



Florida's 'election police force' puzzles SWFL officials

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The state of Florida is getting a new police force and you're paying for it.

Governor Ron DeSantis wanted a team of election police to sniff out voter fraud and other crimes.

That's despite no evidence of any fraud in Florida's 2020 election.

The election police force will have one focus and that is to investigate any election fraud. Voters could report it just like any other crime but that's where the concern comes in for some election supervisors and others.

Carmen Lopez-Negron of Cape Coral calls the police force ridiculous.

"It's been proven time and time again by judges, appointed by President Trump, that there was no election fraud," she said.

Despite that Governor DeSantis is moving forward with his police force.

Legal Scholar with the Cato Institute Walter Olson who has studied election law warned that anytime the government takes any power it could be misused.

"It has the potential for polarization and the potential for people to reach for political reasons for doing things," Olson explained.

A concern also shared by Lee Election Supervisor Tommy Doyle.

"You have a voter going to the polling location and they see something wrong they're going to be calling the election police," Doyle said.

One call to the hotline could have the police showing up at the front door of his election office.

"They're going to be called against the supervisors for doing something wrong and possibly causing disruptions of our processes," Doyle warned.

FGCU Political Science Professor Dr. Sandra Pavelka fears investigations could even delay election results.

“If you have x number of people calling to report a crime even if minor or major...it can create a backlog and a number of other safety and security concerns. This could really be problematic in the long run,” Dr. Pavelka said.

Despite the concerns and no evidence of voter fraud in Florida the new police force will cost taxpayers more than \$2-million dollars.

“The bill might increase confidence by making it even sure that some sort of crime would be prosecuted,” Olson predicted.

This new law also makes ballot harvesting a felony instead of a misdemeanor. Instead of a \$1000 fine you could be fined up to \$50,000