

The greatest threat to our Constitutional Republic is misinformation and disinformation. This dubious pair will cause people to react in anger, cause acts of violence, and motivate people to take actions that are a danger to themselves, their communities, and to the fabric of our nation.

Faith in the results of elections is vitally key for the health of our republic, but more and more that faith is shaken by false allegations.

The 2016 Presidential Election was marred by allegations of Russian hacking. And while evidence showed that hacking was of campaign emails, the narrative was twisted into something far more dangerous to the legitimacy of elections administration. [YouGov published polling in December of 2016 that showed half of Democrat Voters believed that Russians had changed vote tallies in favor of Donald Trump](#). That number would skyrocket to 67% by November of 2017 after a media barrage and many prominent leaders, including [Hillary Clinton](#), [Bernie Sanders](#), [John Lewis](#), calling the Presidency of Donald Trump illegitimate or refusing to recognize it as legitimate..

Democrat voters were not alone in believing misinformation because that same poll showed 62% of Trump voters believed that millions of votes were cast illegally although there was no widespread evidence this was the case.

While I had first begun working on legislation in 2015 that would move Georgia from our aging DRE touchscreen voting machines, I accelerated efforts after hearing how post-election conspiracy theories began eroding voter confidence after 2016. I did not see this as a partisan issue, voters from both parties needed a voting system, from registration to final certification of their vote, that they could have confidence in. So that the General Assembly would have at least something to study I introduced the [first paper ballot bill at the end of the 2017 legislative session \(HB 641\)](#). And I would soon learn that bill was fraught with problems. 9.22.2017

During the summer months of 2017, I continued research and with the assistance of the Chairman of the Science and Technology Committee, Representative Ed Setzler, I organized a hearing featuring testimony from [cyber security experts on best practices for running elections](#). Paper ballots were a must, as well as the ability to audit them quickly and accurately. And so, I abandoned HB 641 and began working with one of my Democrat Colleagues in the House, Rep. Scott Holcomb, to attack the problem in a bipartisan way.

In October of 2017, Rep Holcomb and I co-authored a letter to Governor Nathan Deal requesting the Governor's proposed budget include funding for replacement machines as well as highlighting the urgency required to update our vulnerable technology.

Rep. Holcomb and I authored that bipartisan legislation (HB 680) the following session to allow hand marked paper ballots with machine tabulation and risk limiting audits <https://www.legis.ga.gov/legislation/52025> Ballot marking devices would have been available for ADA Voters, however would have produced same style ballots as individuals using hand marked paper ballots. The bill called for the use of risk limiting audits (RLA's) to verify the results. My own leadership in the House was skeptical of the need for change and the bipartisan nature of our approach, so the bill never got a hearing.

A close facsimile of that bill was carried in the Senate by my own Senator, Bruce Thompson, and passed

out of that chamber with only a single vote against. When it got to the House for consideration, there was no unifying vision for how to proceed. The media coverage wasn't all that helpful. [Even Fox News stated HB 680 would, "turn back the clock."](#)

Elections officials were also vocal about their opposition to using paper ballots, with one telling me that if any paper ballot bill should pass, they would immediately retire.

Neither HB 680 nor SB 403 would pass.

In April of 2018, while seeking the GOP nomination for Governor, Secretary Kemp created the Secure, Accessible & Fair Elections (SAFE) Commission to look at all options for replacing the machines. [They issued a 19-page report with the following recommendations:](#)

1. Georgia should adopt a voting system with a verifiable paper vote record. Every effort should be made to implement this system statewide in time for the 2020 election. The system should create an auditable paper record for every vote that the voter has an opportunity to review before casting. Rules should be put in place ensuring a rigorous chain of custody for these paper records, as are in place now for security of paper ballots and memory cards.
2. Georgia should remain a uniform system state, with each county using the same equipment that is initially provided by the state.
3. The implementation of a new system should include a training plan and budget to educate both voters and county election officials.
4. Any new system should ensure that disabled voters have the same opportunity for access and participation as other voters in accordance with HAVA and the ADA. Any new system should be certified by the EAC.
5. Georgia's new voting system should include new vote casting devices, new scanners, and new pollbooks. There should be paper backups for each of these systems to the extent possible, including paper registered voter lists and ballots. For each new type of hardware, steps should be taken to ensure both security and functionality. Any new hardware or software needs to be compatible with Georgia's existing voter registration system.
6. Given Georgia's history as a state that uses DRE's and the familiarity of voters and election officials with that method of vote casting, Georgia should move to a primarily ballot marking device with verifiable paper ballots solution for a new voting system.
7. Georgia should require post-election, pre-certification audits. These audits will certainly be time consuming and add work to county election officials, but they are necessary to show transparency and maintain trust in the elections process.
8. In order to successfully implement this new system, other areas of Georgia election law should be updated to ensure compatibility with the new system and improve election administration. Some of these updates may require updates to Georgia statutes, while some may be better suited to regulations promulgated by the State Election Board.

Before the SAFE commission could complete their work, Brian Kemp was elected Governor over Stacey Abrams. Abrams refused to concede the election, citing voter suppression efforts. While Ms. Abrams now bristles at comparisons of her refusal to concede the 2018 gubernatorial to those of President Trump, she absolutely engaged in the same type of activity to spread misinformation and disinformation. In a federal lawsuit against the state that initially claimed widespread vote suppression

that finally concluded this past October, the [judge wrote that Abrams and her group could not provide a single instance or “direct evidence of a voter who was unable to vote, experienced longer wait times, was confused about voter registration status.”](#)

There have been legitimate concerns throughout our nation’s history about specific elections that may have been corrupt. In many cases, there’s direct evidence or the losing candidate decides it is better for everyone involved to let the case go. So, there are instances when questioning the results of an election is an appropriate action. However, in none of our modern cases do we see any evidence to back up these claims, whether it be Russian hacking, voter suppression, or voter fraud. It’s all misinformation or disinformation. This is when it became apparent to me just how damaging misinformation and disinformation are to our country.

When Abrams refused to concede there was an immediate tone change among Republicans and Democrats who had worked to together on elections issues in the Georgia General Assembly. What I would describe as general collegiality became hyper partisan and at times combative. Rhetoric designed to invoke racism, outrage, and emotional responses replaced thoughtful debate and analysis.

It was into this new political paradigm that legislation that had been recommended by the SAFE Commission would be introduced in the House in January of 2019.

The legislation, which now had widespread Republican support, featured paper ballots with exclusive use of ballot marking devices in polling places and machine tabulation, but no risk limiting audit. RLA’s would be added at my insistence later with an amendment in committee, but in a very limited fashion. HB 316 received three full days of testimony that featured unlimited public comment.

Links to the hearing videos:

- [2.19.19](#)
- [2.20.19](#)
- [2.21.19](#)
- [Full Committee](#)

At this point, like so many other instances in making public policy, we had two groups of experts offering conflicting opinions on which path to take. On one side, we had cyber security experts and academics pointing out how BMD’s may not accurately reflect voter intent. On the other side, elections officials were telling us that ballot marking devices would eliminate questions about voter intent because it would remove handwriting and the ability of a voter to follow instructions from the equation.

After listening to person after person come before the committee to express concerns about the use of electronic ballot marking devices and never trusting any mark on a ballot that is not human readable, i.e., a bar code or QR code, I moved to table the bill in subcommittee and lost the vote on that motion. I ultimately became the only Republican in either chamber to cast a nay vote on HB 316 during the floor debate. My reasoning: too many voters would not be comfortable with QR codes on their ballots and would lead to future elections being attacked as illegitimate. Even if those attacks were false, it would create further doubt in our elections.

Except for my lone Republican Nay, the bill passed strictly along party lines.

In that year's budget, the General Assembly set aside \$150 million for the purpose of purchasing new machines under the requirements of HB 316. It was announced on July 30th, 2019, that Dominion Voting would be awarded a \$107 million contract to install 30,000 new voting machines that would produce a paper ballot but used a QR code for tabulation.

The machines were implemented statewide for the first time in the 2020 primaries and [Problems with the implementation of the new machines, impacted heavily by COVID-19, created series of scenarios that negatively impacted voter confidence](#). Media reports showed voters waiting in line for hours to vote, especially in urban areas and a lack of trained personnel to operate polling places. Speaker David Ralston again tasked the House Governmental Affairs Committee, of which I was a member, with investigating these problems. The committee had 4 hearings and produced a report of their findings. From the report:

Voting by Absentee Ballot

Following the mass mailing of absentee ballot applications by the Secretary of State's office, over 1.6 million Georgians applied for absentee ballots. However, many voters reported that they did not receive their ballots before election day, if at all. The committee heard reports of multiple applications arriving for the same voter, an application sent to a deceased voter, and applications and ballots sent to incorrect addresses.

The process of canceling the absentee ballots for voters who arrived at the polls for in-person voting led to long lines and long waits for many polling locations. Additionally, the processing of the applications and scanning of the completed ballots were noted as requiring significant commitments of time and resources from local elections workers.

New Voting Machines and Technology Issues

From counties throughout the state, the committee heard complaints of printer failures, issues with ballot scanners, and general malfunctions of the new voting equipment. Specifically, the set up and take-down of equipment, troubleshooting issues with the machines, problems with login credentials, and a lack of clear instruction for machine usage emerged as the most reported complaints.

The committee heard testimony stating that poll workers received inadequate training on operating the new voting machines. This lack of training on the machines, paired with equipment malfunction, were cited as reasons for long lines and long wait times for voters in polling locations across the state. Additionally, the "My Voter Page" voter information portal on the Secretary of State's website did not serve as a reliable source of information for voters on election day, leading to poll location confusion and issues with absentee ballot status.

COVID-19

Due to the pandemic that was taking place during the primary elections, fewer poll workers and fewer possible polling locations were available. Concerns regarding COVID-19 safety measures also contributed to less training opportunities and longer waits on election day. Many of the issues caused by COVID-19 served to compound the other delays and problems that were reported from election day.

Suggestions

The committee heard numerous recommendations and ideas already under consideration by the Secretary of State, the State Board of Elections, and/or local election officials.

Based on the testimony and presentations submitted throughout the investigative process, the committee further suggests the following for consideration in preparation of the November general elections:

- In order to ensure proper preparation for any potential outcomes, local election officials must adopt an election administration plan in advance of each election day which would include contingency plans, resource allocation, and turnout expectations;
- In order to improve poll worker training, local election officials should coordinate with the Secretary of State's Office and the voting machine vendors to ensure accurate and appropriate training standards are in place. Local election officials should increase the emphasis on training and poll worker recruitment;
- In order to ensure each polling site is appropriate for the new voting machine demands, local election boards must obtain certification of adequate electrical capacity at each polling site;
- In order to lessen the burden on local election officials on election day, allow absentee ballot processing to begin at the start of early voting;
- In an effort to address the absentee ballot cancellation backlogs on election day, the Secretary of State's Office must implement an accurate absentee/vote-by-mail ballot tracking program so that voters are informed of their application or ballot status; and
- In preparation of potential emergency situations or machine malfunction, local election officials must ensure paper ballot availability at the minimum of ten percent of active voters.

Conclusion

Much of the confusion from the primary elections was centered around the impact of COVID-19, first-time use of new voting equipment in statewide elections, and the mass increase in absentee mail ballots. However, certain findings uncovered during the investigation of the June 9, 2020 primary revealed issues that could extend beyond Georgia's November general elections. Testimony revealed potential modifications that require legislative and/or administrative action and deserve further scrutiny.

While the Committee's task was strictly related to the aforementioned June 9th irregularities, some areas worthy of further review are as follows:

- Exploration of best practices in other states;
- Codifying of emergency powers related to elections; and
- Audit/evaluation of the partnership, communication, and duties distributed among the Office of the Secretary of State, the State Board of Elections, and local county boards of election.

And then the Presidential Election of 2020 took place and Georgia became the center of the political universe just as I was heading out of office. At this point you have all heard about the various claims, the recorded Presidential call to Secretary Raffensperger, and how Rudy Giuliani appeared before both House and Senate committees. This is where he made the now infamous, "suitcases full of ballots,"

accusation which caused some poll workers to have to go into hiding for fear of their safety. Those were genuine ballot boxes that had been stored until they could be processed.

During this time, I did not feel that our majority leadership in the House had any desire to call a special session for the purpose of overturning the election. But there was certainly external pressure to do so. [A representative from the Trump campaign called each member to see if we would be willing to call for a special session.](#) Emails and phone calls from constituents who had bought into the conspiracy theory were constant.

It was at this moment that the risk limiting audit, which had faced stiff pushback during the debate over HB 316, allowed Secretary Raffensperger the authority to issue a full hand recount of the ballot in the presidential race. The results were the same, the election was certified, and Joe Biden won Georgia.

However, Georgia is the only state in the union that has used a runoff for a general election, and two US Senate seats, those held by David Perdue and Kelly Loeffler, were heading to a runoff in this environment. [Lin wood and Sydney Powell told Republican Voters to refrain from voting in the runoff](#) so long as Dominion Voting machines were being used. The impact of disinformation in this case was devastating for Republicans.

[The Atlanta Journal Constitution found in a poll that roughly 75% of Georgia Republicans believed that the election was stolen prior to the runoff.](#) “What good would it have done to vote? They have votes that got changed,” one voter is quoted as saying, “I don’t know if I’ll ever vote again.”

There is almost always a huge drop off in turnout during runoffs. In my own race when I was elected for the first time, I won in a runoff that saw total turnout in the runoff nearly match my first-round individual vote total as an example. In the US Senate runoffs, we also saw a massive drop off in turnout, as about 750,000 voters did not return to the polls a second time. Through analyzing voter data and records, we now know roughly 339,000 of them were Republicans.

In the first session after I left office, Georgia passed SB 202 to shore up voter confidence. Democrats attacked it as unnecessary in part, claiming that the Republicans in the General Assembly were trying to placate people who believed the lie that the election was stolen. They further claimed that the bill was racist and would result in voter suppression.

It should be noted that any attempt to give Republican voters in Georgia more confidence in elections obviously would be at the detriment of Democrats. And so we saw more over the top rhetoric as president [Biden called it, “Jim Crow in the 21st century.”](#) These attacks were Democrats own version of voter suppression and the media was all too willing to join in.

