



House of Representatives

JON BURNS
MAJORITY LEADER
ROOM 338, STATE CAPITOL
ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30334

December 4, 2020

SENT VIA EMAIL:

Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger
Chairperson of the State Election Board
Mrs. Rebecca N. Sullivan
Vice-Chairperson of the State Election Board

Dear Secretary Raffensperger and Mrs. Sullivan,

As I am sure you have seen over the past month, many Georgians, including my colleagues who have signed this correspondence, have serious concerns about Georgia's elections. As we approach a critical election on January 5, 2021, it is clear that Georgia voters must have confidence in the election process going forward. To that end, below you will find two common-sense suggestions: a rule that should be promulgated by the State Election Board (the "SEB") and additional resources of which the Office of the Secretary of State (the "SOS") or the SEB could take advantage.

I. Absentee Ballot Application and Mail-In Absentee Ballot Signature Review Process. As the process currently stands, when a voter wishes to vote early by mail, they submit an Absentee Ballot Application ("Application") either through the mail or online. When a local Board of Registrars (the "BOR") receives a paper Application, typically, a single employee of the BOR is responsible for the initial review of a signature on a paper Application. If that paper Application is accepted, the BOR mails an Absentee Ballot to the voter. The process for reviewing signatures on the external envelope of a returned Absentee Ballot is the same – a single employee of the BOR is allowed to "approve" a signature without oversight by other employees or independent observers. Additional BOR staff members are only involved in reviewing signatures when the initial reviewer seeks to reject the ballot. Even with the massive increase in Absentee Ballot participation this year, in many counties, a single solitary person is responsible for accepting voter signatures on Applications and Absentee Ballots themselves. This fact is alarming to me, my colleagues who have co-signed this correspondence, and Georgians across the state.

To increase confidence in our election process, it is imperative that signatures be appropriately scrutinized and that the signature review process is above reproach. With that goal in mind, I propose the SEB promulgate a rule requiring that the signature review process on Absentee Ballot applications and Absentee Ballots include an independent observer from each political party represented in the races on the reviewed ballots. (In Georgia, this would typically be a Republican and a Democratic observer, but it may also include a Libertarian (or another third party) observer where the race warrants

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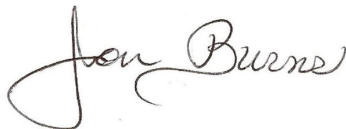
it.) These independent observers would be entitled to physically review the signatures on Applications and Absentee Ballots and, when discrepancies are observed, to ask for additional review of those signatures. Those “flagged” Applications and Absentee Ballots would then go through further scrutiny, which should occur before the Absentee Ballot is removed from its outer envelope. This guidance should also allow these independent observers the opportunity to note Applications or Absentee Ballots that should be challenged.

Additionally, this rule should apply to the review and processing of applications for military and overseas ballots and the ballots themselves, including throughout the period after Election Day when these military and overseas ballots are legally allowed to be received and processed.

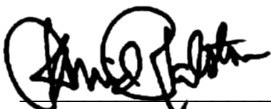
II. Utilization of Current State Employees by the SOS. Multiple news outlets reported significant failures in counties across our state before, during, and after Election Day. These counties were rural, suburban, and metro-area and represented all demographics and areas of our state. This is unacceptable.

Due to these failures, I am confident that the SOS wishes to provide more support and oversight to counties. I propose that the SOS contract with other state agencies willing and able to temporarily allow their employees to perform services on behalf of the SOS. Specifically, the SOS should deploy these individuals to observe Election Day activities at the precinct and county level, where additional support may be needed. Alternatively, the SEB may wish to enter into agreements with state agencies to perform similar investigatory activities pursuant to OCGA § 21-2-31(5). The SOS or the SEB should seek out individuals who have investigative backgrounds or experience in administering elections, as they will likely have a skill set that lends itself to this type of work. To the extent that the SOS or the SEB needs additional funds for these temporary services, I am confident that the leadership of the Georgia House of Representatives, many of whom have signed this correspondence, will do everything within our power to ensure that the necessary resources are available.

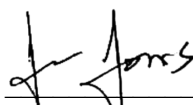
Thank you for considering these suggestions that I believe would rebuild some of the trust that Georgians may have lost in our election process. If you have any questions or feedback, please do not hesitate to reach out to my office. Thank you for what you do in service to our state.



