

# On-Campus Early In-Person Voting in Florida in the 2018 General Election

Report by

THE **ANDREW GOODMAN** FOUNDATION

Written by

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## Executive Summary

In the 2018 Florida General Election, nearly 60,000 registered voters in 9 Florida counties cast early in-person (EIP) ballots at 12 on-campus voting locations at public and private universities and colleges (“On-Campus Locations”). Young voters, as well as people of color and those who did not cast a ballot in 2016, disproportionately voted at the On-Campus Locations. Statistical models indicate that turnout—especially among young registered voters—in the counties that introduced On-Campus Locations, was higher in 2018 compared to 2016. Turnout in Florida is bolstered by On-Campus Locations as it lowers the opportunity costs of voting for all registered voters, particularly for young registered voters.

## Key Findings

- Nearly 60,000 registered voters in 9 Florida counties cast early in-person ballots at On-Campus Locations in the 2018 General Election.
- 56% of the total EIP ballots at On-Campus Locations were cast by voters aged 18-29 years old, a larger % than at other sites.
- Significantly more (over 38%) of all On-Campus Location ballots cast were by voters between the ages of 18 and 22, compared to only 3.3% of the nearly 2.65 million voters who cast EIP ballots at non-campus early voting locations (“Non-Campus Locations”).
- Hispanic and Black voters disproportionately cast ballots at the On-Campus Locations.
- On-Campus Locations helped to mobilize young registered voters, including those who stayed home in 2016.
- Over one-third of the On-Campus Location early voters in 2018, who successfully voted in 2016, didn’t vote early in 2016, including voters who had their 2016 absentee ballots rejected.
- Scientific research methods reveal that overall turnout in Florida, especially of young registrants, increased in 2018 due to the added convenience of On-Campus Locations for EIP voting.



## Introduction

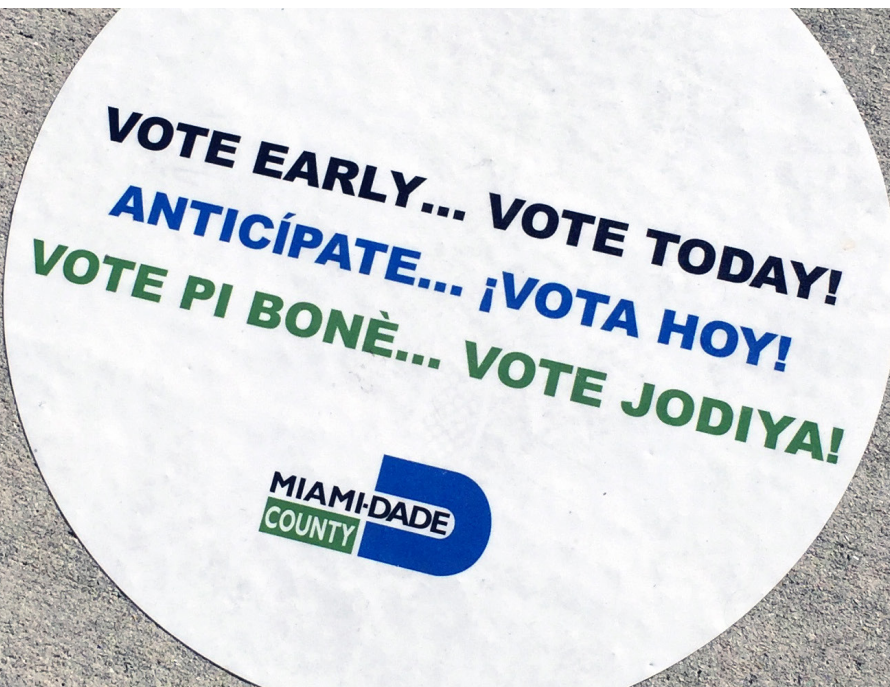
Nearly 60,000 registered voters in 9 Florida counties cast early in-person ballots at 12 on-campus voting locations in the 2018 General Election. The opportunity for registered voters to cast EIP ballots on any college or university campus—public or private—was the direct result of a federal lawsuit filed in the spring of 2018 by the League of Women Voters of Florida, Inc., The Andrew Goodman Foundation (AGF), Megan Newsome and Mary (“Jaime”) Roy (AGF “Ambassadors” and undergraduate students at the University of Florida), and other individual student plaintiffs.<sup>1</sup>

In a strongly-worded order handed down on July 24, 2018, U.S. District Court Judge Mark Walker ruled that the Florida Division of Elections had incorrectly interpreted Florida’s early voting law when it issued an administrative rule in 2014 that on-campus buildings could not be used for early voting. Judge Walker explained that “[t]hrowing up roadblocks in front of younger voters does not remotely serve the public interest.” He invalidated the ban of early voting sites on college campuses since the ban violated the 26<sup>th</sup> Amendment.

Judge Walker’s ruling did not mandate Supervisors of Elections (SOEs) to provide early voting on public or private campuses; rather, it cleared the way to make on-campus early voting permissible.

