

ENGAGE MIAMI

2023 VOTER GUIDE

CITY OF MIAMI COMMISSION

DISTRICT 1

DISTRICT 2

DISTRICT 4

ELECTION DAY NOVEMBER 7

Engage Miami is a nonprofit building the civic power of Gen-Z and millennials in South Florida through voter education, civic engagement, and issue organizing.





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OUR FUTURE, OUR VOTE.

Your Vote Matters! As young people in Florida, we understand the issues affecting our communities. This November, the City of Miami is having Municipal elections, and it's up to voters like us to decide who will represent our city on the commission for the next four years.

Young people across Miami know our votes matter. If your Commission District is up for election in 2023, now is your chance to be a voter and a leader. Who you vote for is always private, but whether or not you vote is public record. **We can't wait to see you on the list of voters this year!** This voter guide breaks down where the candidates stand on the issues that matter most to young people. You can bring our guide to the polls with you or use it as you fill out your Vote by Mail ballot.

Plan to Vote in Every Election. We are here to send you reminders for election deadlines, early and in-person voting locations, and information on your voting rights.

**PLEDGE TO ENGAGE
WITH US FOR MORE
ON HOW TO VOTE.**



WHAT'S YOUR PLAN TO VOTE?

Vote by Mail: Request your ballot by Thursday, October 26.

We recommend you mail or send in your completed ballot at least one week before the election. You can track your ballot online to make sure it is counted.

Note: Due to state legislation, previous vote by mail requests were canceled after the 2022 elections. Voters must re-enroll in vote by mail after every general election.

Vote Early: Saturday, October 28 through Sunday, November 5.

Weekends on October 28–29 and November 4–5 from 8am to 4pm

Weekdays on October 30–November 3 from 7am to 7pm

Vote on Election Day: Tuesday, November 7 from 7am to 7pm.

You must vote at your assigned voting location. You can look this up on your voter information card or online at elections.myflorida.com.

EARLY VOTING SITES

- ✦ **Allapattah Branch Library** 1799 NW 35th Street, Miami, FL 33142
- ✦ **Lemon City Branch Library** 430 NE 61st Street, Miami, FL 33137
- ✦ **Miami City Hall** 3500 Pan American Drive, Miami, FL 33133
- ✦ **Shenandoah Branch Library** 2111 SW 19th Street, Miami, FL 33145
- ✦ **Stephen P. Clark Government Center** 111 NW 1st Street, Miami, FL 33128
- ✦ **West Flagler Branch Library** 5050 West Flagler Street, Miami, FL 33134



ROLES + POWER OF LOCAL OFFICIALS

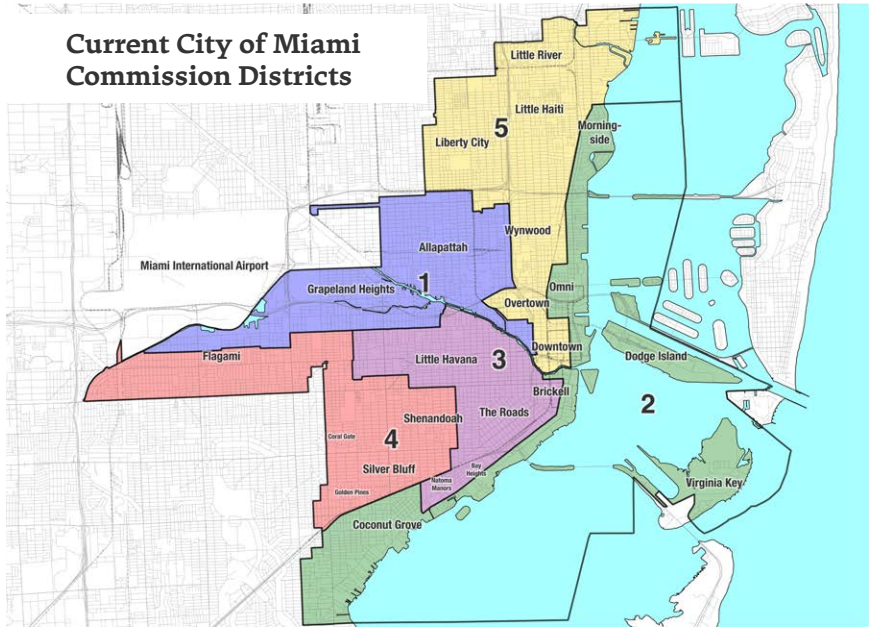
Our City's Commission and Mayor are nonpartisan offices, so you won't see a D or R next to their names on your ballot.

