

# Memorandum



**Date:** December 17, 2012

**To:** Honorable Vice Chairwoman Audrey M. Edmonson and Members  
Board of County Commissioners

**From:** Carlos A. Gimenez  
Mayor 

**Subject:** Update on the Work of the Elections Advisory Group

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As all of you know, I have appointed a group of 13 community leaders for the purpose of reviewing every aspect of the elections process and make recommendations, including changes to State law, to the Board of County Commissioners (Board) in order to improve future elections. To date, the Advisory Group has met twice and has spent considerable amount of time understanding the detail and methodologies used for voting in Miami-Dade County. At its last meeting on December 14, a very thorough review of the County's proposed legislative recommendations were discussed. As a result, five critical priorities have been identified by the Advisory Group and are included in the December 18 Board Agenda package for your consideration. They include the following:

1. Expansion of Permissible Early Voting Sites – recommends the expansion of allowable facilities eligible for use as early voting sites.
2. Early Voting Days – recommends extending the availability of early voting from eight (8) to nine (9) days, so as to include the last Sunday before Election Day
3. Referendum Proposed by Legislature Regarding Ballot Language – recommends limiting the ballot language for constitutional amendments to a maximum of 15 words for title and 75 words for ballot summary.
4. Ballot Canvassing - recommends extending the number of days that Supervisors of Elections are permitted to canvass ballots, from 15 days to 20 days.
5. Discontinue "Absentee Ballot" Term – recommends discontinuing the term "Absentee Ballot" and replacing it with "Vote by Mail."

It is my hope that the Board will endorse these priorities unanimously and, together with the Advisory Group, provide leadership to these issues during the legislative session. I look forward to continuing to work closely with all of you to aggressively pursue these important changes for future elections.

The work of the Elections Advisory Group will carry through January and we will prepare a report with findings and recommendations for the Board's consideration at the conclusion of the Group's work.

I would like to thank Chair-Elect Rebeca Sosa, Vice Chair-Elect Lynda Bell, Commissioner Heyman, Commissioner Moss and all of the members of the Advisory Group for their time and contributions.

c: R. A. Cuevas, Jr., County Attorney  
Alina T. Hudak, Deputy Mayor  
Penelope Townsley, Supervisor of Elections  
Elections Advisory Group Members