

Florida Ballot Proofing

WHAT IS BALLOT PROOFING AND WHY SHOULD WE DO IT?

The process of producing a ballot is complex. County election officials do their best to make sure they have listed every contest and every candidate correctly. But **mistakes happen**. Ballot proofing helps catch mistakes before official ballots are printed. And that's important because mistakes caught after ballots are printed often cannot be fixed. Ballot proofing is therefore one of many tools to ensure that election results accurately reflect voter intent.

So who does this proofing? County officials will proof each ballot before sending it to the printer, but **you have a role to play too**. The more eyes on the near-final version of the ballot, the better. You should feel free to invite staff, voter protection volunteers, and others to participate.

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO PROOF A BALLOT?

Not long. It will take one person a few minutes per ballot to perform a complete review. Because mistakes are usually noticed by a fresh set of eyes, consider bringing in a second person to review.

HOW DO WE PARTICIPATE IN THE PROOFING PROCESS?

In Florida, state law does not require that counties send near-final versions of the ballot to candidates to review, but counties are **permitted** to do so. In past elections, a number of counties permitted outside parties to participate in the proofing process. So start by asking county election officials about their process.

Remember, each county handles the proofing process differently and so you should reach out to any target counties now to confirm their process, including the date you could expect to receive a ballot to review.

WHEN DOES THE PROCESS START?

The proofing process in Florida will likely start in August and the turnaround time will be quick. The state primary is August 18 and counties will begin creating ballots for the general election soon after that. Ballots for the November election must be finalized by mid-September. At the latest, **you should contact counties by early August so you know what to expect.**

HOW SHOULD WE REPORT ERRORS OR OMISSIONS?

Work with the county to find the best way to report errors and proposed corrections. In all cases, make sure to follow up on any emails with a phone call to confirm receipt and next steps.

OTHER THAN ITEMS ON THE PROOFING CHECKLIST, IS THERE ANYTHING SPECIFIC TO FLORIDA THAT WE SHOULD BE LOOKING FOR?

Candidate names will appear with the Republican nominee first and the Democratic nominee second (by law, and pursuant to a recent appellate court ruling,¹ the candidate from the party which received the most votes for Governor in the preceding election is listed first).² Note: Litigation regarding this ballot order provision may continue and the ballot order rules may change prior to the 2020 general election.

The contests will be listed as follows:

1. President;
2. United States Representative;
3. State Senator;
4. State Representative;
5. Other state, county, and local offices.³

CONNECT WITH US!

Have questions? Need help?
Please reach out to us at:

ballotquestions@digidems.com

1 *Jacobson v. Lee*, No. 19-14552 (11th Cir. 2020).

2 [Fla. Stat. § 105.151\(3\)\(a\).](#)

3 [Fla. Stat. § 105.151\(2\)\(a\).](#)