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Good morning, Chairwoman Klobuchar, Ranking Member Blunt, and members of the Committee.

I'm Wesley Wilcox, Supervisor of Elections of Marion County, Florida, and President of the Florida Supervisors of Elections (FSE) Association. I have more than 30 years of experience in the elections industry, and I am nationally certified.

Most of us likely recall the 2000 General Election. In the 20 years since, Florida and many other States have made great improvements, culminating in an administratively accurate and successful 2020 General Election.

Florida offers a no-excuse vote-by-mail option, that has proven to be quite popular, especially during the pandemic. One of the things that set Florida apart in 2020 is that fact that vote-by-mail ballots are processed in the weeks prior to the election. This process allows us to publish nearly complete vote-by-mail totals on election night. In addition, if there is an issue with a mail ballot signature, we have time to contact the voter, providing them an opportunity to "CURE" their ballot.

Several years ago, we also added an in-person Early Voting option to meet the needs of our extremely diverse population. Elections are best administered at the state and local level. A two-week Early Voting period offered in Miami-Dade County with 1.5 million voters, is not needed for a small county such as Lafayette County with only 4,500 voters. Decentralized elections are also positive from a national security perspective, making it more difficult for bad actors attempting to compromise the system, since there is no central point of attack.

Florida also has well-developed laws and procedures for recounts and post-election audits, providing clear guidelines and procedures.

There have also been significant efforts in raising the professionalism of election officials. Since 2000, over 1,300 elections professionals have received their national Certified Elections and Registration Administrator (CERA) designation, with 119 of those from Florida.

Our FSE association developed the nationally awarded Florida Certified Elections Professional (FCEP) program. The FCEP program consists of 30 core courses plus renewal courses, and 120 hours of content instructed by industry experts. Since its inception in 2009, we have had over 800 participants, with 245 obtaining their Master Florida Certified Elections Professional (MFCEP) designation.

In recent years, election security has become a top priority. Partnerships between local, state, and federal agencies have been strengthened. In 2017, the Department of Homeland Security designated elections as Critical Infrastructure, and the Center for Internet Security (CIS) formed the Elections Infrastructure Information Sharing and Analysis Center (EI-ISAC), of which I am an executive board member. Through the EI-ISAC, election officials have access to resources and tools for implementing cyber security best practices. Florida has used HAVA dollars to fund election security grant programs, which have been extremely beneficial.

Despite these vast improvements and strong partnerships, grave concerns remain for me and my colleagues. Florida was touted as the gold standard and model for voting in the 2020 election, but lately the accolades have waned, and the high fives for a job well done have ceased.



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Instead, they have been replaced by threats of violence against us and our families, accusations of rampant voter roll irregularities, allegations of voter fraud, and an inundation of public records requests. My colleagues and I continue to defend the accuracy of our 2020 Election, and our cherished democracy, which remains under a relentless and unprecedented barrage of falsehoods. Misinformation has made our jobs more difficult, as we battle on the front lines defending our democracy. Several of my tenured colleagues, have retired or have announced their impending retirement due to these unceasing false narratives. Even the days of wanting to be an election worker for your own sense of civic duty, have been replaced with fear, polling place disruptions, and politicization.

We have spent over two decades professionalizing our conduct of elections. And now, in a short period of time, our institutions are being undermined by falsehoods that continually weaken voter confidence in our elections.

The challenges facing our elections are daunting. In normal times, election worker recruitment is difficult, but today it is nearly impossible. Elections offices across the nation will need record amounts of paper this fall for our ballots, and supplies have been greatly affected by paper shortages. And, lest we all forget, the 2022 election is taking place after the decennial census, with its resulting redistricting, a challenging operation even in the best of times.

And finally, many of us are also facing new state election laws, resulting in demanding court cases and requiring substantial voter education. Election law changes are most successful when they're a collaborative effort between election administrators and the legislative bodies. We remain dedicated to impartial administration of Florida's election laws and conducting fair, honest, and accurate elections. Our goal is to make it easy to vote and hard to cheat.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify today on this important topic.