The City of Miami has five commissioners who each represent one district in the city (see map). These commissioners act as the city's decision makers. They adopt regulations on zoning and housing, approve a multi-billion dollar annual City budget that dictates where public resources go, and act as the City's primary legislative body.

They make decisions that affect us, like how much affordable housing there is, whether the trolley is on time, and what policing looks like in our communities.

Local government can have a huge impact on our everyday lives as City residents, sometimes more than state and national government, so it's important that we vote with our values in local elections and help our friends and family do the same!

Current City of Miami Commission Districts

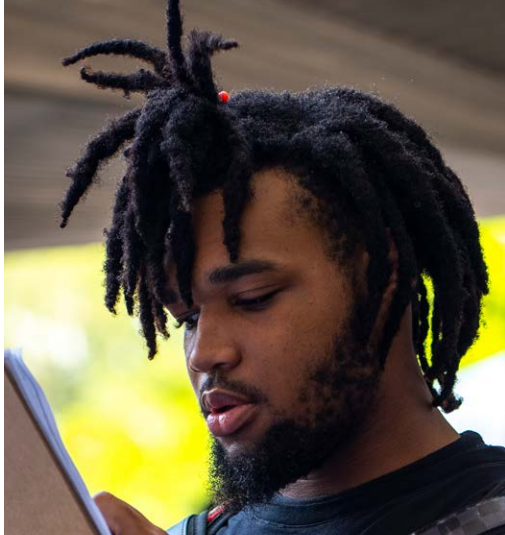


MIAMI DISTRICT UPDATES

After every census, new district maps are drawn for legislative bodies, like our School Board, County Commission, and State Legislature.

Last year, the City of Miami Commission adopted a new district map which was challenged for racial gerrymandering by advocacy groups, including GRACE, Engage Miami, the ACLU of Florida, and the NAACP. While this case will go to trial in 2024, voters will be using a district map passed by the Commission for the November 2023 elections.

Stay tuned for updates, and double check your district!



**YOUR DISTRICT MAY
HAVE CHANGED.
CHECK TO FIND YOUR
CURRENT DISTRICT.**



WHAT'S IN YOUR GUIDE?

You can find responses from candidates for Commissioner in District 1, 2, and 4 in this voter guide. Some candidates that will appear on the ballot do not have their positions included in this guide because they did not submit responses or did not do so by the deadline provided. Please note this guide does not endorse or oppose any of the candidates for public office. The questionnaire responses were limited to 400 characters and may be cut off. For the full list of questions and candidate responses, go to [engagecivic.miami/voter-guide](https://engagecivic.miami.com/voter-guide).

District 1 Candidates

- ✦ **RESPONDED:** Francisco Pichel, Mercedes Librada Rodriguez, Marvin Tapia
- ✦ **NO RESPONSE:** Alex Diaz de la Portilla and Miguel Angel Gabela

District 2 Candidates

- ✦ **RESPONDED:** Michael Castro, Sabina Covo, Alicia Susan

Kossick, Damian John Pardo, Christi Reeves Tasker

- ✦ **NO RESPONSE:** Gabriela Ariana Chirinos, Eddy V. Leal, James Torres

District 4 Candidates

- ✦ **RESPONDED:** Andres Vallina
- ✦ **NO RESPONSE:** Manuel (Manolo) E. Reyes



FRANCISCO PICHEL (DISTRICT 1)

