



ALACHUA COUNTY 2024 NON PARTISAN VOTER GUIDE

WHAT'S INCLUDED IN THIS GUIDE:

This guide covers **local races and issues** on the November 5, 2024 ballot for Alachua County residents.

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For **statewide races & constitutional amendments**, see LWV's VOTE411:
www.VOTE411.org

Want more resources about the election? See the 2024 Voter Toolkit on our website:
<https://my.lwv.org/florida/alachua/voter-education/2024-voter-toolkit>

Or the Alachua County Supervisor of Elections website: <https://www.votealachua.gov/>

IMPORTANT DATES

Last Day to Register for November General Election.....October 7
Early Voting Dates.....October 21 - November 3
Election Day.....November 5

ABOUT THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy. The League does not take positions or make endorsements in any race for political office, and neither supports nor opposes any particular candidate or party.

EIGHTH CIRCUIT STATE ATTORNEY

The **State Attorney** is responsible for representing the State of Florida in criminal proceedings before county and circuit courts. The State Attorney conducts legal proceedings against individuals charged with crimes that occur in the judicial circuit that the State Attorney serves. There are 20 Judicial Circuits in Florida. The Eighth Judicial Circuit is comprised of Alachua, Baker, Bradford, Gilchrist, Levy and Union counties. It is the job of the State Attorney and Assistant State Attorneys to review charges and complaints to determine whether the facts warrant prosecution, to determine what criminal charges to file, interview witnesses and victims, litigate pre-trial motions, and prepare and try criminal cases. Term: 4 years.

CANDIDATES: STATE ATTORNEY

**Brian Kramer,
Republican**

Campaign Website:
www.keepkramer.com



Yvens Pierre-Antoine

Campaign Website:
yvensforflorida.com



Why are you the best candidate for this position? I am the only candidate in the race with experience as an Assistant State Attorney, Executive Director of the State Attorney's Office, and as the State Attorney. Since 1993, my career has been in public service. I am proud to have served this office and this community since 1999 as a prosecutor. During this term, this office has been very successful and made significant improvements to the services that we provide to the community. There is more work to be done.

What is your approach or criteria with respect to prosecuting juveniles as adults? This office, under my leadership, takes very seriously the decision to prosecute a juvenile as an adult. I personally approve every transfer from juvenile court to adult court. In doing so, we consider multiple factors including: child's juvenile history, the nature of the offense, the age of the child, whether the Department of Juvenile Justice has a meaningful opportunity to provide rehabilitative services to the child, and the victim's input. We implement a multi-person review of the case prior to the decision for approval of the transfer.

How will you approach prosecution under the state's abortion laws? Under Florida law, a prosecutor must consider each case on its own merits. No prosecutor can legally set policy to prosecute or not based upon a particular charge. In order to file a criminal charge, a prosecutor must adhere to the Rules Regulating the Florida Bar, and should follow the ABA's guidance on this issue. To file a criminal charge, the following must be true: The charge must be supported by probable cause; the government must believe that it will prevail on the merits of the action based upon the evidence; and the prosecution must just. I will adhere to these rules in all cases, including the state's abortion laws. To do otherwise, subjects any candidate to removal by the Governor.

Why are you the best candidate for this position? As a father, a business owner, and the child of working-class parents, my values aren't just talking points; they are the essence of who I am. I share these values with you, and it's this shared commitment that drives me to seek the role of your State Attorney. I have worked on all sides of the aisle, from the State Attorney's office to the Public Defender's Office and in private practice. We can do better and we can create a more justice and equitable system. Right now, we have a state attorney who has prosecuted more people for voting than any other State Attorney in Florida. We can do better.

What is your approach or criteria with respect to prosecuting juveniles as adults? As someone who has spent a great deal of time working with our youth, I am always going to be cautious prosecuting juveniles as adults because for so many, that is a life sentence, no matter the actual crime. While I look forward to partnering with the county to work on recidivism and re-entry programs, the most impactful action we can take is to keep out kids out of the justice system. We have to have a better plan than what is happening now.

How will you approach prosecution under the state's abortion laws? While our office will follow the law as we are required, we will work to be as caring and compassionate if the same laws remain in effect after November 5th. Hopefully voters will decide differently.