Here is a mostly comprehensive list of policy objectives the bill set out to address:

- Removes the Secretary of State as the chair of the State Election Board (SEB) and replaces them with a person elected by the General Assembly.
- Outlines the process for how the new chair is to be elected, starting as a nomination in the House and confirmation by the Senate.
- Prohibitions against the chair participating in party activities and contributing to candidate campaigns.

- The candidate for chair must be nonpartisan and has to have refrained from participating in campaigns for two years, although participation is not clearly defined.
- Sets the term of office (Gives the House the ability to set the length of term which can vary) and establishes an interim appointment by the Governor if a vacancy is created while the General Assembly is not in session.
- Establishes the Secretary of State as a non-voting ex-officio member of the State Election Board.
- Directs the Secretary of State to provide support or assistance requested by the State Election Board.
- Establishes procedures for the State Election Board to create emergency rules or regulations provided they
 - Give public notice
 - Immediately notify the following of the time, date, and subject of the proposal at what has caused the emergency
 - Governor, Lt. Governor, Speaker, Chair of elections related committees in the House and Senate, Legislative Counsel, and the head of each political party.
- Requires a majority of the SEB to certify that the rule or regulation strictly adheres to OCGA 50-13-4
- Prohibits county elections superintendents from accepting private money to run their offices.
- Establishes the process for filling a vacancy or temporary incapacitation of a probate judge in counties that do not have a local board of elections.
- Currently poll workers must live in the county they are serving and this expands the pool of poll workers to include residents of adjacent counties.
- Creates a new rule that should a candidate in a nonpartisan election die before that election that they would stay on the ballot and all votes for that candidate would still count.
- If the deceased candidate wins, the election would be handled under the failure to fill office provision of OCGA 21-2-504.
- Similar logic is applied to runoffs.
- Prohibits the board of registrars from accepting private money.
- Requires local elections superintendents to reduce the size of a voting precinct to 2000 voters if voters had to wait in line for more than an hour to check in on Election Day.
- Requires this change to be made at least 60 days ahead of the next election.
- Requires local poll manager to measure wait times not fewer than three times on Election Day.
- Prohibits the use of mobile polling locations by counties unless authorized by emergencies declared by the Governor under his authority in OCGA 38-3-51.

- Allows local superintendents to select government buildings for advance voting in the same way they have authority for Election Day voting.
- Clarifying process when a candidate for office dies.
- Gives county elections superintendents authority to set the number of voting machines used for municipal elections and requires one voting booth per 250 voters in a precinct for state wide elections.
- Creates a requirement that ballots be printed on security paper that incorporates features which can be used to authenticate the ballot but do not make the ballot identifiable to a particular voter.
- Creates a requirement for public notice of testing of various voting machine components.
- Party officials are to be notified, however they may not interfere with the testing or preparation of the voting machines.
- Reduces the earliest an absentee ballot application can be made from 180 days before an election to 78 days.
- Closes off new absentee ballot applications to 11 days before the election.
- Creates a requirement that absentee ballots be made on an application supplied by the Secretary of State.
- Creates a requirement for photo identification when applying for an absentee ballot.
- Voters signs an oath that certifies the info they include in the application is correct.
- Prohibits any government employee from sending an absentee application to a voter unless the voter has requested it.
- Prohibits anyone, except a relative, from sending out a prefilled absentee ballot application to any voter.
- No person will handle another person's absentee ballot unless they are a relative, assisting a disabled person, a clerk, mail carrier while returning the ballot, or a law enforcement office in the course of an investigation.
- Requires absentee applications that are sent by third parties prominently display that the entity sending the application is not a governmental agency and that the application is not a ballot.
- Creates a requirement for the absentee ballot clerk to verify the identity of the applicant as well as their voting eligibility.
- Establishes that applications received after the deadline are to be denied.
- Establishes that identity mismatch may not be the sole reason an application is denied and allows for voters in these cases to be sent a provisional ballot. This provisional ballot would be subject to a curing process prior to being tallied.

- If the application is incomplete the clerk or registrar is to contact the voter in writing to get the required information including a signed oath.
- Requires each county to have at least one drop box.
- Counties would be allowed an additional drop box for each 100,000 voters or one for each early voting location, whichever is less.
- Creates a requirement that each drop box is evenly geographically placed.
- Creates a requirement that drop boxes are placed inside the board of registrars or absentee ballot clerks' office or inside an early voting location.
- Creates a requirement that drop boxes are closed when voting is not being conducted.
- Creates a requirement that the drop boxes are under constant surveillance by an election official, their designee, licensed security guard, or a law enforcement officer.
- Creates requirements for the markings and features of the drop box.
- Requires a team of two people collect the ballots from the drop box at the end of each day.
- Requires ballot collectors to have sworn an oath.
- The clerk is required to store these ballots the same as ballots received via the mail.
- Requires poll manager to check that each box is empty at the beginning of each day and requires notification of the Secretary of State if the box is not empty.
- Reduces the number of days before a ballot must be sent to a voter from 49 to 29 days, and not less than 25 days, prior to an election.
- Overseas absentee ballots for federal elections would be sent beginning 49 days in advance of an election but not later than 45 days.
- Requires elections officials to respond within three days of receiving applications.
- Creates a provision that allows a person staying in a hospital to make an application for an absentee ballot on or ten days prior to Election Day.
- Adds fields for drivers license, last four of a social security number, or state issued id number.
- Creates a felony for anyone unauthorized to open an absentee ballot.
- Creates a requirement that instructions that ballots must be kept private except from people who are authorized to help someone complete their ballot.
- Adds language to the oath that under penalty of false swearing that no unauthorized person was allowed to observe the voter's ballot.
- Create ranked choice voting for overseas ballots.
- Requires DL, last four of social security number, or ID card number be printed on the outer envelope of the absentee ballot.

- Early voting starts on the 4th Monday before Election Day and as soon as possible prior to a runoff, but no later than the second Monday before the runoff.
- Clarifies that regular business hours for early voting are from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM on weekdays.
- Excludes observed state holidays from early voting.
- Registrars would choose either the third Saturday or third Sunday for early voting from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM. Previously polls would have closed at 4:00 PM.
- Allows registrars to open polls for advance voting from 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM only on days approved in state law.
- Board or registrars are required to post public notice regarding times and places of early voting.
- Creates ID Check and verification for absentee voting.
- If ID info is a mismatch, the ballot is rejected and the voter is notified. Voter would then have until the end of the cure period to rectify their ID info in order for their ballot to be counted.
- Extends the time elections officials may begin to process the identification and scanning of absentee ballots to three weeks prior to an election.
- Establishes the prohibition of tallying (which is a separate function from scanning) until polls are closed on Election Day.
- Creates a public notice requirement of when and where scanning will take place.
- Creates a requirement for people scanning ballots to swear an oath.
- Establishes that each party in a county may have up to two people to monitor the absentee ballot scanning process (Judge appointed voters if only ballot referendum).
- Prohibits observers from interfering, using cameras, cell phones, campaigning, touching ballots or containers, tallying or estimating the total votes cast, or communicating what they see.
- Allows superintendents to begin tallying absentee ballots at 7:00 AM on Election Day.
- Creates process for cured ballots to be tallied.
- Creates a requirement that absentee ballots are reported to the public as soon as possible (This is not defined) after the polls close.
- Creates the requirement that poll watchers are placed in an area where they can fairly observe the proceedings.
- Creates a training requirement for poll watchers.
- The Secretary of State would make training materials available to political parties for this purpose.

- Prohibits giving voters any gift, including specifically money, food, or drink within 150 feet of a polling place. This is in addition to existing law that prohibits displaying or disseminating campaign materials.
- Creates a requirement that provisional ballots must be cast in the precinct where the voter is entitled to vote. If the voter is not entitled to vote in that precinct, their ballot would be invalid and will not be counted even if they are registered to vote in a different precinct.
- Creates a duplication panel for when ballots are torn or damaged. A panel is made up of part officials or others as necessary.
- Extends the certification period from the Friday following the election to Monday.
- Removes the authority of the Secretary of State to use their judgement to extend certification.
- Creates new language about not being sworn in unless the candidate receives a majority of votes cast.
- Shortens special elections and runoffs to 28 days.
- Eliminates jungle primaries and creates a special primary for offices appointed by the Governor.
- Strikes superfluous language about elections in 2014.
- Sets dates for special primaries and special elections for county and municipal elections.
- Candidates in special primaries are listed alphabetically on the ballot.
- Specifies where on the ballot special primary races are located.
- Requires a special primary be held at the same time as the next scheduled general primary after the governor appoints an interim replacement for an office.
- Further prohibits ballot harvesting.
- If the census data is not available within 120 days of a municipal election, reapportionment will be effective for subsequent election cycles.
- Repeals conflicting laws

In spite of the blistering attacks on what the impact of SB 202 would be, specifically on communities of color, the criticisms in their own right turned out to be disinformation. And in this case, the Atlanta Braves lost the opportunity to host a Major League Baseball All Star Game when [President Biden indicated he would “strongly support” relocating the event to another state because of the law.](#)

The real impact was a higher level of confidence in voters from all walks of life. In fact, a post election poll, attached below, for the 2022 midterms by the University of Georgia, found 96% of African Americans waited in line 30 minutes or less to cast their ballot in person. It went on to find that zero of the African American respondents to the poll said that they had a poor experience. Other highlights from the poll:

- 98.9% of voters reported no issues casting a ballot.

- 95.3% reported a wait time of less than 30 minutes.
- 97% of voters rated their interactions with poll workers as “good” or “excellent”.
- 99% of voters felt safe in their polling location.
- 89.7% of voters feel confident in the elections process.
- 77.4% of voters felt that SB202 didn’t impact their ability to cast a ballot, with 14.8% saying SB202 made it easier to cast a ballot.
- 90.7% of voters feel that it’s easy to vote in Georgia.

Two of the most repeated criticisms of SB 202 are the provision which prohibits the distribution of water or food to voters waiting in line to vote. The first is in direct reaction to some candidates who have gone into polling places to pass out refreshments to voters waiting in line while their name is on the ballot those voters were about to see. For example, this candidate for State House, Matthew Wilson, who passed out Pizza to voters waiting in line.

Think about that for a second. A down ballot candidate with little exposure goes into a polling place and says, ‘Hi! I’m Matthew Wilson and I hope you will enjoy this delicious pizza,’ moments before the voter sees their name on a ballot?

Further, under SB 202 anyone can go to the poll manager and donate bottled water or other refreshments for distribution to those waiting in line to vote. They simply cannot campaign in a polling place by handing it out themselves. The donated refreshments must not have campaign materials on them as well.

And lastly, the average wait time to vote under SB 202 was under 30 minutes statewide, essentially eliminating the need for line warming.

The second most common criticism is the reduction in the use of drop boxes. It is important to note that Georgia’s use of drop boxes was not legal to begin with without the emergency powers granted during COVID. When those powers expired, all drop boxes would have been eliminated as a result. SB 202 legalized the use of drop boxes for the first time. Further, any voter that has access to a mailbox at their residence has their own version of a personalized drop box.



Georgia's Runoff Problem

Whenever no candidate receives more than 50%+1 most races go to a runoff election. Under SB 202, the runoff period has been shortened from about two months to one. The state had previously been under a court order to keep runoffs at 8 weeks to accommodate military and overseas voters. Under SB 202 every Republican in Georgia voted for the use of ranked choice voting to accommodate these voters and shorten the runoff period so that we are not in a constant election cycle.

A report published by Kennesaw State University last year looked at runoffs through three policy questions. How much do runoffs cost? What is the impact of turnout? And do campaigns get more negative during runoffs.

The study found that the current cost of a runoff is about \$75m statewide. It is important to note that elections are funded through local governments, and not by the states. So, election dollars are in direct competition with public safety budgets, public works, and other local and municipal services. The city of Milton, GA, for example, sets aside 30% of their budget just for elections.

The cost to administer a runoff election could be justified if it actually delivered on the promise of producing a majoritarian winner. However, the study found that with only a few exceptions, turnout usually substantially drops. The net effect is to elect the candidate by plurality, only delayed a month and with a \$75m price tag.

Lastly, the negative campaigning only accelerates during a runoff. KSU was able to measure the negative words in campaign ads to show empirically personal attacks and not policy differences are the messages that are employed most often. When you consider that runoffs, even under SB 202, go past Thanksgiving, Georgians are miserable as they are bombarded with negativity.

The promise of a majoritarian winner is a noble goal and there are ways to achieve that without limiting turnout or with the giant price tag to run the election. The KSU Study is attached for your review.

Voter Confidence and the role of Clean Voter Rolls

In 2020 and subsequent elections, a source of doubt in the has been the inability of the state to clean up voter rolls and make sure only eligible voters can cast a ballot. Georgia uses the Electronic Registration Information Center (ERIC) to assist in making sure when a voter moves to another state they can be taken off the voter rolls in Georgia.

In 2022 over 67,000 voters were identified by ERIC as having moved out of state. Also, in 2022 over 45,000 voters moved from one county to another. In all of these cases, The Secretary of State's Office follows a notification procedure that is designed to confirm the voter's proper address. The need for accuracy in voter rolls can be seen in cases such as former [State Rep Dan Gasaway who initially lost by 2 votes and forced a new election because of ineligible voters participating in his election.](#)

ERIC is a helpful tool, but not every state uses it. Further, it is under attack from those who believe it is part of a left-wing conspiracy to tilt elections. ERIC's voter data usage rules are also a source of contention and if it is to be truly useful compromise by member states may be needed to ensure more states are members. States who have decided to leave ERIC or not join have valid concerns and for the good of election confidence members and no members should work to resolve differences.

Another unintended consequence of Georgia's runoff election system is that because it creates such an extended election season it is nearly impossible for Georgia to update voter rolls with the latest information. Ineligible voters, even if we know they have moved out of state through ERIC, cannot be removed from the Georgia election rolls during most of an election year.

