



November 12, 2020

*VIA U.S. Mail and Electronic Mail*

The Honorable Brad Raffensperger  
Georgia Secretary of State  
214 State Capitol  
Atlanta, Georgia 30334

Dear Secretary Raffensperger:

The Georgia Republican Party and The Donald J. Trump for President Campaign appreciate your announcement yesterday that you are exercising your discretionary authority under Georgia law<sup>1</sup> to order a statewide hand count of ballots cast in the November 2020 General Election, in response to our request earlier this week. You stated yesterday that the process would be “an audit, a recount and a recanvass all at once” and would help ‘build public confidence.’

However, the training and directives issued today do not comport with your stated goals yesterday and do not satisfy our concerns that gave rise to our request for a hand count in the first place.

We write now to express our serious concerns regarding the training and directives issued today as to how the hand count is to be conducted by the counties. We do not believe that the protocols and procedures announced today will accomplish what we had requested in our letter or announced by your office yesterday. Absent immediate revisions, the people of Georgia cannot have confidence that the hand count and audit were meaningful or delivered on the promised objectives.

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<sup>1</sup> See O.C.G.A. 21-2-495

First, the audit does not include a review of signatures on absentee ballot applications and ballot envelopes to confirm the validity of the statutory signature verification process by the counties. Our analysis of your office's publicly available data shows that the number of rejected absentee ballots in Georgia plummeted from 3.5% in 2018 to 0.3% in 2020. This raises serious concerns as to whether the counties properly conducted signature verification and/or other scrutiny of absentee ballots. In fact, it presents the issue of whether some counties conducted any scrutiny at all.

We reiterate our earlier request that this hand count and audit process include a review of signatures on absentee ballot applications and envelopes in order to ascertain whether the signature verification process was properly executed by the counties. We believe that a review of the signatures is fundamental to this procedure. We do not believe it is possible to certify the results of the 2020 General Election without conducting this investigation and analysis.

Second, we have concerns about meaningful access to the auditing process by our designated monitors. Your office announced today that the state parties can designate only one reviewer for every 10 audit teams. That makes it impossible for hand count decisions to be reviewed in real time. One designated monitor cannot observe ten tables at once. Transparency has been a very significant problem during this election. During the initial vote tabulation, some counties placed ballot reviewers in multiple rooms and aggressively enforced arbitrary distancing restrictions that prevented poll watchers from effectively observing the tabulating process. In other counties, poll watchers were not allowed an unobstructed view of the tabulating process. We are concerned that your directive today has replicated and aggravated these problems.

You have publicly stated that transparency and openness are a high priority to you. That requires a system that allows our designated monitors to be able to meaningfully observe the audit and hand count. Having one monitor for ten audit teams does not allow for transparency. We hereby request that you allow designated monitors on a one-to-one ratio for every audit team as well as for every vote review panel.



We also request that you direct the counties to make certain that the designated monitors are able to confirm their ability to actually see the process as it occurs. Simply allowing monitors somewhere in the vicinity of the audit process is not sufficient for proper and meaningful oversight. And it is certainly not meaningful if the monitors are behind obstructions or not even in the same room as the audit teams and the vote review panels.

Third, we are very troubled by the directive issued today that counties must certify their results by 5:00 P.M. tomorrow. Given that the audit and recount will necessarily still be ongoing, it is completely improper for counties to be directed to certify the accuracy of the results before the audit and hand count are completed. The purpose of the audit and hand count is to ascertain whether the unofficial tabulations were accurate and conducted in accordance with state law. Only upon completion of the audit and hand count should there be a certification of the results – but not before. Please rescind your earlier directive that the counties are required to certify their results tomorrow afternoon. And we further request confirmation that your office will not rely on the accuracy of any certified results from the counties until after the hand count and audit are completed.

Fourth, we had expected to receive by yesterday the parameters for the hand count in order to provide sufficient time to the public of the process to be followed. However, your training and guidance were issued only within the last few hours and the counties are directed to start the audit tomorrow. That is simply not sufficient public notice of the existence, location, and times of the audits and hand counts. We would request that you delay the commencement of the process until Monday, November 16, 2020, in order to provide ample public notice in every county of the commencement and details of the audit. We would also request that the counties announce and post publicly and clearly when and where they will conduct the audit. It would be helpful to post that information from all the counties on your website. And, in that spirit, we would also request that you notify all counties that they must not begin the audit without public notice or outside the presence of our designated monitors.

Fifth, the security of the paper ballots is critically important. Aside from a single passing reference about security during today's training, the Secretary of State's office provided no substantive guidance regarding the necessity of maintaining the security of the ballots, the transporting of ballots, and documenting the chain of custody as required by law.

The Honorable Brad Raffensperger

November 12, 2020

Page 4

We appreciate your decision to proceed with the hand count as well as your public commitment to transparency and openness. The purpose of this letter is to identify the ways in which the announced process is counter to that intended purpose. We are more than willing to work with your office to accomplish our mutual objectives of protecting the integrity of Georgia's elections and to make certain that there is meaningful public access to the audit and vote review process.


Please contact the undersigned should you wish to discuss further. Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,



Doug Collins

Georgia Recount Team Leader  
The Donald J. Trump for President  
Campaign



David J. Shafer

State Chairman  
Georgia Republican Party