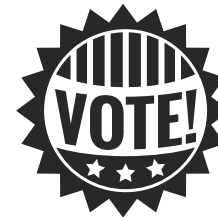
ALACHUA COUNTY SHERIFF

Sheriff is an elected position in the state of Florida according to the state's constitution. Sheriffs are elected by the voters of their county and have county-wide jurisdiction, which includes incorporated and unincorporated areas. A sheriff appoints law enforcement officers whose duties are the prevention and detection of crime or the enforcement of the penal, traffic, or highway laws. Sheriffs execute writs, processes, warrants, and other papers directed to them, attend all terms of the circuit court and county court held in their counties and execute all orders of the boards of county commissioners of their counties. The Sheriff is also responsible for all aspects of operating the Alachua County Jail. Each year the Sheriff is responsible for submitting a budget for the Sheriff's operations to the Alachua County Commission, in compliance with Florida Statute. Term: Four years.

CANDIDATES

There are three candidates for Alachua County Sheriff:

- Emery Gainey, Republican
- Pamela Marshall-Koons, No Party Affiliation
- Chad Scott, Democrat



Emery Gainey, Republican

Campaign Website:
emerygainey.com



What are the top three challenges facing the sheriff's department and how does your experience and character prepare you to effectively respond to them? **1.** Rebuilding trust and honor at the agency through proven compassionate and experienced leadership. **2.** Restaffing the agency with dedicated employees has been a top priority. Over the past nine months, my team and I have made significant strides towards this goal, achieving a net gain of 93 new employees to fill the 248 vacant positions we inherited upon taking office. **3.** Reestablishing positive working relationships with our local, state and federal partners has been crucial in addressing the unacceptable rise in gun violence and other criminal activities committed by those who chose to violate the rights of law-abiding citizens. My 39 plus years of experience and success in law enforcement serve as my qualifications.

What is your opinion of co-responder programs, which send mental health clinicians along with officers on certain emergency calls? The Mental Health Co-Responder teams are among the best programs managed by the Sheriff's Office, city and university police departments. These teams consist of specialty trained deputies, who partner with Mental Health professionals from Meridian. They have proven to be highly effective in diverting citizens experiencing a mental health crisis away from the legal and emergency health care systems and into more appropriate treatment programs. This approach ensures that individuals receive the treatment they need instead of facing arrest, when appropriate. The ACSO's program saved the taxpayers over \$2.8 million dollars in 2023. I fully support this program. It is my intent to expand this unit in 2025 due to its proven effectiveness.

What is your position on "gun control," "gun safety," and "gun regulation" efforts? I am a staunch supporter of the constitutional rights of our citizens, and our state legislative process. As the Chief Law Enforcement Officer for the county, it is my duty to uphold the laws of our US Constitution and the Constitution of the State of Florida and continue to encourage all gun owners to take safety courses on the proper operation of all firearms they own, to include the proper handling and safety features of their firearms. I also strongly encourage gun owners to keep their firearms secure and locked away from children at all times and store them in a secure manner (gun safes, and/or secure locking mechanisms) to prevent the theft of their firearms.

ALACHUA COUNTY SHERIFF - CANDIDATES (CONTINUED)

**Pamela Marshall-Koons,
No Party Affiliation**

Campaign Website:
www.pamela4sheriff.org



What are the top three challenges facing the sheriff's department and how does your experience and character prepare you to effectively respond to them?

(1) Gun violence is a critical public health risk. Despite law enforcement's hard work, we need new innovative solutions to address this crisis. With my public policy and legislative expertise, I can collaborate with local, state, and federal officials as well as community programs to stop senseless killings. **(2)** Supporting Families - As a mom, I understand the impact of home life on schools and streets, and I'm committed to building collaborations for sustainable solutions that involve our parents and children. **(3)** ASO morale- As a former mayoral Chief of Staff, I know we must listen to our employees, prioritize their well-being, and foster a respectful, supportive environment to retain and attract people who are proud to be part of the ASO family.

What is your opinion of co-responder programs, which send mental health clinicians along with officers on certain emergency calls? Co-responders are critical for law enforcement as well as the person who is having a mental health challenge. As the number of the mentally ill increases in our community, co-responders can not be our long-term solution. We must advocate for a more sustainable solution for those with Alzheimer's, PTSD, autism, and other mental health disorders.

