



# Make Freedom Count! 2024

# VOTER GUIDE

A guide to Elected Officials and  
Okeechobee County Election Process

Provided by  
Melissa Arnold, Supervisor of Elections

## 2024 Election Schedule

### Presidential Preference Primary Election

Registration Deadline: February 19, 2024

Early Vote: March 9-16, 2024

8:30am -6:00pm

Election Day: March 19, 2024

Polls open: 7:00am-7:00pm

### Primary Election:

Registration Deadline: July 22, 2024

Early Vote: August 10-17, 2024

8:30am-6:00pm

Election Day: August 20, 2024

Polls Open: 7:00am-7:00pm

### General Election:

Registration Deadline: October 7, 2024

Early Vote: October 26– November 2, 2024

8:30am-6:00pm

Election Day: November 5, 2024

Polls Open: 7:00am-7:00pm

**Identification Requirements:** In order to vote you must present a current and valid picture/signature identification. It can be one form, such as a Florida driver 's license or Florida issued ID, or two separate forms of identification. A provisional ballot will be issued if you do not have proper ID.

**Voting System in Okeechobee County:** Instructions on how to use the voting system will be available at the polling locations during early voting and on Election Day

**REMEMBER ...**

**Your OPINION is IMPORTANT  
BUT it is your VOTE that COUNTS!**

## Voter's Bill of Rights

### **Each registered voter in this state has the right to:**

1. Vote and have his or her vote accurately counted.
2. Cast a vote if he or she is in line at the official closing of polls in that county.
3. Ask for and receive assistance in voting.
4. Receive up to two replacement ballots if he or she makes a mistake prior to the ballot being cast.
5. An explanation if his or her registration or identity is in question.
6. If his or her registration or identity is in question, cast a provisional ballot.
7. Written instructions to use when voting, and, upon request, oral instructions in voting from elections officers.
8. Vote free from coercion or intimidation by elections officers or any other person.
9. Vote on a voting system that is in working condition and that will allow votes to be accurately cast.

## Voter Responsibilities

### **Each registered voter in this state should:**

1. Familiarize himself or herself with the candidates and issues.
2. Maintain with the office of the Supervisor of Elections a current address.
3. Know the location of his or her polling place and its hours of operation.
4. Bring proper identification to the polling station.
5. Familiarize himself or herself with the operation of the voting equipment in his or her precinct.
6. Treat precinct workers with courtesy.
7. Respect the privacy of other voters.
8. Report any problems or violations of election laws to the Supervisor of Elections.
9. Ask questions, if needed.
10. Make sure that his or her completed ballot is correct before leaving the polling station.

**NOTE TO VOTER:** Failure to perform any of these responsibilities does not prohibit a voter from voting.

## Registration Information

### **How to Register or Update Voter Information:**

You may pick up an application from one of the following locations:

Supervisor of Elections Office	WIC
Driver's License Office	CPS
Senior Services Center	Public Library
Hunting/Fishing License Locations	

or you may call the elections office and a form will be mailed to you. You may also visit our website at <http://www.voteokeechobee.gov> where you will find an easy to complete online registration form.

Once you have completed your voter registration application, mail or deliver it to the Elections Office. A voter information card will be mailed to you.

## Registration Information Cont.

**Requirements to Register:** You may register to vote if you are:

- a U.S. Citizen
- a resident of the State of Florida (your county of residence)
- 18 years of age (you may pre-register at 16)
- If you are a felon with rights restored
- You must **register at least 29 days prior to voting in any Election.**

**To Remain a Voter:** Registration is permanent as long as you remain a qualified voter and a resident of Florida. Please **keep** your **address current** with the Supervisor of Elections. As failure to do so may result in the cancellation of your registration. You may **change your address**, by phone, in person or in writing. However, if you **change your party** OR **change your name** by marriage or other legal process, you must complete a new voter application.

**Precinct Changes:** In the case of redistricting or a change of polling location, you will be sent a new Voter Information Card with all your updated information.

**Party Affiliation:** You may choose to register in a political party (major or minor) or register with no party affiliation. You may change your party affiliation, however the completed application must be submitted at least 29 days prior to a primary election.

## Voting Information

**What is a Closed Primary?** Florida is a closed primary state. In a primary election, registered voters may only vote for candidates in their party of registration. By not selecting a party when you register, your vote is limited in the primary election to nonpartisan races and issues. In the general election, you may vote for any candidate, regardless of party affiliation.

