Quarterly* 71(4):854-68.

Table 3.11. How confident are you that your ballot was counted correctly? by Race and Ethnicity

Response	White	Black	Hispanic	Other
Very confident	76%	77%	73%	65%
Somewhat confident	20%	16%	21%	24%
Not too confident	3%	6%	5%	5%
Not at all confident	1%	1%	2%	6%

Overall Voting Experience

In terms of overall experience, the majority of VBM voters were satisfied. Table 3.12 shows that when voters were asked: "How would you rate your voting experience overall?," 67% of respondents who voted by mail rated their experiences as "excellent" while another 30% said it was "good." Overall, VBM voters had poorer experiences than early and Election Day voters: 81% of early voters and 74% of Election Day voters said their experience was "excellent," while 17% and 24% indicated it was "good," respectively.

Table 3.12. How would you rate your voting experience overall? by Vote Mode

	Vote-by-mail	Early	Election Day
Excellent	67%	81%	74%
Good	30%	17%	24%
Fair	2%	2%	2%
Poor	1%	0%	0%

Chapter 4: Beliefs About Ballot Privacy, Voter Intimidation, Election Fraud, and Attitudes Toward Election Reforms

This chapter focuses on voters' attitudes about ballot confidentiality, election fraud, and voter ID laws.

- Section 4.1 examines voters' willingness to share their vote choice with others and whether they feel their ballots were kept confidential.
- Section 4.2 examines voters' beliefs about election fraud.
- Section 4.3 examines voters' attitudes toward election reforms.

4.1 Ballot Privacy

Secret ballots are a core value of the US electoral system. Secret ballots protect voters' privacy by preventing coercion and intimidation, allowing voters to choose the candidate of their choice. Importantly, neither election administrators nor poll workers can connect individual ballots to particular voters. Unfortunately, voters have a great deal of uncertainty around these facts.

Ballot privacy is protected during in-person voting by ensuring that during the voting process no poll worker or other voters can view a voter's ballot. Poll workers are taught to avoid looking at the ballot once it is in the hands of the voter. Voters, not poll workers, insert their own ballots into the vote tabulator while poll workers stand next to the vote tabulator so they cannot see voter choices on the ballots. If a ballot error is detected, the poll worker is trained to cover up the ballot and look at the readout on the vote tabulator to communicate the error to the voter. If the voter has to spoil their ballot and get a new one, the voter — and not the poll worker — is supposed to put the ballot in the spoiled ballot envelope and stamp it void. In addition, voters are encouraged to keep their ballots in a privacy sleeve, which is an oversized folder that voters can use to move from check-in to the voting station and then to the vote tabulator. Figure 4.1 shows a laminated privacy sleeve used by in-person voters in Palm Beach County. There are no markings or codes on a ballot that connects it to a particular voter and therefore once it is inserted into the tabulator it cannot be traced back to the voter. We found that 4 in 5 voters (80%) reported keeping their ballot in a privacy sleeve while moving through a vote center or precinct on Election Day, while 1 in 5 (20%) did not.

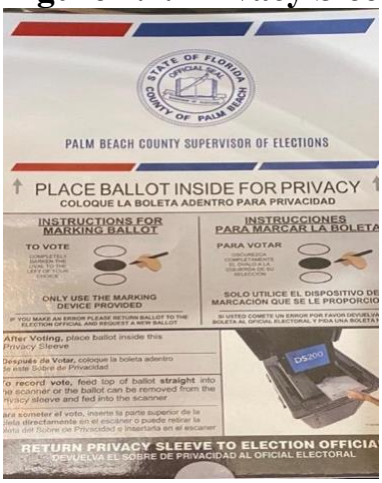
Overall, we found that 99% of in-person voters either strongly agreed (77%) or agreed (22%) that, "My ballot privacy was protected." Only 2% indicated that a poll worker looked at their ballot or that someone in line asked them who they were voting for.

Privacy for VBM voters is a bit more complex because voters are in charge of keeping their ballot secret while they vote at home.

- While almost 9 in 10 (88%) voters indicated that they voted alone, just over 1 in 10 (12%) indicated they voted with someone else present.

- Three-quarters of voters who voted with someone else voted with their spouse or partner, 12% voted with a parent or both parents, 14% voted with their children, 7% voted with some other family member, and 3% indicate they voted with a friend.
- In addition, only 86% of VBM voters either strongly agreed (73%) or somewhat agreed (13%) that "my ballot choices were kept private at home," with 14% either somewhat disagreeing (6%) or strongly disagreeing (8%).
- Compared to in-person voters, where 99% of voters agreed that their ballot privacy was protected, VBM voters are less likely to believe their ballot privacy was protected while voting.

Figure 4.1. Privacy Sleeve for In-Person Voters in Palm Beach County



Institutionally, several procedures are in place to ensure that poll workers and election administrators cannot identify a ballot. VBM ballot privacy is protected by double-enveloping the ballots. The outer envelope contains the information to qualify the voter. Once qualification is complete, the outer envelope is separated from the inner envelope and the ballot envelope moves to a separate station for opening and tabulating. This ensures that ballot qualification and ballot tabulation are separate administrative transactions that result in complete ballot privacy for the voter.[52] Moreover, this ensures that the ballot remains secret from those tasked with qualifying the ballot, as well as those placing it in the tabulator.

- Nevertheless, about 7% of VBM voters either somewhat disagreed (4%) or strongly disagreed (3%) that "my ballot privacy was maintained when my vote was counted," and only about 6 in 10 strongly agreed (62%) and 3 in 10 (31%) somewhat agreed.

Clearly, VBM voters feel their ballot is less private than in-person voters. *We recommend that election supervisors include in their VBM kit to voters, along with the instructions, a letter that explains how voter secrecy is maintained at the office.*

[52] Fraga, Bernard L., and Michael G. Miller. 2022. "Who Do Voter ID Laws Keep from Voting?" *The Journal of Politics* 84(2): 1091-1105.

Disclosing Votes

Voters have complete control over their choice whether to disclose whom they voted for to family, friends, and others. We asked if family or friends asked voters whom they voted for, whether they named the candidate, and if they were truthful in their disclosure of whom they voted for. Table 4.1 gives the frequency of each response.