Do you think access to affordable housing is an issue City of Miami Commissioners should address and if so, what steps will you take to address the issue? Yes, The City of Miami has

been notorious when it comes to the homeless, the poor and the elderly. We have so many homeless people that I see on a daily basis and most of them tell me that they are waiting for a Section 8 or some other type of government aide to receive lodging. In District 1 we have the highest amount of unemployment, homeless and elderly people. Even though we pay the same taxes

As Commissioner, will you take actions to make Miami more walkable and bikeable? If so, what would those actions be? Yes, The City of Miami has developed bicycle paths in all the other districts. However in Allapattah and District 1 for that matter, does not enjoy the same attention to pedestrians and bicyclists. I am a bicyclist myself and believe that we should have the same pedestrian/bike paths that all the other districts have. I am currently organizing

a bicyclist rally that will be held in October. This e

Do you think that protecting the environment, increasing tree canopy, and ensuring access to public green spaces and parks are issues Miami Commissioners should address? And if so, what steps would you take to address these issues? I have been an advocate of the environment since I was a teenager. I have been a member of green peace, PETA and other organizations that are advocates of the environment. I have volunteered yearly in ocean, river and other land cleaning up debris, trash, plastic and other items that are harmful to our environment. I want to educate our citizens that dumping, and disposal of other environmentally

How will you ensure our elections and redistricting process are fair, accessible, and equitable? We must have more monitoring and oversight of our election process. The City of Miami has a notorious history of voter fraud that has been publicized for decades. As stated in newspaper articles and other social media outlets, they have reported that most are elected officials and/or city officials are under State and Federal investigations because of the voter fraud and fraud in general. The redi



MERCEDES LIBRADA RODRIGUEZ (DISTRICT 1)

Do you think access to affordable housing is an issue City of Miami Commissioners should address and if so, what steps will you take to address the issue? Yes it has always been a

serious concern because the waiting lists to get any affordable unit is on high demand. Construction initiatives. Not enough. There needs to be more housing built have a % of units in all apt bldgs designate as affordable housing besides base on the senior population specifically the income level is so low living on their retirement or gov assistance with food stamps.

As Commissioner, will you take actions to make Miami more walkable and bikeable? If so, what would those actions be? One of my goals is to adding more sidewalks in District 1. More sidewalks in our parks to attract our patrons to exercise and enjoy the outdoors. To connect from our neighborhoods to our parks our greenway spaces to our transit systems.... Like the Underline Project that's been a success.

Do you think that protecting the environment, increasing tree canopy, and ensuring access to public green spaces and parks are issues Miami Commissioners should address? And if so, what steps would you take to

address these issues? Yes, I want District 1 to have canopies like in other parts of the City. I always made the statement when I served on the City Planning Board I want canopies like District 2 and 3. We need to invest in having more trees planted in our parks and street right a ways. We need to have a master plan to give our businesses and neighbors incentives to plant more trees.

How will you ensure our elections and redistricting process are fair, accessible, and equitable? The census happens every 10 years and I have belonged to the County Census Board which one try's to communicate how important it is to complete the questionnaire provided by the federal government which affects how much funding es h community receives base on the population level.



MARVIN TAPIA (DISTRICT 1)

Do you think access to affordable housing is an issue City of Miami Commissioners should address and if so, what steps will you take to address the issue? Yes. The rise in cost of living

in Miami has been the largest in the country and has greatly outpaced wage growth. The City of Miami has offered funding to developers to renovate existing affordable housing and it should continue to do so, but it should increase incentives for developers to build new affordable housing with new developments without changing the nature of our communities or displacing low income

As Commissioner, will you take actions to make Miami more walkable and bikeable? If so, what would those actions be? Absolutely. I myself am a runner and love to explore our city by riding a bicycle around it. Miami has made large improvements over the past decade to become more walkable and bikeable, but more action is needed. Many residents of District 1 utilize Miami's existing bike lanes, and I would work as commissioner to make sure those are expanded and

well maintained. A large part of what makes a city w

Do you think that protecting the environment, increasing tree canopy, and ensuring access to public green spaces and parks are issues Miami Commissioners should address? And if so, what steps would you take to address these issues? Yes. Miami is a world class city and deserves world class green spaces, parks, and a clean environment. As commissioner I'll fight for funding to make sure we build new spaces and that existing parks are open and accessible for the use of all residents. Miami's residents and economy depend on water and beaches, so prioritizing effort to reduce pollution into Biscayne Bay is critical. Many areas of