Conclusion

Hillary Clinton, Stacey Abrams, and Donald Trump, along with some members of the media have all created doubt in the election process. In response to their claims, the Georgia General Assembly has worked to create a system that makes it easier to vote, have results that can be audited and verified, give voters options for their preferred method of voting, and build confidence using voter ID. They have made adjustments that have shortened lines and lowered absentee rejection rates. More voters are participating than ever before and taking advantage of all of the various voting options Georgia offers.

However, they are not perfect and policies like runoff elections, at least in the way they are currently conducted, do more harm to voter participation than good.

At each step of the way and with every improvement to the voting process, the General Assembly has had critics screaming at them that what they are doing is wrong, racist, and will hurt various communities. In claims like Russia hacked the election, or that Abrams lost because of voter suppression, or that the election was stolen, the data doesn't back up those claims.

Secure, Accessible & Fair Elections (SAFE) Commission Report

Submitted to the General Assembly

January 10, 2019

SAFE Commission Members

Co-Chairs

- Secretary of State Robyn A. Crittenden
- State Representative Barry A. Fleming

State Legislators

- State Representative James Beverly
- State Senator Lester Jackson
- State Representative and Secretary of State-elect Brad Raffensperger
- State Senator Brian Strickland

Elections Officials

- Lynn Bailey, Executive Director, Richmond County Board of Elections
- Nancy Boren, Director of Elections & Voter Registration, Muscogee County
- Deidre Holden, Supervisor of Elections & Voter Registration, Paulding County
- Darin McCoy, Probate Judge and Election Superintendent, Evans County
- Cynthia Willingham, Supervisor, Rockdale County Board of Elections & Voter Registration

Accessibility Expert

- Amy Howell, Assistant Commissioner and General Counsel, Department of Behavioral Health & Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD)

Cybersecurity Expert

- Wenke Lee, Co-Executive Director, Georgia Tech's Institute for Information Security & Privacy (IISP)

Voters At-Large

- James "Jimmy" McDonald, Managing Principal, McDonald Firm, LLC
- Sheila Ross, Director of Capital Litigation, Prosecuting Attorneys' Council of Georgia

Other Members

- Michael Jablonski, General Counsel, Democratic Party of Georgia
- Vincent Russo, Deputy General Counsel, Georgia Republican Party
- John Monds, Libertarian Party of Georgia, Executive Committee

Background

Leading up to the November 2016 General Election, citizens across the nation began to grapple with questions about election security in the United States. Federal and State officials faced public scrutiny over whether the Direct Recording Electronic (DRE) machines and other components of the voting system that Georgia and other states use could be compromised as well as allegations of foreign nations influencing elections. While there is no evidence that Georgia's voting machines have ever been compromised or that they do not accurately count votes, state officials recognized the need to look at Georgia's existing voting system and see what future investments the state should make due to the age of the current system which was implemented by Secretary of State Cathy Cox in 2002.

In the fall of 2017, the Georgia General Assembly House of Representatives Science and Technology Committee (STC) held two meetings to discuss the future of Georgia's voting equipment. In the first meeting, the STC held discussions surrounding the current voting machines and their remaining estimated useful life. In that meeting, Chris Harvey, Elections Director at the Office of the Secretary of State, explained that while the existing voting system has worked well, Georgia should aim to have a new voting system in place by the 2020 election cycle.¹ At the second meeting, the STC viewed demonstrations of some of the systems currently available on the market.²

During the 2018 legislative session, House Bill 680³ and Senate Bill 403⁴ were introduced with the aim of updating Georgia's voting system and election code. Although neither of these bills passed, they helped further discussions towards the replacement of the current system.

In April 2018, then Secretary of State Brian Kemp established the Secure, Accessible, & Fair Elections (SAFE) Commission (SAFE Commission) to study different options for Georgia's next voting system. In November 2018, Secretary of State Robyn A. Crittenden took over as Co-Chair of the Commission.

The SAFE Commission's mission is to thoroughly study and discuss all options for Georgia's next voting system, with a focus on security, transparency, voter experience, accessibility and inclusion, voters' ability to adjust to a new system, and the ability of election officials to adapt to a new system quickly and accurately. To accomplish this mission, the SAFE Commission

¹ <http://www.house.ga.gov/Committees/en-US/CommitteeArchives122.aspx>

² Id.

³ <http://www.legis.ga.gov/Legislation/en-US/display/20172018/HB/680>

⁴ <http://www.legis.ga.gov/Legislation/en-US/display/20172018/SB/403>

traveled the state soliciting feedback from stakeholders including voting rights advocates, citizens, election officials, cybersecurity experts, accessibility experts, and former Secretary of State Cathy Cox, who previously led the state through a statewide implementation of a new voting system. The SAFE Commission held multiple hearings, reviewed responses to a Request for Information (RFI) that voting system vendors submitted, witnessed demonstrations of different types of voting systems, and researched post-election audit procedures with the aim of providing legislative recommendations before the Georgia General Assembly's next legislative session. The SAFE Commission's goal is not to provide vendor specific recommendations, but is to provide overall recommendations and information to the General Assembly about what Georgia's next voting system should look like. The Commission also hopes that this information will inform any future Request for Proposals (RFP) issued by the state.

The SAFE Commission recognizes that there is not a "one-size-fits-all" approach to voting and that trade-offs must be made to accommodate competing priorities, particularly security and accessibility. The Commission also recognizes that Georgia is not building a voting system from scratch. The Commission's recommendations are focused on the future of voting in Georgia, but in considering the future it must also consider the present voting system as well as past issues with voting in Georgia. The Commission also realizes that time is of the essence in this decision due to multiple lawsuits regarding Georgia's current voting system and the time to implement any new system; therefore, the Commission must consider the process for implementing its recommendations in a timely manner. In addition to making recommendations regarding a new voting system in Georgia, the Commission recognizes that moving to a new system may require updates to other aspects of the election code. The Commission has no legal authority to require a particular solution but instead recognizes that it serves as a resource to the General Assembly to offer guidance as the state moves to a new voting system. This report is a summary of these findings and recommendations.

Georgia's Current Voting System

The Commission was not established to examine Georgia's current voting equipment, but did receive a briefing from Georgia Elections Director Chris Harvey on the current system. Georgia's current election system was born out of issues that arose from the November 2000 General Election. In 2000, counties in Georgia used four different systems to cast and count ballots: lever machines, paper and scanning machines, punch-out ballots, and pen and paper. Post-election audits revealed major discrepancies in the number of votes for and ballots actually cast for the office of President.⁵ Chief among the causes for these discrepancies was a lack of uniformity among methods of voting across the state.⁶ As a result of the concerns raised in the review of the November 2000 General Election, the General Assembly and Governor Roy Barnes established

⁵ *The 2000 Election: A Wake-Up Call for Reform and Change*. Georgia Secretary of State Cathy Cox. January 2001.

⁶ *Id.*

the 21st Century Voting Commission, which held public hearings and conducted a pilot project using Direct Recording Electronic (DRE) vote casting devices.

In its final report to Governor Barnes and members of the Georgia General Assembly, the 21st Century Voting Commission made the following recommendations:

- 1) Georgia should move to a uniform voting system for in-person voting;⁷
- 2) This system should be comprised of DRE machines for in-person voting and an optical scan system for absentee voting by mail;⁸ and
- 3) The uniform election system should be controlled by an Election Management System (EMS) or software program that allows election officials to design both DRE and optical scan ballots simultaneously that will integrate votes into a single tallying report that will easily interface with existing and future voter registration systems.⁹

As a result, Georgia implemented its current uniform voting system that uses DRE systems for in-person voting. Georgia has a “top-down” election system where ballots are constructed by the Center for Elections System, which was previously a part of Kennesaw State University, but is now part of the Office of the Secretary of State.

One of the reasons that the state selected the current voting system is because of its ability to prevent overvotes and flag undervotes. An overvote is when a voter selects more selections than he or she is eligible to make. For example, if a voter chose two candidates for governor, this would be an overvote. Undervoting occurs when there is a discrepancy between the total number of ballots cast and total number of votes counted in a race. This generally occurs when a person neglects or chooses not to vote in a particular race on the ballot. The current DRE system in Georgia does not allow for overvotes, but voters are still able to exercise the right not to cast a vote in a particular race resulting in an undervote. The current system will not allow a voter to overvote. The current system also flags undervotes in a mandatory review screen that shows races with an undervote prior to allowing a voter to cast their ballot.

Currently, there are approximately 7,000,000 registered voters and 2,300 polling places in Georgia. The number of registered voters has increased dramatically since the implementation of online voter registration in 2014 and “opt-out” voter registration at the Department of Driver Services in September 2016.¹⁰ The number of registered voters has increased at a rate faster than the growth

⁷ *Report of the 21st Century Voting Commission*, page 38. December 2001.

⁸ *Id.*

⁹ *Id.*

¹⁰ “Georgia’s Motor-Voter Drive Boosts Eligible Balloters.” *Wall Street Journal*, January 8, 2019. Available at <https://www.wsj.com/articles/georgia-boosts-eligible-voters-in-groups-leaning-democratic-1538991000>.

in population.¹¹ The Commission’s view is that both online voter registration and “opt-out” voter registration (which were implemented subsequent to the U.S. Supreme Court’s decision in *Shelby County v. Holder*) are positive developments that increase both access and security to Georgia’s voting system, making it easier to register to vote while at the same time ensuring that election officials have accurate, up-to-date information.

Georgia currently utilizes a uniform voting system that allows voters to vote in three different ways: 1) On Election Day on DREs, 2) during in-person advance voting on DREs, and 3) on a paper absentee ballot that is mailed to the voter. Georgia has “no-excuse” absentee by mail voting, meaning that any voter may request an absentee by mail ballot for any reason or no reason whatsoever. Despite the existence of no-excuse absentee by mail voting, the overwhelming majority of voters choose to vote on DRE machines during in-person advance voting or on Election Day.¹² In the past four general elections, approximately 5.46%,¹³ 4.17%,¹⁴ and 5.08%,¹⁵ and 5.68%¹⁶ of voters who cast ballots, respectively, chose to vote absentee by mail.

In-person advance voting occurs during the three weeks prior to Election Day, beginning on the fourth Monday before Election Day and ending on the Friday before Election Day.¹⁷ Every county is required to have at least one advance voting location but many counties choose to have more than one location.¹⁸ Counties are also required to have advance voting on the second Saturday of the advance voting period from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., but some larger counties choose to provide more weekend days and hours.¹⁹ During advance voting, voters may vote at any advanced voting location in their county.²⁰ In the past four general elections, approximately 43.77%,²¹ 32.65%,²²

¹¹ “Georgia Cancels Fewer Voter Registrations After Surge Last Year.” *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, October 17, 2018. Available at <https://www.ajc.com/news/local-govt--politics/georgia-cancels-fewer-voter-registrations-after-surge-last-year/fqT1bcSzGu33UEpTMDzMKV/>.

¹² Voters who request but who have not yet returned an absentee ballot, may instead vote in person during advance voting or on Election Day if they so choose.

¹³ <http://results.enr.clarityelections.com/GA/42277/113204/en/vts.html?cid=5000> (reflecting votes cast in the 2012 race for President).

¹⁴ <http://results.enr.clarityelections.com/GA/54042/149045/en/vts.html?cid=6000> (reflecting votes cast in the 2014 race for Senate).

¹⁵ <http://results.enr.clarityelections.com/GA/63991/184321/en/vts.html?cid=5000> (reflecting votes cast in the 2016 race for President).

¹⁶ <https://results.enr.clarityelections.com/GA/91639/Web02-state.221451/#/cid/20000> (reflecting votes cast in the 2018 race for Governor.)

¹⁷ In runoff elections where there is no federal candidate on the ballot, advance in-person voting begins “as soon as possible.” O.C.G.A. § 21-2-385(d).

¹⁸ Fulton County, for example, had 20 advance voting locations open every day of the advance voting period, including all weekend days, during the 2018 general election. <https://www.ajc.com/news/local/fulton-county-announces-early-voting-locations/bFmiAqtm7cuRy1U08uXeJJ/>.

¹⁹ *Id.*

²⁰ On Election Day, voters must vote at their assigned precinct.

²¹ See Note 13.

²² See Note 14.

53.54%,²³ and 47.99%²⁴ of voters who cast ballots, respectively, chose to vote during advance voting. It is the view of the Commission that the current advance voting period is appropriate for primary and general elections and elections held in conjunction with primary and general elections and that the current advance voting period should be preserved. Furthermore, the ability for voters to vote at any advance voting location within their county is also popular and should be preserved.

Election Day voting in Georgia takes place entirely on DREs and still remains the most popular way to vote in Georgia. In the past four general elections, approximately 50.53%,²⁵ 62.91%,²⁶ 41.20%,²⁷ and 46.03%²⁸ of voters who cast ballots, respectively, chose to vote on Election Day. Due to the logistics of having such a large number of people turn out on a single day, Georgia law requires voters to vote at their assigned polling places on Election Day.²⁹

Georgia's voting system is more than just DRE machines. Georgia also uses electronic pollbooks and optical scanners to scan absentee by mail and provisional ballots. Some counties use a driver's license scanner that allows poll workers to pull up voter records by scanning their driver's license. Each of these components must work with the election management system, known as GEMS, that is used to build ballots and tabulate results. An electronic pollbook is a device that contains a voters registration information and shows poll workers which precinct that the voter should vote in and what ballot they should receive based on their district. An optical scanner is used to scan absentee by mail and provisional ballots. The electronic pollbooks used in Georgia were procured by the state in 2005 and distributed to the counties in 2006. The optical scanners used in Georgia were procured and distributed in 2010.

Recommendations and Discussion

Based on discussions, consideration of public testimony and other submitted documents, and after hearing from election officials (who will be tasked with using this new system and who have firsthand insight into voter experience in Georgia), experts in voting rights, cybersecurity, security, accessibility, and reviewing multiple voting systems, the SAFE Commission makes the below recommendations to the Governor, the Secretary of State, and the General Assembly. These recommendations track best practices from experts in election administration while keeping in mind circumstances that are unique to Georgia. In today's environment, it is vital to have a robust election system that the voting public has confidence in. The SAFE Commission believes that

²³ See Note 15.

²⁴ See Note 16.

²⁵ See Note 13.

²⁶ See Note 14.

²⁷ See Note 15.

²⁸ See Note 16.