### **EXCEPTION: UNIVERSAL PRIMARY CONTEST**

If all candidates have the same party affiliation and the winner will have no opposition in the general election, then **ALL** qualified voters may vote on that "Universal Primary Contest" in the primary election.

**Election Day Voting:** Voting in a precinct in which you do not live is illegal. You must vote only at the precinct in which you reside. You are encouraged to report any changes in your registration (i.e., address, name, party affiliation) to the Elections Office. A current and valid picture/signature ID is required.

**Vote by Mail (Absentee):** Any registered voter may apply by mail, phone, e-mail, or in person to the Elections Office for an absentee ballot. Absentee ballots will not be forwarded, so please keep your address updated. An absentee ballot must be received by your Elections Office no later than 7 p.m. Election Day. Your signature will be verified so to ensure your absentee ballot gets accepted, please keep an up to date signature on file with our office.

**Early Voting:** The law permits voters to vote in person prior to election day. Early Voting begins up to 15 days before election day and ends the Saturday before election day. A current and valid picture/signature ID is required.

**Provisional Ballots:** The law permits voters to who are potentially ineligible or lacking a valid form of identification to vote a provisional ballot.

# ELECTED OFFICIALS

## FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

### PRESIDENT/VICE PRESIDENT (4 Year Term)

**Joseph R. Biden (D)/ Kamala D. Harris (D) 2024**

The White House  
(202) 456 -1414  
www.whitehouse.gov

### U.S. SENATORS (6 Year Term)

**Rick Scott (R) 2024**  
(202) 224 -5274

Toll Free in Florida: 1 -888 -671 -4091  
www.rickscott.senate.gov

**Marco Rubio (R) 2028**

(202) 224 -3041 or (561) 775-3360  
Toll Free in Florida: 1 -866 -630 -7106  
www.rubio.senate.gov

### U.S. HOUSE 18TH DISTRICT (2 Year Term)

**Gregory Steube (R) 2024**

(202) 225 -5792 [DC] or (863) 402 -9082  
www.steube.house.gov

## STATE GOVERNMENT

GOVERNOR/LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR AND CABINET  
(4 year terms-2026)

### GOVERNOR

**Ron DeSantis (R)**  
(850) 488 -7146

### LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

**Jeanette M. Nunez (R)**  
(850) 488 -7146

### ATTORNEY GENERAL

**Ashley Moody (R)**  
(813) 254 -3369

Toll Free in Florida: 1-866-966-7226

The Capitol, 400 South Monroe Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32399 -0001  
www.flgov.com

### COMMISSIONER OF AGRICULTURE

**Wilton Simpson (R)**  
(800) 212-0226

### COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION

**Richard Corcoran (R)**  
(850) 245 -0505

### CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

**Jimmy Patronis (R)**  
(877) 693 -5236

## STATE LEGISLATORS

### SENATE DISTRICT 29 (4 Year Term)

**Erin Grall (R) 2026**  
7555 20th Street  
Vero Beach, FL 32966  
(772) 569-0000  
TLH www.flsenate.gov

### HOUSE OF REPS DISTRICT 83 (2 Year Term)

**Kaylee Tuck (R) 2024**  
55 S Parrott Ave  
Okeechobee, FL 34974  
(863) 835 -0130 or (850) 717 -5055  
TLH www.myfloridahouse.gov

## LOCAL POLITICAL PARTY

### OKEECHOBEE DEMOCRATIC PARTY

**Weston Harvey**  
(863)634-2848

### OKEECHOBEE REPUBLICAN PARTY

**Jim Craig**  
(574)249 -9495

## OKEECHOBEE COUNTY GOVERNMENT

COUNTY CONSTITUTIONAL OFFICERS (4 Year Term—2024)

### SHERIFF

**Noel Stephen (R)**  
(863) 763-3117  
www.okeesherriff.org

### TAX COLLECTOR

**Celeste Watford (R)**  
(863) 763-3084  
www.okeechobeeountytaxcollector.com

### CLERK OF THE COURT

**Jerry D. Bryant (R)**  
(863) 763-2131  
www.clerk.co.okeechobee.fl.us

### SUPERVISOR OF ELECTIONS

**Melissa Arnold (R)**  
(863) 763-4014  
http://www.voteokeechobee.gov

### PROPERTY APPRAISER

**Mickey Bandi (R)**  
(863) 763-4422  
www.okeechobeeepa.com

### COUNTY JUDGE (6 Year Term)

**William Wallace (2024)**  
(863) 763-3193

### COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

(Elected at Large — 4 Year Term)  
304 NW 2nd Street, Room 123  
Okeechobee, FL 34972  
863-763-6441  
www.co.okeechobee.fl.us