In the immediate months following Judge Walker’s July 2018 ruling, 9 county SOEs (Alachua, Broward, Duval, Escambia, Hillsborough, Leon, Miami-Dade, Orange, and Palm Beach) and administrators from 9 cooperating public universities, 1 state college, 1 private university, and 1 private college agreed to establish early voting locations, allowing registered voters in the counties to cast a ballot on campus during the 2-week early voting period, from Monday, October 22 to Sunday, November 4, 2018.<sup>2</sup>

Floor signage leading voters to the On-Campus Location at Miami Dade College - Kendall campus during the 2018 election



The 9 participating counties and 12 colleges/universities with on-campus EIP locations were:

1. **Alachua County**  
University of Florida (public)
2. **Broward County**  
Nova Southeastern University (private)
3. **Duval County**  
University of North Florida (public)  
Edward Waters College (private)
4. **Escambia County**  
University of West Florida (public)
5. **Hillsborough County**  
University of South Florida (public)
6. **Leon County**  
Florida State University (public) & Florida A&M University (public) [shared site]
7. **Miami-Dade County**  
Florida International University (public)  
Miami Dade College - North campus (public)  
Miami Dade College - Kendall campus (public)
8. **Orange County**  
University of Central Florida (public)
9. **Palm Beach County**  
Florida Atlantic University (public)

This report is broken down into two sections. In Section 1, the report draws on individual-level data from the Florida Division of Elections and analyzes which registered voters cast ballots at the 12 on-campus early in-person voting locations. It then provides more in-depth analysis of turnout among young voters registered in the 8 counties that offered on-campus EIP voting at public universities/colleges (“On-Campus Public University/College Locations”). The report relies on publicly available data from the November 2018 statewide voter file—that is, data extracted from the Florida Voter Registration System (FVRS) and made available monthly by the Florida Secretary of State, Division of Elections, and the January 2019 FVRS vote history file, as well as early voting data made available by the Division of Elections at the time of the 2018 General Election.<sup>3</sup>

Section 2 then presents the findings of several experimental methods used to evaluate the impact on turnout in the counties that offered On-Campus Public University/College Location voting in 8 counties. It compares turnout rates in the 2018 General Election of young (and older) voters in the 8 counties that offered On-Campus Public University/College Locations with turnout rates of comparable registered voters in adjacent counties that did not provide On-Campus Public University/College Locations for EIP voters. This research design provides evidence whether the adoption of a single election administration reform—permitting early in-person voting to occur on public college and university campuses—had a positive effect on turnout, especially among young voters, who do not normally vote in midterm elections.

## SECTION 1: On-Campus Location EIP Voters in Florida's 2018 General Election

This Section provides descriptive information about voters who cast EIP ballots on the 12 public and private college and university campuses in the 9 counties in the 2018 General Election, including:

1. Age, race/ethnicity, and gender of On-Campus Location EIP voters
2. Newly registered On-Campus Location EIP voters
3. On-Campus Location EIP voters who did not cast a ballot in the 2016 General Election
4. On-Campus Location EIP voters, who in the 2016 General Election, had cast a ballot by mail, a ballot at a Non-Campus Location, or a ballot on Election Day

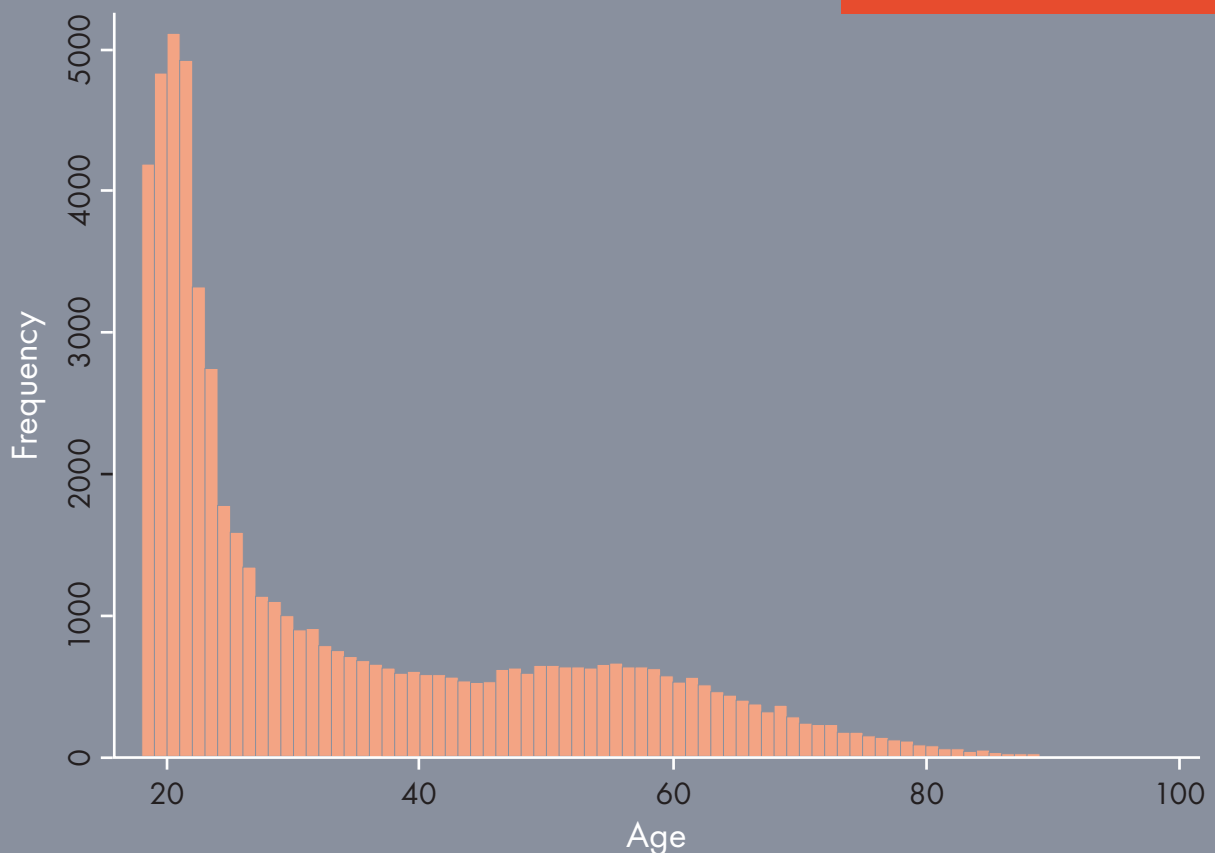
### Age

Of the nearly 60,000 ballots cast at On-Campus Locations, voters aged 18-29 cast more than 33,000 of the ballots, or **56% of the total** EIP ballots cast.<sup>4</sup>

