

# Seminole State College should be an early-voting site



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Why don't we have early voting at Seminole State College?

In July 2018 a federal court overturned Florida's four-year ban on early voting on college campuses. The judge stated, "Throwing up roadblocks in front of

younger voters does not remotely serve the public interest."

However, while the University of Central Florida received an early voting location for the 2018 election, Seminole State College (SSC) did not.

Previous Seminole County Supervisor of Elections Mike Ertel said SSC did not need voting on campus because it was "a commuter school with no residential facilities." According to this logic, commuter students

should vote off-campus because *they are already commuting.*

This reason is unacceptable.

SSC would be an ideal early voting location *because it is a commuter school.* It has ample parking, regular bus service, ADA accessibility, and thousands of students, faculty, and staff who can vote in local elections.

Half of SSC students come from Seminole County, and nearly 14,000 attend the Sanford-Lake Mary campus. This means that about 7,000 students at this campus are potential Seminole County voters.

After the ban was lifted, colleges across Florida had early voting for the 2018 elections, including UCF, where 6,500 votes were cast. Statewide nearly 60,000 people voted on college campuses.

SSC should not be left out.



SEMINOLE STATE COLLEGE/COURTESY

Seminole State College would be an ideal early voting location because it is a commuter school, Deborah Poulalion says.

In addition, early voting at SSC could relieve congestion at other early voting

locations because people are drawn to SSC from throughout the county. This would help accommodate the high voter participation expected in 2020.

However, the site must be visible and accessible to students.

UCF's early voting site in 2014 was located on the edge of campus. Only 1,800 votes were cast there. However, a location closer to the campus center drew 6,500 votes in 2018.

In conclusion, a federal court ruled in 2018 that it was unconstitutional and discriminatory for Florida to ban voting on college campuses. Now that the ban is overturned, Seminole County needs to properly serve its younger voters by setting up early voting at SSC.

*The author, a former Seminole State instructor, lives in Longwood.*