- Over half (51%) of voters are at least sometimes asked by family and friends whom they voted for, compared to 58% in 2020.
- When a friend or family member asked which candidate they preferred, most voters (50%) named a candidate almost all the time, compared to 57% in 2020, while 24% named a candidate most of the time, compared to 21% in 2020. Additionally, 14% of voters indicated they sometimes named a candidate, compared to 11% in 2020. Fewer voters rarely (7%) or never (6%) named a candidate; these numbers were similar in 2020.
- An overwhelming majority of voters were truthful in naming the candidate they preferred all the time (88%), while 6% were truthful most of the time, compared to 8% in 2020. Fewer voters are sometimes (3%), rarely (0%), or never (2%) truthful in stating the candidate they prefer; these figures were the same in 2020.
- There are no substantive differences among party identifiers or across demographic characteristics (e.g., age, gender, race, education) in whether voters discussed and disclosed the candidate they preferred in an election.
- We also asked in-person voters if they were asked to disclose their vote while in line at the polling location or if a poll worker looked at their ballot. Only 2% of voters reported someone in line asking who they were voting for, and only 3% said a poll worker looked at their ballot.

Table 4.1. Percentage of Being Asked and Providing Who a Voter Voted For

Response	All or almost all the time	Most of the time	Some-times	Rarely	Never or almost never
How often does anyone, including friends or family, ask you which candidate you prefer or voted for?	6%	13%	32%	29%	20%
If a friend or family member asks you who you prefer in an election, do you name a candidate?	50%	24%	14%	7%	6%
If you tell a close friend or family member which candidate you prefer, do you tell the truth?	88%	6%	3%	0%	2%

Can Others Determine Your Vote If You Do Not Disclose It?

We also asked voters whether they believed election officials or other actors could access secret ballots and identify who an elector voted for. We asked the following two questions:

1) “According to the law, which candidate you vote for is supposed to be kept secret unless you tell someone. Even so, how easy or hard do you think it would be for politicians,

union officials, or the people you work for to find out who you voted for, even if you told no one?"
2) "Do you think elected officials can access voting records and figure out who a voter had voted for?"

The responses to these questions, found in Table 4.2, are quite surprising given how many voters indicated that their voting experience preserved their privacy.

- One-quarter (25%) indicated it would be "very" (9%) or "somewhat" (16%) easy for employers, politicians, or union officials to find out who they voted for. and only 1 in 5 (20%) said it would be impossible.
- Another 3 in 10 (30%) indicated it would be very hard but not impossible, and another 15% indicated it would be somewhat hard.
- Additionally, 12% indicated they didn't know.
- One-third (33%) believe election officials can identify a person's vote, while a slightly larger share (36%) indicated they were not sure. Only about 3 in 10 (31%) voters indicated they did not believe election officials could identify a voter's ballot.
- Those voters who indicated they believe that election officials can identify a voter were also asked whether they think it is easier for election officials to identify voters using an in-person or vote-by-mail ballot. Of these, 3 in 5 voters (60%) indicated that mode of ballot does not matter and that it is equally likely that an election official could identify a voter of either ballot type. However, about one-third (34%) said it is easier with mail balloting and only 6% thought an in-person ballot would be easier to identify.

Compared to 2020, more voters believed that their ballot was secret in 2022. Nevertheless, a very large percentage of voters remain concerned or uncertain about their privacy, which suggests further action should be taken. *We recommend a statewide and county-level education campaign on voter ballot secrecy.*

Table 4.2. Percentage Response to Two Questions about Voters' belief that others can find out who they voted for even if the voter does not disclose this information to others

According to the law, which candidate you vote for is supposed to be kept secret unless you tell someone. Even so, how easy or hard do you think it would be for politicians, union officials, or the people you work for to find out who you voted for, even if you told no one?	2022	2020
Impossible, my vote is secret	20%	18%
It would be very hard, but not impossible	30%	23%
It would be somewhat hard	14%	11%
It would be somewhat easy	16%	18%
It would be very easy	9%	21%
Don't know	12%	9%
Do you think elected officials can access voting records and figure out who a voter had voted for?		
Yes	33%	50%
Don't know	36%	28%
No	31%	22%
[Yes to above:] Do you think elected officials can more easily identify who you voted for when you use a vote-by-mail ballot, an in-person ballot, or are they about the same?		
Vote-by-mail is easier to identify	34%	
In-person is easier to identify	6%	
Equally likely to be identified	60%	

4.2. Beliefs about Election and Voter Fraud, Voter Intimidation, and other election anomalies

Over the last six presidential cycles, except for the 2008 contest, presidential elections have been quite close either in the electoral college vote, the popular vote, or both. In addition, over the last 25 years, polarization on issues between the parties has substantially increased. When elections are close and so much is at stake, concerns about election integrity and election access move center stage as both parties seek to ensure that their voters can go to the polls and that fraud is minimized. Given that 2022 was a midterm election with no presidential contest on the ballot, allegations of voter intimidation and election fraud were more isolated and local, involving mostly close statewide contests across the country.

Voter Perceptions of Election Anomalies and Fraud

We asked voters: "Which of the following situations did you observe in the 2022 general election?" These results are detailed in Table 4.3 and suggest that voters perceived almost no voter fraud or voter intimidation.

- The highest proportion of relevant answers was for the activity "voter intimidation at the polling place," which only 2% of respondents reported.
- All remaining observations are reported at less than 1%.

Table 4.3. Which of the following situations did you personally observe in the 2022 Midterm Election? Please mark all that apply (n=6,245)

	Yes	No
Someone bribes a voter or pays for votes	<1%	99%
Someone being improperly denied the chance to vote	<1%	99%
Someone filling out an absentee ballot for someone else	<1%	99%
Voting machines failing to record votes	<1%	99%
Someone using a false identity to vote	<1%	99%
Voter intimidation at the polling place	2%	98%
Someone stuffing a lot of ballots into an official ballot drop	<1%	99%

Orphan Ballots

Voters become concerned about election integrity when they find evidence that there are gaps in the system. One place where this happens is with vote-by-mail ballots because vote-by-mail ballots entail a break in ballot custody. While there are authentication processes in place to enhance integrity, specifically ballot signature matching, voters may become concerned when ballots arrive at their home for a voter who does not live there ― so-called orphan ballots.

Therefore, we asked: "Did you receive a ballot in the mail that didn't belong to you or anyone in your household?"

- A total of 4% of voters stated they received a VBM ballot that did not belong to them or anyone in their household.
- Given that Florida had nearly 8 million qualified voters go to the polls, this amounts to about 312,000 orphan ballots delivered to residences without the voter named on the ballot.
- Voters who indicated they received an orphan ballot were much less likely to believe their ballot was counted correctly. Only 59% of voters who received an orphan ballot in the mail were very confident, compared to 75% of voters who did not receive an orphan ballot; among those receiving orphan ballots, another 29% were somewhat confident compared to 20% who did not, 6% were not too confident compared to 3%, and 5% were not confident at all compared to 2%.
- Given that a VBM ballot should not arrive at the home of a person who did not request one, *we recommend that the Secretary of State and/or county Election Supervisors create a hotline and/or web form for voters to report an incorrect ballot being delivered.* That would alert election officials to a bad address in the voter file and would help to identify administrative issues in the VBM process. It might also help ensure voters that the state is actively concerned about ballot tracking, the quality of the voter file, and ballot security, thus enhancing voter confidence.