Figure 1 displays a histogram of the age distribution of the registered voters who were On-Campus Location voters. As is clear, a disproportionate number—over 38% of all On-Campus Location voters—were between the age of 18 to 22.

**FIGURE 1:**

Number of On-Campus Location  
EIP Ballots Cast, by Age



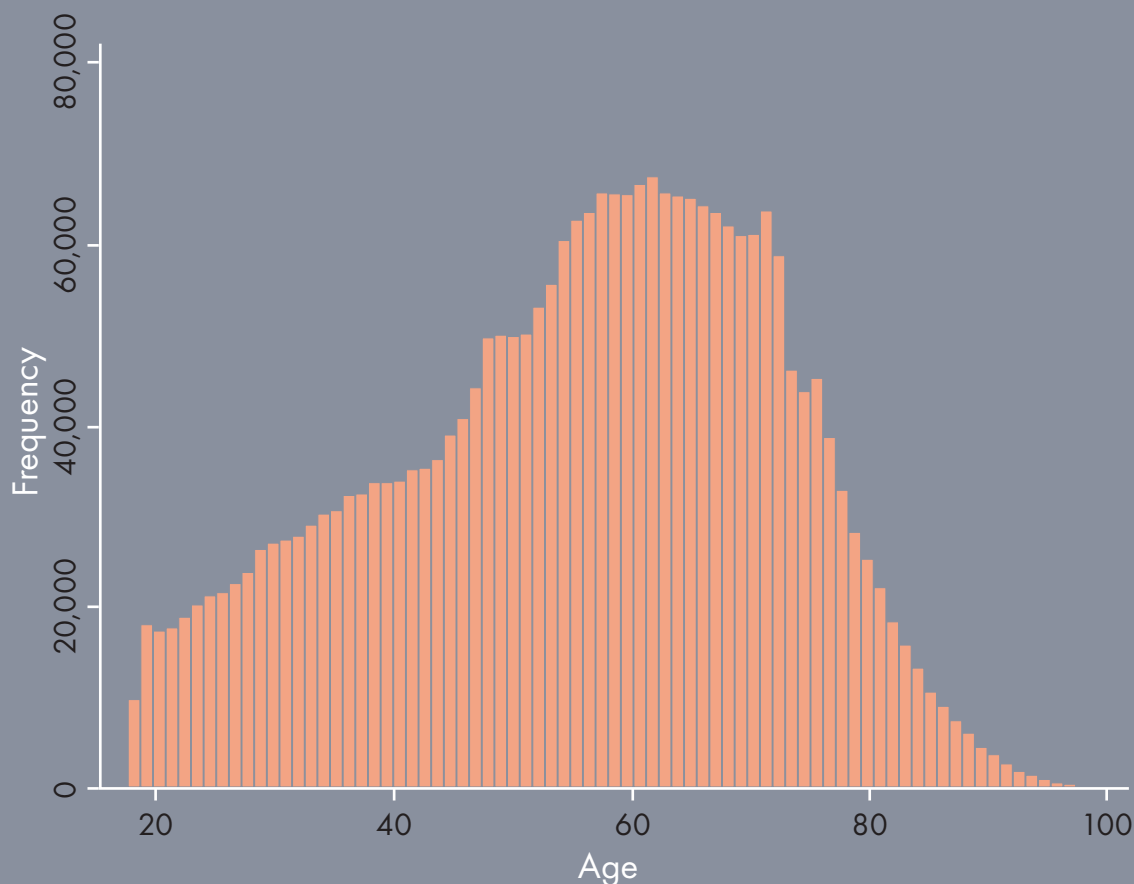
Contrast the statewide age distribution of the total approximate 2.71 million EIP votes both at On-Campus Locations and Non-Campus Locations as follows: There were approximately 60,000 On-Campus Location EIP ballots cast and 2.65 million Non-Campus Location EIP ballots cast during the Florida 2018 election. As displayed in Figure 2, of the 2.65 million EIP ballots cast at Non-Campus Locations, such votes were concentrated much more among Baby Boomers.

As mentioned previously, 38% of the On-Campus Location ballots were cast by voters between the age of 18 and 22; whereas this same age group (18-22) only cast 3.3% of the 2.65 million EIP ballots cast at Non-Campus Locations. In other words, for the age group between 18-22, there were 10 times the percentage points of On-Campus Location ballots from these voters compared to Non-Campus Location voters from the same age group. Put another way, in 2018, of the nearly 110,000 registered voters between the age of 18 and 22 who voted early in Florida, 1 in 5 voted at On-Campus Locations; 18 to 22-year-old voters disproportionately voted at higher rates at On-Campus Locations than at Non-Campus Locations.