What is your position on "gun control," "gun safety," and "gun regulation" efforts? Safety is our number one goal. I believe in sensible gun control measures that help prevent firearms from falling into the wrong hands. This includes background checks, closing loopholes, and ensuring that those with a history of violence or mental illness are unable to obtain weapons. Promoting gun safety is paramount. I support educational programs that teach responsible gun ownership, safe storage practices, and proper handling techniques to reduce accidental injuries and deaths. Encouraging gun safety courses and public awareness campaigns can make a significant difference. Effective gun regulation is necessary to maintain public safety, by implementing laws that balance the rights of responsible gun owners and public safety.

**Chad Scott,
Democrat**

Campaign Website:
ChadScottforSheriff.com



What are the top three challenges facing the sheriff's department and how does your experience and character prepare you to effectively respond to them? The sheriff's department faces pressing challenges including gun violence prevention, enhancing community engagement, and addressing mental health concerns.

Drawing on my extensive experience in narcotics investigations and Special Operations, I prioritize proactive strategies to reduce gun violence and ensure community safety. I emphasize transparent communication and collaboration to build trust and strengthen community relations. As someone who has managed budgets and resources as Chief of Police and Colonel, I understand the importance of efficient resource allocation to support mental health initiatives and provide compassionate care.

What is your opinion of co-responder programs, which send mental health clinicians along with officers on certain emergency calls?

Our office in Alachua has integrated mental health programs into our operations, recognizing their crucial role in modern policing. However, the current resources are insufficient. We need to at least triple our capacity to ensure these services are available 24/7. To this end, I propose creating a captain position dedicated solely to overseeing and enhancing our mental health initiatives. This role will focus on developing comprehensive programs that proactively work in the community to prevent crises and better support individuals facing mental health challenges. By significantly expanding our resources, we aim to create a safer, more compassionate community, where mental health care is a fundamental aspect of our protection and service.

What is your position on "gun control," "gun safety," and "gun regulation" efforts? As a former school resource officer, I've witnessed firsthand how the presence of firearms can dangerously escalate situations, especially among our youth. We have too many guns on our streets, and too often, these end up in the hands of our children, fostering a cycle of violence that we must break. My approach to gun control focuses on removing firearms from the streets and intensifying our efforts on educating families about gun safety. It's imperative that we teach our children about the dangers of firearms, instilling a sense of responsibility and awareness from a young age. By combining law enforcement action with comprehensive education and community engagement, we can create a safer environment for everyone.

ALACHUA COUNTY SUPERVISOR OF ELECTIONS

The Supervisor of Elections (SOE) is an elected County Constitutional Officer. The SOE administers the election laws of the State of Florida. Duties of the SOE include: Administer county, state and federal elections in accordance with applicable laws; Provide voter outreach education and information as required by Florida statutes; Recruit, hire and train poll workers; Qualify candidates for office; Administer the provisions of the campaign reporting laws; Provide information and statistics on voter registration, voting and elections results; Maintain custody of financial and election records; Advise the Board of County Commission on equipment procurement and maintain custody of all election equipment; Redistrict as required by law; Define precincts and assign polling places; Register eligible voters and maintain voter rolls; Provide assistance and support for municipal elections. Term: Four years.

CANDIDATES

**Kim Barton,
Democrat**

Campaign Website:
www.facebook.com/KimBartonSOE



**Judith Jensen,
Republican**

Campaign Website:
www.VoteJensen2024.com



What motivates you and qualifies you to run for Supervisor of Elections? I am committed and passionate about serving the voters of Alachua County. My focus has always been on protecting their right to vote, ensuring integrity in all elections, and making sure that voters are confident their vote is accurately counted. I am qualified, having over 30 years of elections administration experience in planning, implementing, and administering over 80 federal, state, county, and municipal elections. As SOE, I have directly overseen the day-to-day operations of the Election's Office, supervised a staff of 30 including over 700 election workers, and managed a 4-million-dollar budget. I am a Master Florida Certified Elections Professional. I am the only candidate with on-the-job experience.

How will you recruit, train, and support poll workers to ensure they are well-prepared to assist voters and handle any issues that may arise on election day? We recruit election workers at community events, through our website at VoteAlachua.gov, on our social media platforms, at colleges and high schools, at houses of worship, with community organizations, through advertisements and election mailers. We emphasize the responsibilities and the benefits of serving as election workers. We match election workers with the best position for their skill set. All election workers are required to attend in-person training classes which prepare them for their assignment and provide hands-on experience in assisting voters. Online training is provided as an additional resource. On election day, experienced elections staff are made available to assist if election workers run into any issues.

