

Orlando Sentinel

FINAL EDITION

Saturday, November 7, 2020

\$3.00

ELECTION 2020

GETTING CLOSER

Biden on verge of victory as lead expands; Trump pushes court intervention



MARY ALTAFFER/AP

Democratic and Republican canvas observers inspect Lehigh County provisional ballots as vote counting in the general election continued Friday in Allentown, Pennsylvania.

By JONATHAN LEMIRE, ZEKE MILLER, JILL COLVIN
AND WILL WEISSERT
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Democrat Joe Biden was on the cusp of winning the presidency on Friday as he opened up narrow leads over President Donald Trump in the critical battlegrounds of Georgia and Pennsylvania.

Those put Biden in a stronger position to capture the 270 Electoral College votes needed to take the White House. The winner will lead a country facing a historic set of challenges, including a surging pandemic and deep political polarization.

The focus on Pennsylvania, where Biden led Trump by more than 16,000 votes, and Georgia, where Biden led by more than 4,000 came as Americans spent a third day after the election without knowing who will lead them for the next four years. The prolonged process added to the anxiety of a nation whose racial and cultural divides were inflamed during the heated campaign.

Biden was at his home in Wilmington, Delaware, as the vote count continued and aides said he would address the nation in primetime. Trump largely remained in the White House residence as more results trickled in, expanding Biden's lead in must-win Pennsylvania. In the West Wing, televisions

Please turn to **ELECTION, A4**

WHERE THE ELECTION STANDS
Through 10 p.m. Friday
Georgia — Biden leads by 4,289 votes
Pennsylvania — Biden leads by 27,130
Nevada — Biden leads by 22,657
Arizona — Biden leads by 29,861

THE RACE TO 270
Joe Biden — 73.8M votes **264**
Donald Trump — 69.9M **214**

Go to **OrlandoSentinel.com/**
results for the latest totals.

Trump faces high bar to get high court involved

By JESSICA GRESKO
AND MARK SHERMAN
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump has repeatedly said there's one place he wants to determine the outcome of the presidential election: the U.S. Supreme Court. But he may have a difficult time ever getting there.

Over the last two days, Trump has leaned in to the idea that the high court should get involved in the election as it did in 2000. Then, the court effectively settled the contested election for President George W. Bush in a 5-4 decision that split the court's liberals and conservatives.

Today, six members of the court are conservatives, including three nominated by Trump. But the outcome of this year's election seemed to be shaping up

Please turn to **COURTS, A6**

DeSantis' ties to Trump could backfire in 2022

By STEVEN LEMONGELLO

Gov. Ron DeSantis' political future will be inexorably tied to his role as one of President Trump's stalwart supporters — for better or worse.

The governor's reelection prospects in 2022 may have been buoyed by the president's victory in Florida on Tuesday. But his willingness to go beyond almost every other current Republican official in defending Trump's baseless claims of fraud has left DeSantis in a class of his own.

"He has been Trump's number one sycophant," said Gwen Graham, a former Democratic congresswoman and candidate for governor in 2018. "I wish I could say I was surprised. At this time in our country's history, America will lift up leaders that put upholding our democracy first. DeSantis is shamefully

Please turn to **DESANTIS, A4**

CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK

'Get those kids in classrooms,' state education official urges

By LESLIE POSTAL

Education Commissioner Richard Corcoran wants more of Florida's public school students back on campus in January, convinced that in-person classes are best for them academically and that schools have been proven safe during the coronavirus pandemic.

By Thanksgiving, he expects to announce state plans for how public schools should operate, and be funded, in the second se-

mester. Currently, nearly 40% of Florida's students are studying online, with the percentage even greater in Central Florida.

"We've got to get those kids in the classrooms," Corcoran told the state's school superintendents last month.

The state's new plans could determine how many students continue to learn via Lake Live, LaunchEd, Digital Learning and Seminole Connect, the online

Please turn to **CLASSES, A9**



STEPHEN M. DOWELL/ORLANDO SENTINEL
Florida Education Commissioner Richard Corcoran speaks during a visit to Florida Virtual School in Orlando on Oct. 26.

OSCEOLA COUNTY

Legal cost over Split Oak protections: \$635 an hour

By JASON GARCIA

Using taxpayer money, Osceola County has paid outside attorneys up to \$635 an hour to try to stop Orange County from thwarting plans to build a developer-backed toll road through the Split Oak Forest nature preserve.

After the Orlando Sentinel told Osceola County officials that it was planning a story about the prices the county was paying, a spokesman for the county

said that Osceola and the law firm it is using have verbally agreed to new, lower rates that will "be effective on the next billing cycle."

The bill is already substantial. Records show the law firm Nelson Mullins billed Osceola County more than \$55,000 for its first two weeks of work on the lawsuit, which began in late August with an attempt to prevent residents in neighboring Orange

Please turn to **SPLIT OAK, A9**

Gators On gridiron, all eyes on Georgia

Florida's chances at reaching the SEC championship game will likely hinge on Saturday's game against Georgia. The Gators (3-1) take on the Bulldogs (4-1) at 3:30 p.m. in Jacksonville. **C1**