The early voting turnout by age across the On-Campus Locations, however, was not uniform. At the University of Florida (UF) and Florida State University (FSU) [which joined forces with Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University (FAMU)], over two-thirds of all EIP ballots cast on-campus were by voters under

**FIGURE 2:**

Number of Non-Campus  
Location EIP Ballots Cast, by Age





the age of 23, with ballots cast by young voters at the University of Central Florida (UCF) also nearly hitting that mark. More than 3,000 18-22-year-olds voted on campus at UCF, over 4,000 voted at FSU's Tucker Center, and nearly 5,000 voters under 23 years old voted at UF's Reitz Union.

Even more impressive, when expanding the definition of a “young” voter, 18-29-year-olds accounted for 84% of the roughly 6,100 ballots cast at the joint FSU/FAMU early voting location. At UF's early voting location, 79% of the nearly 8,000 on-campus EIP ballots were cast by 18-29-year-olds. And at UCF, 18-29-year-olds accounted for 77% of the more than 5,100 total on-campus EIP ballots cast.

Table 1 provides a breakdown by age categories of the % of those who voted at each location for young voters (18-22 and, alternatively, 18-29) and those 30 and over. At all but the 2 private colleges/universities that had on-campus EIP voting, 18-29-year-olds cast at least one-third of all EIP ballots.

For comparison purposes, 18-29-year-olds cast less than 10% of the roughly 2.65 million EIP votes cast statewide at Non-Campus Locations. Thus, even with a more expansive definition of young voters (18-29), On-Campus Locations were disproportionately more likely to have young voters utilize the newly permitted locations, when compared to traditional Non-Campus Locations.

**TABLE 1:**

Percent of On-Campus Ballots  
Cast, by Age

Youth Vote				
Early Voting Location	18-22	18-29	30-105	Total Votes
ALA—UF	61.7	79.1	20.9	7,880
BRO—Nova Southeastern	12.7	30.4	69.6	4,851
DAD—FIU	36.5	57.7	42.3	7,683
DAD—MDC (Kendall)	27.7	40.9	59.1	5,654
DAD—MDC (North)	24.9	41.1	58.9	5,612
DUV—UNF	26.5	43.8	56.2	3,384
DUV—EWC	12.0	22.4	77.6	2,089
ESC—UWF	19.0	34.8	65.2	1,657
HIL—USF	41.9	65.8	34.2	4,649
LEO—FSU/FAMU	66.0	84.2	15.8	6,086
ORA—UCF	59.1	77.4	22.6	5,102
PAL—FAU	22.1	36.5	63.5	4,345
<b>Total</b>	<b>33.4</b>	<b>56.0</b>	<b>44.0</b>	<b>58,992</b>