Belief in the Frequency of Types of Election Fraud, and Voter Access

Even if voters have not personally witnessed unusual election activities, some may still believe these types of activities occur. Therefore, we asked voters the following question: "Below is a list of possible illegal election activities that may or may not take place in Florida. How often do

you think each event occurs in your state?" Voters could respond: (1) never; (2) hardly ever; (3) not much; (4) some of the time; (5) all or most of the time.

To cover more types of concerns, we split respondents into two random groups, A or B, with a few identical questions between the groups and the remaining questions different. Table 4.4 shows a detailed display of these results over different types of actions. We included in parentheses in column one, along with the question, the number of respondents for each question and the group letter, so readers can identify which questions both groups received and which were given only to one group or the other. Also in parentheses is the average score for the variable, with one coded as "never" and five coded as "all or most of the time," such that a higher score means more belief in fraud or intimidation. The table is organized from the question with the lowest to the highest average score. Keep in mind that all the answers to the question have an average score of less than "not much." Below we highlight many of the questions focusing on whether voters believed that statement at least some of the time.

- Over 1 in 10 voters (13%) believe that the least likely fraudulent voting activity that occurs is that someone hacks into the vote tabulators and changes individual votes.
- About 14% of voters believe that ballots are tampered with by election workers.
- 1 in 5 voters (20%) believe that an eligible voter gets denied the opportunity to vote by a poll worker at least some of the time.
- About 1 in 5 voters (22%) believe someone fraudulently casts a vote for another person at least some of the time.
- About one-quarter of voters (26%) believe that absentee ballots are stolen and thrown away after being submitted.
- About one-quarter (25%) of voters believe that absentee ballot votes are changed.
- 3 in 10 voters (30%) believe that people submit too many ballots into drop boxes on behalf of others at least some of the time.
- Almost 3 in 10 voters (27%) believe people vote more than once.
- Almost 3 in 10 voters (28%) believe that some people pay for votes.
- One-third of voters (34%) believe that it is likely that a non-US citizen votes.
- Almost 3 in 10 voters (29%) believe that it is likely that voter fraud occurs with a false name and address.
- About one-third (36%) of voters believe that someone intimidates a voter.

Table 4.4. Below is a list of possible illegal election activities that may or may not take place in your Florida. How often do you think each event occurs in your state?

	All or most of the time	Some of the time	Not Much	Hardly ever	Never
Someone hacks into the vote tabulators and changes individual votes (n=3,077, B, 1.97)	3%	10%	15%	27%	45%
Ballots are tampered with to change votes by election workers (n=3,083, B, 2.03)	2%	12%	15%	31%	40%
An eligible voter being denied the opportunity to vote by a poll worker or other election official (n=3,084, B, 2.33)	2%	18%	18%	34%	28%
Voting machines fail to record votes correctly (n=6,187, Ballot A and B, 2.44)	4%	21%	17%	33%	25%
Someone pretends to be another person and casts a vote for them in-person (n=3,081, B, 2.46)	2%	20%	19%	40%	19%
Voted absentee ballots are stolen and thrown away after being submitted (n=3,078, B, 2.48)	3%	23%	17%	33%	24%
Someone steals an absentee ballot, changes the ballot, and casts it (n=3,111, A, 2.55)	4%	21%	20%	37%	18%
People submitting too many ballots in drop boxes on behalf of others (n=3,078, B, 2.60)	6%	24%	17%	32%	21%
A voter casts more than one ballot, also known as double voting (n=3,105, A, 2.62)	4%	23%	19%	39%	15%
Someone bribes a voter or pays money for their vote (n=6,181, A&B, 2.62)	4%	24%	19%	33%	20%
Voting under a fraudulent voter registration that uses a phony name and fake address (n=3,105, A, 2.65)	6%	23%	18%	36%	17%
A non-US citizen votes (n=3,097, A, 2.71)	9%	25%	16%	31%	19%
Eligible voters get mistakenly removed from the voter registration file during purges/clean-up (n=3,103, A, 2.86)	5%	32%	21%	30%	12%
Someone intimidates a voter (n=3,104, A, 2.90)	5%	31%	26%	26%	12%

4.3. Attitudes toward Election Reforms

We begin by focusing on the tension in the election ecosystem between access and fraud. From a general perspective, election policies are designed to promote greater access, such as Election Day registration, or to promote greater security, such as voter ID laws. Both types of laws are important to a healthy election system. Despite election systems being built to fulfill both needs, there is an innate tension between the concepts.

To assess attitudes toward the trade-off between policies that are more focused on protecting the system against voter fraud versus those that provide greater access, we asked, “Thinking about elections and election reforms, which is more important to you, ensuring that everyone who is eligible has the right to vote or protecting the voting system against fraud?” The results of a crosstab with party and frequency are in Table 4.5.

- A majority of voters (56%) favor protection over system access.
- Black voters were the most likely racial or ethnic group to feel it was more important to ensure that everyone eligible has the right to vote (73%) than to protect the system against fraud (27%). Given the historical fight to vote in the Black community, this is not surprising. White voters, on the other hand, were more likely to support protecting the system against fraud (42%) than ensuring that everyone has the right to vote (57%). Hispanics were even more conservative, with only 38% indicating they prefer access over fraud protection (62%).
- Education has a linear association with this variable. A majority of voters holding a graduate or professional degree preferred access over integrity (55% vs. 45%), while a majority of voters with a college degree or less preferred protecting the system against fraud (college degree 54% vs. 46%, some college 41% vs. 59%, and high school graduates or less 35% vs. 65%).
- We also find substantial partisan differences (see Table 4.5). The parties are clearly polarized over this issue, as they mirror one another: 86% of Republicans believe that protecting the system against fraud is more important than ensuring access, while 86% of Democrats believe that ensuring access is more important than protecting the system against fraud. Independents are generally split down the middle, with a slight majority (52%) preferring protecting the system against fraud than ensuring access.

