

## POLITICS

# Early voting is back on Florida campuses — and students are taking advantage

Summary: Early voting precincts are open on the FIU and Miami Dade College campuses for the first time since 2014, after a federal judge decided that a state ban on campus polling places was unconstitutional.

**ELIZABETH BISWELL**

2 NOV 2018 – 4:24 PM EDT

SHARE



Entrance at the FIU MMC campus early voting site

Crédito: Elizabeth Biswell

College students at early voting sites on their campuses in Miami-Dade County say they are enjoying the convenience of being able to vote between classes, with some saying they believe it will significantly boost turnout.

The college-based sites are a result of a lawsuit filed by the League of Women Voters of Florida and six students from University of Florida and Florida State University. The groups claimed the statewide ban made by Secretary of State Ken Detzner in 2014 discriminated against younger voters.

In July, a federal judge agreed, and Miami-Dade election officials added three campus sites to its network of 28 early-voting locations countywide. Two are at Miami Dade College – at the Kendall and North campuses – with the third at Florida International University's main campus.

According to county statistics, about 10,000 people have voted at the three campus sites as of Oct. 31. More than 150,000 people had voted at all 28 sites.

Campus voting was also set up around the state at the University of Florida (UF) in Gainesville, the University of South Florida (USF) in Tampa, the University of Central Florida (UCF) in Orlando and Florida State University (FSU) in Tallahassee.

Patricia Brigham, president of the League of Women Voters of Florida, says she is hopeful this will make it easier for students to fulfill their civic duty to vote.

“This is a win for the constitutional rights of the young people,” she said. “We certainly hope that the turn out will be high for campus early voting locations. Many students live on campus and might not be able to drive to a voting location, so we are excited about this opportunity to facilitate them.”

According to the Miami-Dade Elections Department, as of October there were about 4,000 more registered voters between 18 and 25 than there were in January.

Brigham said since the shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, students have had an increased interest to become involved and vote.

MDC and FIU have taken advantage of having early voting sites on campus to motivate their students to vote.

MDC spokesman Juan Mendieta said students at the school have been encouraging voter turnout.

“Our students have been active with signage on campus and social media campaigns online,” he said. “They have been using the hashtags #MDCVotes and #VoteTogether on all posts. The college has been supporting these efforts by putting up their own signage and sending reminder emails to the students (and faculty) to vote.”



Entrance at Miami Dade Kendall College campus' early voting site.

Crédito: Elizabeth Biswell

FIU students and faculty have taken on similar efforts.

The FIU Honors College located at MMC announced on their site scheduled events throughout the weeks leading up to the election advising their students on how to become an informed voter.

Student Daniel Weiland said he has benefited from FIU's early voting site.

"I was able to vote in the hour break that I have between my classes," he said. "It made voting very easy. Hopefully a lot of students will vote this year."

Summary: Early voting precincts are open on the FIU and Miami Dade College campuses for the first time since 2014, after a federal judge decided that a state ban on campus polling places was unconstitutional.

*Elizabeth Biswell is a student reporter for South Florida News Service / FIU*