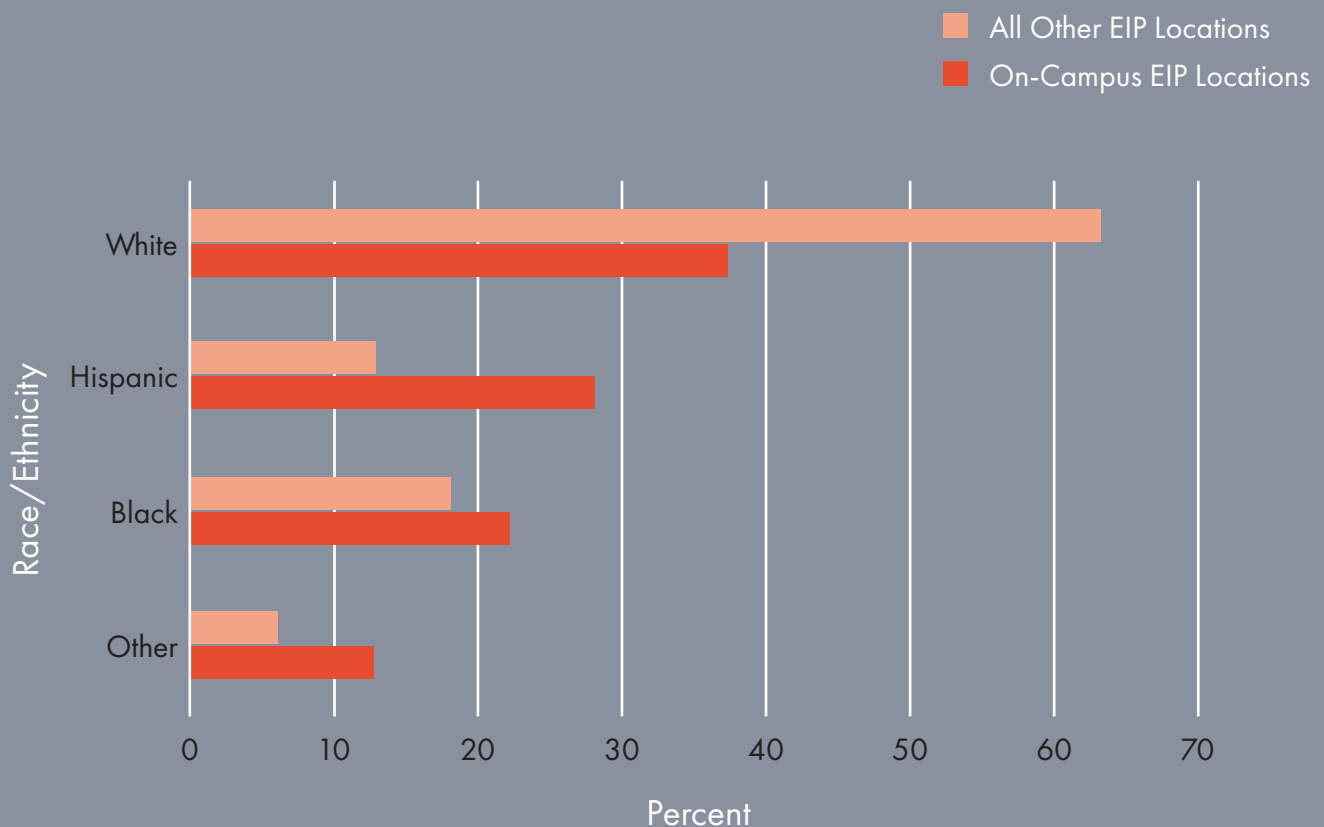
## Race/Ethnicity

Minority voters also took advantage of the new On-Campus Locations. Figure 3 displays the % of voters across racial and ethnic groups who voted early at On-Campus Locations compared to EIP voters who cast ballots at Non-Campus Locations around the state.

As Figure 3 reveals, Hispanic voters accounted for nearly 30% of all EIP ballots cast at On-Campus Locations even though they comprised only 12.8% of the nearly 2.65 million EIP ballots cast statewide at Non-Campus Locations. Nearly 13% of the ballots cast at On-Campus Locations were by voters who did not classify their race, or reported being American Indian/Alaskan Native, Asian/Pacific Islander, Multi-racial, or Other. In contrast, 6% of all ballots cast statewide at Non-Campus Locations were by individuals in this broad race/ethnicity category.

**FIGURE 3:**

Percent of On-Campus Location and Non-Campus Location EIP Ballots Cast, by Race/Ethnicity





Black voters—who in Florida historically vote early at higher rates than other racial/ethnic groups—also utilized the new early voting On-Campus Locations. Over 22% of the On-Campus Location EIP ballots were cast by Black voters, compared to just 18% of all EIP votes cast at Non-Campus Locations across the state. Although white voters accounted for 63% of the 2.65 million EIP ballots cast statewide at Non-Campus Locations, whites comprised only 37% of the EIP ballots cast on the new On-Campus Locations.

Table 2 provides the % breakdown of EIP voters in 2018 by racial/ethnic categories for each of the public or private on-campus locations.

**TABLE 2:**

Percent of EIP Ballots Cast on Each On-Campus Location, by Race/Ethnicity

<b>Early Voting Location</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>Black</b>	<b>Hispanic</b>	<b>White</b>
ALA—UF	18.6	11.2	17.0	53.2
BRO—Nova Southeastern	13.6	22.2	22.5	41.7
DAD—FIU	9.8	9.3	67.2	13.7
DAD—MDC (Kendall)	9.5	6.8	65.6	18.0
DAD—MDC (North)	8.1	56.5	30.7	4.7
DUV—UNF	11.9	16.4	7.8	64.0
DUV—EWC	4.3	91.5	1.0	3.3
ESC—UWF	7.1	18.0	3.8	71.1
HIL—USF	15.8	23.1	16.1	45.1
LEO—FSU/FAMU	11.2	22.3	15.7	50.7
ORA—UCF	19.6	18.4	19.4	42.5
PAL—FAU	12.5	14.8	11.4	61.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>12.6</b>	<b>22.1</b>	<b>28.1</b>	<b>37.3</b>

## ***Gender***

Women accounted for roughly 53% of all EIP ballots cast statewide as well as the ballots cast at On-Campus Locations in the 2018 General Election. Men comprised a slightly lower % of EIP ballots cast at On-Campus Locations compared to the statewide EIP rate; the difference was due to a higher % (6.1%) of on-campus EIP ballots cast by individuals who did not report their gender, as compared to less than 2% at other EIP locations statewide.

## ***On-Campus Location EIP Ballots Cast by Young, Newly Registered Voters***

The convenience of having early voting locations at On-Campus Locations had an especially sizable impact on young, newly registered voters. Approximately 676,000 Florida citizens registered to vote in Florida in 2018, including nearly 258,000 18-29-year-olds (38% of the total new registrants). Some 37,600 of these newly registered 18-29-year-olds voted EIP, with over 6,100 (16.3%) casting their ballots at On-Campus Locations.

In contrast, roughly 418,000 30-years-olds and older were newly registered to vote in 2018 (62% of the total new registrants); roughly 85,000 were EIP voters, but fewer than 1,400 (1.6%) cast their ballots at On-Campus Locations compared to 16.3% for 18-29-year-olds as noted above, 10 times greater in percentage points. Equally dramatic, of the more than 122,000 voters of all ages who registered in 2018 and who voted EIP in the 2018 General Election, nearly 7,500 voted at an On-Campus Location (or about 6% of all 2018 new registered EIP voters), despite the 12 early voting locations accounting for about 3% of the 350 early voting locations scattered across the state's 67 counties.

**Young voters, as well as people of color and those who did not cast a ballot in 2016, disproportionately voted at the On-Campus Locations.**

In short, there is no question that young, newly registered voters who voted early disproportionately did so at the newly created On-Campus Locations.

## ***On-Campus Location EIP Voting in 2018 and Registered Voters Who Skipped the 2016 General Election***

The newly established early voting locations on the dozen campuses around the state in 2018 also had a notable impact on the turnout of young, eligible registered voters who skipped the 2016 General Election. Of the nearly 60,000 voters who cast ballots at an On-Campus Location in 2018, nearly 47,700 were cast by voters who were registered in Florida prior to the 2016 General Election.