What motivates you and qualifies you to run for Supervisor of Elections? I earned a Master of Science Degree in Nursing and have served in management roles on busy obstetrics units for many years. I hired, trained, scheduled, evaluated, and taught professionals, assuring their competency to perform their duties. This experience foundation has prepared me for managing an elections office, using skills honed in a fast-paced environment. My passion is Election Integrity. Starting with Defend Florida as a volunteer county lead, I have networked with others in the state to identify vulnerabilities in our election processes. Understanding all the steps from voter registration through reporting of results is key to formulating optimal ways to keep our elections trustworthy. Processes can always be improved.

How will you recruit, train, and support poll workers to ensure they are well-prepared to assist voters and handle any issues that may arise on election day? Poll workers are the backbone of our elections, patriotic participants who step up for low pay and long hours. Each polling location needs a large pool of workers for all the positions and days of operation. Recruitment through ads, supplemented by visits to community organizations will help fill the need. A diverse group of workers representing our county requires recruitment efforts in all neighborhoods. I would offer training during non-traditional hours and online introductory content which can be completed at the learner's convenience. Classroom activities include hands-on practice and clearly written guidelines. No training can cover every eventual occurrence, but novices will know where to seek answers.

ALACHUA COUNTY SUPERVISOR OF ELECTIONS CONTINUED

Kim Barton, Democrat

What processes do you have in place for addressing and resolving election-related disputes and complaints in a fair and timely manner? First, we have to communicate proactively with all parties involved to make sure we have all the information available regarding the circumstances. We are always seeking for a resolution that serves everyone, but the resolution must follow Florida Election Law. In elections, things move fast and we need to make sure everyone is informed, but we must also make sure the correct information is getting out to the public. Many issues within elections involves misunderstandings or miscommunications. My staff and I strive to be patient with voters, election workers, and the public and understand their concerns and give them the information that they need in a timely manner.

Judith Jenson, Republican

What processes do you have in place for addressing and resolving election-related disputes and complaints in a fair and timely manner? Listening allows me to clearly understand the problem from all viewpoints before making a decision. There is potential for unexpected events involving people, machines, paper, connectivity, supplies, and weather. Establishing rapport with community stakeholders, polling place representatives, and major political party leaders helps minimize misunderstandings. The Supervisor position is ultimately responsible for a smooth flow, but building a team of trusted individuals for rapid response is a priority. Having properly maintained and functioning phones must also be assured. When workers are inundated with long lines and complex issues, poll watchers may notice things that need to be addressed, so they are valuable. Statutes are final.

ELECTION DAY VOTING (NOVEMBER 5)

On Election Day (November 5), registered voters are required to vote at their assigned precinct.

Polls will be open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Where's my precinct?

<https://www.votealachua.gov/Voters/List-of-Alachua-County-Precincts/Precinct-Finder>

EARLY VOTING DATES & LOCATIONS

Early Voting Dates: October 21 - November 3.

Early Voting Times: 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Early Voting Locations

- Supervisor of Elections Office, 515 North Main Street, Gainesville, FL 32601
- Millhopper Branch Library, 3145 NW 43rd Street, Gainesville, FL 32606
- J. Wayne Reitz Union, 655 Reitz Union Drive, Gainesville, FL 32611
- Tower Road Branch Library, 3020 SW 75th Street, Gainesville, FL 32608
- Alachua County Agriculture and Equestrian Center, 23100 W Newberry Rd, Newberry, FL 32669
- Legacy Park Multipurpose Center, 15400 Peggy Road, Alachua, FL 32615
- Hawthorne Community Center, 6700 SE 221st St, Hawthorne, FL 32640
- (NEW) Santa Fe College, S-029, 3000 NW 83rd St, Gainesville, FL 32606



[VOTE411.org](https://www.votealachua.gov)

LWV's one-stop-shop for nonpartisan election information, including:

- Statewide Races
- Constitutional Amendments
- Print a ballot for your address
- And more!