Table 4.5. Thinking about elections and election reform, which is more important? by Party Identification

Response	Republican	Independent	Democrat	Total
Ensuring that everyone who is eligible has the right to vote	14%	48%	86%	46%
Protecting the voting system against fraud	86%	52%	14%	56%

Accuracy of Voter Rolls

Earlier in this chapter in Table 4.4, we noted that some voters think it is likely that eligible voters get removed from the voter rolls during voter purges and clean-ups. Yet interestingly, voters strongly support voter file maintenance and purging voters who appear to have moved or are no longer participating. We asked: "Thinking about election administration, how important or not is it to ensure accurate voter registration rolls even if some eligible voters are removed and required to re-register for participation in future elections?" Nearly 4 in 5 (79%) responded that this was very important, with another 16% responding "somewhat important," for a total of 95% of voters indicating that clean voter rolls are important to maintain.

Same Day or Election Day Registration

A total of 22 states and Washington, D.C., provide for same-day registration, which allows a voter to both register and vote at a voting precinct or vote center during early and Election Day

voting.[53] Voters in 20 states are offered that opportunity on Election Day. Given the increasing popularity of this election reform, we asked: "Do you support or oppose allowing voters to register on Election Day?"

- 3 in 5 voters (60%) oppose Election Day registration.
- 2 in 5 voters (40%) support Election Day registration.

Not surprisingly support for this measure is highly polarized by party.

- About 75% of Democrats support Election Day registration, while 85% of Republicans do not.
- About 61% of Independents oppose Election Day registration.

Vote-by-Mail Reforms

Over the last two election cycles there has been much concern around VBM ballots and the rules related to voting by mail. Seven states ─ California, Colorado, Hawaii, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, and Vermont ─ and the District of Columbia conduct all their elections by mail. All-mail elections are defined as elections in which all eligible registered voters are sent a ballot via USPS. Another 14 states permit certain special elections to be conducted by mail, while others allow some election jurisdictions to opt in to all-mail balloting. A small number of other states, including Arizona and Montana, are mostly mail states, meaning that a majority of voters choose to vote by mail.

Therefore, we were curious about support for changing to all-mail elections in Florida. We asked: "Do you support or oppose moving all state and local elections in our state to permanent vote-by-mail elections for all voters? This would eliminate all in-person voting."

- We find that 79% of voters are against moving to all-mail elections, with more than 3 in 5 voters (62%) very strongly opposed and another 17% indicating they somewhat oppose.
- Only 21% support moving to all-mail election, with 6% supporting moving to all-mail elections very strongly and another 15% indicating they somewhat support universal vote-by-mail.

Different states also have different rules about when a ballot must arrive in order to be counted. Thirty states require mail ballots to arrive in the election office either on or before Election Day,[54] while 19 states allow mail ballots to arrive after Election Day and be counted, but only if postmarked on or before Election Day. In Florida, voters are required to have their mail ballot returned either in person or by mail no later than the end of voting day, which is 7:00 PM. There has been a great deal of litigation around ballot arrival times over the last few years, especially in 2020.

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[53] For a good overview of state policies on same day registration visit the National Conference of State Legislatures at https://www.ncsl.org/elections-and-campaigns/same-day-voter-registration.

[54] NCSL, Receipt and Postmark Deadlines for Absentee/Mail Ballots, available at: https://www.ncsl.org/elections-and-campaigns/table-11-receipt-and-postmark-deadlines-for-absentee-mail-ballots.

Therefore, we asked voters: “When should a mail ballot have to arrive at the local election office to be counted?”

- 3 in 10 voters (30%) indicated the ballot should arrive before Election Day.
- Just over 4 in 10 (42%) indicated on or before Election Day.
- Only one-quarter (25%) of voters supported counting ballots that arrived after Election Day with a postmark indicating that it had been sent on or before Election Day.
- Responses are correlated with partisanship, with Democrats more supportive of extending the opportunity to vote after Election Day (48%) compared to independents (25%) or Republicans (8%).

Securing the Vote

Paper ballots are considered the gold standard in election administration. In 2008, Florida moved to a paper ballot system. Indeed, during the last two decades nearly all states have moved to a 100% paper ballot system to provide a paper record of the vote that can be examined and counted independently of a vote tabulator. Voters agree that a paper record of their vote is important.

- Over 4 in 5 voters (85%) agree that having a paper record is very important (64%) or somewhat important (21%).
- About 1 in 7 voters (15%) feel that having a paper record is not too important (10%) or at all important (5%).

Accusations about incorrect voting machines was especially prominent in the 2020 election, when members of then-President Trump’s campaign suggested that vote tabulators were counting votes incorrectly. In Table 4.4, we show that about 13% of voters believe that “someone hacks into the vote tabulators and changes individual votes” at least some of the time and that about 25% of voters believe that voting machines fail to record votes correctly at least some of the time. Nevertheless, voters indicate that they prefer machine counts to paper counts. We asked, “Would you prefer ballots in your county be counted by voting machines or by people by hand?”

- The vast majority of voters support machine counts. Nearly 4 in 5 voters (79%) prefer machine counts to hand counts (21%).
- About half of voters (49%) prefer a machine count a lot, while another 3 in 10 prefer machine counts only somewhat. Slightly more than 1 in 10 (11%) prefer hand counts a lot and another 1 in 10 support machine counts somewhat.

Of course, most states, including Florida, have a check on the voting system in the form of a post-election audit to ensure that the vote count is accurate or demonstrates that the tabulators were counting correctly. Indeed, 45 states perform some sort of post-election audit, and two

additional states have post-election audit pilot projects.[55] Post-election audits helps ensure a fair and accurate election process that maintains voter privacy, while also helping to minimize the potential for fraud.[56] Voters support post-election auditing very strongly as a measure to secure the vote. We asked, "How much do you agree or disagree that every state have a post-election auditing process to ensure that votes were counted correctly?"

- We find that more than 3 in 5 voters (61%) strongly agree and another 3 in 10 (29%) somewhat agree.
- Only 10% indicate that they somewhat (7%) or strongly disagree (3%).

Extending the Franchise

We also asked two questions about extending the voting franchise. The first question we asked considers whether voters would support compulsory voter participation. Most democratic nations, around 85% of them, do not support compulsory voting; most of the 15% that do support it are located in Central or South America.[57] We therefore asked, "Some countries legally require citizens to vote in elections or face fines. Do you think compulsory voting in the US would be a very good idea, a good idea, a bad idea, or a very bad idea?"

- The modal response was a very bad idea, with 2 in 5 voters (41%) picking this option and slightly more than one-third (34%) choosing "a bad idea."
- This indicates that about three-quarters of voters (75%) do not support compulsory voting.
- About 25% of voters believe compulsory voting is a very good idea (9%) or a good idea (16%).

