

CITY OF CORAL GABLES

OFFICE OF CITY COMMISSIONER



CITY HALL 405 BILTMORE WAY
CORAL GABLES, FLORIDA 33134

The Honorable James Uthmeier
Attorney General of Florida
Office of the Attorney General
The Capitol, PL-01
Tallahassee, FL 32399

June 23, 2025

Dear Honorable James Uthmeier,

I respectfully request a formal written legal opinion from your office regarding the recent ordinance adopted by the City of Coral Gables, which moves our municipal elections from April to November 2027. This change, passed by a majority of the Commission, shortens the current terms of office for duly elected officials by approximately five months, without submitting the matter to a vote of the residents.

As one of the dissenting voices on the Commission, I believe this action may conflict with both the Florida Constitution and established precedent requiring voter approval for any amendment that alters the terms of elected office. The authority to modify the term or timing of elections should remain squarely with the electorate.

I am also aware of Governor Ron DeSantis' public statement regarding a similar situation in the City of Miami. As he stated: "*City of Miami politicians do not have the authority to cancel this year's elections and extend their terms in office without voter approval.*" The same principle of voter sovereignty applies when terms are unilaterally shortened or altered in any direction.

Given the potential statewide implications of this precedent, your formal legal guidance is critical. I respectfully ask that your office clarify whether a municipality may legally enact an ordinance that amends the timing of elections and modifies the terms of office for sitting officials without first securing approval through a voter referendum.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I appreciate your leadership and look forward to your response.

Respectfully,

Melissa Castro
City Commissioner