ALACHUA COUNTY COMMISSION RACES: DISTRICTS 1 & 3

A County Commissioner represents their single-member district and overall countywide interests, as part of the legislative and policy-setting branch of county government. County government is typically responsible for fire rescue; disaster relief; county jail; constructing and maintaining county buildings, roads, and bridges; providing programs for housing and land conservation, as well as approving the Comprehensive Plan (for development). A county commission candidate must live in the district where they are running for office and is elected by the voters in that district. Term: Four years.

CANDIDATES: ALACHUA COUNTY COMMISSION DISTRICT 1

**Mary Alford,
Democrat**

Campaign Website:
www.alfordforalachua.com



**Lizabeth Ann Doebler,
Republican**

Campaign Website:
VoteLiz2024.com



What are the most important lessons you've learned from your time in public service or other roles? The most important lesson that I have learned is to prioritize the the interests, needs, and well being of the citizens of Alachua County. This means asking, listening, and then addressing those needs as best I can. Sometimes there are competing interests, and that requires making tough decisions. I can't always make a decision that pleases everyone, but I can say that I think through decisions carefully and weigh the short and long term impacts on people, the budget and on our county itself. I've learned from experience to adapt. Finally, I have learned to remain humble, to be willing to learn, to ask questions, and to admit when I am wrong. I want to earn (and deserve) the trust of every Alachua County resident.

What do you believe are the three most critical projects or initiatives that will benefit Alachua County in the next 5 years? We need workforce housing, long term supportive housing for the elderly and people with mental illness, and affordable rental housing that is safe and energy efficient. We have many right answers and we need to do most of them. 40% of the inmates in our jail have a diagnosed mental illness and likely another 20% have an undiagnosed mental illness. The Central Receiving Facility being built at Meridian will help reduce this population by providing an alternative to jail for those undergoing a mental health crisis. We will need housing and wrap around services to keep these folks from returning to jail. Literacy is the root cause of crime, truancy, homelessness, underemployment, even gun violence. We must prioritize reading skills.

How will you communicate with and represent all your constituents, including those with opposing views to your own? I work hard to be accessible to all Alachua County residents. Residents email me, telephone me, respond to me on social media, and meet with me in person. My commissioner cell phone number is public (352-810-1731) as is my personal cell phone (352-317-4480). I welcome civil discussions with any citizen, and I have found that we all have things that we care about in common. Almost all want our tax dollars to be spent carefully, our roads to be maintained, our fire fighters to respond quickly and effectively, great playgrounds and parks, we want smoothly run emergencies. When we start with what we have in common, it is easier to address the things where we may disagree, and to listen to and respect others opinions. This is my goal.

What are the most important lessons you've learned from your time in public service or other roles?

Most important thing is to LISTEN

What do you believe are the three most critical projects or initiatives that will benefit Alachua County in the next 5 years?

Alachua is growing in leaps and bounds. Most of our county roads have not been repaved in more than twenty years. this is unacceptable. Personal property rights are very important and large corporations want to purchase our rural acreage to build multi family apartments. This affects our farm land our schools, and our police department. The third item is our water and its safety. Industrial runoff should be prohibited as well as cleaning up items that have been dumped illegally. However, anything that would harm our farmers should be considered very carefully regarding water safety.

How will you communicate with and represent all your constituents, including those with opposing views to your own?

I would communicate respectfully with clear reasoning and with ideas that all could agree on.



CANDIDATES: ALACHUA COUNTY COMMISSION DISTRICT 3

Jen Garrett, Republican

Campaign Website:
www.jenngarrettcampaign.com



What are the most important lessons you've learned from your time in public service or other roles?

I learned how to collaborate with individuals in a manner that was more productive than anything else. I was also able to assume leadership positions while maintaining an impeccable level of integrity and ethics.

What do you believe are the three most critical projects or initiatives that will benefit Alachua County in the next 5 years?

I think the most critical projects are: roads, infrastructure through smart growth management, public safety, economic development and housing.

How will you communicate with and represent all your constituents, including those with opposing views to your own?

I am always happy to have a dialogue with those who might disagree with my decisions or my approach. There are usually more than two solutions to every problem, and, being a creative thinker, I can see challenges in new ways to develop solutions that haven't been considered in the past.

Anna Prizzia, Democrat

Campaign Website:
www.annaforalachua.com



What are the most important lessons you've learned from your time in public service or other roles?