Of the almost 47,700 voters who cast On-Campus Location EIP ballots in 2018 and who were registered prior to the 2016 General Election, over 15% (nearly 7,300) had skipped the 2016 election. More than 23,600 of these 47,700 voters who were registered prior to the 2016 election and who cast On-Campus Location EIP ballots in 2018 were under the age of 30 at the time of the 2018 election; a quarter of them (or about 5,900 voters under 30 years old), all of whom were registered to vote in 2016, did not cast a ballot in the 2016 Presidential Election. In other words, 80% (5,900 out of 7,300) who skipped the 2016 election but voted in 2018 election, were under 30 years old. The added convenience of On-Campus Locations for early voting in the 9 counties clearly assisted in the mobilization of young registered voters aged 18-29, including those who stayed home in 2016.

### ***On-Campus Location EIP Voting in 2018 and Method of Voting in the 2016 General Election***

It is possible to look at the previous method of voting of the more than 40,000 on-campus voters in 2018 who voted in 2016.

For most On-Campus Location voters in 2018, some 65%, cast an early vote at some other location in the 2016 General Election. One in four On-Campus Location voters in 2018, however, had voted at their local Election Day precinct in 2016, and another 10% had voted by mail two years earlier.

More importantly, though, over 100 voters who successfully cast On-Campus Location EIP ballots in 2018 had voted by mail in 2016, only to have had their mail ballot rejected by their local canvassing board. Over three-quarters of these voters, who had their vote-by-mail ballot rejected in 2016 but voted a valid EIP ballot at an On-Campus Location in 2018, were under the age of 30.

## SECTION 2: Evaluating the Turnout Effect of Public School On-Campus EIP Voting

The convenience of EIP voting on a college/university public campus was clearly a hit among young registrants. Registrants under the age of 30, across all races and ethnicities, disproportionately voted early on the 10 campuses in the 8 counties that offered the new sites on public colleges/universities. This included those who were registered in 2016 but who stayed home during the presidential election.

But did the availability of On-Campus Public University/College Locations increase voter turnout among young voters, or would these registered voters have cast ballots in the 2018 General Election without Judge Walker's order?

Would young registrants have turned out by casting a mail ballot, voting at another early voting location, or waiting until Election Day to vote?

This section uses several quasi-experimental methods to test whether turnout, especially of young registrants, in the 8 counties offering On-Campus Public University/College Locations increased in 2018 due to the added convenience, or if turnout would have increased anyway, with voters merely substituting voting on a public campus for another method of voting.<sup>5</sup>

It might seem intuitive that, all else being equal, turnout should increase when new opportunities to vote are made available. After all, individuals have more options to mobilize themselves, or be mobilized by others, to vote.

But assessing the causal impact of newly available On-Campus Public University/College Locations on turnout requires making some assumptions. It is possible to understand the 8 counties that adopted On-Campus Public University/College Locations in 2018 as if it were a natural experiment, with some of the state's registered voters given an unexpected "treatment"—the opportunity to vote early in-person on the grounds of a public campus—while others were not afforded the opportunity for EIP at non-campus public University/Colleges ("Non-Campus Public University/College Locations").<sup>6</sup>

By exploiting as-if random variation in treatment assignments (the adoption of On-Campus Public University/College Locations) across geographic boundaries (Florida's 67 counties), it is possible to isolate the impact of Judge Walker's order on turnout in the 8 counties that adopted early voting on public campuses in the 2018 General Election.

According to Judge Walker's order, the decision of counties to expand on-campus EIP locations was voluntary. While the decision to designate new early voting locations on some campuses was made by local election and college/university officials only a few months prior to the 2018 General Election, none of the remaining 59 of the 67 counties chose to allow early voting on a public campus.

Using individual-level election data from the Florida Division of Elections, this section reports the results of 3 quasi-experimental methods used to estimate whether the adoption of EIP voting on public campuses increased voter turnout<sup>7</sup> as follows: difference-in-difference (DiD) models, difference-in-difference-in-difference (DDD) models, and exact-matching models.

## *Difference-in-Difference Models*

A common statistical method that can be employed to test whether On-Campus Public University/College Locations increased voter turnout is a difference-in-difference (DiD) research design. Given that only 8 of 67 counties in Florida implemented public college/university EIP voting sites, this quasi-experimental design makes use of longitudinal data from treatment and control groups to obtain appropriate counterfactuals to estimate the causal effect of a specific intervention (or treatment), in this case, the implementation of On-Campus Public University/College Locations.

In short, the method can be used to compare changes in outcomes in the treated and control groups over time. Here, it is used to compare the turnout rates of registered voters in the 2016 and 2018 General Elections who are registered in the 8 counties that allowed On-Campus Public University/College Locations, with the turnout rate over time of registered voters in the control counties that share a border with the treated counties.<sup>8</sup>

It is important to note that all registered voters—young and old alike—residing in a county that voluntarily decided to implement an On-Campus Public University/College Locations had the opportunity to cast an early ballot on a public campus—every registered voter in the county, in other words, received a treatment.

As such, the 8 DiD models (one for each of the treated counties) estimate the turnout of all registered voters in the 8 counties over the two elections, compared to the turnout of all registered voters in the counties adjacent to the 8 treated counties, which serve as a control.

The variable of interest across the 8 models, then, is an interaction between the election year variable (2018), and the treatment indicator (treatment or control), which estimates the effect of On-Campus Public University/College Locations sites on change of turnout from 2016 to 2018.

The results of 8 separate DiD statistical models reveal that in half of the treated counties with EIP on public campuses, turnout among registered voters was stronger in 2018 compared to 2016, relative to the turnout difference in the abutting counties in the control groups that did not permit On-Campus Public University/College Locations on public campuses in 2018.

