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National Voter Registration Day

David H. Stafford, Supervisor of Elections

“Let us never forget that government is ourselves and not an alien power over us. The ultimate rulers of our democracy are not a President and Senators and Congressmen and Government officials but the voters of this country.” - Franklin D. Roosevelt

Our 32nd President spoke those words in July, 1938 in Marietta, Ohio, at the 150th anniversary celebration of the establishment of the first civil government west of the original 13 states. President Roosevelt reminded those in attendance that it is we the people, who by casting our ballot are ultimately in charge.

On Tuesday we celebrate National Voter Registration Day by highlighting the importance of registering and voting. If you are not among the nearly 200,000 Escambia County citizens who are registered to vote, there's no better time than right now.

In less than six months, voters from across the state will make their choices known in the Presidential Preference Primary on March 15, the first of three statewide elections in Florida in 2016. Our team is actively preparing to accommodate the throngs of voters who will cast their ballots by mail, during early voting, or on Election Day.

So what can you do to prepare?

The first essential step is registering to vote. The good news is that almost 9 out of 10 eligible citizens in Escambia County are already registered, and that number is sure to rise between now and the Presidential Election. If you are not currently among the registered, it's quick and easy to do so.

To register in person, simply submit a completed and signed Florida Voter Registration Application at the Supervisor of Elections office, public library, Tax Collector office, Armed Forces recruitment office, or public assistance office. You may also access an application online at EscambiaVotes.com, by mail, and at several other locations throughout the county.

Voter registration will be even more accessible when the state's online voter registration system goes live in 2017. During this year's legislative session, Florida's supervisors of elections helped push through a proposal to allow persons who already have a Florida Driver's License or Identification Card to complete a Florida Voter Registration Application online. Studies have shown that the more than 20 states who have already implemented online registration have found it cheaper, more efficient, more secure, and voters love it.

One of the many ways we are reaching out to encourage interest and participation in elections is in the pre-registration of voters. Floridians as young as 16-years-old can pre-register to vote by completing a Florida Voter Registration Application in much the same way as their parents. Once verified, the

applicant is pre-registered and automatically becomes a fully registered voter on their 18th birthday without having to do anything more. It's a great tool and has become quite popular, as evidenced by the approximately 1,500 pre-registrants currently on our books.

If you are already registered, it's a good idea to make sure your registration is current. If you've moved since the last time you voted or are unsure if you're registered, you may click the *Am I Registered?* link at EscambiaVotes.com to confirm we have your correct information. You can check your registration status, including your address, party affiliation, precinct number, polling location, and the districts in which you're registered, and make any necessary updates.

We encourage you to help us celebrate National Voter Registration Day by ensuring you're ready to join your voice with millions of other Floridians in the upcoming elections. As our 34th President and Supreme Allied Commander Dwight D. Eisenhower said, "The future of this republic is in the hands of the American voter."