I have learned many lessons in my time in office, but perhaps two of the most important are, 1) that we need to work on building collaboration and finding common ground to address our big issues. My work with our agriculture community is a great example of how we can work together to find solutions and bring different sides together. And 2) that we need to focus on root causes of issues. It is easy to want to jump to quick solutions and fancy projects, but the things that are going to really solve our biggest challenges require us to focus on investing in our people. We need to build policies and an economy that works for everyone, using data-driven decision making, and ensuring that we protect our biggest asset, our natural resources.

What do you believe are the three most critical projects or initiatives that will benefit Alachua County in the next 5 years?

(1) Climate change: Developing strategies and robust emergency management, investments in infrastructure to manage flooding and heat, support for our farmers, protecting and investing in natural resources, and focus on public health. **(2) Local Economy:** We must work to develop our local economy and create quality jobs. We must also ensure that we have programs that support youth development and education, and community-driven solutions for long term resilience. **(3) Housing and Social Services:** Increasing housing and food prices are a real stress on our families. We need to focus on increasing the stock of affordable housing and providing support for healthcare, food security, and transportation so that everyone can thrive.

How will you communicate with and represent all your constituents, including those with opposing views to your own?

I work hard to be available for all my constituents, and am easy to reach on the phone, in email, and in-person. I am happy to meet with anyone, and I endeavor to attend community meetings and events so that I can talk to our neighbors and learn the issues that are important to them. I have been a strong advocate for improving and expanding the county's community engagement processes to better listen to our neighbors regarding development projects and program spending. I believe we are stronger when we have diverse perspectives and find common ground. I have worked to reach out to all cities and rural areas during my first term, and will continue to ensure we build positive relationships and collaboration with all areas of the county.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF ALACHUA COUNTY



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BALLOT QUESTION 1

AMENDING THE ALACHUA COUNTY CHARTER TO PROVIDE FOR COUNTY COMMISSIONER ELECTIONS ON AN AT-LARGE BASIS

Ballot Language: SHALL THE FIVE MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF ALACHUA COUNTY, FLORIDA, BE ELECTED BY ALL ELECTORS WITHIN THE COUNTY AT LARGE?



A YES vote would change the elections of county commissioners so all five commissioners would be elected by all voters in the county.



A NO Vote would retain the current single-member districts, where county commissioners are elected only by the voters who live in the district.

The LWV of Alachua County conducted a policy driven, objective, and comprehensive study of this ballot measure. We support the return to at-large voting in Alachua County and recommend a Yes vote on this amendment.

The NAACP Branch of Alachua County recommends a Yes vote on this amendment.

Overview

This ballot measure relates to how the five Alachua County Commissioners are elected. In this November's election, commissioners will be elected only by the voters who live in the district in which the candidate is running. This method of voting is referred to as single member districts. If the proposed amendment is approved, future county commissioners will be elected "at-large" or by all the voters in the county. Alachua county commissioners were elected at-large between 1987 (when the county charter was adopted) and 2022. The difference between single member districts and at large voting can affect which candidates are elected and how our county government functions.

History

During the 2022 legislative session, one of our state representatives sponsored a bill requiring Alachua County residents to vote on changing the election of county commissioners to single member districts. Shortly before the election, an unidentified sponsor began a high-profile campaign employing disinformation to encourage residents to vote in favor of single member districts. The campaign was strategically designed, well-funded and comprehensive. It included large mailers, which quoted statements by local African American leaders and the NAACP in favor of single member districts. But the quotes were taken out of context, and originally from a City of Gainesville campaign, where at-large voting resulted in the election of white men city commissioners. City residents voted to include some single member districts and thereafter elected some African American commissioners.

Racial Justice and Voting

Although Gainesville and Alachua County share geography, they are very different in regards to racial and demographic distribution. Single member districts will not promote racial justice in Alachua County. Single member districts are only recommended by NAACP as a remedy to communities in which the governing body does not represent the population. The NAACP specifies that districts be drawn by a professional mapping expert and include a district in which the majority of constituents are African Americans. None of these criteria apply to Alachua County. The African American population is distributed throughout the county, and it would be difficult to draw a majority minority district. Furthermore, Alachua County has always had proportional representation of African Americans on the County Commission.