For example, among all Alachua County registered voters (i.e. students and non-students across the county), the installation of an On-Campus Public University/College Locations on the University of Florida's campus in Gainesville had a positive effect on turnout, relative to turnout in the county in 2016 and compared to the turnout rate over time in the 8 counties bordering Alachua.

Overall, then, controlling for other factors, the implementation of On-Campus Public University/College Locations had a positive effect on turnout over time across all age groups in half of the counties, even after controlling for a registrant's race/ethnicity, age, gender, party registration, and the year in which he or she registered.





Students wait to vote at the On-Campus Location at the University of Florida during the 2018 election

### ***Difference-in-Difference-in-Difference Models***

Because Judge Walker's order focused in particular on the opportunities of young voters to cast an On-Campus Public University/College Location EIP ballot, it is possible to use difference-in-difference-in-difference (DDD) models to isolate the effect of on-campus early voting on the turnout of young registered voters over time and relative to the turnout of similar young registered voters in the sets of control counties adjacent to the 8 counties offering on-campus EIP at public colleges/universities.

By narrowing the populations in the treatment and control groups, the DDD models test whether the adoption of On-Campus Public University/College Locations had differential effects on the turnout of young registrants in the 8 treated counties, controlling for the existence of confounding factors.

Here, the key variable of interest is a triple-interaction between the election year, the treatment indicator (counties with On-Campus Public University/College Locations or their abutting counties with no On-Campus Public University/College Locations), and the youngest age group (20-22-year-olds), as current 18- and 19- year-olds would not have been eligible to vote in the 2016 General Election.

In 6 of the 8 models, young voters were more likely to turn out in the treatment counties that offered EIP voting On-Campus Public University/College Locations, compared to the turnout of young registered voters in the control counties that adjoined each of the 8 treated counties.

The change in turnout from 2016 to 2018 was positive among young voters in Alachua, Duval, Escambia, Leon, Miami-Dade, and Orange counties, relative to the change in turnout among young voters in the counties that surround the 6 counties that offered EIP On-Campus Public University/College Locations.

For example, with the introduction of On-Campus Public University/College Locations at UF and FSU/FAMU, 18-22-year-olds in Alachua and Leon counties were more than 7 % points more likely to vote than the similar age cohort in the adjoining counties. With the addition of On-Campus Public University/College Locations at UWF, FAU and Miami Dade College, and UCF, young voters in Escambia, Miami-Dade, and Orange were all roughly 3 % points more likely to vote than young voters in the surrounding counties. In Palm Beach County, SOE Susan Bucher noted that turnout of students at the On-Campus Public University/College Locations was lighter than expected, something she chalked-up to not having enough time to advertise the new location.

### ***Coarsened Exact Matching Models***

An alternative method of testing whether or not the introduction of an on-campus early voting location in a county increased the likelihood of young registered voters turning out in the 2018 General Election is to match young registrants in the 8 treatment counties with similar young registrants in the counties adjacent to the 8 counties that did not adopt On-Campus Public University/College Locations.

A 1-to-1 matching technique known as coarsened exact matching (CEM), can be used to estimate the average treatment effect of registrants 18-22 years old residing in the counties that adopted EIP voting On-Campus Public University/College Locations.

The alternative method, which acts as an additional robustness check, identifies registered voters akin to one another in the control counties and their adjoining treatment counties, matching their race/ethnicity, gender, age, political party registration, year of registration, and whether they voted in Florida in the 2016 election.

The CEM models reveal that voters aged 20-22 in 6 of the 8 counties that offered EIP voting On-Campus Public University/College Locations were statistically more likely to vote in the 2018 General Election than their doppelgängers in the surrounding counties.

That is, turnout among young voters in 6 of the 8 counties with On-Campus Public University/College Locations was higher, as compared to young voters with similar demographic, partisan, and turnout characteristics in those counties that did not adopt EIP at On-Campus Public University/College Locations.

## Conclusion

U.S. District Court Judge Walker's 2018 order lifted Florida's ban on early voting sites on all Florida's college and university campuses. Just 4 months after his decision, 9 counties and 12 colleges/universities provided voters with the added convenience to access the polls.

Of course, every registered voter in the 9 counties that offered On-Campus Locations for EIP voting was permitted to utilize the new locations, not only young voters. But young voters disproportionately took advantage of the added convenience, showing strong turnout in the November 2018 election, especially on public college/university campuses.

In addition, racial/ethnic minorities utilized the On-Campus Locations for EIP voting. So too did thousands of newly registered voters, as well as registered voters who did not turn out in the 2016 General Election. As the 3 quasi-experimental methods reveal, compared to voter turnout in 2016, voters in counties with EIP voting On-Campus Public University/College Locations turned out at higher rates than comparable voters in counties around the state that did not add On-Campus Public University/College Locations. In particular there was a broad increase in the turnout of 20-22-year-olds who were exposed to the new opportunity to vote early in-person at On-Campus Public University/College Locations.

Despite having little time to prepare, the 9 SOEs and the participating college and university administrators managed to find space as well as staffing to house the new On-Campus Locations for EIP voting. Young voters took advantage of the added convenience and turned out to vote in force.

It is possible that the positive turnout that resulted from allowing On-Campus Locations for EIP voting in Florida is isolated to the 2018 General Election. The results of this study are limited to the adoption of a single reform in a single state in a single election. There is no guarantee that the findings of this study are generalizable to other settings or elections.