²⁹ In certain circumstances, voters may vote a provisional ballot if they are in the wrong polling place within their county of registration. Their votes will count in the contests that they are eligible to vote in.

putting these recommendations into practice will increase confidence in Georgia's elections and therefore, strengthen our democracy.

1. Georgia should adopt a voting system with a verifiable paper vote record. Every effort should be made to implement this system statewide in time for the 2020 election. The system should create an auditable paper record for every vote that the voter has an opportunity to review before casting. Rules should be put in place ensuring a rigorous chain of custody for these paper records, as are in place now for security of paper ballots and memory cards.

The Commission unanimously agrees that Georgia should move to a new voting system that provides a verifiable paper vote record. While there are many good things about Georgia's current voting system; it is running on hardware and software that is approaching the end of its useful life. The Commission further unanimously agrees that Georgia should make every effort to implement this system in time for the 2020 election cycle. The Commission is aware of the court order in *Curling v. Kemp* where a federal judge strongly suggests that if Georgia does not update its voting system soon, a new system will be ordered. The Commission unanimously believes that Georgia voters would be better served by a process that goes through their elected representatives in the General Assembly rather than be subjected to a system that is simply ordered by a federal judge.

A verifiable paper vote record is a method of providing feedback to voters using a paper ballot that is either marked by hand or on a ballot-marking device with a verifiable paper ballot. At the June 12, 2018 SAFE Commission meeting, the Commission heard testimony from Chris Harvey, Elections Director for the Secretary of State, that the strong consensus among election officials was that any new system should have some form of voter-verifiable paper trail component to it. The verifiable paper vote record offers some fundamental differences from a traditional DRE machine because a paper, rather than electronic recording medium, is used when storing votes. Voter's choices are either marked by hand with a writing utensil or marked on a screen in a similar manner to a DRE on a tablet device. However, a ballot-marking device with a verifiable paper ballot does not record the voter's choices into its memory. Instead, it allows the voter to mark the choices on-screen and, when the voter is done, prints the ballot selections in a manner that allows the voter to easily read their selections. The resulting printed paper ballot is then counted using a digital scanner and tabulator. This printed paper ballot, which is the official ballot, is then fed through a scanner into a locked ballot box so that all originals are saved for auditing and recounts. Additionally, the voter has the ability to proofread the ballot before it is scanned and have it voided and start over if there is an error.

While Georgia should move to a new voting system that incorporates a verifiable paper vote record that can be audited, the state should also keep in mind the positive things about the current voting system and the problems that it solved when it was implemented. Georgia has one of the lowest

residual vote rates³⁰ in the country³¹ and that is a strength that the state should seek to keep in a new system. As we make our additional recommendations, the Commission keeps in mind that Georgia voters have voted on DREs for 16 years, and Georgia election officials have administered a DRE based election system for the past 16 years. In making these recommendations, the Commission is thinking of the future of voting in Georgia, but we are mindful of what Georgia's current voting system is and the short amount of time that we are recommending to move to a new system.

2. Georgia should remain a uniform system state, with each county using the same equipment that is initially provided by the state.

Georgia currently utilizes a uniform election system, meaning that every county in Georgia uses the same type of DREs, electronic poll books,³² and the same Election Management System.³³ The SAFE Commission recommends that Georgia remain uniform in its next system. The Commission heard from numerous experts who endorsed uniformity. Sean Young, Legal Director for the American Civil Liberties Union of Georgia, endorsed a uniform system because it “eliminates a lot of problems of disparate counting.” He further commented on the need for the state to pick a system that does not have a discriminatory impact in order to ensure these problems remain hypotheticals and not a reality. Previous studies conducted in Georgia have shown that different voting systems may have disparate impacts on different populations of voters.³⁴

Elisabeth MacNamara, previously President of the League of Women Voters, complimented the current uniform system and stated that uniformity is one of the things that is “good about our system” in reference to Georgia's current voting system. Anne Lewis, General Counsel for the Georgia Republican Party, also testified that she believed a uniform system was best for voters. Cathy Cox, former Georgia Secretary of State, stated that her 21st Century Voting Commission found numerous problems with Georgia's lack of uniformity in elections prior to 2002, including large differences in residual vote rates across jurisdictions.

³⁰ Residual Vote Rate is “the number of under- and over-votes cast in an election, as a percentage of voter turnout.” Massachusetts Institute for Technology Election Performance Index. <https://elections.mit.edu/#indicatorProfile-AVT>.

³¹ Id.

³² An electronic pollbook is a device that allows poll workers to look up a voter's registration info to determine that the voter is properly registered and in the correct precinct.

³³ An election management system is the database software that allows election officials to build ballots, tabulate results, and perform other tasks necessary to administering an election.

³⁴ “The data indicates that, across the board, the percentage of undervotes is higher in predominately black precincts than in predominately white precincts in the same county. This variation is referred to as the “undervote gap.” Surprisingly, the undervote gap was greater in counties that use opti-scan systems than in counties that use the punch card. And some of the highest undervote percentages found were in African-American precincts using optical scan equipment.” *Report of the 21st Century Voting Commission*, page 19.

A uniform system has several benefits. Chief among these is that a uniform system is ideal for training and administration purposes. All election officials and volunteers throughout the state will be trained on the same equipment, electronic poll books, procedures, and learn the same best practices and procedures. Further, a uniform system ensures that voters have the same voting experience no matter where they vote in Georgia. A voter who moves from one part of Georgia to another will be able to vote in a consistent and familiar way. The SAFE Commission also recommends a uniform voting system because of potential lawsuits challenging the system on equal protection grounds.

3. The implementation of a new system should include a training plan and budget to educate both voters and county election officials.

Good training is vital to running good elections. During the implementation of Georgia's current voting system, the state provided money to allow for both voter education and election official training. The State conducted training and awarded grants to counties to implement their own training for their election officials. The SAFE Commission recognizes the importance of both voter education and election official training as we move to a new system, and the Commission recommends that the state take a similar approach to training and education during this implementation as it did during the implementation of the current system.

4. Any new system should ensure that disabled voters have the same opportunity for access and participation as other voters in accordance with HAVA and the ADA. Any new system should be certified by the EAC.

The Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA) states that voting systems must be accessible for individuals with disabilities, including a manner of access for the blind and visually impaired that provides the same opportunity for access and participation as other voters. The opportunity for access and participation includes an expectation of privacy and independence in the voting booth. Georgia's current system accomplishes this well because the voting experience is very similar for disabled and non-disabled voters. Giving disabled voters the same amount of access, participation, privacy, and independence as non-disabled voters should be a goal of Georgia's next election system.

The SAFE Commission held a Voting Accessibility Panel at its August 30, 2018 meeting where it heard testimony from panelists who work to ensure that individuals with disabilities are provided proper access to the voting process. Lou Ann Blake, Deputy Director of the National Federation of the Blind and Jernigan Institute, has worked extensively with election technology, developers, voting rights advocates, elections officials, and vendors to ensure accessibility for blind and vision impaired voters. Ms. Blake previously managed NFB's HAVA training, and she testified that the two key issues for blind or vision-impaired voters are being able to access the ballot and then mark

it privately and independently. A third issue revolves around absentee ballots and the fact that typically they are not accessible to a blind voter because it is a paper ballot. When asked what current practices the state should retain in order to make sure disabled Georgians had access to voting, Ms. Blake lauded the uniform system Georgia currently has in place.

Additionally, Anne Kuhns, staff attorney with the Georgia Advocacy Office, advocates on behalf of individuals with physical, mental, and developmental disabilities. Current laws require that people with disabilities have the same opportunity to access and participate in the voting process. Ms. Kuhns commented on the need for any new voting system to have an audio-ballot component for the visually impaired and that ballot access is an issue of utmost importance for individuals with disabilities. There is also a great need for proper training on how to use voting equipment that is used by individuals with disabilities because every experience is different. If a precinct has the greatest equipment in place for use by voters with disabilities, but workers are not adequately trained on how to use it, or for contingency plans, it makes it difficult for these individuals to vote. The SAFE Commission also heard testimony from Elizabeth Jones, Director and COO of the Shiloh Community Center, which provides health and wellness services to the elderly and persons with disabilities. Ms. Jones testified about potential issues for senior citizens when trying to vote. She commented that one of the largest problems for senior citizens was a lack of access to polling places and adequate transportation, especially in rural areas, and that some of these sites lack the type of accessibility elderly people may need including restrooms. Another issue for senior voters is having adequate lighting in polling places. This may be rectified by new technology with the ability to use larger print on ballots and technology that allows for a great deal of contrast on the screen or ballot.

The SAFE Commission also heard testimony from representatives from the Georgia Advocacy Office who stressed that voting with disabilities is not a partisan issue. Disabilities stretch across race, gender, economic, and party lines. Voters all want the same thing – which is to go to the poll, have your vote properly counted, and for it to be done privately and accurately. The uniformity of any voting system is essential to ensuring disabled voters have as seamless a trip to the ballot box as possible.

The Commission is aware of recent litigation regarding accessible voting in both Maryland and Ohio. In National Federation of the Blind v. Lamone, 813 F.3d 494 (4th Cir.) 2016, the United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit held that Maryland's absentee voting program, which required voters to mark a hardcopy ballot by hand, violated the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Rehabilitation Act, 29 U.S.C. § 974, because it did not allow disabled persons to mark their ballots without assistance. In Hindel v. Husted, 875 F.3d 344, (6th Cir.) 2017, the United States Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit reversed the district court's holding that a similar absentee balloting design did not violate the ADA. That case was remanded to the district court and continues.

Another byproduct of the passage of HAVA was the establishment of the United States Election Assistance Commission (EAC). The EAC is an independent, bipartisan commission tasked with developing guidance to meet HAVA requirements and adopting voluntary voting system guidelines. The EAC also serves as a national clearinghouse of information on election administration. The EAC also accredits testing laboratories and certifies voting systems, as well as audits the use of HAVA funds.

HAVA also established the Technical Guidelines Development Committee to assist EAC in the development of voluntary voting system guidelines (VVSG). VVSG are a set of specifications and requirements that voting systems may be tested against to determine if they meet standards for accessibility, security capabilities, and basic functionality. These guidelines are voluntary, but they have been adopted in some form by 47 states by rule or law. The EAC and the National Institute of Standards (NIST) currently have a working group that is developing VVSG 2.0, which is currently in its draft phase. Currently, no election vendors offer a voting system that is VVSG 2.0 compliant. It is not currently clear when or if the EAC will review and adopt the new VVSG 2.0 standards; subsequently, the SAFE Commission recommends that any new system must be certified by VVSG 1.0. Whether there will need to be upgrades or patches that would bring the new voting system into compliance with the VVSG 2.0 standard is an open question until VVSG 2.0 is actually adopted. The SAFE Commission recommends that Georgia's next voting system have a mechanism to allow for upgrades and patches to ensure continued reliability and ability to comply with future standards.

5. Georgia's new voting system should include new vote casting devices, new scanners, and new pollbooks. There should be paper backups for each of these systems to the extent possible, including paper registered voter lists and ballots. For each new type of hardware, steps should be taken to ensure both security and functionality. Any new hardware or software needs to be compatible with Georgia's existing voter registration system.

While much of the attention regarding voting systems revolves around the vote casting devices, there is a host of other equipment that is vital to administering secure, accessible, and fair elections. This equipment includes pollbooks, scanners, an election management system, and other components. Georgia should update each of these components, but should ensure that any new hardware and software is compatible with the state's existing voter registration system.

As with any piece of hardware or software, security must be a top priority. As SAFE Commission member Dr. Wenke Lee has pointed out, "even when a system is not directly connected to the Internet it can still be attacked by those who have direct access or via data that can be traced back to an Internet facing system."³⁵ In order to ensure a high level of security of voting system

³⁵ "Addendum to Basic Security Requirements for Voting Systems." Dr. Wenke Lee. January 3, 2019.

components, Georgia should adopt security rules based on the following guidelines. Georgia should also ensure that any technology that touches any aspect of a voting system is secure. These recommendations are more appropriate for promulgation by the State Election Board as administrative rules rather than being adopted in statute. These steps include but are not limited to:

- Restricting device functionality to only what is required (e.g. disabling Wi-Fi, Bluetooth, or internet connectivity when not needed for updates or specific functionality).
- Physically disable or otherwise seal exposed ports.
- Encrypt any data transmissions.
- Conduct regular penetration testing.
- Treat all removable media as potential delivery mechanism for malware and put in place appropriate policies for the use of removable media (e.g. thumb drives, etc.).
- Ensure that there is a consistent process to securely patch and update software on devices.
- For any vendor that provides hardware or software—require vendor security measures in accordance with industry best practices, such as those established by the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST). Such security requirements for any potential vendor should be included in the RFP process and in any contract so that vendors hold responsibility for cybersecurity failures and are incentivized to properly maintain equipment under contract.
- Have an ability to “hash-test” software to ensure that the code on the hardware matches the certified source code.

6. Given Georgia’s history as a state that uses DRE’s and the familiarity of voters and election officials with that method of vote casting, Georgia should move to a primarily ballot-marking device with verifiable paper ballots solution for a new voting system.

While all other recommendations of the SAFE Commission represent the unanimous view of the Commission, the Commission was not able to come to a unanimous view on how Georgia voters should mark their ballots on Georgia’s next voting system. A majority of the Commission believes that Georgia should utilize ballot-marking devices with verifiable paper ballots as the in-person method of voting for Georgia’s next voting system. Ballot-marking devices with verifiable paper ballots ensure that a voter’s selection in each contest is captured in a manner that will be automatically counted by the tabulating mechanism. Georgia’s residual vote rate is very low, and the next system should aim to keep that rate low. Any ballot-marking device utilized in Georgia, in addition to utilizing verifiable paper ballots where voters can easily read their selections prior to casting a ballot, should include features that prevent overvotes, warn about undervotes, incorporate a review screen that lets the voter confirm their selection prior to printing their ballot, and include measures to increase election security such as counting the numbers of voters who utilize the device. Every printed ballot marked on a ballot-marking device must include a way for the voter to read their selections on the printed ballot prior to entering it into the scanner, and the

law should allow for a voter to spoil that ballot and mark a new ballot if he or she sees something on the ballot that needs to be corrected. Any new system should also include a solution that allows voters to cast provisional ballots in a manner that does not require duplication of that ballot by election officials in order for the ballot to count.

