



Misinformation Continues to plague Orange County August 23, 2022 Elections

Candidates claim "Incumbent Protection Program"

ORANGE COUNTY, FLORIDA, UNITED STATES, August 13, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Orange County voters continue to be misinformed about who can vote. Despite promises by the Supervisor of Elections office (SOE), the third and final official notice has not been received by many voters. Early voting started on Monday, August 8, 2022, but as of Wednesday, August 10, 2022 voters including the candidates Chris Messina and Demensio Barton had not received their sample ballots. In the same time period, only 7% of NPA's (Independents) had voted, despite comprising 31% of the voter base in Orange County.

This mailing is especially important because it contains the sample ballots for all three classes of voters eligible to vote in the primaries. Republicans, Democrats, and "No Party Affiliation" (NPA: Independents) can, and should, all vote in the August 23 Elections. Since early voting started on August 8, the lack of clear, timely information from the SOE is especially troubling.

In addition, media outlets have published widely distributed incorrect information about who can vote. For example on Sunday Orlando's ABC Television affiliate WFTV, Channel 9 stated that "only registered voters who identify with a political party are able to vote in the primary election." That erroneous claim was then widely distributed by Yahoo News: <https://news.yahoo.com/early-voting-primary-election-starts-005539052.html>

The early voting period runs from August 8-21 and will culminate with the August 23 Election Day. Note that there are over 40 different races that all voters (Democrats, Republicans, and Non-Party Affiliated/Independents) can vote in. These include all County-wide races (Mayor, Commissioners, School Board) and Judges.

In a recent press conference Orange County Mayoral and School Board Chair candidates Chris Messina & Demensio Barton highlighted the importance of broad voter inclusivity in these races <https://www.wesh.com/article/misinformation-orange-county-voter-cards/40666347>

Consequently Bill Cowles, Orange County Supervisor of Elections, promised to address this issue. However, the promised third mailing with the sample ballots has not been received by all voters in a timely manner. A broad swath of voters across the political spectrum report that they did not receive this information before early voting began on August 8, 2022.

"We are concerned that many media outlets are sharing information to all voters that can disenfranchise NPA voters. This coverage still contains errors found within the previous Orange County SOE mailings that were received by all of our voters. This false narrative is telling many of our legal Florida citizens to stay home during the primaries", stated Chris Messina, Candidate for Orange County Mayor. "Every registered voter in the state of Florida must know that this is one of the most important elections of our time and they not only can vote, but their vote will make a difference. The mailings from the SOE that started this issue have now proven to be exactly what we said; it is a disenfranchising stay at home order for NPAs. But we say that all registered voters that are NPAs have a right to have their votes count in this election." stated Demensio Barton, Candidate for Orange County School Board Chair.

Mr. Barton and Mr. Messina added further, "the original language that has caused this disenfranchisement of NPAs is very serious. The lack of the corrected and promised 3rd mailing to be received by the voting citizens of Orange County Florida within a timely manner is inexcusable. The resulting amplification of the error through the media has now proven that the magnitude of disenfranchising damage to NPAs is larger than we could have imagined. The disenfranchising mailing originally sent to Orange County's registered voters, the delayed receipt of that mailing for the minority who received it, and the poor overall turn-out of NPA/Independent voters in the first three days of early voting all smack of an Incumbent Protection Program."

Mr. Messina and Mr. Barton will hold a press conference to further highlight this issue and call on ALL voters, including NPA/Independent voters to vote in the Primaries. The press conference will take place at 9AM on Sat. August 13, 2022, on the main steps in front of the Orange County Administrative Offices, 201 South Rosalind Ave. Orlando. ###

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