

CITY OF CORAL GABLES

--MEMORANDUM--



TO: City Clerk

CC: Members of the City Commission and City Manager

FROM: Commissioner Melissa Castro

DATE: July 31, 2025

SUBJECT: Urgent Request for Special Commission Meeting to Address
Unconstitutional Election Rescheduling

Dear Billy,

I am formally requesting that you begin the process of calling a special commission meeting to address the final appellate court ruling regarding municipal election scheduling, a ruling with clear and direct implications for the City of Coral Gables.

On July 31, 2025, Florida's Third District Court of Appeal ruled that the City of Miami's decision to move its November 2025 elections to November 2026 without a charter amendment approved by voters was unconstitutional and unlawful. The court concluded this violated both Section 6.03 of the Miami-Dade County Home Rule Charter and Article VI, Section 5(b) of the Florida Constitution, which collectively protect the public's right to determine the terms and timing of their local elections.

Coral Gables passed a nearly identical ordinance in May 2025, unilaterally moving our April 2027 elections to November 2026. This decision was made without voter approval and is now in direct conflict with binding legal precedent.

Furthermore, the City of Miami's request for a stay of the court's order was denied. The court made clear that their decision is effective immediately not pending appeal and Miami is now legally required to hold its municipal elections in 2025 as originally scheduled.

Given that Coral Gables' ordinance was modeled after Miami's, and given the ruling's specificity and clarity, our city is now exposed to significant legal liability unless we act promptly. Continuing to enforce the November 2026 election schedule would place us in violation of the same constitutional and charter provisions and subject our city to potential litigation, judicial intervention, and irreparable harm to our democratic credibility.

In light of this, I respectfully request that you initiate the required process to schedule a special commission meeting at the earliest possible date so that we may:

1. Reevaluate our election rescheduling ordinance in light of the court's ruling.
2. Discuss corrective measures to return to the April 2027 election schedule or place the matter before voters through a binding referendum.
3. Ensure immediate legal compliance and protect the city from avoidable legal exposure.

I understand that the calling of a special meeting requires majority consent, and I trust that you will move forward with the necessary documentation and polling of the Commission.

This is not a political issue, it is a constitutional one. We have a duty to correct course, honor the law, and uphold the residents' right to vote on changes that affect the core structure of our democracy.

Thank you in advance for your attention to this urgent and consequential matter.