



Miami-Dade voters will soon have an elected District 11 Commissioner again. Will it be Gov. DeSantis' appointee?

Miami-Dade County Commissioner **Rob Gonzalez** has had almost two years to demonstrate his leadership and policymaking skills to voters who will soon choose between him and two opponents seeking his District 11 seat.

He's hoping to win a full, four-year term at County Hall. Teachers **Bryan Paz-Hernandez** and **Claudia Rainville** intend to derail him.

Gonzalez, a 37-year-old lawyer, ran unsuccessfully for state office in 2022, placing second in a five-way Republican Primary for House District 119. Two months later, Gov. **Ron DeSantis** tapped him to replace then-Commissioner **Joe Martinez**, who was booked on felony charges of improper compensation.

Since joining the dais, Gonzalez has sponsored or co-sponsored more than 100 items, including an ordinance requiring more transparency from homeowner associations and a resolution aimed at expanding Miami-Dade's youth mentorship programs.

If elected, he vows to support law enforcement and push back against defund-the-police efforts, support school choice, oppose tax or fee increases, beautify parks, improve public transportation and guard small businesses from "excessive government regulation."

8 / 16 / 2024

ONLINE | FloridaPolitics.com | Jesse Scheckner

Approximate Visitors Per Month & Potential Audience: 277,623



After two years of serving in an appointed capacity, Rob Gonzalez believes he's proven to Miami-Dade voters that he deserves a full term at County Hall. Image via Rob Gonzalez.

He's also promising to make District 11 – a 215,000-resident area spanning the unincorporated west Miami-Dade neighborhoods of Country Walk, Hammocks, Kendale Lakes, Bent Tree and Lake of the Meadows – a more self-sufficient area in terms of employment and commercial options.

Gonzalez has amassed nearly \$1 million to defend his seat, with big donations coming from real estate interests like Centennial Management Corp., Atlantic Pacific Communities and Fontainebleau Miami Beach.

He collected endorsements from U.S. Rep. **Carlos Giménez**, 10 state-level officials, Miami-Dade Commissioners **Kevin Marino Cabrera** and **Anthony Rodriguez**, Miami-Dade School Board members **Mary Blanco**, **Monica Colluci** and **Dan Esposito**, and a handful of union and advocacy groups.

But he's also attracted criticism for leasing a new district office less than six months into his appointed tenure that will cost county taxpayers \$1 million over nine years – while still dragging the old office's lease.

8 / 16 / 2024

ONLINE | FloridaPolitics.com | Jesse Scheckner

Approximate Visitors Per Month & Potential Audience: 277,623

FLORIDA POLITICS

He drew further censure in late May for using Miami-Dade's official seal in an Instagram post of an upside-down American flag, historically a symbol of extreme distress or danger, to decry **Donald Trump's** conviction on nearly three dozen felony counts.



First-time candidate Bryan Paz-Hernandez has big policy proposals, including a Metrorail line through congested Kendall, that he wants to bring to the Miami-Dade Commission. Image via Bryan Paz-Hernandez.

Paz-Hernandez, a 29-year-old high school history teacher, said Gonzalez's list of achievements is paltry and evidence that he is more interested in stature than bringing relief to residents who need better transportation options and help making ends meet.

He wants to extend Metrorail into Kendall, an estimated **\$2.1 billion undertaking**, while cutting taxes, battling government corruption and blocking overdevelopment of District 11 that leads to traffic congestion.

8 / 16 / 2024

ONLINE | FloridaPolitics.com | Jesse Scheckner

Approximate Visitors Per Month & Potential Audience: 277,623



He also wants to increase Miami-Dade's affordable housing inventory, cut insurance costs and reduce toll fees.

Gonzalez supports restarting a currently stalled \$1 billion project called the **Kendall Parkway** to expand a county toll road into Southwest Miami-Dade.

Paz-Hernandez's opposition to the project, which would require development of previously protected wetlands, earned him an endorsement from the Sierra Club. He also notched an endorsement from the Kendall Federation of Homeowner Associations after **participating in a candidates' forum Gonzalez skipped**.

A former President of the **West Kendall Democrats Club**, Paz-Hernandez recently reregistered as an independent. Before becoming a teacher, he worked as a social worker and field organizer for former Democratic U.S. Rep. **Donna Shalala's** successful 2018 campaign.

This is his first run at public office. Between when he filed to run in January and early August, he raised close to \$19,000 through his campaign account. Two political committees supporting his campaign – **Miami-Dade First** and **District 11 First PAC** – have collected about \$42,000 combined.



Claudia Rainville jumped into the District 11 race at the last minute, but she's since shown up to several candidate events to explain what she hopes to do if elected. Image via Claudia Rainville.

That's far more than Rainville, a private school elementary teacher, has managed to gather since she made the District 11 race a three-person contest in early June. The 43-year-old Republican has added \$5,300 to her campaign coffers, all of it from her bank account.

An engineer educated in Nicaragua who became a U.S. citizen in 2010, Rainville is running to promote economic growth in the district she's called home for the past seven years. She wants to help small businesses, improve the county's educational offerings, increase local cultural activities, improve transit, provide more mental health services to the community, and beautify public parks and recreation areas.

8 / 16 / 2024

ONLINE | FloridaPolitics.com | Jesse Scheckner

Approximate Visitors Per Month & Potential Audience: 277,623



The wife of a cop and former U.S. Marine, she also lists improving public safety and supporting first responders among her campaign priorities, along with a proposed tax credit program to help retired seniors and veterans.

To boot, she promises to donate 10% of her monthly salary to help needy residents.

The Miami-Dade Commission is a technically nonpartisan body, as are its elections, so Gonzalez, Paz-Hernandez and Rainville are all on the Aug. 20 Primary ballot.

If no candidate secures more than 50% of the vote to win outright, the two top vote-getters will compete in a runoff culminating in the Nov. 5 General Election.

<https://floridapolitics.com/archives/689656-miami-dade-voters-will-soon-have-an-elected-district-11-commissioner-again-will-it-be-gov-desantis-appointee/>

8 / 16 / 2024

ONLINE | FloridaPolitics.com | Jesse Scheckner

Approximate Visitors Per Month & Potential Audience: 277,623