

2000 Events Timeline - Post-Election

November 7, 2000 - Election Day

- 7:50 pm The Associated Press declares Vice President Al Gore the victor in Florida, based on Voter News Service projections from exit polls. The major TV networks call Florida for Gore between 7:50 and 8:00pm.
- 9:30 pm Florida begins to look more uncertain as the vote totals accumulate more in favor of Texas Gov. George Bush. Bush, talking with reporters, says "The networks called this thing awfully early, but the people actually counting the votes are coming up with a different perspective. So we're pretty darn upbeat about things."
- 10 pm Networks begin retracting the projection that Gore wins Florida; the state reverts to too close to call.

November 8, 2000

- 2:15 am Bush appears to take a decisive lead in Florida. Some estimates have Bush leading Gore by 50,000 votes. Networks project Bush to be the winner of Florida and the Presidency between 2:16 and 2:20 am.
- 2:30 am Gore calls Bush to concede the election.
- 3:00 am Gore leaves the hotel in Nashville, Tennessee. His motorcade heads to the War Memorial Plaza, where he plans to address supporters.
- 3:15 am Gore advisers call the vice president to tell him Bush's lead in Florida has diminished dramatically. He returns to his hotel without addressing his supporters. Reports show that less than 1,000 votes separates Bush and Gore in the state of Florida.
- 3:30 am Gore calls Bush back to retract his concession. Networks retract the projection that Bush wins Florida between 3:57 and 4:15 am. The state reverts to too close to call. The Presidency is once again undecided.
- Morning The final margin of the Florida vote is reported to be 1,784 votes; Bush leads Gore 2,909,135 (48.8%) to 2,907,351 (48.8%) with other candidates receiving 139,616 votes (2.4%).
 - Some voting irregularities are alleged, especially in Palm Beach County where voters complain that their punch card ballots were configured in a manner that was confusing.
 - A full machine recount of votes is ordered in Florida - this is due to Florida Election Code 102.141 that requires a recount of ballots if the margin of victory is 0.5% or less.
 - Florida Governor Jeb Bush officially recuses himself from the process.

November 9, 2000

- The preliminary nationwide popular vote numbers are: Gore 48,976,148 votes and Bush 48,783,510 votes. Bush has won 29 states with 246 electoral votes. Gore has won 18 states plus the District of Columbia for a total of 260 electoral votes. Neither candidate has enough electoral votes to claim victory.
- Pat Buchanan agrees with the Gore campaign that the Palm Beach County ballot was confusing and says he believes many of his votes there were meant for Gore.
- Gore's team requests a hand count of presidential ballots in four Florida counties (allowed under Florida Election Code 102.166), Palm Beach, Broward, Miami-Dade, and Volusia. These four counties are strong Democratic areas and had a total of about 1.8 million votes cast.
- Vice President Al Gore returns to Washington, where he will spend most of the month.
- Bush meets with advisers and potential members of a Bush administration. Aides say announcements of Cabinet appointments could be made within a week.

- Sixty-four of Florida's 67 counties have recounted their votes, Bush leads Gore by 362 votes in an unofficial tally by the Associated Press.

5 p.m. Florida Secretary of State Katherine Harris says official results from the recount may not be completed until the following Tuesday, November 14.

November 10, 2000

- New Mexico, with five electoral votes, is retracted from Gore; the state reverts to too close to call.
- Oregon is called for Gore.

November 11, 2000

- The Bush camp seeks a federal injunction to stop hand recounts of ballots in several Florida counties because of alleged equal protection and other constitutional violations.
- George W. Bush heads to his ranch in Crawford, Texas, where he will spend most of the month.

November 12, 2000

- Palm Beach County announces its manual recount will be extended to all ballots countywide. Initially, only ballots in certain precincts were slated to be counted by hand.
- Florida's Volusia County begins hand counting more than 184,000 ballots.

November 13, 2000

- 9 a.m. Florida's Secretary of State, Katherine Harris, announces she will not extend the 5 p.m. EST November 14 deadline (Florida Election Code 102.112) for certifying election results. The decision does not affect the counting of overseas absentee ballots, which has a November 17 deadline.
- Volusia County sues to complete manual recount notwithstanding the November 14 deadline for county Canvassing Boards to file election returns (one week after general election) set in Florida Election Code 102.112.
 - U.S. District Judge Donald Middlebrooks rejects Bush's plea for an order barring hand recounts of ballots in several Florida counties.
- Evening Broward County decides against proceeding with a full manual recount.

