



MIAMI-DADE COUNTY

## Miami Commissioner Suarez reelected by default; Gort faces challenger

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Francis Suarez won four more years on the Miami City Commission on Saturday when the deadline to qualify for the Nov. 3 election passed without any opposition.

Suarez will keep his District 4 seat until 2019 — or until 2017 if he chooses to run once again for mayor, as many expect. For now, he said he's focused on what he can do as a commissioner, like addressing public safety and promoting mass transit.

"I'm really proud of the fact that I've been reelected twice without opposition, which I think says a lot about the work I've done for the district and as a consensus builder who has an open door policy," he said.

It's hardly a surprise that Suarez, 37, drew no opposition. A slew of candidates filed for his seat two years ago when he ran for mayor against Tomás Regalado, but Suarez ultimately dropped out of the race and most of the candidates campaigning for his District 4 seat backed away. The lone candidate who had yet to withdraw didn't file qualifying papers Saturday.

Because of city laws, Suarez won't officially be reelected until Nov. 8, according to City Clerk Todd Hannon.

Unlike Suarez, Commission Chairman Wifredo "Willy" Gort will have to campaign to keep his seat. He drew a challenge from Miguel Angel Gabela, a Jaguar auto parts retailer and former member of the city's zoning board. Gort had raised \$172,000 as of the beginning of the month. Gabela, meanwhile, reported lending his campaign \$90,000.

Gabela, 51, ran against Gort and seven others in a 2010 special election, and came in a distant second. He said he's running again because he and his neighbors are frustrated about crime and an inattentive city government.

"He hasn't been effective," Gabela said of Gort, 74. "I feel I can do a much better job."

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