



**House Committee on Administration July 28 Hearing Testimony
Topic: "Election Subversion: A Growing Threat to Electoral Integrity"**

In the 2020 election, a record-shattering 4.93 million Georgians made their voices heard when they cast their votes. Six weeks later, Georgians did it again, showing up in record numbers for the Senate runoff election that changed the direction of America forever.

Taken together, these two elections represented one of the greatest moments for democracy in the history of Georgia— and America.

But then, Georgia's 2020 election results were placed under an unwarranted microscope by so-called "election integrity watch dogs" because of what was at stake. Three recounts and multiple lawsuits later, the results are clear. Democrats and Republicans alike agree: our election was free from fraud.

Our elections have been free and fair because of hardworking, nonpartisan elections officials who are used to working behind the scenes to ensure everyone's sacred vote gets counted.

Georgia's Jim Crow 2.0 voter suppression law, S.B. 202, which was signed into law by Governor Brian Kemp, breaks down crucial safeguards for independent elections administrators. Most frighteningly, under S.B. 202, the Georgia State Election

Board has the power to replace county election boards that it decides are underperforming, giving partisan election officials far too much control over the fair administration of elections.

Partisan pressure and subversion tactics have no place in our elections – plain and simple.

Unfortunately, election subversion is not some far-off hypothetical. Republicans in Georgia are actively working to replace the elections board of Fulton County, Georgia's largest county, which includes the City of Atlanta.

Just this Monday, Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger said, "I have repeatedly called for the State Election Board to use its authority under SB202 to replace Fulton County's elections leadership." This is despite the Secretary of State previously certifying Georgia's 2020 election results and fighting against accusations of election fraud in the state.

Additionally, on July 15, House Speaker David Ralston sent a letter to Director Barron requesting he ask for the Georgia Bureau of Investigation to conduct a forensic investigation into Fulton County Board of Elections' procedures.

These are only two examples of Georgia Republicans fueling election subversion as they play to their political base. But Governor Kemp, Secretary Raffensperger, House Speaker Ralston, and their colleagues are scared to say the quiet part out loud.

Fulton County is full of voters who look like me. We might not be counting jelly beans in a jar, but election subversion seeks the

same results — suppressing the votes of people of color and those most marginalized.

Beyond undermining our democracy, targeting dedicated election officials is putting lives at risk. Director Barron and his staff have received death threats. Black staff members of the Fulton County election board have been called every racial slur you can imagine. One poll worker, having been harassed by the former President, is now in hiding and her life is turned upside down.

This needs to change, and ending election subversion should not be a partisan issue. Secretary Raffensperger's own employee, Gabriel Sterling, took a stand in December against members of his own Republican Party who were peddling conspiracy theories and undermining our democracy. "Someone's going to get hurt, someone's going to get shot, someone's going to get killed," Sterling warned. "It's not right."

I thank the House Committee on Administration for holding this hearing because our democracy is at stake. It's not just Georgia where this is happening, ya'll: legislation has been introduced this year in nearly every state to limit access to the ballot box. We don't have time to wait and see what might happen.

In Georgia, we've conducted one election with the undemocratic S.B. 202 as the law of the land, and our next election will be here before we know it. The time to act is now.

To anyone who wonders what they would have done during the civil rights movement — now is your time to find out. You are either on the side of our democracy or you aren't.

I look forward to continuing to work with Representative Sarbanes, my co-chairs of the Congressional Voting Rights Caucus, members of this Committee, and all those ready to defend our democracy and prevent election subversion.