

As your Supervisor of Elections, I'd like to ask you a question: How do you feel about Florida's public record laws?

Now I realize that's a pretty broad question, so let me be more specific.

I'm just going to go out on a limb here and say you probably believe it's a good thing. Florida's public record laws allow us to monitor the function of our government, and I wholeheartedly agree.

What about when those same public record laws allow *you* to be monitored? How do you feel about your personal information being public record?

Maybe you're OK with your home address being public record. That seems fairly innocuous, right?

What about your date of birth? Your home phone and/or cell number? How about your personal email address?

As a parent, how would you feel about your teenage son or daughter's personal information being public record when they become a preregistered voter at age 16 or 17?

As a parent, I wish I could tell you that's a hypothetical question, but it is not. Your child's personal information becomes public record as soon as they fill out a Florida Voter Registration Application. Under Florida law — like you, their personal information is available to “anyone” who asks for it. Let me be clear, “anyone” includes: sexual predators, convicts serving life in prison, someone your child met in an online chat room, someone from another state. Anyone means just that — anyone.

I increasingly hear from voters who are concerned about Florida's open access to their personal information. I have been contacted by female voters concerned for their safety who, sadly, ask me to remove them from the voter rolls. I have been contacted by new residents to the state who, after finding out that registering to vote in Florida means their personal information will become public record, decide not to register to vote. I hear from voters concerned about increasing crimes of identity theft. (Florida ranks at the top in the nation for identity theft.)

As a mother and your Supervisor, I believe your and your children's personal information should be protected. Unfortunately, I am also bound under Florida's current public record laws to release your personal voter registration information to anyone and everyone who requests it.

My fellow Supervisors and I have made protecting your personal information a legislative priority this Session. A bill has been filed in both the House and Senate to restrict access to your and your children's information obtained from a Florida Voter Registration Application. I am proud to share that one of the two Senate sponsors and both House sponsors are from Brevard County!