

# STATE OF FLORIDA

## OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR EXECUTIVE ORDER NUMBER 19-262 (Emergency Management-Elections)

**WHEREAS**, on October 10, 2018, Hurricane Michael made landfall in Bay County as a Category 5 Hurricane with sustained winds of 155 miles per hour disrupting the lives of Floridians throughout Northwest Florida; and

**WHEREAS**, I, as Governor of Florida, have witnessed the destruction and damage to homes, public roadways, and public and private facilities that still exist as a reminder of the long road to recovery for Northwest Florida; and

**WHEREAS**, the effects of Hurricane Michael have had a particular impact, continuing to this day, on Northwest Florida, with reports of severe damage to infrastructure; and

**WHEREAS**, the Supervisors of Elections for Bay and Gulf Counties have reported to Florida's Secretary of State that one or more early voting locations and polling locations have sustained damage and are unusable or otherwise unsafe for public use; and

**WHEREAS**, ensuring that eligible voters in the aforementioned counties have the opportunity to vote in the 2020 Election Cycle, including the Presidential Preference Primary Election on March 17, 2020, the Primary Election on August 18, 2020, and the General Election on November 3, 2020, is paramount; and

**WHEREAS**, because of the effects of Hurricane Michael and the direct request from the Supervisors of Elections of the aforementioned counties, the strict application of some provisions of the Florida Election Code may prevent, hinder, or delay necessary action in coping with the emergency and may preclude the Supervisors of Elections in the aforementioned counties from providing voters with the same opportunities to cast ballots as voters outside of the counties; and

**WHEREAS**, Bay and Gulf Counties are still under the state of emergency declared by Executive Order 18-276, and extended by Executive Orders 18-360, 19-33, 19-98, 19-134, 19-176; 19-207 and 19-261;

**NOW, THEREFORE, I, RON DESANTIS**, as Governor of Florida, by virtue of the authority vested in me by Article IV, Section 1(a) of the Florida Constitution, by the Florida Emergency Management Act, as amended, by the Elections Emergency Act, and all other applicable laws, do hereby promulgate the following Executive Order, to take immediate effect:

**Section 1 (Early Voting):**

Because of the foregoing emergency conditions, I hereby suspend the application of the following limited provisions of Section 101.657, Florida Statutes, in Bay County and Gulf County and establish the following limited exceptions related to early voting:

The Supervisor of Elections, who, as a result of the destruction caused by Hurricane Michael, determines that additional early voting opportunities are necessary to provide the voters in his county an adequate opportunity to cast ballots, shall have the authority to:

- a. Designate one or more additional or alternative early voting sites, notwithstanding the deadlines and facility eligibility restrictions set forth in Section 101.657(1)(a) and (b), Florida Statutes, provided the early voting sites are geographically located so as to provide all voters in the aforementioned counties an equal opportunity to cast a ballot, insofar as is practicable; and
- b. Conduct early voting in the aforementioned counties beginning on the 15th day before any federal, state or multicounty election in the 2020 calendar year, whichever is applicable, and ending on the day of the applicable election, at the discretion of the Supervisor of Elections, notwithstanding the provisions of Section 101.657(1)(d), Florida Statutes.

**Section 2 (Relocation or Consolidation of Polling Places):**

Because of the foregoing emergency conditions, I hereby suspend the application of the following limited provisions of Section 101.001, Florida Statutes, in the aforementioned counties and establish the following limited exceptions relating to polling places:

Notwithstanding the provisions of section 101.001, Florida Statutes, the Supervisor of Elections, who, as a result of the destruction caused by Hurricane Michael, determines that it is necessary to relocate or consolidate any polling place, shall have the authority to relocate or consolidate polling places within the aforementioned counties, including relocation or consolidation of polling places with early voting sites.

**Section 3 (Notice to the Public and the Division of Elections):**

The Supervisors of Elections for the aforementioned counties who exercise authority under this Executive Order shall immediately certify that fact to the Director of the Division of Elections of the Florida Department of State and shall provide notice to the public regarding any changes in voting locations or procedures in a manner consistent with the law and designed to ensure widespread dissemination of voting information to members of the public in Bay and Gulf Counties, including through print and broadcast media, website postings, and posted signage at polling locations.



IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of Florida to be affixed, at Tallahassee, this 25th day of November, 2019.

  
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RON DESANTIS, GOVERNOR

ATTEST:

  
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SECRETARY OF STATE

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