How will you ensure our elections and redistricting process are fair, accessible, and equitable? I would start by supporting efforts to move the City of Miami elections to coincide with Miami-Dade County's municipal elections in August of even years. Turnout in Miami's odd years is extremely low and does not reflect the diversity of the voters. Instead of repeatedly violating the law by gerrymandering the City's districts, the commission should conduct the redistricting process in the open, t



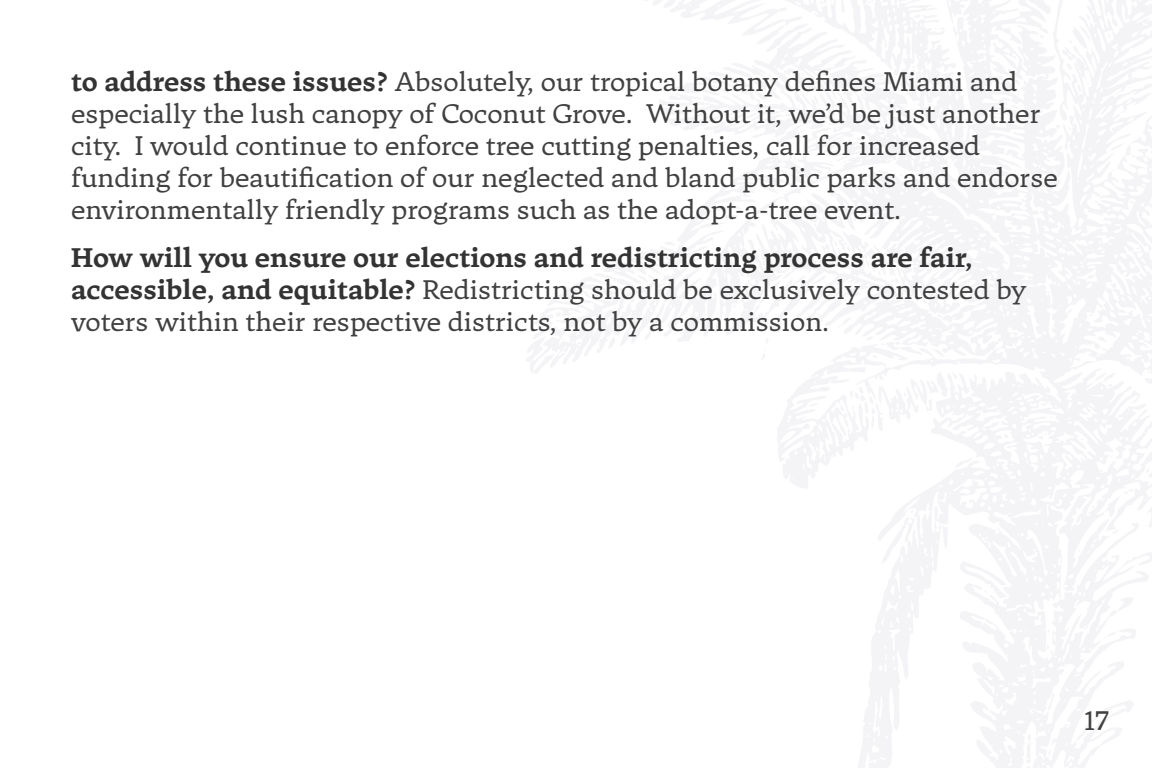
MICHAEL CASTRO (DISTRICT 2)

Do you think access to affordable housing is an issue City of Miami Commissioners should address and if so, what steps will you take to address the issue? Affordable housing is certainly an issue and even more so in District 2. Rent

increase caps, improve housing voucher programs and all future Residential developments should have a mandatory designation of allocated affordable housing units.

