

**Interview with Bill Keen, Sumter County Supervisor of Elections,  
On the State of Election Security in Sumter County, FL**

League of Women Voters Villages/Tri-County Chapter member Deirdre Burke interviewed Sumter County, Florida, Supervisor of Elections Bill Keen on February 19, 2026

**1. How is the voter eligibility of ex-felons being addressed?**

When Amendment 4 was approved in 2018, requirements were specified in 2019 that all outstanding fees must be paid in order to restore the right to vote by eligible ex-felons. Some problems occurred because of the short preparation time available to create a strong process to check eligibility. Some counties did not have easily accessible records to share information about outstanding debts. The Sumter County Supervisor of Elections indicated they are now experiencing better sharing across counties about debts, status of meeting sentencing requirements, etc. Communication and recordkeeping of felon status are court responsibilities, vs. SOE's.

Our team has access to proprietary data systems to communicate with the courts. The Supervisor of Elections staff, researches files shared by the court system, weekly, involving felons. Our team researches each reported name 1) to see if they are a registered voter in Sumter County; and if so, 2) to confirm they have met all court requirements to fulfill their sentencing. Information found is validated by our legal team. It is at that time we determine if their application should be denied or their voting status should be removed, per F.S. 98.075.

**2. What are common issues with mail-in voting and how are they addressed?**

Every signature on the outside envelope of a mail-in ballot is scrutinized by permanent staff in the Sumter Department of Elections. Illegible handwriting and unsigned envelopes are the most frequent cause for rejection. The voter is contacted several times to come in person with identification to resolve signature issues. Local political organizations are also provided lists of rejected ballots to help with the follow-up. Attempts to vote twice may be due to confusion and forgetfulness. Every instance is reported to the state's attorney to determine any further action. Usually, these are found to be "aging" issues rather than intentional fraud. If a non-citizen is identified, they are removed from the voter rolls. The state would determine whether to prosecute.

Common issues with vote By Mail ballots that are received are ballots that 1) Signatures Differ and 2) Un-signed ballot-envelopes. We have updated our envelopes to help educate the voters. The envelopes have an ENLARGED FONT and HIGHLIGHT where the names are shown.

Large RED ARROWS have, too, been added to remind the voters to sign on the line provided, explaining the signature must match the name on the envelope. This updated envelope has truly assisted our voters with making fewer errors in this area.

When voters are identified with the need to cure their Vote by Mail ballots, we follow Florida Statute, below.

Per F.S. 101.68(4)(a)

(4)(a) As soon as practicable, the supervisor shall, on behalf of the county canvassing board, attempt to notify an elector who has returned a vote-by-mail ballot that does not include the elector's signature or contains a signature that does not match the elector's signature in the registration books or precinct register by: 1. Notifying the elector of the signature deficiency by e-mail and directing the elector to the cure affidavit and instructions on the supervisor's website; 2. Notifying the elector of the signature deficiency by text message and directing the elector to the cure affidavit and instructions on the supervisor's website; or 3. Notifying the elector of the signature deficiency by telephone and directing the elector to the cure affidavit and instructions on the supervisor's website. In addition to the notification required under subparagraph 1., subparagraph 2., or subparagraph 3., the supervisor must notify the elector of the signature deficiency by first-class mail and direct the elector to the cure affidavit and instructions on the supervisor's website. Beginning the day before the election, the supervisor is not required to provide notice of the signature deficiency by first-class mail, but shall continue to provide notice as required under subparagraph 1., subparagraph 2., or subparagraph 3. (b) The supervisor shall allow such an elector to complete and submit an affidavit in order to cure the vote-by-mail ballot until 5 p.m. on the 2nd day after the election.

When contacted, they are required to show a Tier 1/Tier 2 identification per Florida Statute, below.

Per F.S. 101.68(d)(a/b)

a. Tier 1 identification.—Current and valid identification that includes your name and photograph: Florida driver license; Florida identification card issued by the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles; United States passport; debit or credit card; military identification; student identification; retirement center identification; neighborhood association identification; public assistance identification; veteran health identification card issued by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs; a Florida license to carry a concealed weapon or firearm; or an employee identification card issued by any branch, department, agency, or entity of the Federal Government, the state, a county, or a municipality; or b. Tier 2 identification.—ONLY IF YOU DO NOT HAVE A TIER 1 FORM OF IDENTIFICATION, identification that shows your name and current residence address: current

utility bill, bank statement, government check, paycheck, or government document (excluding voter information card). 4. Place the envelope bearing the affidavit into a mailing envelope addressed to the supervisor. Insert a copy of your identification in the mailing envelope. Mail (if time permits), deliver, or have delivered the completed affidavit along with the copy of your identification to your county supervisor of elections. Be sure there is sufficient postage if mailed and that the supervisor's address is correct. Remember, your information MUST reach your county supervisor of elections no later than 5 p.m. on the 2nd day after the election, or your ballot will not count.

### **3. Has intentional fraud occurred?**

Sumter County identified 4 cases of fraud where the voters were arrested by the Florida Office of Election Crimes. Three were individuals who voted in Florida and in their prior residence state; one falsified his dying father's mail in ballot.

Historically, Sumter County has identified intentional fraud, as proven by the State Attorney's office. We no longer are a part of ERIC, but we work with the State of Florida's Office of Election Crimes and Security office. Proprietary information is shared with the Office of Election Crimes and Security, the State Attorney, and our legal team to make sure that all potential fraud events are reported, researched, and tried, when applicable.

### **4. How secure are the voting machines and process in the Tri-County area?**

All 67 counties in the State of Florida are required to conduct a Logic and Accuracy testing prior to each election, per Florida Statute, below.

Per F.S.101.5612

101.5612 Testing of tabulating equipment.

(1) All electronic or electromechanical voting systems shall be thoroughly tested at the conclusion of maintenance and programming. Tests shall be sufficient to determine that the voting system is properly programmed, the election is correctly defined on the voting system, and all of the voting system input, output, and communication devices are working properly.

(2) On any day not more than 25 days before the commencement of early voting as provided in s. 101.657, the supervisor of elections shall have the automatic tabulating equipment publicly tested to ascertain that the equipment will correctly count the votes cast for all offices and on all measures.

In addition to testing our equipment there is a reconciliation that takes place at the conclusion of each election.

Also, at the conclusion of Election Day, results are securely uploaded into our servers via a protected proprietary system. At that same time, all supplies are securely returned to the Supervisor of Elections and placed into retention at the conclusion of our manual audit.