Nine states have introduced legislation to lower the voting age to 16. These include Oregon, Utah, New Mexico, Georgia, Kentucky, New York, Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Maine. Therefore, we also asked voters their perceptions on extending the franchise to minors who are 16 or 17 years old. We asked, "How much do you support extending voting rights to 16- and 17-year-olds?" This is not a popular election reform idea.

- Only 18% of Florida voters support extending voting rights to residents 16 or 17 years old, with 8% saying they support it very much and another 10% indicating they somewhat support the franchise extension to younger voters.
- A total of 82% of voters do not support extending the franchise to residents 16 and 17 years old, with almost two-thirds of voters (65%) indicating they do not support it at all and another 17% responding not too much.

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[55] NCSL, post-election Audits, available at: https://www.ncsl.org/research/elections-and-campaigns/post-election-audits635926066.aspx#state%20reqs.

[56] See Huefner, Steven F., Daniel Tokaji, & Edward B. Foley. 2007. "From Registration to Recounts: The Election System of 5 Midwestern States," available at: https://cpb-us-w2.wpmucdn.com/u.osu.edu/dist/b/90788/files/2021/05/From-Registration-to-Recounts.pdf.

[57] For a discussion of contemporary compulsory voting see International IDEAs compulsory voting page at: https://www.idea.int/data-tools/data/voter-turnout-database/compulsory-voting

Appendix A. Methodology

The theoretical sample frame for our project was the population of voters in the 2022 election. However, we did not have a list of 2022 voters. Therefore, we had to construct a theoretical sampling frame from the Florida Voter Registration File (FVRF). There were 14,503,978 registered eligible voters in Florida who could have voted in the 2022 election, but only 54% or 7,796,916 did. State laws require daily data releases of in-person early voters during the election. All these voters were placed into our theoretical sampling frame. For the remaining registered voters, we modeled their likelihood of voting as a function of past participation variables found in the voter file. To estimate turnout, we used a logistic regression model with the outcome variable being equal to 1 if a person voted in the 2018 midterm election and 0 if not. Predictor variables included turnout in the most recent past midterm and general elections and state primary turnout, party registration, gender, race, age and age-squared, and the number of years registered to vote.

We first selected a target sample from the entire voter file (with and without emails) of 100 likely voters in each smaller county and 250 likely voters in the larger counties for a total of 7,450 likely voters who were sampled into our initial list of targets for the pre-survey design. We then matched each of these targets to 10 exclusive email-providing matches by creating a distance measure based on demographic and geographic information in the FVRF.

In addition to this matched sample, we supplemented the initial survey sample with more than 300,000 additional email invitations. We included every valid email in our sample for small and rural counties (those with fewer than 30,000 registered voters) and oversampled via random sample nonwhite likely voters from across the state to ensure a large enough pool. In all, we sent out 391,731 email invites that hit registered voters in-boxes. However, only 253,396 or 65% were voters and therefore part of our sample frame.

A total of 8,108 sample respondent from our nonprobability sample opened our survey by clicking on our link. However, we determined that only 6,242 sample respondents were valid. Valid surveys were defined as general election voters with nearly completed surveys and whose reported demographics matched one or more characteristics from the voter file. This makes for a response rate of 2.41% using the American Association for Public Opinion Research Response Rate 5. The Cooperation Rate is 4.83% using the American Association for Public Opinion Research Cooperation Rate 1. The survey was in the field from November 17, 2022-January 17, 2023. The data were weighted using a raking procedure based upon the following characteristics from the voter file: age, sex, ethnicity, vote mode (early, absentee, Election Day), county, and party registration. Education weights were based upon the CPS voter supplement and we also included a weight for the gubernatorial election outcome.

Appendix B. Frequency Report

Q1. How did you vote in this fall's general election? (n=6,242)

Absentee/Vote-by-mail including dropping off a ballot that was mailed to you	37%
Early in-person at a vote center	31%
Election Day in-person at a vote center or precinct	32%

Q2. How confident are you that **YOUR** vote in this year's General Election was counted as you intended? (n=6,237).

Very confident	74%
Somewhat confident	20%
Not too confident	4%
Not at all confident	2%

Q3. Think about vote counting throughout your county and not just your own personal situation. How confident are you that votes in your county or city were counted as voters intended in the 2022 general election?

	Very Confident	Somewhat confident	Not too confident	Not at all confident
County (n=6,240)	64%	29%	5%	2%
The State of Florida (n=6,232)	56%	35%	7%	2%
Nationwide (n=6,238)	31%	27%	23%	19%

Q4. Thinking in political terms, would you say that you are (n=6,235)

Very liberal	9%
Somewhat liberal	14%
Moderate	26%
Somewhat conservative	28%
Very conservative	18%
Haven't thought much about it	4%
Don't know	1%

Mail Voting

Q5. Why did you request a vote-by-mail ballot? Please mark all that apply (n=2,608)

I was going to be out of town for this election	12%
Voting by mail or absentee was just more convenient for me this	69%
I could not get to the poll on Election Day because of my work or school schedule	9%
I am in the armed forces / a domestic out of state voter	1 %
I have a physical disability that makes it difficult for me to go to the polls	12%
I was an election official or poll	4%
Religious observances would have interfered with my going to the polls	0%
I was worried about COVID-19	9%
Other (please specify)	10%

Q6. Have you voted by mail in a previous election or is this your first time? (n=2,605)

Yes, I have voted by mail in a previous election	94%
No, this is my first time voting by mail	6%

Q7. When did you request an absentee ballot? (n=2,568)

Before August 23 (Before the state primary election)	86%
August 23 to September 30	9%
October 1 through 15	4%
October 16-29	1%

Q8. Did you track your mail ballot online or through text/email messages? (n=2,603)

Yes	56%
No	44%

Q9. Which of the following describes the reason you chose to track your ballot? Please mark all that apply (n=1,515)

I was automatically signed up for ballot tracking	27%
I was concerned my ballot would be lost in the mail	28%
I was concerned my ballot would be rejected	12%
I believed the 2022 election was too important to risk my ballot being rejected	53%
Other, please describe why you chose to track your ballot	16%

Q10. Which of the following describes reason you chose NOT to track your ballot? Please mark all that apply (n=1,098)

I was not aware that I could track my ballot	40%
I fully trusted my ballot would be received and counted by the election	46%
I did not feel comfortable tracking my ballot information online or through text messages	2%
I did not care if my ballot was rejected or did not arrive on time	1%
I was worried my contact information would be used for non-election purposes	4%
Other, please describe why you chose NOT to track your ballot	14%

Q11. Did you fill out your ballot with anyone else, such as a family member or friend, or did you complete your ballot alone? (n=2,605)

Alone	88%
With someone else	12%

Q12. With whom did you complete your ballot? Please mark all that apply. (n=317)