As Commissioner, will you take actions to make Miami more walkable and bikeable? If so, what would those actions be? As bicycling continues to gain popularity so does bicycle related traffic accidents and fatalities. The many roads throughout District 2 that require repaving anyways (Grand Ave., Main Hwy, Commodore Trail) should begin to incorporate designated bike/pedestrian lanes. As well as strong public education program informing bicyclist, pedestrians & motorist of the laws & courtesies ever changing.

Do you think that protecting the environment, increasing tree canopy, and ensuring access to public green spaces and parks are issues Miami Commissioners should address? And if so, what steps would you take



to address these issues? Absolutely, our tropical botany defines Miami and especially the lush canopy of Coconut Grove. Without it, we'd be just another city. I would continue to enforce tree cutting penalties, call for increased funding for beautification of our neglected and bland public parks and endorse environmentally friendly programs such as the adopt-a-tree event.

How will you ensure our elections and redistricting process are fair, accessible, and equitable? Redistricting should be exclusively contested by voters within their respective districts, not by a commission.



SABINA COVO (DISTRICT 2)

Do you think access to affordable housing is an issue City of Miami Commissioners should address and if so, what steps will you take to address the issue? Absolutely, affordable

housing is a top priority and an issue that affects our entire county. As Commissioner, I allocated \$3.5M for affordable housing in Little Bahamas, Coconut Grove, demonstrating my commitment to this issue. I will continue pushing for affordable housing solutions.

As Commissioner, will you take actions to make Miami more walkable and bikeable? If so, what would those actions be? As a mom of three and passionate biker, I'm committed to enhancing Miami's walkability and bikeability. I've already co-sponsored a resolution to allocate \$4.1M for sidewalk and street improvements downtown. I also supported the pedestrianization of Fuller Street in Coconut Grove, preserving our community's culture.

Do you think that protecting the environment, increasing tree canopy, and ensuring access to public green spaces and parks are issues Miami Commissioners should address? And if so, what steps would you take to address these issues? Absolutely, these are vital issues. I've supported green

initiatives, including tree planting in Little Bahamas as part of a comprehensive Heat Plan. I've also allocated resources to improve parks like Regatta, Kennedy, and Triangle, demonstrating my environmental commitment. I've also championed legislation allocating \$4.3 million to Morningside Park Living Shoreline.

How will you ensure our elections and redistricting process are fair, accessible, and equitable? I have a strong track record of advocating for fair and equitable elections. I recently voted against the city's redistricting map, pushing for a plan that better represents our communities. I'll continue to fight for transparency and inclusivity in our electoral and redistricting processes to ensure they are fair and accessible to all.



ALICIA SUSAN KOSSICK (DISTRICT 2)

Do you think access to affordable housing is an issue City of Miami Commissioners should address and if so, what steps will you take to address the issue? My six recommendations are using empty properties, community-led housing schemes, new designs for affordable housing, like the Grow Home prototype, new forms of temporary housing, community self-build projects, and readdressing Miami 21.

As Commissioner, will you take actions to make Miami more walkable and bikeable? If so, what would those actions be? Narrow Streets, widen sidewalks, Commodore Trail and improve the trolley routes.

Do you think that protecting the environment, increasing tree canopy, and ensuring access to public green spaces and parks are issues Miami Commissioners should address? And if so, what steps would you take to address these issues? I am a supporter of tree canopy with native Fig and Mahogany trees which provide shade. Shade cools the areas, create promenade and promote pedestrian and bicycle traffic. Water front parks, more public access to waterfront and parks that provide . All Miamins should have access to clean streets, access to any tool that counters barriers to entry, access to shade,

and access to waterfront,

How will you ensure our elections and redistricting process are fair, accessible, and equitable? I recommend that everyone take a picture of their ballot and the mail in ballots are verified.



DAMIAN JOHN PARDO (DISTRICT 2)

Do you think access to affordable housing is an issue City of Miami Commissioners should address and if so, what steps will you take to address the issue? We address this crisis by

increasing affordable and workforce housing projects in our community, working with Federal, State and County authorities to maximize opportunities for residents, focusing on displaced residents who cannot qualify for affordable housing programs. We can find grants through foundations and corporations to assist and look to other cities fighting these issues successfully.

