

No. 1D2026-1539

IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF APPEAL
OF FLORIDA, FIRST DISTRICT

EQUAL GROUND, ET AL.,
Appellant,

v.

CORD BYRD, IN HIS OFFICIAL CAPACITY AS FLORIDA
SECRETARY OF STATE, ET AL.,
Appellees.

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Tab 1

DECLARATION OF MARIA MATTHEWS

I, Maria Matthews, consistent with section 92.525, Florida Statutes (2026), hereby state:

1. I am over 18 years of age, am competent to testify, and declare the following facts based on my own personal knowledge.

2. This Declaration supplements my previous Declarations dated May 12, 2026, and May 15, 2026, to provide the current status of congressional qualifying for the 2026 election cycle. The information herein is as of 4:30 p.m., Friday May 29, 2026.

3. As Director of the Division of Elections of the Department of State, I am responsible for overseeing candidate qualifying with the Division of Elections pursuant to sections 99.061, Florida Statutes.

4. The Division began accepting qualifying items on **May 25, 2026** (even though that Monday was the Memorial Day Holiday) for the qualifying period beginning at noon on June 8 and ending at noon on June 12. § 99.061(9), Fla. Stat. (2026).

5. Over 200 candidates have indicated that they intend to qualify for congressional office for the 2026 election cycle—and identified the specific district. Of those, 19 have already “pre-qualified” for congressional office, such that they have submitted all required qualifying items and identified the district number. Those candidates will be qualified for ballot placement during the qualifying period. Another 20 of the over 200 intended congressional candidates are actively in the process of qualifying, such that they have submitted at least one required qualifying item (whether sufficient or not). You can find the list of all candidates (and browse their submissions) on the Division’s Candidate Listing for the 2026 Election available at: <https://dos.elections.myflorida.com/candidates/CanList.asp>.

6. Additionally, two local officeholders have resigned their current, respective offices in order to run for congressional office. Specifically, Greg “Tex” Bukowski has resigned from the

Sarasota Charter Review Board to run for CD 19, and Jim Norton has resigned as Gulf County Superintendent Schools to run for CD 2. Their resignations are irrevocable. *See* § 99.012(4)(b), Fla. Stat. More officeholders may resign to run for congressional office before tonight's deadline.

7. Since May 4, 2026, a memo has been posted to the Division's Qualifying Webpage informing candidates that the map and districts in HB 1D "are in effect and operative for qualifying for U.S. House of Representatives for the 2026 election." You can find it here: <https://files.florida-dos.gov/media/710588/memo-redistricting-2026.pdf>. The memo was also emailed the same day to all congressional candidates with an email address on file with the Division. Division staff have also been directing candidates to the map and districts in HB 1D (via the Office of Economic and Demographic Research (EDR) website) to the extent asked.

8. On May 4, 2024, the Supervisors and I received an email from the General Counsel of the Department notifying us that the Governor signed into law HB 1D and was in effect. We were emailed again on May 26, 2026, to continue to implement HB 1D.

9. Activity in the Florida Voter Registration System (FVRS) suggests that Supervisors of Elections have been implementing HB 1D since it went into effect by associating voters to the new districts. Once the Supervisors have completed this task, the publicly available voter extract file will reflect which voters are in each district under HB 1D. This file is used by candidates and committees to campaign in and interact with the relevant voters. The Division has already been asked when the voter extract file will be up-to-date with that districting information.

Under penalties of perjury, I declare that I have read the foregoing declaration and that the facts stated in it are true. Executed this 29th day of May, 2026.

/s/ Maria Matthews
Maria Matthews
Director of the Division of Elections, Florida
Department of State