Spouse or partner	75%
Parent or parents	12%
Child or children	14%
Roommate	0%
Friend	3%
Other family member	7%
Party or campaign worker	0%
Nursing home or medical aid	0%
Other (please specify)	0%

Q13. When did you return your mail ballot? (n=2,605)

After Election Day	0%
On Election Day	3%
1-7 days before Election Day	16%
8-14 days before Election Day	36%
15-30 days before Election Day	33%
More than 30 days before Election Day	9%
Don't know	3%

Q14. Who returned your ballot or dropped it in the mail? (n=2,603)

I did	90%
A member of my immediate family did	9%
My roommate did	0%
A friend of mine did	0%
A political party or interest group member did	0%
A stranger did	0%
Other (please specify)	1%

Q15. How did you return your ballot? (n=2,338)

At a post office box at a U.S. Postal Service location	25%
At an official post office box not at a U.S. Postal Service location	11%
It was picked up by the postal worker who delivers mail to my home	35%
A drop box used only for ballots	8%
I dropped it off at the Supervisor of Elections' office during early voting	12%
I dropped it off on Election Day at a vote center or the election supervisor’s office	3%
I emailed my ballot	1%
Other (please specify)	5%

Q16. Why did you decide to drop off your ballot rather than mail the ballot back in? Please mark all that apply. (n=884)

It was very convenient to drop it off	27%
I didn't trust the USPS to deliver it on time	16%
I didn't have enough time to use the USPS for return delivery	5%
I wanted to be certain that it arrived	42%
Other (please specify)	2%

Q17. How difficult or easy was it to find the place where you dropped off your ballot? (n=613)

Very difficult	0%
Somewhat difficult	1%
Fairly easy	11%
Very easy	88%

Q18. Please rate the job performance of the staff at the place where you dropped off your ballot? FL ONLY (n=614)

Excellent	79%
Good	18%
Fair	3%
Poor	0%

Q19. When you returned your ballot to a drop box, did you directly observe any of the following events taking place near it? (Mark all that apply) (n=884)

People peacefully holding signs or giving out literature in support of a candidate or ballot question	12%
Individuals or groups of people casting doubt on whether the election was fraudulent	1%
Individuals or groups of people seeming to challenge whether some people were properly dropping off ballots	2%
Individuals or groups, other than police officers, carrying a gun	1%
Someone taking pictures of voters or election workers who DID NOT seem to be a reporter	1%
Anything else that seemed disruptive	2%
I didn't observe any of these things	50%

Q20. Did you return anyone else's ballot? (n=2,337)

No	78%
Yes	22%

Q21. Whose ballot(s) did you return? Please mark all that apply. (n=849)

Spouse or partner	55%
Parent or parents	4%
Child or children	4%
Roommate	0%
Friend	1%
Other family member	5%
Other (please specify)	1%

Q22. How many ballots did you return? (n=522)

1	16%
2	75%
3	7%
4	0%
5	1%
6	1%

Q23. Please mark how much you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding your mail ballot:

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
My ballot was too long (n=2,574)	4%	23%	31%	42%
My ballot choices were kept private at home (n=2,582)	73%	13%	6%	8%
My ballot privacy was maintained when my vote was counted(n=2,549)	62%	31%	4%	3%

Q24. Were you contacted by your local election official because there was a problem with your ballot, and it could not be counted? (n=2,602)

No	98%
Yes	2%

Q25. Were you able to resolve the problem? (n=25)

No	10%
Yes	90%

Q26. Overall, how difficult was it to follow all the instructions necessary to cast your ballot and return it to be counted? (n=2,604)

Very easy	78%
Somewhat easy	19%
Somewhat hard	2%
Very hard	1%

In-Person Voting

Q27. When you voted, did you directly observe any of the following events taking place at your polling place or vote center? (Mark all that apply) (n=3,640)

People peacefully holding signs or giving out literature in support of a candidate or ballot question	35%
Individuals or groups of people casting doubt on whether the election was fraudulent	2%
Individuals or groups of people seeming to challenge whether some people were properly dropping off ballots	1%
Individuals or groups, other than police officers, carrying a gun	1%
Someone taking pictures of voters or election workers who DID NOT seem to be a reporter	1%
Anything else that seemed disruptive	2%
I didn't observe any of these things	62%

Q28. How long was the voting line when you got to your vote center or polling location? (n=3,634)

Very Long	1%
Somewhat long	5%
Not very long	16%
Not long at all	78%

Q29. About how many minutes did you wait in the check-in line before you were able to vote? (n= 3,543)

Minutes	
0 Minutes	18%
1-5 Minutes	58%
6-15 Minutes	13%
16- 30 Minutes	5%
31-60 Minutes	1%
Over 60 Minutes	4%
Average	5 min

Q30**.** Did you consider the overall wait time at the vote center or polling location to be: (n=3,635)

No wait time	64%
Short wait time	28%
Moderate wait time	7%
Long wait time	1%

Q31**.** What type of voter ID did you show when you went to the polls? (n=3,633)

Driver's license	94%
Passport	1%
College ID	0%
I showed 2 forms of ID. One ID had my signature on it, the other had my photo	1%
I showed some other form of identification (Please indicate what you showed)	4%
I didn't show any photo ID	0%

Q32. Please mark how much you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding the voting location where you voted:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The location was easy to find. (n=3,629)	83%	16%	1%	0%
I had to go far out of my way to vote (n=3,575)	2%	4%	23%	71%
It was hard to find a place to park. (n=3,585)	2%	4%	29%	65%
The poll workers were helpful. (n=3,592)	74%	25%	1%	0%
My ballot privacy was protected. (n=3,596)	76%	22%	1%	0%
The ballot was too long. (n=3,584)	2%	11%	55%	32%

Q33. Please answer the following questions on ballot privacy:

	Yes	No
Did someone in line at the polling place ask you who you were voting for? (n=3,629)	2%	98%
Did a poll worker look at your voted ballot? (n=3,623)	2%	98%
Did you keep your ballot in a privacy sleeve while you were moving around the vote center/precinct (n=3,625)	81%	19%

Voting Experience

Q34. How many contests did you vote on your 2022 ballot? (n=6,227)

All contests	81%
Nearly all contests	11%
Most contests	4%
About 1/2 of all contests	1%
Just a few contests	1%
No contests	2%

Q35. Did anyone help you fill out your ballot? (n=3,633)

No	99%
Yes	1%

Q36. Who helped you fill out your ballot? (n=31)

Spouse or partner	5%
Parent or parents	20%
Child or children	13%
Roommate	3%
Friend	1%
Other family member	18%
Poll worker	5%
Employer	0%
Co-worker	0%
Someone else (please specify)	35%

Q37. How would you rate your voting experience overall? (n=6,235)

Excellent	73%
Good	24%
Fair	2%
Poor	1%

Q38. Party ID 7 (n=6,209)

Strong Democrat	30%
Weak Democrat	11%
Leaning Democrat	10%
Independent	11%
Leaning Republican	9%
Weak Republican	8%
Strong Republican	21%

Q39. Below is a list of possible illegal election activities that may or may not take place in your Florida How often do you think each event occurs in your state?

