



# Floridians for Election Transparency

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## 3 About Election Monitoring and Observation

To help ensure a free and fair election for all voters, FFAF supports a non-partisan program called *Floridians for Election Transparency (MFET)*, which will deploy volunteer observers to monitor election processes and procedures throughout the election cycle. Observers can deter malfeasance and cheating, or by detecting and formally documenting such malfeasance, can deny legitimacy to fraudulent elections and provide evidence for lawsuits and other post-election court cases. By increasing the transparency of the election, observers can enhance public confidence in the integrity of the election process.

Observation will be conducted in phases, beginning with *Pre-Election Observation*. During the pre-election phase observers will look at the voter list, election administration, the legal framework and procedures for elections, and the broader election environment. Pre-election observation seeks to confirm the process, or to highlight potential problems or concerns so that they can be addressed prior to the election. Internationally, pre-election observers are usually referred to as Long-Term Observers or LTOs. LTOs often play an important role in recruiting, training, and managing the larger number of volunteers needed for election observation.

FFET pre-election observers are non-partisan. In contrast to partisan observers (poll watchers), they do not represent a specific party. Instead, they represent all voters, and their primary objective is ensuring a free and fair process for all voters, regardless of outcome. Non-partisan observers are normal in other democracies, but still relatively rare in the US, where we have primarily relied on partisan observers. Non-partisan observation provides any voter, regardless of party, the possibility to support free and fair elections; allowing participation by independent voters, and by neutral groups (like church groups) that want to support a fair process, but don't want to affiliate with a particular party.

*Election Season Observation* – Election observation (poll watching) used to be largely confined to election day, but with long periods of advance voting, and all the opportunities that creates for malfeasance and fraud, we have to develop new approaches to strengthening transparency and deterrence. The primary innovations of the FFET approach are facilitating increased deployment of observers and poll watchers during the advance voting, and the expectation that observers and poll watchers will file regular reports throughout the election season.

Although MFET will continue to deploy its LTOs during election season, its primary focus will be the provision of training and/or materials for party-endorsed poll watchers.

*Observing Election Day and the Counting Process* – Although the actual election day in Florida is not as important as it used to be because of the long election season, to deter malpractice and enhance transparency will require more poll watchers than any other day. The objective is to detect and deter malfeasance through complete coverage of, and reporting from, all precincts in the state.

Poll watchers may work in shifts organized before election day. They will arrive before the precinct opens to observe set up of the precinct and machines, and will watch the polling process throughout

the day, then the counting process after the poll. Each precinct poll watcher (or team) and observer should have a checklist and report form to facilitate monitoring, and the collection of data that can be used to validate or delegitimize the election process at the precinct after the election. In addition, poll watchers will have access to the legal hot line to report irregularities or malfeasance as they happen.

*Post-Election Audits and Reports* – After the election, FFET will continue to monitor any post-election audits or court cases. Pre-election, election season and election day reports will be synthesized, and used to develop a comprehensive narrative report on the integrity of the entire election process, with recommendations for needed reforms in advance of the 2024 national elections.