November 14, 2000

- 8:20 a.m. Officials in Palm Beach County vote 2-1 to delay their manual recounts until they are able to clarify whether they have the legal authority to proceed.
- The canvassing board in Miami-Dade County unanimously votes to start an immediate hand recount of ballots in three precincts as requested by Gore's lawyers.
 - Circuit court judge in Palm Beach to hear legal challenge that claims poor ballot design led Gore supporters to vote for Pat Buchanan. Five judges had previously recused themselves from the case.
- Afternoon Circuit Judge Terry Lewis upholds 5 p.m. Tuesday deadline for Florida vote certification. The judge says supplemental returns can be filed after the deadline, but can be ignored after circumstances are considered. An appeal by the Gore campaign to the Florida Supreme Court is expected.
- 4:30 p.m. Palm Beach County canvassing board votes to resume the recount on Wednesday, November 15.
- Evening Florida Secretary of State Katherine Harris announces that Bush leads Gore by 300 votes based on returns submitted by all 67 counties.

November 15, 2000

- Broward County canvassing board reverses an earlier decision and decides to conduct a full manual recount.
- State judge rules that the Palm Beach County board can set rules on which ballots are valid.
- 9 a.m. In a petition to the Florida Supreme Court, Secretary of State Harris asks the justices to order Miami-Dade, Broward and Palm Beach counties to end the manual recounts. Elections officials in Palm Beach County ask the state's highest court to decide if they can recount ballots by hand.
- Noon The Bush camp will join in a suit by the Florida Secretary of State that seeks an order to block further manual recounts.
- Al Gore suggests a hand recount in all of Florida's 67 counties if Republicans won't accept the recounts in selected counties. Gore said he says he will forgo further legal challenges if the Republicans accept the selected counties' recount. Gore also proposes a face to face meeting with George W. Bush.
- Evening Florida Supreme Court denies the request to block hand recounts of ballots.
- Evening After considering submissions from counties still conducting recounts, Secretary of State Harris indicates that she will not consider further returns from those counties.
- 10:15 p.m. George W. Bush rejects Al Gore's proposal for a statewide manual count of Florida's presidential vote, saying it would be neither fair nor accurate. Bush also rejects Gore's idea for a one-on-one meeting. He says he would be glad to meet Gore after the election.

November 16, 2000

- The Bush team says they will not seek a recount of votes in Iowa.
- Lawyers for Bush submit written arguments to the U.S. federal appeals court in Atlanta to end the recounts. Democrats also filed papers with the federal court to oppose the Republican bid.
- Attorneys for the Gore campaign file an emergency motion in Leon County state court challenging the certification of the results of the Florida presidential election.
- Florida Supreme Court rules that Palm Beach County can proceed with a manual recount of ballots. Within minutes, officials in Palm Beach County announce they will begin their recount.

November 17, 2000

- Midnight Deadline for receipt of overseas absentee ballots under Florida Administrative Code, Chapter 1S-2.013
- Leon County Circuit Judge Terry Lewis upholds Florida Secretary of State Kathrine Harris' decision to reject late vote tallies resulting from manual recounts.
- Florida Supreme Court bars Harris from certifying the state's presidential winner "until further order of this court" and set a Monday hearing on the recount dispute.
- Miami-Dade County reverses an earlier decision and votes to conduct a full manual recount.
- Local Democrats sue the Seminole County Canvassing Board in state court for including certain absentee ballots in the vote totals that did not satisfy the provisions of 101.62 of the Florida Election Code, requiring that a person requesting an absentee ballot provide the elector's registration number on their application.
- The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit denies a Bush team request to stop manual recounts on constitutional grounds.

November 18, 2000

- Bush's lead over Gore in Florida triples after overseas absentee ballots are counted. With all of the state's 67 counties reporting results from overseas, Bush's official lead stands at 930 votes. Bush picked up 1,380 votes from the overseas ballots and Gore added 750 votes.

November 19, 2000

- Miami-Dade County begins a manual recount.

November 20, 2000

- The Florida Supreme Court hears recount arguments from both the Gore and Bush camps regarding whether Secretary of State Harris should consider hand-recounted ballots before she certifies results of the presidential election (*Palm Beach Canvassing Board v. Harris*).
- In Palm Beach County, Judge Jorge Labarga rules that he has no constitutional authority to order a re-vote due to use of the butterfly ballot.

November 21, 2000

- The Florida Supreme Court, in a unanimous decision, rules that that manual recounts may continue and that the totals must be included in the final results. Court sets as deadline for certifying the election Nov. 26, a Sunday, or early Nov. 27.

November 22, 2000

- Republican vice presidential candidate Dick Cheney is admitted to the hospital with chest pain. It is later revealed to be a mild heart attack. Doctors operate and insert a stent in one of his arteries that showed signs of narrowing.
- Bush files petition for certiorari in United States Supreme Court, asking for review of Florida Supreme Court ruling.
- Judge Jorge Labarga rules that so-called "dimpled chads" cannot be summarily excluded from the Palm Beach manual recount. However, officials can reject questionable ballots if the voter's intent can't be determined.
- Miami-Dade County votes unanimously to halt its manual recount.