The Commission unanimously agrees that federal law requires the availability of ballot-marking devices for disabled voters. Ballot-marking devices with verifiable paper ballots can allow for the efficient use of audio ballots (listening to the ballot being read aloud through headphones) for visually challenged voters and low literacy voters if they choose.³⁶ Ballot-marking devices with verifiable paper ballots can also be an efficient way to provide ballots in alternative languages.³⁷ Currently, one jurisdiction in Georgia, Gwinnett County, is required by federal law to provide ballots and other election materials in Spanish in addition to English, and other jurisdictions may meet that threshold after the 2020 Census.³⁸ Utilizing a ballot-marking device with a verifiable paper ballot also allows a voter to adjust the text size on the screen if they need to.³⁹ While the Commission's discussions addressed physical disabilities, the Commission is also cognizant that the state must remain cognizant of voters with developmental disabilities. Any new system should also accommodate voters with developmental disabilities and the output of any ballot marking device should be easily readable and verifiable. It is the view of the Commission that Georgia should utilize a voting system that allows both disabled and non-disabled voters to mark their ballots in the most similar way possible that maximizes both independence and privacy. This is especially the case because Georgia's existing system allows both disabled and non-disabled voters to vote in very similar fashions. Moving from a system where a disabled voter's voting experience closely aligns with a non-disabled voter's experience to a system where the experiences are very different would likely invite legal challenges that may well be successful.⁴⁰

The fact that Georgia's current voting system utilizes touchscreen voting through DREs is another reason that the Commission recommends moving to a ballot-marking device with verifiable paper ballots solution. Georgia voters have cast more than 40 million votes on a touchscreen since 2002,⁴¹ and touchscreen technology has become even more widely adopted across all facets of life since that time. The Commission believes that moving from one form of touchscreen voting to another will be an easier transition for Georgia voters than it would be to move to hand-marked paper ballots. Exit polling conducted in a pilot project in Rockdale County using ballot-marking devices with a verifiable paper ballot showed strong support by Georgia voters.⁴² On a scale of 1-

³⁶ Center for Civic Design, <https://civicdesign.org/why-not-just-use-pens-to-mark-a-ballot/>.

³⁷ Id.

³⁸ See Voting Rights Act, Section 203. 52 U.S.C. § 10503.

³⁹ Center for Civic Design, <https://civicdesign.org/why-not-just-use-pens-to-mark-a-ballot/>.

⁴⁰ Muller, Derek T., "The Democracy Ratchet" (June 22, 2018). *Indiana Law Journal*, Vol. 94, 2019. Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3201247>

⁴¹ http://sos.ga.gov/index.php/Elections/current_and_past_elections_results

⁴² "City of Conyers Pilot Project Report." Georgia Secretary of State. February 1, 2018.

10 with 10 being the most satisfied in the equipment, the mean response of the 686 respondents was 9.21.⁴³ On a scale of 1 to 10 with 10 being very confident that their vote was counted accurately, the mean response was 9.28.⁴⁴

The Commission also believes that moving from one form of touchscreen voting to another will be an easier transition for Georgia's election officials. Cynthia Willingham, Elections Director in Rockdale County, utilized ballot-marking devices with verifiable paper ballots in a pilot project during a municipal election and testified that it was an easy transition for her and her poll workers. She found that utilizing a ballot-marking device with a verifiable paper ballot system saved time during opening and closing procedures in precincts, allowed faster reporting of results, and maintained existing functionalities like being quickly able to provide all ballot styles needed during advance voting.⁴⁵ The Commission heard testimony from numerous county election officials who voiced concerns about the cost of a hand-marked paper ballot system. These officials pointed out that in a hand-marked paper ballot system, more costs are pushed to the counties. County election officials also testified moving to a hand-marked paper ballot system would require major changes for poll workers and would lead to increased risk of voters not getting the correct ballot. In some precincts in Georgia, poll workers have as many as a dozen ballots styles to choose from depending on where exactly a voter resides. While a statewide transition will undoubtedly be more complex than a pilot project, easing the transition as much as possible is the best way to have a successful implementation.

SAFE Commission member Dr. Wenke Lee, Professor of Computer Science in the College of Computing at the Georgia Institution for Technology, who also holds the John P. Inlay Chair in Software at Georgia Tech, strongly feels that hand-marked paper ballots are more secure than ballots marked using ballot-marking devices. This view is also held and was expressed to the commission by Verified Voting and numerous professors in computer science and cybersecurity.⁴⁶ Dr. Lee's views are well-stated in two white papers that he submitted to the Commission and that are attached hereto.⁴⁷ Dr. Lee also made a presentation to the Commission on cybersecurity that is attached to this report. Dr. Lee's view is that "a voting system must provide either a human readable, post-vote paper receipt from a ballot-marking device or an actual paper ballot as the durable, independent evidence that can be used as the authoritative source document in an audit or recount."⁴⁸ Dr. Lee's concern with ballot-marking devices with verifiable paper ballots is that there is not a systemic study that shows that voters actually do verify their ballot selection even when

⁴³ Id.

⁴⁴ Id.

⁴⁵ Id.

⁴⁶ January 7, 2018 Letter from Richard DeMillo, Charlotte B. and Roger C. Warren Professor of Computing, Georgia Institute of Technology.

⁴⁷ "Basic Security Requirements for Voting Systems" and "Addendum to Basic Security Requirements for Voting Systems." Dr. Wenke Lee. Attached hereto as Exhibits 1 and 2.

⁴⁸ "Addendum to Basic Security Requirements for Voting Systems." January 3, 2019. Dr. Wenke Lee.

they have the opportunity. He is also concerned that even voters who attempt to verify their selections may not actually remember them. Dr. Lee articulated in his white-papers and at SAFE Commission meetings that a ballot marked by hand is more secure than one marked by a ballot-marking device and that any convenience offered by ballot-marking devices should not outweigh the cybersecurity concerns. Dr. Lee understands that at least one ballot-marking device with a verifiable paper ballot per precinct would be required for use by disabled voters, but argues that non-disabled voters should mark their ballots by hand. He strongly recommends that if the state does utilize ballot-marking devices with verifiable paper ballots, that it consider how it will keep those machines up to date. Dr. Lee suggests leasing, rather than buying, those machines to allow for more frequent replacement, vendor incentive to regularly improve their equipment, and reduced cost to the taxpayer.

The Commission agrees with Dr. Lee that the state must ensure a mechanism to keep all hardware and software used in its voting system, including ballot-marking devices with verifiable paper ballots, up-to-date and secure. The state should consider leasing or otherwise ensure via contractual terms that all components of the voting system can be replaced and updated to ensure that after implementing a new system, Georgia remains on the forefront of voting technology and security. The Commission understands that state law and budgetary rules may make leasing technology equipment difficult, but the Commission encourages the General Assembly to review these laws in order to ensure that technology utilized by Georgia remains up-to-date.

The voting systems demonstrated to the Commission use either bar codes, QR codes, or optical character recognition (OCR) in order to tabulate marked ballots. The Commission reiterates its recommendation that the paper ballot that is generated in Georgia's next voting system must allow the voter to verify his or her selections and cure any errors prior to scanning the ballot. Additionally, Georgia law should be updated to clarify that the human readable component of the ballot is the official vote record. Given the Commission's next recommendation that Georgia require post-election, pre-certification audits, we do not believe it is prudent for Georgia to not consider a vendor based on their method of tabulation, whether it be bar code, QR code, or OCR.

7. Georgia should require post-election, pre-certification audits. These audits will certainly be time consuming and add work to county election officials, but they are necessary to show transparency and maintain trust in the elections process.

The SAFE Commission unanimously recommends that Georgia require post-election, pre-certification audits of its election results. The Commission recognizes that this requirement adds another post-Election Day activity to county election officials, and recommends that the General Assembly consider amended post-election deadlines for certification to ensure that an audit can be conducted without lengthening the overall certification process. The Commission recommends that the General Assembly put in place an audit requirement for all elections from the November

2020 election going forward, but recommends that the General Assembly not require a certain type of audit, instead leaving the specifics to the State Election Board to enact via administrative rule so that Georgia can be more responsive to updates in election auditing.

A properly designed post-election audit can find errors, correct them, deter fraud, provide data for continuous improvement in election administration, and promote public confidence in elections. Election audits should rely on a paper vote record that is easily readable without a technical device, should be conducted on different machinery than Election Day tabulation, and should be conducted publicly. The Commission reiterates its previous recommendation that robust chain of custody requirements for paper ballots must be adhered to in order to conduct meaningful, precinct-level audits.

8. In order to successfully implement this new system, other areas of Georgia election law should be updated to ensure compatibility with the new system and improve election administration. Some of these updates may require updates to Georgia statutes, while some may be better suited to regulations promulgated by the State Election Board.

In order to ensure successful implementation of these recommendations, the Commission recommends that the General Assembly also review the below aspects of Georgia election law in order to allow for a smooth transition to a new system and to improve election administration in Georgia.

- Definitions. Include a definition of verifiable paper vote record. Include a definition of ballot-marking devices and allow for their use. Also clarify the definition of ballot to make clear that the official ballot is the human readable component of the verifiable paper vote record. Include a provision similar to the last voting system update where the State is to provide new equipment to each county and each county is required to use it beginning in the November 2020 election cycle.
- Certification Deadline. In order to implement the post-election, pre-certification audit requirement, the General Assembly should change the county certification deadline to allow for sufficient time for county election officials to conduct required post-election activities. The Commission believes that changing the county certification deadline to the second Friday following the election (10 days following the election) would allow for sufficient time to complete required post-election activities including an audit. It will also be necessary to update the state certification deadline, although the Commission notes that the State should not need a lot of time following the county deadline in order to certify.
- Recounts. With the implementation of a new voting system, the General Assembly should also update Georgia law regarding recounts. Moving to a paper-based system will require

more time and effort for county election officials to conduct recounts than the current system. The Commission recommends updating the threshold for a losing candidate to request an automatic recount to 0.5% to be more in line with other states, and allowing for a hand recount in the discretion of the Secretary of State (for state contests) or the county elections supervisor (for county contests) in certain instances where an audit or recount shows unexplained anomalies

- Runoffs. With the requirement of post-election audits and the corresponding recommended changes to the certification deadlines, the State should consider how these changes will affect preparation for runoff elections, especially a state runoff that is held 28 days after a general election. While the Commission recognizes the benefit to ensuring that elected officials win a majority of the electorate, the Commission also recognizes that runoffs make election administration more difficult and compress timelines.
- Absentee Ballots. Georgia's absentee ballot process should be updated in order to ensure compatibility with a new system and to codify recent court orders. The Commission believes that absentee balloting in Georgia should remain "no-excuse," and recommends that the General Assembly adopt a process where absentee voters are given the opportunity to resolve issues with their absentee ballots by completing an affidavit and submitting a copy of ID that meets HAVA standards. The deadline to cure an absentee ballot should be the same as the provisional ballot verification deadline, which is the Friday after the election.

The Commission also recommends that the State update the requirements on the oath envelope to make them easier for voters to accurately complete and to allow county election officials to more easily verify a voter's identity using the information on the envelope. The Commission recommends that Georgia law make clear that slight variations in any information on the envelope not be a reason to reject an absentee ballot unless the variation does not allow the election official to identify the voter and confirm that the voter cast the ballot.

Georgia should also amend its law authorizing electronic ballot delivery for UOCAVA voters to clarify that electronic ballot delivery is permitted in federal and state elections and runoffs. Georgia should also authorize a pilot project for electronic ballot delivery, marking, and/or return for disabled voters.

- Voter Assistance. Update state law to be consistent with federal law such that the federal voter assistance standard applies for all elections in Georgia.
- HAVA Verification. Georgia law should be updated to expressly state that county election officials are required to check that they accurately typed information into the voter registration system from the registration form and to verify whether the applicant provided documentation with the application.

The Commission also recommends that the State Election Board consider updating its rules for third-party registration groups to require those groups to inform voters that both state and federal law require a voter to put their driver's license number on their voter registration application if they have one.

- Advance In-Person Voting. Advance in-person voting in Georgia is popular and should be maintained. The Commission finds that the current advance voting period is appropriate in federal and state elections. The Commission also recommends that the General Assembly clarify that for statewide runoff elections, advance in-person voting should begin on the same day in each county.

Given the popularity of advance voting, the Commission recommends keeping the functionality that allows a voter to vote in any advance voting location in their county. The next voting system should be able to accommodate that functionality. The Commission further recommends that, instead of treating advance in-person voting as another form of absentee voting as the law currently does, that the law be updated to draw distinction between absentee by mail and advance in-person voting. Particularly, advance in-person voters should not have to fill out an absentee ballot application in order to early vote. The paperwork should be more similar to Election Day voting.

The Commission also recommends that the General Assembly expand allowable advance voting locations to permit advance voting to occur in non-governmental buildings.

- Leasing. The General Assembly should review the laws of Georgia governing and regulating the procurement of large technology purchases including voting systems. Given the speed at which technology adapts, it may be prudent for Georgia to have additional flexibility to lease new technology when doing so is cost effective and in the best interest of Georgia.



*House of Representatives
Governmental Affairs Committee
Primary Elections Investigation*

**Chairman Shaw Blackmon
Representative, 146th District**

Vice Chairman Todd Jones
Representative, 25th District

Secretary Bruce Williamson
Representative, 115th District

The Honorable Rhonda Burnough
Representative, 77th District

The Honorable J. Collins
Representative, 68th District

The Honorable Barry Fleming
Representative, 121st District

The Honorable Micah Gravley
Representative, 67th District

The Honorable Joseph Gullett
Representative, 19th District

The Honorable Eddie Lumsden
Representative, 12th District

The Honorable Bee Nguyen
Representative, 89th District

The Honorable Mary Margaret Oliver
Representative, 82nd District

The Honorable Alan Powell
Representative, 32nd District

The Honorable Renitta Shannon
Representative, 84th District

The Honorable Darlene K. Taylor
Representative, 173rd District

The Honorable Robert Trammell
Representative, 132nd District

The Honorable Scot Turner
Representative, 21st District

The Honorable Mary Frances Williams
Representative, 37th District

The Honorable Rick Williams
Representative, 145th District

2020

Prepared by the House Budget and Research Office

Introduction

Following the primary elections that took place in Georgia on Tuesday, June 9, 2020, Speaker of the House of Representatives David Ralston tasked the House Governmental Affairs Committee with investigating the primary election process and the concerns raised with the election day proceedings. The committee held four public hearings at the State Capitol and via Zoom video conferencing on the following dates in 2020: June 18, June 23, August 10, and August 14.