	All or most of the time	Some of the time	Not much	Hardly ever	Never
Someone steals an absentee ballot, changes the ballot, and casts it (n=3,111, Ballot A)	4%	21%	20%	37%	18%
Someone bribes a voter or pays money for their vote (n=6,181, Ballot A and B)	4%	24%	19%	33%	20%
Someone intimidates a voter ((n=3,104, Ballot A)	5%	31%	26%	26%	12%
Voting machines fail to record votes correctly (n=6,187, Ballot A and B)	4%	21%	17%	33%	25%
Eligible voters get mistakenly removed from the voter registration file during purges/clean-up (n=3,103, Ballot A)	5%	32%	21%	30%	12%
A voter casts more than one ballot, also known as double voting (n=3,105, Ballot A)	4%	23%	19%	39%	15%
A non-US citizen votes (n=3,097, Ballot A)	9%	25%	16%	31%	19%
Voting under a fraudulent voter registration that uses a phony name and fake address (n=3,105, Ballot A)	6%	23%	18%	36%	17%
Voted absentee ballots are stolen and thrown away after being submitted (n=3,078, Ballot B)	3%	23%	17%	33%	24%
An eligible voter being denied the opportunity to vote by a poll worker or other election official (n=3,084, Ballot B)	2%	18%	18%	34%	28%
Ballots are tampered with to change votes by election workers (n=3, 083, Ballot B)	2%	12%	15%	31%	40%
Someone pretends to be another person and casts a vote for them in-person (n=3,081, Ballot B)	2%	20%	19%	40%	19%
Someone hacks into the vote tabulators and changes individual votes (n=3,077, Ballot B)	3%	10%	15%	27%	45%
People submitting too many ballots in drop boxes on behalf of others (n=3,078, Ballot B)	6%	24%	17%	32%	21%

Q40. How often do you think **elected officials** make rules that favor one party or another? (n=3,131)

All or almost all of the time	30%
Most of the time	35%
Sometimes	28%
Rarely	5%
Never or almost never	2%

Q41. Thinking about election administration, how important or not is it to ensure accurate voter registration rolls, even if some eligible voters are removed and required to re-register for participation in future elections (n=3,126)

Very important	79%
Somewhat important	16%
Not too important	4%
Not at all important	1%

Q42. When should a mail ballot have to arrive at the local election office to be counted? (n=3,133)

Before Election Day	30%
On Election Day or before	42%
After Election Day with a postmark indicating it had been sent on Election Day or before	25%
Other	3%

Q43. Some countries legally require citizens to vote in elections or face fines. Do you think compulsory voting in the United States would be: (n=3,129)

A very good idea	9%
A good idea	16%
A bad idea	34%
A very bad idea	41%

Q44. During the past year did you: Mark all that apply (n=3,131)

Attend local political meetings	10%
Put up a political sign	11%
Work for a candidate or campaign	4%
Attend a political protest, march, or demonstration	5%
Contact a public official	25%
Donate money to a candidate, campaign, or political organization	28%
Donate blood	16%
None of these	47%

Q45. Please indicate to which of the following groups or people you donated money. Mark all that apply (n=1,036)

Candidate for President	25%
Candidate for U.S. Senate in my state	35%
Candidate for U.S. Senate in another state	31%
Candidate for U.S. House in my state	21%
Candidate for U.S. House in another state	18%
Candidate for state office	31%
Political party committee	22%
Political action committee at work	13%
Political group	26%
Other (please specify)	9%

Q46. During the past year how much did you donate to candidates, campaigns, and political organizations? (n=1,022)

$100 or less	56%
Between $100 and $499	31%
Between $500 and $999	7%
Between $1,000 and $4,999	5%
Between $5,000 and $9,999	0 %
$10,000 or more	1%

Q47. During the past year how often did you donate to candidates, campaigns, and political organizations? (n=1,029)

Once	39%
Two to five times	47%
Many times, but less often than every month	9%
Monthly or more often	5%

Q48 Compared to a year ago how are each of the following doing economically?

	Much better	Somewhat better	About the same	Somewhat worse	Much worse
You and your family(n=3,128)	5%	11%	36%	30%	18%
Your State economy (n=3,084)	8%	20%	38%	26%	8%
National economy (n=3,079)	4%	11%	13%	26%	46%

Q49. What issue mattered most to you in this election? (n=3,131)

Inflation/the economy	33%
Abortion	10%
Immigration	9%
Threats to democracy	34%
Education	3%
Crime	2%
Climate Change	2%
Other (please specify)	7%

Q50. How much do the following people care about whether you vote?

	A lot	A little	Hardly at all	Not at all	Not Applicable
Your family (n=3,102)	52%	23%	10%	10%	5%
Your coworkers (n=3,092)	14%	18%	12%	16%	40%
Members of your union (n=3,090)	6%	3%	2%	4%	85%
Your employer (n=3,087)	10%	10%	6%	19%	55%
Members of your church (n=3,087)	15%	10%	6%	12%	57%
Your friends (n=3,097)	33%	33%	12%	13%	9%

Q51. After you vote, do you typically wear your "I voted" sticker or display it so others can see you voted? (n=3,111)

I wear my sticker	51%
I place my sticker on an object (cell phone, water bottle, laptop, etc	16%
I don't display my sticker.	16%
I don't take the sticker.	5%
I didn't get a sticker	12%

Q52. Do you typically post, update your status, or do a check-in on social media to show that you voted? (n=3,111)

Yes	21%
No	52%
No, I don't use social media	27%

Q53. How often does anyone, including friends or family, ask you which candidate you prefer or voted for?

