



Miami Dade College wins the early voting race.

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As Early Voting Closes, Democrats Surge and Miami Dade College Tops University Ballots

CHUCK STROUSE | NOVEMBER 5, 2018 | 8:20AM

As early voting concluded Sunday, the top ten colleges in Florida had drawn just over 50,000 early votes, with Miami Dade College – the state's largest institution of higher learning – tallying 11,324 ballots, far more than any other campus. The University of Florida in Gainesville was number two and Florida International University number three.

The numbers are tiny compared to the 4.8 million votes already cast in Florida, which is fully one-third of the total voting population, but they are a good sign for Democrats.

Elsewhere in South Florida, the most Democratic part of the state, there were other hopeful indicators for Democrats. Monroe County set a record with more than 40 percent of its registered voters casting ballots early. Broward, the most Democratic of the state's 67 counties, showed almost 414,000 voters have already gone to the polls. Fifty-eight percent of those were registered Democrats, 23 percent were Republicans, and the rest showed no party affiliation.

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In Miami-Dade, just over a half-million people voted early. The numbers were closer, with 44 percent Democrats and 32 percent Republicans. Lines at some polling sites continued past the 7 p.m. closing time. In North Miami, voting machines broke down for several hours, *the Miami Herald reported*.

Florida Secretary of State Ken Detzner, you will recall, had **blocked early voting at college campuses**, citing a building at the University of Florida that did not meet standards. The League of Woman Voters and six UF and FSU students sued, and this past July U.S. District Judge Mark E. Walker ruled the blocking “reveals a stark pattern of discrimination.”

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Overall, whites were voting early at a higher level than other groups going into Sunday, but African-American turnout traditionally spikes on the final Sunday of the two-week early voting period as the so-called Souls to the Polls vote hits. At a library/early voting site on NW Seventh Avenue in Liberty City, waits were longer than an hour for much of the day as mostly African-American voters cast ballots. "We only have a couple of Gillum T-shirts left," said one clearly exhausted campaign worker as the day ended.

African-American turnout may end up being the key to this race, as former President Barack Obama, John Lewis, California Sen. Kamala Harris, Eric Holder, and Al Sharpton have visited the state.

As far as the race among universities, FAMU/FSU might end up the ultimate winners. The rapper Diddy will headline a concert tonight at FAMU in Tallahassee for Gillum. Final votes will be cast on Tuesday.

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