Furthermore, the increase in voter turnout in the 2018 election resulting from the opportunity to cast one's ballot on a college/university campus prior to Election Day might be a novelty effect. Increased turnout from the added convenience might become mitigated over time, as the thrill of voting early in-person on a college/university campus wanes.

But the excitement should not be underestimated. "It definitely makes me feel empowered," Sabrina Ochoa, a psychology major said after she was the first UF student to cast a ballot at the Reitz Union early voting

**This report provides evidence that it is possible to bolster turnout, especially among young registrants who have yet to become habitual voters, simply by providing polling places that are more convenient for them to cast their ballots.**

location at 9 a.m. on October 22, 2018, noting that it was “convenient to be able to vote here then go to class.”

Voting among young voters in Florida, as across the country, continues to lag behind other age cohorts. This report provides evidence that it is possible to bolster turnout, especially among young registrants who have yet to become habitual voters, simply by providing polling places that are more convenient for them to cast their ballots.

The convenience of early in-person voting may have conditional and differential effects. Election officials and proponents of voting rights concerned about low turnout among young registered voters should be very interested in the finding that on-campus early voting in 2018 significantly lowered the opportunity costs of voting for all registered voters in Florida, and particularly young registered voters.

## About the Author

**Daniel A. Smith** is Professor and Chair of the Department of Political Science at the University of Florida and President of ElectionSmith, Inc. For over 2 decades, Dr. Smith has conducted research on voting and elections in the American states, including Florida. He has authored 3 books, over 100 peer-reviewed journal articles, book chapters, and technical reports, and has served as an expert in numerous state and federal lawsuits defending voting rights.

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## Endnotes

1 *League of Women Voters of Florida, Inc., et al. v. Detzner*, Case No. 4:18-cv-00251 (MW/CAS), (US District Court for the Northern District of Florida). Available: <https://www.leagle.com/decision/infdc020180725987>. Other student plaintiffs were: Dillion Boatner, Alexander Adams, and Anja Rmus. The lawsuit and participation of the co-plaintiffs was the result of multi-year advocacy done by the AGF Ambassador Megan Newsome, who as part of her advocacy work wrote an [Op-Ed](#) article which resulted in the amended [complaint](#) dated June 1, 2018. The lawsuit is brought on behalf of the organizational and individual plaintiffs by the international law firm Perkins Coie LLP and local counsel King, Blackwell, Zehnder & Wermuth, P.A.

2 The Court's decision allowed a movement of student advocates and organizations to convince SOEs to establish EIP voting sites on Florida campuses. This movement was the result of the work of AGF, members of the Students Learn Students Vote Coalition including All Voting is Local, ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge, Fair Elections Center's Campus Vote Project, Engage, Engage Miami, Florida Student Power Network, League of Women Voters – Florida, NextGen America, NASPA, StudentPIRGs, Vote Mob, #VoteTogether, and Young Invincibles, and other grassroots organizations with a strong presence in Florida.

3 Rather than relying on the aggregate figures provided by each county of the number of votes cast at each EIP location, this report relies on statewide individual-level data. Registered voters in Florida are issued a unique 9-digit voter ID. Voter registration information is maintained by the Division of Elections, in a database called the Florida Voter Registration System (FVRS). The database is often referred to as the statewide voter file. Monthly copies of the publicly available statewide voter file and vote history files are made available from the Florida

Division of Elections. By combining these files using the unique voter ID number, it is possible to provide demographic breakdowns of those who voted EIP, although the figures may not match the totals reported by the counties at the 12 locations, as some early provisional ballots are rejected by county canvassing boards and some individuals have redacted personal information. For a detailed discussion of Florida's statewide voter files, see Michael C. Herron and Daniel A. Smith. 2014. "Race, party, and the consequences of restricting early voting in Florida in the 2012 general election." *Political Research Quarterly* 67(3):646–65.

4 Of those who cast ballots at On-Campus Locations, age data for 215 are redacted from the November 2018 voter file.

5 Rather than trying to assess the turnout impact of the adoption of on-campus EIP voting at the two private institutions (Nova Southeastern University in Broward County and Edward Waters College in Duval County), Section 2 uses a variety of methods to compare turnout in the 8 (treated) counties that implemented EIP voting on a public campus with turnout in (control) counties adjacent to the 8 treated counties.

6 The as-if random geographic treatment of public campus early voting sites assumes that individuals do not self-select to the treatment; that is, that individuals do not choose to become registered to vote in Florida county because of the possible future convenience of being permitted to vote early on a public college/university campus.

7 For more details on the research design and statistical methods used in this section, see Enrijeta Shino and Daniel A. Smith, "Mobilizing the Youth Vote? Early Voting on College

Campuses in Florida" paper prepared for presentation at the State Politics and Policy Conference, University of Maryland, May 30-June 1, 2019. See, <https://electionsmith.wordpress.com/2019/06/04/mobilizing-the-youth-vote-early-voting-on-college-campuses-in-florida/>.

8 A primary assumption in DiD estimations is the parallel trend assumption. The estimate requires that in the absence of a treatment, the difference between the 'treatment' and 'control' groups remains constant over time. In addition, DiD models assume that the composition of the control and treatment groups pre- and post-intervention are stable. Shino and Smith (2019) use a variety of placebo tests that confirm the validity of these assumptions.

9 Kevin Brockway. "Early Voting Opens on UF Campus," October 22, 2018, *Gainesville Sun*. See, <https://www.gainesville.com/news/20181022/early-voting-opens-on-uf-campus>.



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