Findings

Through live testimony and public comments submitted by email from poll workers, poll managers, local election officials, Secretary of State officials, Georgia House of Representatives members, and other individuals from across the state, the following issues emerged as the primary factors impacting the elections on June 9, 2020:

Voting by Absentee Ballot

Following the mass mailing of absentee ballot applications by the Secretary of State's office, over 1.6 million Georgians applied for absentee ballots. However, many voters reported that they did not receive their ballots before election day, if at all. The committee heard reports of multiple applications arriving for the same voter, an application sent to a deceased voter, and applications and ballots sent to incorrect addresses.

The process of canceling the absentee ballots for voters who arrived at the polls for in-person voting led to long lines and long waits for many polling locations. Additionally, the processing of the applications and scanning of the completed ballots were noted as requiring significant commitments of time and resources from local elections workers.

New Voting Machines and Technology Issues

From counties throughout the state, the committee heard complaints of printer failures, issues with ballot scanners, and general malfunctions of the new voting equipment. Specifically, the set up and take down of equipment, troubleshooting issues with the machines, problems with login credentials, and a lack of clear instruction for machine usage emerged as the most reported complaints.

The committee heard testimony stating that poll workers received inadequate training on operating the new voting machines. This lack of training on the machines, paired with equipment malfunction, were cited as reasons for long lines and long wait times for voters in polling locations across the state. Additionally, the "My Voter Page" voter information portal on the Secretary of State's website did not serve as a reliable source of information for voters on election day, leading to poll location confusion and issues with absentee ballot status.

COVID-19

Due to the pandemic that was taking place during the primary elections, fewer poll workers and fewer possible polling locations were available. Concerns regarding COVID-19 safety measures also contributed to less

training opportunities and longer waits on election day. Many of the issues caused by COVID-19 served to compound the other delays and problems that were reported from election day.

Suggestions

The committee heard numerous recommendations and ideas already under consideration by the Secretary of State, the State Board of Elections, and/or local election officials.

Based on the testimony and presentations submitted throughout the investigative process, the committee further suggests the following for consideration in preparation of the November general elections:

- In order to ensure proper preparation for any potential outcomes, local election officials must adopt an election administration plan in advance of each election day which would include contingency plans, resource allocation, and turnout expectations;
- In order to improve poll worker training, local election officials should coordinate with the Secretary of State's Office and the voting machine vendors to ensure accurate and appropriate training standards are in place. Local election officials should increase the emphasis on training and poll worker recruitment;
- In order to ensure each polling site is appropriate for the new voting machine demands, local election boards must obtain certification of adequate electrical capacity at each polling site;
- In order to lessen the burden on local election officials on election day, allow absentee ballot processing to begin at the start of early voting;
- In an effort to address the absentee ballot cancellation backlogs on election day, the Secretary of State's Office must implement an accurate absentee/vote-by-mail ballot tracking program so that voters are informed of their application or ballot status; and
- In preparation of potential emergency situations or machine malfunction, local election officials must ensure paper ballot availability at the minimum of ten percent of active voters.

Conclusion

Much of the confusion from the primary elections was centered around the impact of COVID-19, first-time use of new voting equipment in statewide elections, and the mass increase in absentee mail ballots. However, certain findings uncovered during the investigation of the June 9, 2020 primary revealed issues that could extend beyond Georgia's November general elections. Testimony revealed potential modifications that require legislative and/or administrative action and deserve further scrutiny.

While the Committee's task was strictly related to the aforementioned June 9th irregularities, some areas worthy of further review are as follows:

- Exploration of best practices in other states;
- Codifying of emergency powers related to elections; and
- Audit/evaluation of the partnership, communication, and duties distributed among the Office of the Secretary of State, the State Board of Elections, and local county boards of election.

Appendix

Meeting Minutes

First Meeting

Date: June 18, 2020

Location: 506 Coverdell Legislative Office Building, Atlanta, Georgia

Committee Members Present: Chairman Shaw Blackmon; Representative Rhonda Burnough; Representative J. Collins; Representative Barry Fleming; Representative Joseph Gullett; Representative Todd Jones; Representative Bee Nguyen; Representative Mary Margaret Oliver; Representative Alan Powell; Representative Renitta Shannon; Representative Darlene Taylor; Representative Robert Trammell; Representative Scot Turner; Representative Mary Frances Williams; Representative Rick Williams; and Representative Bruce Williamson

The committee invited poll workers, elections staff, and individuals from across the state to provide insight on the primary election that took place on Tuesday, June 9, 2020. The invited speakers provided testimony in-person and via Zoom video conferencing. The following speakers provided testimony to the committee: Michelle Chaffee, poll observer, Greene County; Phi Nguyen, poll observer, Gwinnett County; Sophie Shepherd and Joanna Shepherd, poll observers, Chatham County; Danielle Wynn, poll observer, Floyd County; Jacoria Borders, poll worker, Fulton County; Carol Beckham, poll manager, Carroll County; Venita Epps, dual poll manager, Fulton County; Betsy Kramer, poll manager, Fulton County; Suzi Voyles, poll manager, Fulton County; Gordon Austin, citizen, Carroll County; Halsey Knapp, attorney, Fulton County; Jennifer Akins, assistant supervisor of elections, Cherokee County; Joseph Kirk, elections supervisor, Bartow County; Debra Presswood and Andrew Holland, registration and elections, Houston County; Baoky Vu, Board of Elections member, DeKalb County; and Lori Wood, Board of Elections chair, Walton County.

Second Meeting

Date: June 23, 2020

Location: 606 Coverdell Legislative Office Building, Atlanta, Georgia

Committee Members Present: Chairman Shaw Blackmon; Representative Rhonda Burnough; Representative J. Collins; Representative Micah Gravley; Representative Joseph Gullett; Representative Eddie Lumsden; Representative Bee Nguyen; Representative Mary Margaret Oliver; Representative Alan Powell; Representative Renitta Shannon; Representative Darlene Taylor; Representative Robert Trammell; Representative Scot Turner; Representative Mary Frances Williams; Representative Rick Williams; and Representative Bruce Williamson

The committee invited representatives from the Office of the Secretary of State and several House of Representative members to provide insight on the primary election that took place on Tuesday, June 9, 2020. The following speakers provided testimony to the committee: Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger; Gabriel Sterling, statewide implementation manager, Office of the Secretary of State; Chris Harvey, elections division director, Office of the Secretary of State; State Representative Katie Dempsey; and State Representative Jasmine Clark.

Third Meeting

Date: August 10, 2020

Location: 606 Coverdell Legislative Office Building, Atlanta, Georgia

Committee Members Present: Chairman Shaw Blackmon; Representative Rhonda Burnough; Representative Barry Fleming; Representative Micah Gravley; Representative Joseph Gullett; Representative Todd Jones; Representative Eddie Lumsden; Representative Bee Nguyen; Representative Mary Margaret Oliver; Representative Alan Powell; Representative Renitta Shannon; Representative Darlene Taylor; Representative Robert Trammell; Representative Scot Turner; Representative Mary Frances Williams; and Representative Bruce Williamson

The committee invited the following speaker to offer perspective, provide nationwide comparisons, and share relevant resources: Director of Elections and Redistricting Wendy Underhill, National Conference of State Legislatures.

Final Meeting

Date: August 14, 2020

Location: Virtual meeting via Zoom video conferencing

Committee Members Present: Chairman Shaw Blackmon; Representative Rhonda Burnough; Representative J. Collins; Representative Micah Gravley; Representative Joseph Gullett; Representative Bee Nguyen; Representative Mary Margaret Oliver; Representative Alan Powell; Representative Renitta Shannon; Representative Darlene Taylor; Representative Robert Trammell; Representative Scot Turner; Representative Rick Williams; and Representative Bruce Williamson

For the final hearing, the committee again invited representatives from the Office of the Secretary of State and several additional speakers to answer questions and address concerns that were presented by the committee. The following speakers addressed the committee: Gabriel Sterling, statewide implementation manager, Office of the Secretary of State; Chris Harvey, elections division director, Office of the Secretary of State; Ryan Germany, general counsel, Office of the Secretary of State; State Representative David Dreyer; and State Representative Patty Bentley.



**School of Public &
International Affairs**

Survey Research Center

UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

2022 GEORGIA POST-ELECTION SURVEY

CONDUCTED BY THE SPIA SURVEY RESEARCH CENTER

JANUARY 17, 2023

M.V. HOOD III

PROFESSOR OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

AND

DIRECTOR, SPIA SURVEY RESEARCH CENTER



**School of Public &
International Affairs**
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Department of Political Science

SPIA Survey Research Center

General Information:

The post-election survey of Georgia voters was conducted November 13-December 6, 2022 and included a total of 1,253 Georgia registrants who self-reported as having voted in the 2022 general election. The live interviewer telephone survey was administered by the School of Public and International Affairs Survey Research Center at the University of Georgia. Interviews were conducted in English. A dual-frame statewide random sample consisting of approximately 90% cell phone numbers and 10% landline numbers was obtained through L2 (L2 is a sampling vendor that maintains a database constructed from state voter registration lists. Through commercial sources, phone numbers have been appended to the individual records (registrants) that make up these lists). The survey results were weighted using iterative proportional raking in order to ensure the sample was representative of the 2022 electorate in terms of education, race, sex, and age. The calculated margin of error for the total sample is +/-2.8 points at the 95% confidence level. This would mean that if 50% of respondents indicate a topline view on an issue, we can be 95% confident that the population's view on that issue is somewhere between 52.8% and 47.2%.

Vote Method

	Topline	Male	Female	White	Black	Other	18-29	30-44	45-64	65+	High School or less	Some College	BA or higher
Absentee by Mail	5.6	3.8	7.1	4.8	4.7	16.1	13.5	4.1	1.6	8.0	8.1	3.0	5.4
Early In-Person	64.0	62.9	64.7	61.6	72.6	50.5	65.4	52.2	66.0	71.8	61.0	64.2	66.9
Precinct, Election Day	30.4	33.3	28.2	33.6	22.7	33.3	21.1	43.7	32.4	20.2	31.0	32.7	27.7

	Liberal	Moderate	Conservative	Republican	Independent	Democrat	Under \$25,000	\$25,000-49,999	\$50,000-74,999	\$75,000-99,000	\$100,000-149,999	Over \$150,000
Absentee by Mail	9.2	5.4	3.9	4.4	2.1	8.5	8.9	6.0	3.8	5.7	8.9	3.7
Early In-Person	66.6	70.4	58.7	58.0	65.5	70.8	64.3	61.2	64.6	57.4	55.0	68.2
Precinct, Election Day	24.2	24.2	37.4	37.6	32.5	20.7	26.8	32.8	31.6	36.9	36.1	28.1

Note: Entries are column percentages.

First Time Voter

	Topline	Male	Female	White	Black	Other	18-29	30-44	45-64	65+	High School or less	Some College	BA or higher
Yes	4.2	3.9	4.5	3.5	5.2	5.4	25.3	0	0.9	0.3	7.4	4.3	0.9
No	95.8	96.1	95.5	96.5	94.8	94.6	74.7	100	99.1	99.7	92.6	95.7	99.1

	Liberal	Moderate	Conservative	Very Conservative	Republican	Independent	Democrat	Under \$25,000	\$25,000-49,999	\$50,000-74,999	\$75,000-99,000	\$100,000-149,999	Over \$150,000
Yes	6.7	9.0	1.0	1.0	0.6	7.2	7.8	0	2.2	8.4	1.1	3.7	5.4
No	93.3	1.0	99.0	99.0	99.4	92.8	92.2	100	97.8	91.6	98.9	96.3	94.6

Note: Entries are column percentages.

Wait Time (In-Person Voters)

	Topline	Male	Female	White	Black	Other	18-29	30-44	45-64	65+	High School or less	Some College	BA or higher
None	38.5	39.7	37.8	41.1	32.2	42.3	34.8	40.4	38.9	38.3	36.5	39.4	39.7
Less than 10 min.	36.1	40.9	32.0	36.3	36.5	32.1	27.3	40.0	40.1	32.1	38.6	35.8	33.7
10-30 minutes	20.7	14.7	25.5	17.8	27.3	19.2	30.4	17.5	16.5	24.4	23.1	19.2	19.9
31 min.-1 hour	3.5	3.5	3.4	3.6	3.4	3.8	6.2	1.8	3.1	4.2	1.8	3.6	5.0
More than 1 hour	1.2	1.1	1.3	1.2	0.6	2.6	1.2	0.4	1.4	1.0	0	2.1	1.5
Don't know	0.1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.2

	Liberal	Moderate	Conservative	Republican	Independent	Democrat	Under \$25,000	\$25,000-49,999	\$50,000-74,999	\$75,000-99,000	\$100,000-149,999	Over \$150,000
None	31.9	33.3	44.4	45.2	37.5	31.6	50.0	37.3	39.5	34.3	42.0	38.8
Less than 10 min.	36.8	33.7	36.3	33.9	43.2	34.5	26.0	35.7	33.6	38.0	36.8	39.2
10-30 minutes	26.0	29.1	14.7	16.5	15.6	28.2	20.0	20.6	22.5	22.9	18.4	18.1
31 min.-1 hour	3.9	2.3	3.8	3.4	2.6	4.1	4.0	6.3	2.4	3.0	2.3	2.6
More than 1 hour	1.4	1.5	0.9	1.0	0.5	1.7	0	0	2.0	1.8	0.6	1.3
Don't know	0	0	0	0	0.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Note: Entries are column percentages.