As Commissioner, will you take actions to make Miami more walkable and bikeable? If so, what would those actions be? First, we need to repair broken sidewalks, widen pathways where possible and ensure they're well-lit and free of trash and debris; implement traffic calming measures (speed bumps, curb extensions and narrower lanes) to slow vehicle traffic and improve pedestrian safety; use AI to collect and analyze data on user safety, usage rates and public satisfaction to enhance infrastructure and programs.

Do you think that protecting the environment, increasing tree canopy, and ensuring access to public green spaces and parks are issues Miami

Commissioners should address? And if so, what steps would you take to address these issues? The tree canopies are not only crucial for the environment, but they're also a distinct feature of the character of many neighborhoods in Miami. I want to conduct a citywide assessment to understand current coverage, identify improvement areas in underserved areas, and invest in developing new parks and green spaces, especially in densely populated or low-income neighborhoods.

How will you ensure our elections and redistricting process are fair, accessible, and equitable? By implementing independent redistricting commissions to draw electoral districts, preventing gerrymandering and ensuring fair representation for all communities, enhancing election accessibility by expanding early voting, promoting mail-in ballots, and providing polling places accessible. Lastly, engage in public education and outreach to inform residents about procedures, processes, and updates.



CHRISTI REEVES TASKER (DISTRICT 2)

Do you think access to affordable housing is an issue City of Miami Commissioners should address and if so, what steps will you take to address the issue? I will create legislation

to have a higher tax rate on condo units that do not require a 12-month lease on condo units. I will limit the amount of rent increases within certain time frames so that landlords cannot cause homelessness. In early 2020, investors began buying up condos, turning them into Air Bnbs. The results are a lot fewer condos on the market and no regulation for affordable houses.

As Commissioner, will you take actions to make Miami more walkable and bikeable? If so, what would those actions be? Yes, absolutely. First, I would reduce speed limits and add more traffic enforcement officers to prevent accidents. Increasing bike lane widths is a must. We also must remove some signage and billboards blocking streets, literally causing walking jams.

Do you think that protecting the environment, increasing tree canopy, and ensuring access to public green spaces and parks are issues Miami Commissioners should address? And if so, what steps would you take to address these issues? Green spaces with proper plants & tree canopies are a

main priority. Placing park benches under canopies is critical. I plan to involve the direct surrounding community from Day 1 pre-planning all park changes. Currently, a lot of our parks have misplaced park benches, art in passageways, and obstacles. Natural green spaces where people can move freely are critical for Miami's future.

How will you ensure our elections and redistricting process are fair, accessible, and equitable? I am the only District 2 commission candidate to formally request that the commission concede and quit gerrymandering maps to save the City money & to create fair elections. The incumbent refused to make a motion, other D2 candidates sat silent. We must prevent ballot harvesting, have humans count ballots, & if we must use machine tabulators they need at min 15 pts .to properly check signatures.



ANDRES VALLINA (DISTRICT 4)

Do you think access to affordable housing is an issue City of Miami Commissioners should address and if so, what steps will you take to address the issue? Yes, work with

developers and other commissioners to designate city property for development and adopt by laws to control rent cost.

As Commissioner, will you take actions to make Miami more walkable and bikeable? If so, what would those actions be? Yes, as president of Florida Wildlife Kids Conservation Foundation we Raise awareness of going out doors and the benefits. Would work with public works and address areas of concern.

Do you think that protecting the environment, increasing tree canopy, and ensuring access to public green spaces and parks are issues Miami Commissioners should address? And if so, what steps would you take to address these issues? As chair for Parks and Rec board appointed by Francis Suarez, we where made aware that impact fees that where supposed to be used for green spaces is going to the general fund. I would address this issue to be

able to make more green spaces in green spaces not in the middle of buildings.

How will you ensure our elections and redistricting process are fair, accessible, and equitable? I would work with the state and courts to make sure they rule correct on these issues and see who is to benefit by doing this.

ENGAGE MIAMI

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