Advantages of At-Large Voting in Alachua County:

- Promotes racial justice
- Promotes gender equity
- Governing body is more cohesive and attuned to overall county issues
- Voters can vote for, and have access to, all commissioners
- Reduces risks associated with gerrymandering

Advantages of Single Member Districts:

- Campaigns cost less, so more candidates may be able to run
- Voters may feel they have a better opportunity to meet candidates
- Voters may feel their representative is more accountable
- Voters may feel a greater connection to their representative

BALLOT QUESTION 2

CITY OF GAINESVILLE CHARTER AMENDMENT LOCAL PUBLIC UTILITIES

Ballot Language: SHALL THE CITY OF GAINESVILLE CHARTER BE AMENDED TO DELETE ARTICLE VII, ELIMINATING THE GOVERNOR-APPOINTED GAINESVILLE REGIONAL UTILITIES AUTHORITY AND ITS APPOINTED ADMINISTRATOR THAT MANAGE, OPERATE AND CONTROL THE CITY OF GAINESVILLE'S LOCAL PUBLIC UTILITIES, AND PLACING THAT RESPONSIBILITY WITH THE ELECTED CITY COMMISSION AND CHARTER OFFICER; AND ELIMINATING LIMITATIONS ON THE GOVERNMENT SERVICES CONTRIBUTION AND UTILITY DIRECTIVES, AS PROPOSED BY ORDINANCE NO. 2024-448?



A Yes vote eliminates the GRU Authority and restores local control of GRU to the City of Gainesville.



A No vote keeps GRU control with the governor-appointed Authority.

The LWV of Alachua County recommends a Yes vote on this amendment.

About Gainesville Regional Utilities

This amendment relates to the governing authority of Gainesville Regional Utilities (GRU), which was governed by the Gainesville City Commission until 2023. GRU is a multi-service utility owned by the City of Gainesville and offers electric, natural gas, water, wastewater, and telecommunication services.

Every year, GRU transfers a portion of revenues to the City of Gainesville's General Fund. This transfer is referred to as the General Services Contribution (GSC), which was previously called the General Fund Transfer. The GSC supports City services such as police, fire rescue, parks and recreation, transportation, and cultural operations.

History

In 2014, 2015 and 2016, a state representative introduced bills in the State Legislature to change GRU's governance to an autonomous authority, but all were unsuccessful. In 2017, a state representative sponsored House Bill 759, which was passed and signed into law. This law put a referendum on the November 2018 ballot to amend the Gainesville City Charter, transferring control of GRU to an autonomous authority appointed by the City Commission. However, voters rejected the referendum by nearly 60%.

In the 2023 legislative session, using a process that bypassed voters, a state representative sponsored House Bill 1645, which was passed by the legislature and signed by the Governor. This new law amended Gainesville's City Charter to create an autonomous GRU Authority, composed of five members appointed by the governor, to oversee GRU. The change split city governance into two parts - general government run by elected city officials and GRU run by the Authority that answers to the governor. Local citizens and officials had no meaningful input on these change.

Governor DeSantis appointed the first five members to the GRU Authority, starting in October 2023. One member resigned within 24 hours and the remaining four resigned in April 2024 after a legal settlement recognized that the appointments failed to meet the law's requirements. The Governor then appointed five new members, who quickly fired GRU's general manager and appointed the Authority Chair as the GRU General Manager. The Authority members also reduced the general services contribution from the utility to general government, from the budgeted \$15.3 million, to \$8.5 million dollars per year for the next ten years.

Current Ballot Amendment

In response to these changes, citizens petitioned the Gainesville City Commission to give them a choice to restore local control of GRU by placing a referendum on the November 2024 ballot. The commission voted unanimously to direct the city clerk to place a referendum on November's general election ballot. This act allows voters to decide what is best for their city (principle of democracy) and, if it passes, will restore home rule.

BALLOT QUESTION 2 (CONTINUED)

CITY OF GAINESVILLE CHARTER AMENDMENT LOCAL PUBLIC UTILITIES



A Yes vote eliminates the GRU Authority and restores local control of GRU to the City of Gainesville.



A No vote keeps GRU control with the governor-appointed Authority.

A YES vote:

- Eliminates the GRU Authority and restores local control of GRU (principle of Home Rule).
- Future changes to GRU governance will not require state legislative action, but will be handled by local ordinances voted on by local elected officials.
- Gainesville residents will have greater influence over the mission and management of GRU through citizen action and voting.
- Restores a single unified City government for Gainesville, eliminating duplication of attorneys, auditors, and other professional services, and cutting costs.
- Allows GRU policies and priorities to be determined by city ordinances that reflect community priorities regarding social, environmental and other goals.
- The general services contribution (GSC) could revert to the previous debt reduction plan, ensuring stable and predictable funding for essential governmental services and long-term budgeting.