	All or Almost all of the time	Most of the time	Some-times	Rarely	Never or Almost never
How often does anyone, including friends or family, ask you which candidate you prefer or voted for? (n=3,113)	6%	13%	33%	28%	20%
If a friend or family member asks you who you prefer in an election, how often do you name a candidate? (n=3,111)	50%	23%	14%	7%	6%
If you tell a close friend or family member which candidate you prefer, how often do you tell the truth? (n=3,106)	88%	6%	3%	1%	2%

Q54. According to the law, which candidate you vote for is supposed to be kept secret unless you tell someone. Even so, how easy or hard do you think it would be for politicians, union officials, or the people you work for to find out who you voted for, even if you told no one? (n=3,113)

Impossible, my vote is secret	20%
It would be very hard, but not impossible	30%
It would be somewhat hard	14%
It would be somewhat easy	15%
It would be very easy	9%
Don't Know	12%

Q55. Do you think elected officials can access voting records and figure out who a voter has voted for? (n=3,111)

Yes	33%
No	31%
Don't know	36%

Q56. Do you think election officials can more easily identify who you voted for when you use a vote-by-mail ballot, an in-person ballot, or are they about the same? (n=822)

Vote-by-mail is easier to identify	34%
In-person is easier to identify	6%
Equally likely to be identified	60%

Q57. How much do you support extending voting rights to 16 and 17 year-olds? (n=3,111)

Very	8%
Somewhat	10%
Not too much	17%
Not at all	65%

Q58. Do you support or oppose allowing voters to register on Election Day? (n=3,104)

Support	40%
Oppose	60%

Election Security

Q59. Did you receive a ballot in the mail that didn't belong to you or anyone in your household? (n=6,242)

Yes	4%
No	96%

Q60. Which of the following situations did you **personally observe** in the 2022 Midterm Election? Please mark all that apply (n=6,245)

	Yes	No
Some bribes a voter or pays for votes	1%	99%
Someone being improperly denied the chance to vote	1%	99%
Someone filling out an absentee ballot for someone else	1%	99%
Voting machines failing to record votes	1%	99%
Someone using a false identity to vote	1%	99%
Voter intimidation at the polling place	2%	98%
Someone stuffing a lot of ballots into an official ballot drop	1%	99%
Other	2%	98%
None of these	92%	8%

Q61. Florida's in-person voter ID requires voters to show a photo ID and a signature. Do you think this requirement is: (n=6,238)

Too strict	7%
Just right	82%
Not strict enough	11%

Q62. Florida's vote-by-mail law requires voters to sign their ballot envelope and poll workers match the signature to those on file to verify their identity. Do you think this requirement is: (n=6,236)

Too strict	8%
Just right	66%
Not strict enough	26%

Q63. Would you prefer ballots in your county to be counted by voting machines or by people by hand? (n=6,221)

Prefer machine counts a lot	49%
Prefer machine counts somewhat	30%
Prefer hand counts somewhat	10%
Prefer hand counts to machine count a lot	11%

Q64. Thinking about elections and election reforms, which is more important? (n=6,214)

Ensuring that everyone who is eligible has the right to vote	44%
Protecting the voting system against	56%

Thinking about Politics

Q65. How many days a week do you typically discuss politics with family or friends? (n=6,237)

0	14%
1	18%
2	15%
3	14%
4	9%
5	11%
6	3%
7	16%

Q66. For whom did you vote in the race for Governor? (n=5,923)

Ron DeSantis (Republican)	58%
Charlie Crist (Democrat)	40%
Hector Roos (Libertarian)	1%
Carmen Jackie Giménez (No Party Affiliation)	1%

Q67. For whom did you vote in the race for U.S. Senate? (n=5,941)

Marco Rubio (Republican)	55%
Val Demings (Democrat)	42%
A third party candidate	2%
Other (please specify)	1%

Q68. For whom did you vote in the race for U.S. House? (n=5,918)

The Republican candidate	55%
The Democratic candidate	42%
A third party candidate	2%
Other (please specify)	1%

Q69. Do you support or oppose requiring all people to show a photo ID when they vote? (n=6,237)

Support	90%
Oppose	6%
Don’t know	4%

Q70. How important is it to you that there is a paper record of your vote? (n=6,226)

Very important	64%
Somewhat important	21%
Not too important	10%
Not at all important	5%

Q71. How much do you agree or disagree that every state should have a postelecton auditing process to ensure that voters were counted correctly? (n=6,222)

Strongly agree	61%
Somewhat agree	29%
Somewhat disagree	7%
Strongly disagree	3%

Q72. Do you support or oppose moving all state and local elections in our state to permanent vote-by-mail elections for all voters? This would eliminate all in-person voting. (n=6,232)

Very strongly support	6%
Somewhat support	15%
Somewhat oppose	17%
Very strongly oppose	62%

Q73. Please rate how you feel towards the following groups and individuals. A score of 0 means you are very cold to them, while a score of 10 means you are very warm to them, a score of 5 means that you are neither cold nor warm to them. (n=6,245)

	0 to 3	4 to 6	7 to 10	Average
Democratic Party	44%	25%	31%	4
Republican Party	42%	23%	35%	5
Big Business	50%	39%	11%	3
President Joe	57%	15%	28%	1
Governor Ron DeSantis	39%	9%	52%	4
Your Election Supervisor/County Clerk	9%	42%	49%	5
Secretary of State Cord Byrd	29%	50%	21%	5
Unions	45%	32%	23%	4

Q74. From what you know about global climate change or global warming, which one of the following statements comes closest to your opinion? (n=6,215)

Global climate change has been established as a serious problem, and immediate action is necessary.	40%
There is enough evidence that climate change is taking place and some action should be taken	22%
We don't know enough about global climate change, and more research is necessary before we take any action.	19%
Concern about global climate change is exaggerated. No action is necessary.	15%
Global climate change is not occurring; this is not a real issue	4%

Demographics

Q75. Age of Respondents (n=6,245)

18-30	7%
31-40	10%
41-50	11%
51- 60	19%
61-70	28%
71-80	20%
81-90	4%
91-100	1%

Q76. What is the highest level of education you have completed? (n=6,245)

Less than high school	1%
High school graduate	9%
Some college	30%
Associate's degree	20%
Bachelor's degree	20%
Master's degree	15%
PhD/MD/JD	5%

Q77. Which racial and/or ethnic groups do you consider yourself a member of? (n=6,189)

White	67%
Hispanic or Latino	13%
Black or African American	9%
American Indian or Alaska Native	1%
Asian or Asian American	2%
Middle Easterner	0%
2 or more races	4%
Other	4%

Q78. How would you describe your Hispanic, Latino or Spanish origin? (n=689)

Cuban	33%
Mexican	8%
Spanish	4%
Puerto Rican	22%
Central American	9%
South American	17%
Something else	7%

Q79. Do you belong to a union? (n=6,219)

Yes	6%
No	94%

Q80. Would you say you live in: (n=6,221)

A city	32%
A suburban area	57%
A rural area	11%

Q81. What is your gender? (6,245)

Male	46%
Female	53%
Other	1%

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INSTITUTE

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