November 23, 2000

- On Thanksgiving Day, Al Gore's campaign files papers with the Florida Supreme Court, asking the judges to force Miami-Dade County to resume its manual recount. The Florida Supreme Court rejects Gore request to require a resumption of the recount.

November 24, 2000

- The U.S. Supreme Court agrees to hear arguments in an appeal from George W. Bush on Florida Supreme Court's November 21 ruling that selective manual recounts must be included in the state's final presidential tally. The hearing set for December 1.
- Bush's Vice-Presidential running mate, Dick Cheney, is released from the hospital, two days after suffering a mild heart attack.

November 25, 2000

- George W. Bush drops his lawsuit to force Florida counties to reconsider overseas military ballots that were rejected for technical reasons.
- Broward County completes its hand recount.

November 26, 2000

- Harris denied a Palm Beach County request to extend the 5PM deadline to turn in completed vote totals. Palm Beach misses 5 p.m. deadline by 90 minutes and left 1,000 ballots uncounted.

- Secretary of State Katherine Harris certifies Bush the winner in Florida, but ongoing legal action by both parties keeps the election outcome uncertain.
- The official results are 2,912,790 votes for Bush; 2,912,253 for Gore, a margin of victory of 537 votes.
- Governor Jeb Bush signs the Certificate of Ascertainment designating 25 Florida electors pledged to George W. Bush and transmits the document to the National Archives as required by Title 3, U.S. Code, Section 6.

November 27, 2000

- Al Gore files an election contest action under Florida Election Code section 102.168, challenging the vote counts in Palm Beach, Miami-Dade, and Nassau counties; the case is assigned to Judge Sanders Sauls.
- Bush lawyers file a motion with the 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals to delay oral arguments in a pending federal case against Florida's hand recounts.
- A Seminole County lawsuit seeking to throw out 4,700 absentee ballots is moved to the state court in Leon County, which is also hearing Gore's certification challenges.
- The issue of whether Palm Beach County's butterfly ballot was legal is moved to the Florida Supreme Court.

November 28, 2000

- Democrats ask Leon County Circuit Court Judge N. Saunders Sauls to authorize an immediate recount of about 14,000 disputed ballots. Judge Sauls orders the disputed ballots, sample voting booths, and voting machines from Miami-Dade and Palm Beach counties brought to his courtroom in Tallahassee by Friday.

November 29, 2000

- Deadline for briefs to be filed before the U.S. Supreme Court on Bush appeal of Florida Supreme Court's ruling selective manual recounts.

November 30, 2000

- Deadline for replies to be filed before the U.S. Supreme Court on Bush appeal of Florida Supreme Court's ruling on selective manual recounts.
- A truck carrying more than 450,000 presidential ballots from Palm Beach County leaves on its way to Tallahassee as ordered by Judge N. Sanders Sauls.
- A Florida legislative committee recommends a special session to name the state's 25 representatives to the Electoral College.
- Democrats file papers in the Florida Supreme Court asking them to order an immediate hand recount of some 14,000 disputed ballots in two heavily Democratic Florida counties. The seven justices on the state's highest court are all Democrats.
- Cheney announces the opening of Bush transition offices in McLean, VA, paid for by private donations, after General Services Administration in Washington declines to release transition funds or office space to Bush, citing disputed election.

December 1, 2000

- The U.S. Supreme Court hears oral arguments on Bush challenge on constitutional grounds of Florida Supreme Court's ruling on selective manual recounts. (Bush v. Palm Beach Canvassing Board)

- Florida Supreme Court on Friday rejects a Gore campaign request to immediately begin the hand count of 14,000 disputed presidential ballots from Miami-Dade and Palm Beach counties.
- Florida Supreme Court affirms lower court's decision that the butterfly ballot used in Palm Beach County was not so confusing as to disenfranchise voters.
- The 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Atlanta says it will hear two separate but related cases challenging the Florida ballot hand count. The cases, brought by individuals but joined by the Bush campaign, argue that recounts by hand are unfair and unconstitutional.
- Texas federal District Court Judge Sidney Fitzwater rejects voter suit arguing that Dick Cheney is an inhabitant of Texas and thus ineligible to receive votes of Texas electors (Jones v. Bush)

December 2, 2000

- Florida Circuit Judge N. Sanders Sauls holds a trial to consider Gore's request for a hand count of 14,000 contested ballots in Democratic-leaning Miami-Dade and Palm Beach counties.