A NO vote:

- Retains the current Governor-appointed GRU Authority, which has sole power to govern, manage, operate, and control GRU systems, including electricity, water, wastewater, gas, and broadband.
- The Authority is accountable only to the Governor and not the City of Gainesville.
- The Authority will control decisions regarding our utility rates, the GRU budget, general services contributions (GCS), and over 800 local jobs, with no accountability or input from our elected officials or residents.
- Future changes to GRU's governance will require state legislation action.
- The Authority will operate independently of local ordinances and cannot, by law, consider social, political, or ideological priorities, such as procurement preferences for veterans and small business, living wages, low-income assistance, energy or water conservation measures, or renewable energy benefits to the environment.
- The Authority will decide on the annual GSC from GRU to the City, which has historically supported Gainesville's operating budget. If GSC contributions decrease, property taxes may rise to compensate.



BALLOT QUESTION 3

RENEWAL OF THE EXISTING ONE MILL AD VALOREM TAX FOR SCHOOL DISTRICT OPERATING EXPENSES

Ballot Language: SHALL THE ALACHUA COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICTS EXISTING ONE MILL AD VALOREM TAX BE RENEWED BEGINNING JULY 1, 2025, AND ENDING FOUR YEARS LATER ON JUNE 30, 2029, FOR NECESSARY OPERATING EXPENSES TO FUND SCHOOL NURSES; MUSIC, ART AND DRAMA PROGRAMS; SCHOOL LIBRARY PROGRAMS; SCHOOL COUNSELING PROGRAMS; BAND AND CHORUS PROGRAMS; ACADEMIC MAGNETS; CAREER TECHNICAL PROGRAMS; AND TO UPDATE CLASSROOM TECHNOLOGY, WITH OVERSIGHT BY AN INDEPENDENT CITIZENS' COMMITTEE?



A YES vote will continue funding for educational and other services to Alachua County K-12 students.



A No vote will reduce the school district's budget by over \$23 million dollars and reduce the average homeowners' taxes by a small amount per month.

The LWV of Alachua County recommends a Yes vote on this ballot question.

Background. According to the Education Data Initiative, Florida ranks 44th in spending for public school K-12 education and the National Education Association reports that Florida ranks 48th in the nation for average teacher pay. In addition to poor funding, public schools face challenges such as unfunded and underfunded state mandates to provide services such as transportation and safety and security measures. Recently, funding challenges have been exacerbated by the diversion of hundreds of millions of dollars to private and charter schools.

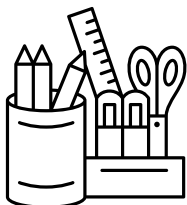
To supplement public funding, many school districts, including Alachua, ask their communities to add a local tax through a ballot initiative. The One Mill tax was first approved by Alachua County voters in 2008 and has been renewed by the voters every 4 years.

How much does it cost homeowners? A one mill tax means homeowners pay \$1 in tax for every \$1,000 in taxable home value. While this is a small amount for each home owner, it has generated approximately \$23 million a year for the Alachua County school district. Since homeowners are currently paying the One Mill for schools, approving this ballot measure to continue the tax will not add new taxes for homeowners. If approved, the tax is expected to generate \$24 million this fiscal year.

What does the One Mill fund? The One Mill tax pays all or part of the salaries for 360 Alachua County Public School teachers, (nearly 20% of all teachers). The tax will continue to fund art and music teachers (including those who teach band, chorus, the performing arts and visual arts), school counselors, school librarians, career-tech teachers, academic magnet program teachers, and school nurses. It has also funded classroom technology and support. The One Mill tax requires the expenditures be reviewed by an oversight committee composed of local business and community leaders. The committee monitors expenses and prepares an annual report.

What about the Half-Cent for Schools?

The Half-Cent for Schools, approved by voters in 2018, is a sales tax surtax that can only be spent on improving our school facilities and constructing new facilities as needed. It ensures our students have high-quality places in which to learn. The One Mill is about making sure we have the professional expertise and the technology students need.



FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE
ONE MILL, SEE:
WWW.SBAC.EDU/ONEMILL.

