

**IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE FIFTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
IN AND FOR HERNANDO COUNTY, FLORIDA**

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER: H-2025-40-B

**AMENDED ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER APPOINTING AND
NAMING HERNANDO COUNTY CANVASSING BOARD
MEMBERS, SUBSTITUTE(S) AND ALTERNATES
FOR 2026 ELECTION CYCLE**

AND

**AMENDING, VACATING AND REPLACING
ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER: H-2025-40-A**

WHEREAS, the Chief Judge of the Fifth Judicial Circuit has the responsibility, pursuant to Section 102.141(1), Florida Statutes, and Florida Rule of General Practice and Judicial Administration 2.215, to appoint a county court judge as the chair of the Hernando County Canvassing Board; and,

WHEREAS, the **HONORABLE KURT E. HITZEMANN**, Hernando County Court Judge, is a qualified elector of Hernando County who is not a candidate with opposition in the election being canvassed and who is not an active participant in the campaign or candidacy of any candidate with opposition in the election being canvassed; and,

WHEREAS, Section 102.141(1)(a) and (e)1., Florida Statutes, requires the Chief Judge of the Fifth Judicial Circuit to appoint a

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county court judge as an alternate member of the county canvassing board or, if each county court judge is unable to serve, an alternate member who is qualified to serve; and,

WHEREAS, the **HONORABLE BARBARA JO BELL**, Hernando County Court Judge, is a qualified elector of Hernando County who is not a candidate with opposition in the election being canvassed and who is not an active participant in the campaign or candidacy of any candidate with opposition in the election being canvassed; and,

WHEREAS, Section 102.141(1)(d), Florida Statutes, empowers the Chief Judge of the Fifth Judicial Circuit to appoint substitute or alternate member(s) to the county canvassing board; and,

WHEREAS, the Board of County Commissioners has named the **HONORABLE DOUG CHORVAT, JR.**, Hernando County Clerk of Court, who is not a candidate with opposition in the election being canvassed and who is not an active participant in the campaign or candidacy of any candidate with opposition in the election being canvassed, to serve as substitute to the seat held by the Chair of the Board of County Commissioners; and,

WHEREAS, the **HONORABLE DENISE LAVANCHER**,

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Supervisor of Elections for Hernando County is statutorily required to serve; and

WHEREAS, Mr. JOHN MITTEN is a qualified elector of Hernando County who is not a candidate with opposition in the election being canvassed and who is not an active participant in the campaign or candidacy of any candidate with opposition in the election being canvassed;

WHEREAS, the HONORABLE AMY BLACKBURN, Hernando County Tax Collector, is a qualified elector of Hernando County who is not a candidate with opposition in the election being canvassed and who is not an active participant in the campaign or candidacy of any candidate with opposition in the election being canvassed;

Based upon the above-stated factual finding, it is hereby

ORDERED AND ADJUDGED that:

1. The **HONORABLE KURT E. HITZEMANN**, Hernando County Court Judge, is hereby appointed to serve as a member and Chair of the Hernando County Canvassing Board for the 2026 election cycle.

2. The **HONORABLE BARBARA JO BELL** is hereby appointed to serve as the substitute for Judge Hitzemann, should

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Judge Hitzemann be unable to serve, and as alternate member who may sit in any seat. In the event that both Judge Hitzemann and Judge Bell are unable to serve as Chair, the members of the Hernando County Canvassing Board meet and elect a Chair in accordance with Section 102.141(1)(a), Florida Statutes.

3. The **HONORABLE DENISE LAVANCHER**, Hernando County Supervisor of Elections, will serve on the Hernando County Canvassing Board pursuant to Section 102.141(1), Florida Statutes.

4. The **HONORABLE DOUG CHORVAT, JR.**, Hernando County Clerk of Court, has been appointed by the Hernando County Board of County Commissioners to serve as substitute for the seat held by the Chair of the Board of County Commissioners pursuant to Section 102.141(1)(d), Florida Statutes, and will serve on the Hernando County Canvassing Board.

5. **MR. JOHN MITTEN** has been appointed by the Hernando County Board of County Commissioners, pursuant to section 102.141(1)(e)2., Florida Statutes, to serve as an alternate, and may serve in any seat.

6. The **HONORABLE AMY BLACKBURN**, Hernando County Tax Collector, has been appointed by the Hernando County Board of County Commissioners, pursuant to section

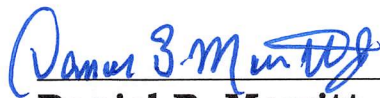
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102.141(1)(e)2., Florida Statutes, to serve as an alternate, and may serve in any seat.

7. Administrative Order H-2025-40-A is hereby rescinded, superseded, and replaced.

8. This Order is effective when signed and shall remain in full force and effect until amended, superseded, replaced, vacated, or rescinded.

DONE AND ORDERED in Chambers at Brooksville, Hernando County, Florida on this 9th day of July 2026.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Daniel B. Merritt, Jr.", is written over a horizontal line.

Daniel B. Merritt, Jr.
Chief Judge
Fifth Judicial Circuit