Self-Reported Problem with Voting

	Topline	Male	Female	White	Black	Other	18-29	30-44	45-64	65+	High School or less	Some College	BA or higher
Yes	1.1	1.4	0.9	1.3	0.5	2.2	0	2.0	0.5	1.9	0.7	1.3	1.4
No	98.9	98.6	99.1	98.7	99.5	97.8	100	98.0	99.5	98.1	99.3	98.7	98.6

	Liberal	Moderate	Conservative	Republican	Independent	Democrat	Under \$25,000	\$25,000-49,999	\$50,000-74,999	\$75,000-99,000	\$100,000-149,999	Over \$150,000
Yes	2.2	0.7	0.7	1.2	0.5	1.3	1.8	0	0.8	1.1	0.5	2.1
No	97.8	99.3	99.3	98.8	99.5	98.7	98.2	100	99.2	98.9	99.5	97.9

Note: Entries are column percentages.

Did you feel safe while waiting to cast your ballot at your polling place?

	Topline	Male	Female	White	Black	Other	18-29	30-44	45-64	65+	High School or less	Some College	BA or higher
Yes	99.0	98.8	99.8	99.3	99.4	94.2	97.9	98.1	99.7	99.2	100	97.6	99.2
No	1.0	1.2	0.2	0.7	0.6	5.8	2.1	1.9	0.3	0.8	0.0	2.4	0.8

	Liberal	Moderate	Conservative	Republican	Independent	Democrat	Under \$25,000	\$25,000-49,999	\$50,000-74,999	\$75,000-99,000	\$100,000-149,999	Over \$150,000
Yes	97.6	99.6	99.4	99.5	98.9	98.8	97.7	97.4	99.6	98.6	99.4	99.0
No	2.4	0.4	0.6	0.5	1.1	1.2	2.3	2.6	0.4	1.4	0.6	1.0

Note: Entries are column percentages.

At a personal level, how would you rate your overall experience voting in this election?

	Topline	Male	Female	White	Black	Other	18-29	30-44	45-64	65+	High School or less	Some College	BA or higher
Excellent	72.0	72.0	72.7	72.7	72.6	64.5	61.6	70.1	75.1	77.6	75.8	65.2	74.6
Good	23.5	24.7	22.7	23.3	23.6	24.7	27.6	25.9	21.9	18.9	21.1	27.5	22.1
Fair	3.5	2.7	3.3	3.0	3.3	8.6	9.7	3.7	1.8	2.2	1.4	7.1	2.3
Poor	0.6	0.5	0.6	0.9	0	0	0	0.3	0.7	1.0	1.2	0	0.5
Don't know	0.4	0	0.7	0.1	0.5	2.2	1.1	0	0.5	0.3	0.5	0.3	0.5

	Liberal	Moderate	Conservative	Republican	Independent	Democrat	Under \$25,000	\$25,000-49,999	\$50,000-74,999	\$75,000-99,000	\$100,000-149,999	Over \$150,000
Excellent	72.9	69.0	75.1	76.0	66.7	71.0	82.5	61.2	72.3	73.9	75.3	72.7
Good	21.0	28.9	21.8	21.2	28.7	22.9	8.8	28.4	24.6	23.9	23.2	21.5
Fair	5.4	1.8	2.1	2.5	2.1	5.3	1.8	10.4	2.7	2.3	1.6	3.7
Poor	0	0.4	0.7	0.2	2.6	0.2	5.3	0	0.4	0	0	1.2
Don't know	0.6	0	0.3	0.2	0	0.4	1.8	0	0	0	0	0.8

Note: Entries are column percentages.

How confident are you that your vote in this midterm election was counted as you intended?

	Topline	Male	Female	White	Black	Other	18-29	30-44	45-64	65+	High School or less	Some College	BA or higher
Very confident	63.9	63.0	64.7	63.0	68.5	53.3	66.1	57.7	64.2	68.6	60.6	56.4	74.2
Somewhat confident	25.8	24.6	27.0	25.0	25.8	32.6	29.6	27.3	24.7	22.4	25.3	31.5	21.1
No too confident	5.5	5.9	4.8	5.9	4.7	5.4	0	10.2	5.5	4.8	7.6	6.5	2.3
Not at all confident	3.4	4.8	2.3	4.8	0.3	4.3	4.3	3.4	3.9	2.2	4.5	4.5	1.2
Don't know	1.4	1.6	1.2	1.3	0.8	4.3	0	1.4	1.6	1.9	1.9	1.0	1.2

	Liberal	Moderate	Conservative	Republican	Independent	Democrat	Under \$25,000	\$25,000-49,999	\$50,000-74,999	\$75,000-99,000	\$100,000-149,999	Over \$150,000
Very confident	76.1	67.1	56.9	57.8	55.9	75.9	72.7	55.6	63.5	68.8	67.9	65.1
Somewhat confident	19.4	28.2	27.1	28.4	29.2	20.0	10.9	35.3	27.0	19.9	26.9	25.3
No too confident	3.8	3.6	7.9	8.3	5.1	2.7	10.9	8.3	8.0	6.3	2.1	2.9
Not at all confident	0	0.4	5.8	4.4	7.7	0.4	5.5	0.8	1.1	4.5	1.6	5.4
Don't know	0.6	0.7	2.2	1.2	2.1	0.9	0	0	0.4	0.6	1.6	1.2

Note: Entries are column percentages.

Now, think about vote counting throughout the State of Georgia, and not just your own personal situation. How confident are you that votes in Georgia were counted as voters intended?

	Topline	Male	Female	White	Black	Other	18-29	30-44	45-64	65+	High School or less	Some College	BA or higher
Very confident	39.6	41.1	38.7	39.4	41.1	34.8	47.3	35.7	40.3	37.3	33.5	36.4	48.0
Somewhat confident	36.5	35.6	37.1	35.4	38.6	37.0	36.6	36.1	32.6	41.5	34.9	39.7	35.1
No too confident	14.3	12.7	15.7	14.1	14.0	18.5	8.1	17.0	19.9	8.7	19.7	13.1	10.3
Not at all confident	5.5	6.3	4.5	6.9	1.9	7.6	4.3	7.5	5.8	4.2	6.7	7.0	3.3
Don't know	4.1	4.3	4.1	4.1	4.4	2.2	3.8	3.7	1.4	8.4	5.2	3.8	3.3

	Liberal	Moderate	Conservative	Republican	Independent	Democrat	Under \$25,000	\$25,000-49,999	\$50,000-74,999	\$75,000-99,000	\$100,000-149,999	Over \$150,000
Very confident	55.7	44.0	30.1	29.8	43.1	49.3	41.1	36.1	33.7	38.3	45.3	43.6
Somewhat confident	34.1	32.9	38.8	39.8	31.3	35.3	14.3	45.9	43.9	36.6	38.4	32.8
No too confident	5.4	16.2	18.7	19.0	13.3	10.0	16.1	10.5	18.6	14.9	13.2	15.8
Not at all confident	1.3	2.5	8.1	7.3	8.7	1.1	14.3	6.8	2.3	5.1	2.1	5.8
Don't know	3.5	4.3	4.3	4.0	3.6	4.2	14.3	0.8	1.5	5.1	1.1	2.1

Note: Entries are column percentages.

Please rate the job performance of election officials in the county where you voted.

	Topline	Male	Female	White	Black	Other	18-29	30-44	45-64	65+	High School or less	Some College	BA or higher
Excellent	56.9	59.1	55.7	58.4	57.8	41.3	52.2	55.3	58.8	59.0	55.7	56.4	58.7
Good	30.8	28.0	33.0	29.3	31.8	40.2	33.2	29.7	32.6	28.8	31.7	32.5	28.4
Fair	7.0	9.5	4.7	6.3	7.1	13.0	13.0	9.2	3.9	5.4	7.4	7.6	6.1
Poor	1.3	1.6	1.0	1.4	0.8	2.2	0.5	2.4	1.2	0.6	0.7	1.3	1.6
Don't know	4.0	1.8	5.7	4.6	2.5	3.3	1.1	3.4	3.5	6.1	4.5	2.3	5.2

	Liberal	Moderate	Conservative	Republican	Independent	Democrat	Under \$25,000	\$25,000-49,999	\$50,000-74,999	\$75,000-99,000	\$100,000-149,999	Over \$150,000
Excellent	50.5	60.8	59.6	62.0	50.5	56.4	74.5	68.4	64.3	50.3	56.5	51.0
Good	36.1	27.7	29.4	28.4	31.1	33.6	14.5	20.3	27.4	38.4	35.1	32.0
Fair	7.3	9.0	5.5	4.2	13.8	6.9	5.5	4.5	5.7	7.9	4.7	9.5
Poor	1.3	0.7	1.5	1.7	1.5	0.9	1.8	1.5	1.1	1.1	1.0	2.1
Don't know	4.8	1.8	4.0	3.6	3.1	2.2	3.6	5.3	1.5	2.3	2.6	5.4

Note: Entries are column percentages.

Last year the Georgia Legislature passed an election reform bill known as SB 202. In your opinion, did the recent changes made to Georgia’s election laws increase or decrease your confidence in the state’s election system?

	Topline	Male	Female	White	Black	Other	18-29	30-44	45-64	65+	High School or less	Some College	BA or higher
Greatly increase	14.7	18.3	11.9	17.1	7.4	23.7	8.6	7.8	18.6	20.3	16.4	13.3	13.8
Somewhat increase	27.5	27.6	27.7	31.9	20.5	16.1	30.1	24.6	27.8	28.9	34.0	27.4	21.6
Somewhat decrease	16.2	13.4	17.7	8.3	33.4	16.1	20.4	16.4	15.8	14.5	11.9	17.3	19.2
Greatly decrease	8.4	8.2	8.6	4.9	15.3	11.8	4.3	14.3	8.1	5.8	5.7	9.3	10.3
Don’t know	33.2	32.4	34.1	37.8	23.3	32.3	36.6	36.9	29.7	30.5	31.9	32.7	35.0

	Liberal	Moderate	Conservative	Republican	Independent	Democrat	Under \$25,000	\$25,000-49,999	\$50,000-74,999	\$75,000-99,000	\$100,000-149,999	Over \$150,000
Greatly increase	6.7	10.1	21.3	24.6	9.7	6.2	21.1	21.6	6.5	17.1	14.7	15.8
Somewhat increase	23.2	23.8	33.3	34.4	27.0	22.9	38.6	29.1	28.2	24.0	37.7	24.1
Somewhat decrease	25.5	24.9	7.4	3.5	14.8	33.0	12.3	20.9	20.2	16.0	10.5	17.0
Greatly decrease	12.1	11.6	3.8	3.6	6.6	13.8	5.3	10.4	10.7	5.1	9.9	9.1
Don’t know	32.5	29.6	34.2	34.0	41.8	24.1	22.8	17.9	34.4	37.7	27.2	34.0

Note: Entries are column percentages.

Comparing your experience voting in the last general election in 2020, would you say this time that it was easier to cast a ballot, harder to cast a ballot, or would you say there was no difference between these two elections? [Asked of those who had voted previously]

	Topline	Male	Female	White	Black	Other	18-29	30-44	45-64	65+	High School or less	Some College	BA or higher
Harder	5.8	5.2	5.8	4.4	6.9	12.6	8.6	5.1	5.8	5.1	3.4	7.1	6.4
Easier	14.8	14.0	15.7	13.3	19.1	10.3	12.9	15.6	11.9	18.9	10.8	18.4	15.2
No difference	77.4	79.7	75.8	80.1	72.5	74.7	69.8	78.2	81.4	74.0	81.4	73.8	77.5
Don't know	2.0	1.1	2.7	2.2	1.4	2.3	8.6	1.0	0.9	1.9	4.4	0.8	0.9

	Liberal	Moderate	Conservative	Republican	Independent	Democrat	Under \$25,000	\$25,000-49,999	\$50,000-74,999	\$75,000-99,000	\$100,000-149,999	Over \$150,000
Harder	9.2	7.5	2.4	1.7	7.8	9.7	10.7	10.7	3.3	7.5	1.6	9.2
Easier	14.7	14.7	14.7	14.8	9.4	17.9	30.4	15.3	18.8	12.6	15.2	11.4
No difference	69.2	77.0	82.5	83.0	81.7	67.6	58.9	71.0	77.9	79.3	76.6	78.6
Don't know	6.8	0.8	0.3	0.4	1.1	4.8	0	3.1	0	0.6	6.5	0.9

Note: Entries are column percentages.

Indicate whether you agree or disagree with each of the following statements concerning the 2022 midterm election: Votes are counted in a timely after the election in Georgia.

	Topline	Male	Female	White	Black	Other	18-29	30-44	45-64	65+	High School or less	Some College	BA or higher
Strongly agree	46.8	46.2	47.7	48.7	46.8	29.3	51.6	44.9	45.8	48.1	36.0	51.1	53.6
Somewhat agree	35.2	35.1	34.7	34.1	36.4	39.1	38.7	36.4	31.7	36.5	41.1	33.2	31.1
Somewhat disagree	7.7	7.2	8.0	7.1	8.2	10.9	4.8	7.1	8.3	7.7	7.4	7.1	8.5
Strongly disagree	6.6	6.8	6.5	7.4	3.3	13.0	0.5	9.2	10.9	2.2	9.5	6.3	4.0
Don't know	3.8	4.7	3.1	2.6	5.2	7.6	4.3	2.4	3.2	5.4	6.0	2.3	2.8

	Liberal	Moderate	Conservative	Republican	Independent	Democrat	Under \$25,000	\$25,000-49,999	\$50,000-74,999	\$75,000-99,000	\$100,000-149,999	Over \$150,000
Strongly agree	58.8	43.7	42.8	41.8	41.0	56.2	45.5	58.2	43.7	43.8	53.1	47.3
Somewhat agree	31.3	40.1	35.6	35.9	45.1	31.3	25.5	32.1	39.5	39.2	30.2	34.0
Somewhat disagree	5.4	11.6	6.5	7.7	6.7	5.8	7.3	6.0	11.0	5.1	8.3	7.5
Strongly disagree	2.9	1.8	10.3	10.6	5.1	2.7	12.7	0.7	4.6	8.0	6.8	8.7
Don't know	1.6	2.9	4.8	4.0	2.1	4.0	9.1	3.0	1.1	4.0	1.6	2.5

Note: Entries are column percentages.

