

Florida

The Lawyers' Committee created three Local Legal Coordinating Committees in Florida: Miami-Dade County, led by Carlton Fields; Broward County, led by Gordon Hargrove & James, P.A.; and Palm Beach County, led by Proskauer Rose LLP. Each LLCC staffed a local hotline call center and a Mobile Field Attorney program on Election Day. People For the American Way Foundation led a state-wide grassroots outreach program, with support from many other grassroots partners.

The hotline received 1008 calls from Florida. Election Protection volunteers recorded 529 incidents and, of the reports entered, 280 reported problems and 248 were inquiries.

Problems at the Polls

Problems at the polls accounted for 36% of all calls from Florida. As in most states, problems centered on voter's names not appearing on the rolls, voter's being given incorrect polling place information, and polls opening late or closing early.

- A voter in Duval County was not on the rolls at her precinct and was told to go to two other locations before finally being told to go back to original location. When she arrived, it was too late and she was not able to vote. The entire process took her nearly two hours.
- In Duval County, a voter had to go back and forth between two precincts several times before being allowed to vote; her voter information card said one precinct, but a poll worker told her to go to another.
- Another voter in Duval County was not on the rolls called Election Protection to find out how he could vote but the poll workers locked him out of the polling place when he called the hotline.
- EIRS received multiple reports from voters in Gadsden County who were in line when the polls closed complaining that they were not allowed to vote because the polls closed early.
- Voters were erroneously required to present photo ID in Broward, Miami-Dade, Seminole, St. John's, and St. Lucie counties. Additionally, there were several reports from Broward and Miami counties of voters being turned away entirely if they did not present ID. In St. John's County, a voter reported that he was asked for ID before entering the polling place.
- In Miami, there were three reports of no Spanish-language assistance at the polls, in violation of Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act.

Problems with Voting Machines

Voters in 12 counties called in problems with voting machines, with the overwhelming number of calls coming from Duval and Broward counties. Voting machine problems accounted for 22% of all problems and included: multiple machines being down in one polling place; voters placing ballots in unsealed boxes; chewed up ballots; vote switching (where a voter intended to vote for one candidate but their vote was registered for another candidate); and candidate's names not appearing on the ballot.

- Voters in Broward, Palm Beach, Broward, Pinellas, Hillsborough, Miami, and Sarasota reported vote switching.
- Several voters in Sarasota County reported that the names of the Congressional candidates were not on the ballot.
- At a polling place in Osceola County, voters were given the ballot for the wrong precinct for nearly an hour, until the problem was fixed at 7:45 a.m.

Voter Intimidation and Deceptive Practices

While Election Protection did not receive widespread reports of voter intimidation or deceptive practices in Florida (6% of all problems), we did receive reports that affected multiple voters or entire polling places.

- In Manatee County, voters reported robo-calls in the middle of the night that seemed to be from congressional candidate Christine Jennings but said paid for by the RNC at the end of the call.
- Police officers at a precinct in Miami were writing parking tickets at the polling place.
- A voter in Boca Raton in Palm Beach County said her employer was encouraging employees to vote a certain way on a ballot initiative because “their jobs depended on it.”

Absentee Ballots

In addition to the normal inquiries about how to obtain an absentee ballot, the hotline received reports from multiple voters from across the state that were told they had already voted absentee. These voters were prevented from voting or had to vote provisionally.

- A voter in Orange County who has never voted absentee was told at the polls that she had to vote by provisional ballot because she had requested an absentee ballot.
- In Collier County, a voter was incorrectly told she had requested absentee ballot and would not be allowed to vote unless she presented her absentee ballot.
- A voter in Duval County was not allowed to vote because the poll book erroneously indicated she had already cast absentee ballot.