Dist.1: **David Hazellief (R)**.....2024 Dist.4: **Terry Burroughs (R)**.....2026  
Dist.2: **Frank DeCarlo (R)**.....2026 Dist.5: **Kelly Owens (R)**.....2024  
Dist.3: **Brad Goodbread (R)**.....2024

### SCHOOL BOARD

(Nonpartisan / Elected at Large—4 Year Term)  
700 SW 2nd Avenue  
Okeechobee, FL 34974  
863-462-5000  
www.okee.k12.fl.us

Dist.1: **Christine Bishop**.....2026 Dist.4: **Amanda Riedel**.....2024  
Dist.2: **Malissa Morgan**.....2024 Dist.5: **Jill Holcomb**.....2026  
Dist.3: **Melisa Jahner**.....2026

## OKEECHOBEE CITY GOVERNMENT

(Nonpartisan / City Residents Only) (4 Year Term)

55 SE 3rd Avenue Okeechobee, FL 34974  
863-763-3372  
www.cityofokeechobee.com

### CITY COUNCIL

**Noel Chandler**.....2024 **Bobby Keefe**.....2026  
**Monica Clark**.....2024 **Mayor Dowling R. Watford, Jr**.....2026  
**Bob Jarriel**.....2026

### CITY CLERK

**Lane Gamiotea (2024)**

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## JUDICIAL OFFICES

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### STATE SUPREME COURT JUSTICES

(6 Year Term)

**Charles T. Canady**.....2028 **John D. Couriel**.....2028  
**Jorge Labarga**.....2028 **Ricky Polston**.....2028  
**Renatha Francis**.....2024 **Jamie R. Grosshans**.....2028  
**Carlos G. Muniz**.....2026

### 4TH DISTRICT COURT OF APPEALS

(6 Year Term)

**Cory J. Ciklin**.....2028 **Mark W. Klingensmith**.....2026  
**Burton C. Conner**.....2024 **Jeffrey T. Kuntz**.....2024  
**Dorian K. Damoorgian**.....2028 **Spencer D. Levine**.....2028  
**Alan O. Forst**.....2026 **Melanie G. May**.....2028  
**Jonathan D. Gerber**.....2028 **Edward L. Artau**.....2028  
**Robert M. Gross**.....2028 **Martha C. Warner**.....2026

### 19<sup>TH</sup> CIRCUIT STATE ATTORNEY

(4 Year Term—2024)

**Thomas Bakkedahl (R)**  
312 NW 3rd Street, Suite 260  
Okeechobee, FL 34972  
(863) 763-5557

### 19<sup>TH</sup> CIRCUIT PUBLIC DEFENDER

(4 Year Term—2024)

**Diamond R. Litty (R)**  
312 NW 3rd Street, Suite 220  
Okeechobee, FL 34972  
(863) 763-7977

### 19<sup>TH</sup> CIRCUIT COURT JUDGES

(6 Year Term)

**Dan L. Vaughn (#3)**.....2024 **Rebecca White (#1)**.....2028  
**Robert E. Belanger (#12)**.....2024 **Michael J. McNicholas (#6)**.....2028  
**Brett M. Waronicki (#17)**.....2026 **Elizabeth A. Metzger (#18)**.....2026  
**Gary L. Sweet (#10)**.....2026 **Lawrence M. Mirman (#16)**.....2026  
**Cynthia L. Cox (#13)**.....2026 **Robert Meadows (#19)**.....2024  
**Janet C. Croom (#8)**.....2028 **William L. Roby (#14)**.....2026  
**Victoria L. Griffin (#11)**.....2026 **Charles Schwab (#9)**.....2028  
**Michael C. Heisey (#4)**.....2026 **Laurie Buchanan (#2)**.....2028  
**Michael J. Linn (#5)**.....2024 **Sherwood Bauer, Jr. (#15)**.....2026  
**Steven J. Levin (#7)**.....2026

This brochure reflects information available  
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304 NW 2nd St, Room 144  
Okeechobee, FL 34972  
voteokeechobee.gov  
(863)763-4014

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regular election updates.