

## **SB 90 by Senator Baxley**

### **Basic public talking points:**

Voting should not be a partisan issue. We should all value the importance of protecting the right of every eligible voter to vote and the importance of secure elections. All eligible voters should be free to vote as easily and safely as possible, with equal access to the polls.

Our last election worked well. Unfortunately, some state legislators are working to:

- Wipe out every last one of the millions of vote-by-mail requests now on file and make every Floridian enroll again.
  - This will lead to voter confusion among those who were told their application would still be good through 2022.
- They also want to do away with secure drop boxes where many of us placed our vote-by-mail ballots last election.
  - These provided a convenient, safe, dependable option for voters.
  - Why are they taking away options and choices when this worked well?
- They also want to tell us who we can ask to turn in our vote-by-mail ballots (and it doesn't include friends, neighbors or caretakers, assisted living facilities)
  - This will impact many seniors and those who don't have relatives nearby.

There is no state funding for these senseless changes or funding to notify voters. This means local taxpayers will end up paying millions for unnecessary "fixes."

- It will cost election officials at least \$14 to 16 million dollars to make sure voters know the rules have changed.
- These are funds that could go towards making voting easier by adding early voting locations or additional drop boxes.
- sb90 is fiscally irresponsible and hides the bill deceptively hides it's true costs.

We had a near-perfect election here in Florida in 2020. Those who won (mostly Republicans) were happy, and even those who lost (mostly Democrats) had no complaints about the process itself.

- Statewide turnout, at 77%, was as high as it has been in 65 years, in part because nearly six million Floridians signed up to vote by mail
- There was no cheating, fraud, or problems with voter rolls
- Vote counting went well and was quick
- All of it was validated by careful audits and recounts

Sb90 does not address any real problems with our voting system. It will take away choices for voters, it will lead to voter confusion and it will saddle local election officials with enormous costs.

This bill is part of a bigger national partisan wave of legislation.

- States legislators in Georgia, Arizona, Ohio, and others have taken aim at voting reforms brought on by the pandemic, and are intent at rolling back vital progress for voters.

Call (or email) your Republican elected officials today and tell them to Vote "no" on SB 90 and leave our vote-by-mail choices and our drop boxes in place

## More Detailed Talking Points

### Elimination of Drop Boxes

- Ballot drop boxes are incredibly popular in Florida.
  - At least 1.4 million voters submitted mail ballots in drop boxes during the 2020 election according to a recent internal survey of counties by the Florida Supervisors of Elections in which not all counties responded.
  - 70% of Florida voters supported the use of drop boxes according to a 2020 poll from the [State Innovation Exchange](#). It is alarming that we are considering banning this option that so many of our voters need and trust.
- Drop boxes have countless benefits. They make election administration more efficient and improve voter access and confidence in the process.
  - Voters can't control how fast the postal service operates. Drop boxes provide voters with reassurance that their ballot will be received in time to count. This is also a huge asset for election officials; more ballots are returned by the deadline to be processed and fewer ballots and resources are wasted.
  - Drop boxes save Florida voters money in counties where return postage is not prepaid.
  - Drop boxes that are staffed reduce the number of rejected ballots as staff can make sure the outer envelope is signed and answer questions voters may have.
- Eliminating ballot drop boxes will disproportionately impact voters of color, low-income communities, individuals with disabilities, and anyone else who is unable to travel potentially long distances to deliver their own ballot.

### The eliminates of VBM applications on file

- Millions of public dollars were spent educating voters about the mail voting process last cycle. Millions more will be required to inform them that the rules have changed.
- SOEs have stated publicly that this will cost them \$14-16 million dollars in voter education to notify voters their applications are no longer valid.
- This would put an unnecessary hardship and expense on SOEs and counties at a time when many local governments are struggling due to revenue streams hit by the pandemic.
- The bill includes no provisions detailing how—or if—the state will notify voters who are currently on the vote-by-mail registration list that they will need to reapply in order to vote by mail in the 2022 elections.

- This is nothing short of bait and switch for voters who were told their vote-by-mail application would cover this election cycle and may now find themselves waiting for a mail-in ballot that will never arrive.
- This is a problem in search of a solution. Supervisors of elections already update their address files regularly and have to perform list maintenance this year. In addition, FL is now a member of ERIC which will help to ensure information on file in the voter registration database is correct.
- The bill's sponsor has been unable to provide evidence that ballots are arriving at the wrong address or that they are being submitted by the wrong person.

**Requires additional personal information on VBM applications (Drivers License, FL ID, last 4 digits of SSN)**

- This is likely to lead to more vote-by-mail applications being rejected. Many voters don't have a drivers' license or state ID.
- Some may not feel comfortable providing a social security number even if it's just the last four digits due to identity theft and security concerns.
- There's no evidence to suggest people are submitting VBM applications for voters other than themselves.

**Restrict who you can have return your VBM ballots to immediate family:**

- This will have a negative impact on seniors, voters with disabilities, and other marginalized voters who rely on trusted community organizations to help them return their sealed ballots to election officials. These voters – who often face mobility issues or have limited access to mail – already face disproportionate barriers to the ballot box. The Legislature must not add to their burden and should be working to expand access.
- By limiting the assistance disabled and limited-English-proficient voters can seek in order to vote by mail, this amendment would violate Section 208 of the federal Voting Right Act, which requires that voters who need assistance to vote by reason of their disability or inability to write (including limited English proficiency) be allowed to select any person of their choice to help them vote who is not their employer or union rep.
- We must ensure that voters continue to have access to needed assistance from community organizations returning their sealed ballot to their local election official. This criminalizes ordinary voters and trusted community groups from helping one another.