Indicate whether you agree or disagree with each of the following statements concerning the 2022 midterm election: Only properly cast ballots are recorded and counted in Georgia elections.

	Topline	Male	Female	White	Black	Other	18-29	30-44	45-64	65+	High School or less	Some College	BA or higher
Strongly agree	42.9	44.7	41.4	44.7	39.7	39.8	51.9	39.4	40.6	44.1	37.6	40.3	50.7
Somewhat agree	33.8	27.5	39.2	32.6	36.7	33.3	37.8	38.7	34.2	27.3	35.5	36.0	30.3
Somewhat disagree	9.0	10.6	7.4	8.8	9.9	7.5	6.5	9.6	9.5	8.7	10.2	9.8	7.0
Strongly disagree	6.8	7.7	6.1	8.2	2.7	10.8	1.6	7.9	8.8	6.4	7.6	6.5	6.1
Don't know	7.5	9.5	6.0	5.8	11.0	8.6	2.2	4.5	6.9	13.5	9.0	7.3	5.9

	Liberal	Moderate	Conservative	Republican	Independent	Democrat	Under \$25,000	\$25,000-49,999	\$50,000-74,999	\$75,000-99,000	\$100,000-149,999	Over \$150,000
Strongly agree	55.6	44.8	35.8	36.0	45.4	51.2	33.9	51.5	35.9	45.2	44.3	47.7
Somewhat agree	34.5	36.5	34.3	35.2	29.9	35.6	26.8	27.6	44.7	36.7	33.3	27.4
Somewhat disagree	3.2	9.4	11.1	10.6	9.8	5.3	3.6	10.4	7.3	6.8	9.4	11.2
Strongly disagree	3.5	4.7	9.4	12.9	2.6	2.0	10.7	6.7	3.4	6.8	7.8	7.5
Don't know	3.2	4.7	9.3	5.4	12.4	5.8	25.0	3.7	8.8	4.5	5.2	6.2

Note: Entries are column percentages.

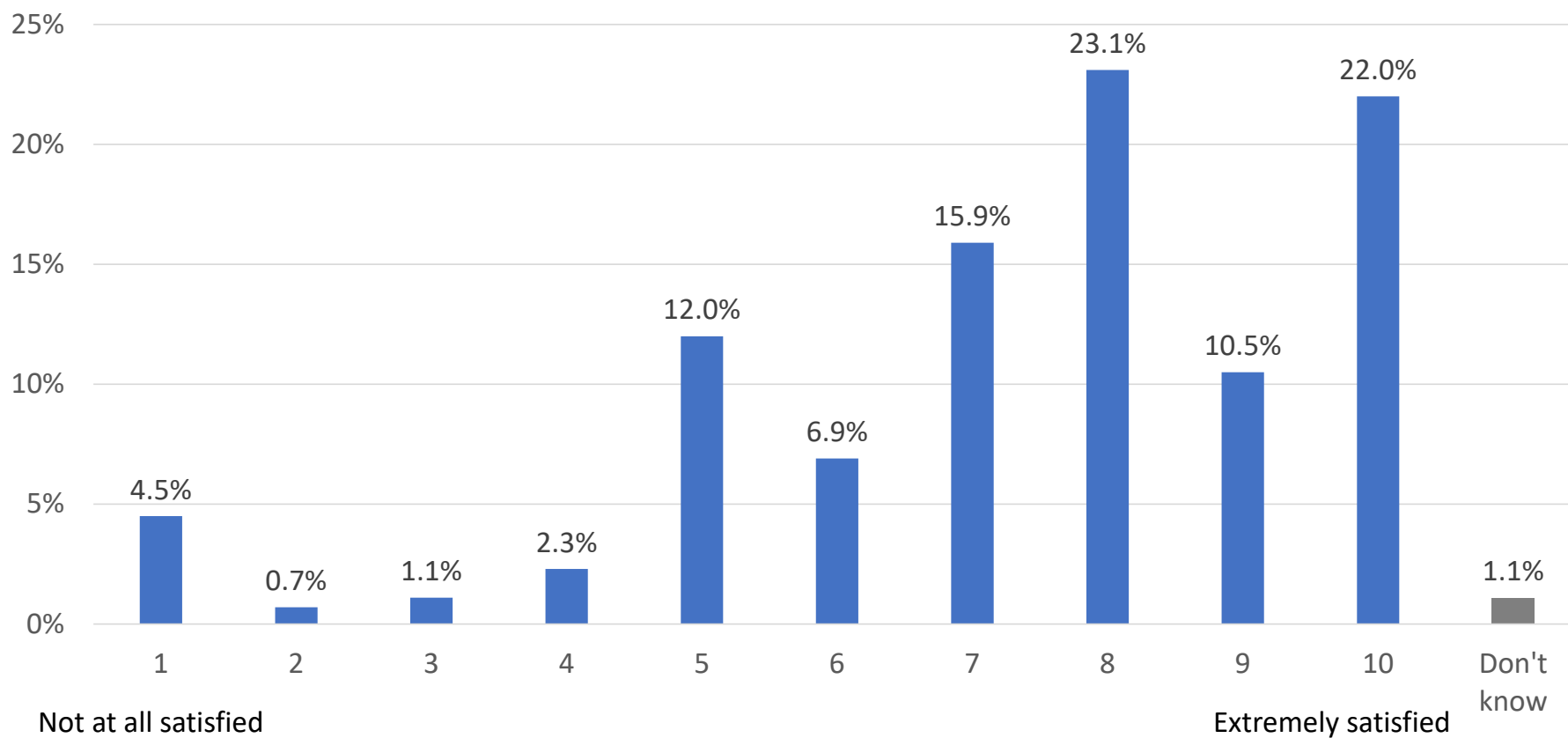
Indicate whether you agree or disagree with each of the following statements concerning the 2022 midterm election: It is easy to cast a ballot in the State of Georgia.

	Topline	Male	Female	White	Black	Other	18-29	30-44	45-64	65+	High School or less	Some College	BA or higher
Strongly agree	70.8	76.5	66.9	78.8	57.1	55.9	60.8	72.4	71.1	76.0	75.7	71.9	64.8
Somewhat agree	19.9	17.2	21.9	16.5	27.0	21.5	26.3	18.7	20.4	15.7	17.6	18.3	23.9
Somewhat disagree	6.1	3.8	7.5	3.6	9.6	14.0	12.9	4.8	5.6	4.2	2.9	7.8	7.5
Strongly disagree	2.1	1.6	2.5	0.5	3.8	8.6	0	3.4	2.1	1.9	2.4	1.3	2.6
Don't know	1.1	0.9	1.2	0.6	2.5	0	0	0.7	0.9	2.2	1.4	0.8	1.2

	Liberal	Moderate	Conservative	Republican	Independent	Democrat	Under \$25,000	\$25,000-49,999	\$50,000-74,999	\$75,000-99,000	\$100,000-149,999	Over \$150,000
Strongly agree	51.0	67.5	83.3	89.3	68.7	51.0	63.6	60.9	74.4	67.0	76.6	70.2
Somewhat agree	32.5	20.2	13.1	9.0	20.5	32.3	30.9	24.8	16.4	25.0	16.7	17.4
Somewhat disagree	12.7	8.7	1.5	0.8	9.7	10.7	5.5	13.5	5.3	4.0	3.6	9.9
Strongly disagree	2.9	2.2	1.4	0.8	1.0	3.6	0	0.8	3.1	4.0	1.6	0.8
Don't know	1.0	1.4	0.7	0.2	0	2.4	0	0	0.8	0	1.6	1.7

Note: Entries are column percentages.

Satisfaction Score with Conduct of Election in Georgia, 2022



On a scale of 1 to 10, with one being not at all satisfied and ten being extremely satisfied, how would you rate the way the State of Georgia conducts elections?

	Topline	Male	Female	White	Black	Other	18-29	30-44	45-64	65+	High School or less	Some College	BA or higher
1-4	8.5	8.9	7.4	6.4	10.7	17.2	2.2	14.7	10.0	4.8	10.5	7.8	7.0
5-6	18.9	16.8	20.7	17.0	24.5	14.0	25.4	19.5	19.0	14.1	21.0	17.9	17.8
7-10	71.5	73.9	70.0	75.4	64.6	65.6	72.4	64.2	70.4	80.1	66.2	74.3	74.2
Don't know	1.1	0.4	1.9	1.3	0.3	3.2	0	1.7	0.7	1.0	2.4	0	0.9

	Liberal	Moderate	Conservative	Republican	Independent	Democrat	Under \$25,000	\$25,000-49,999	\$50,000-74,999	\$75,000-99,000	\$100,000-149,999	Over \$150,000
1-4	6.1	9.7	8.1	7.1	14.4	6.9	8.9	9.7	5.3	10.2	7.9	11.6
5-6	18.8	18.8	18.9	16.7	19.0	21.6	21.4	14.9	24.7	14.8	15.7	12.8
7-10	74.8	69.7	72.0	75.1	64.6	71.0	69.6	74.6	70.0	71.0	76.4	75.2
Don't know	0.3	1.8	1.0	1.1	2.1	0.4	0	0.7	0	4.0	0	0.4

Note: Entries are column percentages.

In future elections, how do you plan on voting? Do you plan on voting...

	Topline	Male	Female	White	Black	Other	18-29	30-44	45-64	65+	High School or less	Some College	BA or higher
Absentee by Mail	6.1	3.4	8.0	5.5	4.4	17.4	14.6	2.7	2.5	9.6	9.3	3.3	5.9
Early In-Person	62.8	60.4	65.0	58.2	77.5	45.7	56.2	55.8	65.4	68.9	58.7	62.1	67.7
Precinct, Election Day	27.8	33.0	23.8	32.6	15.9	33.7	21.6	40.1	29.6	18.3	29.2	30.7	24.1
Don't know	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.6	2.2	3.3	7.6	1.4	2.5	3.2	2.9	4.0	2.3

	Liberal	Moderate	Conservative	Republican	Independent	Democrat	Under \$25,000	\$25,000-49,999	\$50,000-74,999	\$75,000-99,000	\$100,000-149,999	Over \$150,000
Absentee by Mail	9.9	6.8	4.6	3.8	3.6	10.2	5.5	6.7	9.9	4.6	4.7	5.0
Early In-Person	69.4	67.6	55.8	54.2	61.5	74.2	69.1	63.4	56.7	63.4	61.5	62.8
Precinct, Election Day	17.8	23.7	35.9	39.4	29.7	12.7	12.7	28.4	31.9	30.9	31.3	31.0
Don't know	2.9	1.8	3.6	2.5	5.1	2.9	12.7	1.5	1.5	1.1	2.6	1.2

Note: Entries are column percentages.

DEMOGRAPHIC TOPLINES

	Percentage
Sex:	
Male	44.6
Female	55.0

Race:	
White	63.5
Black	29.1
Other	7.4

Age:	
18-29	15.2
30-44	24.0
45-64	35.3
65+	25.5

Education:	
High school or less	33.8
Some college	32.0
BA or higher	34.3

Ideology:	
Liberal	26.8
Moderate	23.6
Conservative	49.6

Income:	
Under \$25,000	5.3
\$25,000-\$49,999	12.6
\$50,000-\$74,999	24.8
\$75,000-\$99,999	16.6
\$100,000-\$149,000	18.0
Over \$150,000	22.8

Political Party:	
Republican	44.7
Independent	16.7
Democrat	38.6



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SCOTT HOLCOMB
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2306 BRIARCLIFF COMMONS
ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30345
404-387-0373

October 4, 2017

The Honorable Nathan Deal
Office of the Governor
203 State Capitol
Atlanta, GA 30334

Dear Governor Deal:

We write to bring the important issue of voter machine technology and security to your attention ahead of the 2018 Legislative Session. As you may be aware, the House Science and Technology Committee recently held a hearing when a cyber-security expert testified that the Direct Recording Electronic (DRE) voting machines used in Georgia had been part of a demonstration at a cyber-security convention and were successfully hacked, including to change voting outcomes.

The participants of the cyber security convention have promised to publish their results on the internet for all to see. As a result, the Commonwealth of Virginia decertified the same DRE machines used in Georgia on the same day that they received word of the serious security vulnerabilities. In fact, states are largely abandoning DREs in favor of some form of paper and pencil method with the use of optical scanner technology. Further, Georgia is one of only five remaining states that exclusively use DRE machines.

The DRE machines are outdated and use Microsoft 2000 operating system—an operating system that has not been supported since 2010. Any replacement technology for Georgia's current voting machine technology must have a verifiable paper trail that can be used to audit the accuracy of the system. To this end, we will be collaborating on legislation to require not only a replacement technology for casting votes in our state, but also a process for auditing election results. This is essential to instill confidence in the voting system.

Our preliminary research indicates that at a minimum, there should an optical scanner at each polling location, although it would be a best practice to require two per precinct. Each county election's office should have a pair as well. And because machines break down when least expected, having an additional 15% of the previous total on hand would be wise.

There are 1673 voting precincts and 159 counties in Georgia. Based on the assumptions we have presented above, we estimate that Georgia would need 4,214 optical scanner machines. The cost, at approximately \$5000 per scanner, would be roughly \$21,070,000.

The Honorable Nathan Deal

October 4, 2017

Page 2

There are additional technologies on the market that allow for automated marking of ballots, or Ballot Marking Devices (BMD), which would be helpful for voters who cannot mark ballots themselves. However, only a small number of these BMD's would be needed per precinct.

With all of this in mind, we ask that you recommend in your proposed budget for the coming legislative session a line item of \$25-\$35 million to replace our outdated and vulnerable voting machines.

We appreciate your willingness to take voting security seriously in our state and appreciate your leadership in addressing this critical issue. We will gladly provide additional information on this subject with you and your staff if that would be helpful. Thank you for considering this request, and we look forward to working with you during the upcoming legislative session.

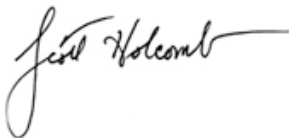
Sincerely,

Scot Turner

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Scot Turner".

State Representative
District 21

Scott Holcomb

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Scott Holcomb".

State Representative
District 81