

miami-dade election reform coalition

The Honorable Brenda C. Snipes, Supervisor
Broward County Division of Elections
Government Center
115 S. Andrews Avenue
Room #102
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301

Re: Broward County's Early Voting and Election Day Preparations

Dear Supervisor Snipes,

We are writing on behalf of the Miami-Dade Election Reform Coalition, a non-partisan group working in South Florida to improve how elections are run. Your decision as reported in the press, to add 229 voting booths and *42 optical scanners* at Broward's 17 early voting sites "in the hopes of quickening the pace" of voting is troubling to our coalition for the following reasons:

1. To our understanding, Broward's early voting delays are being caused by insufficient electronic pollbooks to check people in and slowness in printing ballots using the Ballot on Demand ("BOD") system.
2. Insufficient scanners have not been the problem from what we understand. This is because, as you well know, the scanners are used at the end of the voting process to read completed ballots. Since the delay is at the start of the process, by the time voters get ready to scan their ballots, there is really no delay.
3. The scanners you are adding to the early voting process are coming from the supply of scanners to be used on Election Day.
4. While there is *no prohibition* against using the same scanners for early voting and then Election Day, there are some very serious issues that arise:
 - a. When a scanner is used for voting (whether it be early voting or election day), that scanner actually does 2 things: (i) it keeps track of the number of ballots it has scanned; and (ii) it actually reads the ballot and stores the ballot choices in its memory for later tabulation.
 - b. If Broward wants to use these additional scanner for early voting and then wants to re-use them on election day, your office would be required to *erase* the memory in the hard drive of each of those scanners and store all of the information in an external drive.

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- c. In that the hard drive has now been erased, there would be nothing to compare the accuracy of what is on the external drive (except for the paper ballots).
- d. If there is a malfunction or a question arises as to the accuracy of the information contained in the external drive for a particular scanner, it would be necessary to re-run the ballots for the affected scanner, a feat that would be impossible unless ballots are sorted and stored *by scanner*, during early voting.
- e. It is our understanding that your office is *not* currently storing early voting ballots by scanner.


5. Since the delays Broward voters are experiencing during early voting relate to check-in, and in light of the fact that Broward County has acquired enough electronic pollbooks for use at the polls on election day (in excess of 700 pollbooks), *why have these electronic pollbooks not been deployed to the early voting sites to relieve the lines?*

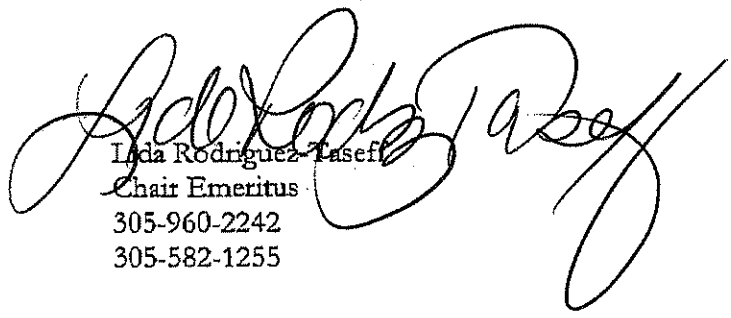
6. There are two good reasons for deploying more pollbooks to the early voting sites:

- a. The more electronic pollbooks on site, the more people who can be checked in.
- b. The BOD printers are most efficient when they are not allowed to sit idle (and it is our understanding that when they idle, it takes about a minute to re-initialize each BOD). Therefore, goal of your office at each early voting site must be to be checking people in constantly so that the BOD printers are constantly printing ballots and are not allowed to idle.

We look forward to hearing from you immediately regarding the above issues. Moreover, we realize you are busy with early voting but we also hereby request a meeting in order to discuss the above and in addition to speak with you about your election day preparations, especially as they relate to deployment of scanners and the check-in procedure using the electronic pollbooks. Please contact us at the telephone numbers below. We look forward to hearing from you.

Very truly yours,


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