

**ELECTION ADMINISTRATION PREVIEW  
FLORIDA PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY ELECTION  
TUESDAY JAN. 29, 2008**

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**On the ballot:** Democratic and Republican candidates for President; constitutional amendment on property tax exceptions; some local ballot questions. See Miami-Dade's [sample ballots here](#).

All major party candidates still in the race will be on the ballot. However, the Democratic Party [announced last summer](#) it would not award delegates and its candidates have not campaigned in the state because it refused to abide by party rules when the January primary date was selected. The Republican battle is currently the most closely-watched in the country. Primaries in Florida are closed; only registered party members may cast ballots for their partisan candidates.

**Polling place hours:** 7 a.m. – 7 p.m. Any voter waiting in line at 7 p.m. will be permitted to cast a ballot.

**Registered voters:** 10,203,102 (December 2007). For more information, click [here](#).

**Absentee and early ballots:** No excuse is required to cast an absentee ballot. Early voting started on January 14 and continues until Saturday. Estimates from mid-week indicated that more than 146,000 Democrats and over 140,000 Republicans had cast early in-person ballots.

For more information, click [here](#).

**Voting systems:** All but 14 of Florida counties use optical-scan voting systems with the exception of one direct-recording electronic machine per precinct for voters with disabilities. The 14 still using DRE systems without paper trails will be rolling their machines out for the final time in a presidential election. For more information, click [here](#).

Florida lawmakers approved [H.B. 537](#) last spring that, among other requirements, will rid the state of DRE machines for most voters beginning in the second half of 2008. To look up voting system usage in individual counties, click [here](#).

Sarasota County will be the only in the state to have a new voting system in place for the primary. County voters passed a ballot measure in 2006 – the same time 18,000 non-votes were recorded in the county in the race to represent the 13<sup>th</sup> Congressional District in Washington – that phased out DREs in favor of optical scan machines in time for municipal elections in 2007. The county is also the first in the state to employ AutoMARK systems for voters with disabilities. The system employs a touch-screen interface to produce an optically-scanned paper ballot. For *electionline Today's* preview of the primary, click [here](#).

**State election links:**

[State elections division](#)

**Recent news stories:**

[Early Voters Out in Big Numbers](#) – *Central Florida News*, Jan. 21, 2008

[Florida Switching to Paper Ballots after February Voting](#) – *wftv.com*, Jan. 23, 2008

[Florida Prepares to Unplug Touch-Screen Voting Machines](#) – *The Associated Press*, Jan. 21, 2008

[Absentee Ballot Requests in Broward Three Times Higher than 2004](#) – *Sun-Sentinel*, Jan. 21, 2008

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