December 4, 2000

- U.S. Supreme Court rules in Bush v. Palm Beach Canvassing Board, vacating the order of the Florida Supreme Court and remanding for clarification the Florida Supreme Court's November 21 decision on recount deadlines.
- Florida Judge N. Sanders Sauls rules against Gore, saying that hand recounts in Palm Beach and Miami-Dade counties aren't warranted and the Nassau County vote total should stand. He refuses Gore's request to overturn George W. Bush's certified statewide victory.

December 6, 2000

- About 25,000 absentee ballots are at stake in two similar trials taking place in Tallahassee. Judge Nikki Clark hears the Seminole County absentee ballot case and Judge Terry Lewis presides over the Martin County trial.
- Atlanta 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals denies Bush appeal to throw out manual recounts in three Florida counties.

December 7, 2000

- Florida Supreme Court hears arguments from both Al Gore and George W. Bush's lawyers in the vice president's appeal of Florida Circuit Court Judge Sauls' ruling.
- A formal proclamation is issued calling the Florida Legislature for a special session commencing December 8 to consider whether to appoint the state's electors.
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit orally affirms dismissal of challenge to Cheney's residency (Jones v. Bush).

December 8, 2000

- The Florida Supreme Court, in 4-3 split decision, reverses lower court rejection of Gore contest, ordering statewide manual recounts of undervotes.
- Leon County Circuit Court Judges Terry Lewis and Nikki Clark refuse to throw out any of the 25,000 absentee ballots challenged by the Gore camp in Martin and Seminole counties.
- In Bush v. Hillsborough County Canvassing Board, federal District Court Judge Lacey Collier rules that overseas absentee ballots can be counted even though they lack a postmark required by 101.62 of the Florida Election Code.
- Bush seeks stays before the Florida Supreme Court, the 11th Circuit, and the U.S. Supreme Court and additionally petitions the U.S. Supreme Court for certiorari.

- The Florida Legislature meets in special session and adjourns with plans to convene again on December 12.

December 9, 2000

- Florida begins a statewide manual recount of the undervote ballots.
- The Florida Supreme Court denies Bush's application for a stay.
- The U.S. Court of Appeals for the 11th Circuit in Atlanta similarly denies Bush's emergency motion to stop the recount, but orders Florida officials not to change his previously certified 537-vote lead.
- The U.S. Supreme Court, divided 5-4, issues a stay in Gore v. Bush to stop the manual recounts.
- District Court Judge Maurice Paul denies request to throw out overseas absentee ballots not received by Election Day (Harris, Medina v. Florida Elections Canvassing Commission)

December 11, 2000

- U.S. Supreme Court hears oral arguments in Gore v. Bush. on the Florida recount.

December 12, 2000

- Deadline for the resolution of elector controversies to qualify for "conclusive" protection under Title 3, U.S. Code, Section 5.
 - Oregon deadline to file a demand for a recount.
 - In a 79-41 vote, the Republican-run Florida House approves 25 electors pledged to George W. Bush.
 - The Florida Supreme Court upholds two state court rulings that allow 25,000 absentee ballots from Martin and Seminole counties to remain in the state's official vote tally.
 - The U.S. Supreme Court renders a complex decision to overturn the Florida Supreme Court ruling that called for manual recounts. The court's unsigned "per curiam" decision carried the opinion of seven justices and says that the recounts as ordered by the Florida court suffered from constitutional problems. However, four Justices wrote dissenting opinions regarding possible remedies in the case. The court said in the 7-2 per curiam that "Because it is evident that any recount seeking to meet the Dec. 12 date will be unconstitutional ... we reverse the judgment of the Supreme Court of Florida ordering the recount to proceed," "It is obvious that the recount cannot be conducted in compliance with the requirements of equal protection and due process without substantial additional work." The case was remanded to the Florida court "for further proceedings not inconsistent with this opinion."
- 12:10p.m.

December 13, 2000

- Gore says in nationally broadcast speech that he accepts Bush as the 43rd president; Bush pledges to deliver reconciliation and unity to a divided nation in his acceptance speech.
- The Florida Senate - scheduled to vote on a resolution certifying electors for Bush - recesses instead.

December 18, 2000

- Electors from each state meet, cast, certify, and seal their votes. George Bush receives 271 votes and Al Gore receives 266 votes; one Gore elector from the District of Columbia abstains.

December 27, 2000

- Deadline for designated officials, both federal and state, to have the certified electoral votes in hand.

January 6, 2001

- Congress meets in joint session in the House of Representatives to conduct the official tally of electoral votes.

January 20, 2001

- President Bush is sworn in.

Sources include CNN, ABC, CBS, PBS, and other news agencies.