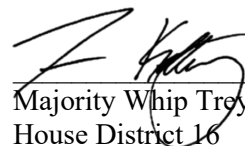
Jon Burns
Majority Leader
House District 159



Speaker David Ralston
House District 7

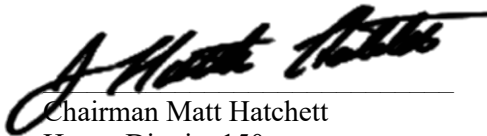


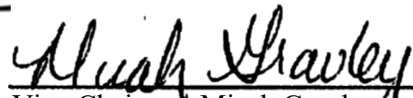
Speaker Pro Tempore Jan Jones
House District 47

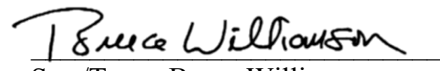


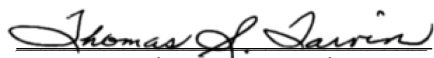
Majority Whip Trey Kelley
House District 16


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Chairman Matt Hatchett
House District 150



Vice-Chairman Micah Gravley
House District 67

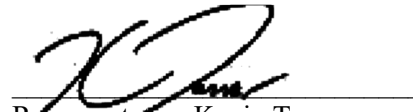

Sec./Treas. Bruce Williamson
House District 115



Representative Steve Tarvin
House District 2



Representative Kasey Carpenter
House District 4

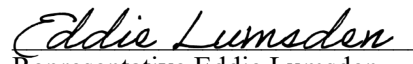

Representative Matt Barton
House District 5


Representative Jason Ridley
House District 6



Representative Kevin Tanner
House District 9



Representative Terry Rogers
House District 10

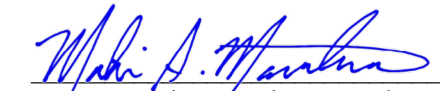

Representative Rick Jasperse
House District 11



Representative Eddie Lumsden
House District 12



Representative Katie Dempsey
House District 13


Representative Mitchell Scoggins
House District 14



Representative Matthew Gambill
House District 15

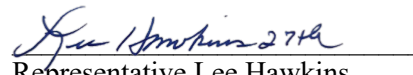

Representative Martin Momtahan
House District 17


Representative Joseph Gullett
House District 19


Representative Michael Caldwell
House District 20



Representative Wes Cantrell
House District 22



Representative Todd Jones
House District 25


Representative Lee Hawkins
House District 27



Representative Chris Erwin
House District 28



Representative Matt Dubnik
House District 29

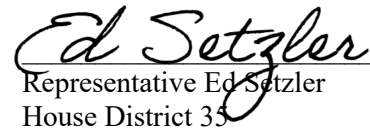

Representative Emory Dunahoo
House District 30



Representative Tommy Benton
House District 31


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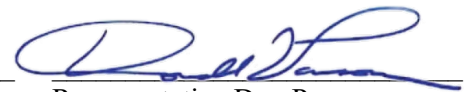

Representative Alan Powell
House District 32



Representative Bert Reeves
House District 34



Representative Ed Setzler
House District 35



Representative Ginny Ehrhart
House District 36



Representative Sharon Cooper
House District 43



Representative Don Parsons
House District 44

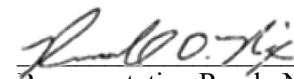

Representative Matt Dollar
House District 45

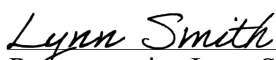

Representative John Carson
House District 46

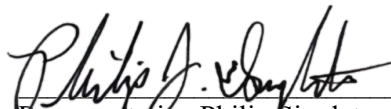

Representative Chuck Martin
House District 49



Representative Deborah Silcox
House District 52

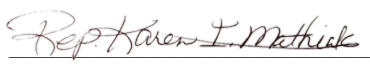

Representative J Collins
House District 68



Representative Randy Nix
House District 69



Representative Lynn Smith
House District 70



Representative Philip Singleton
House District 71



Representative Josh Bonner
House District 72



Representative Karen Mathiak
House District 73



Representative Bonnie Rich
House District 97

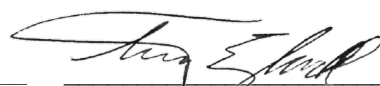

Representative Timothy Barr
House District 103



Representative Chuck Efstration
House District 104


Representative Brett Harrell
House District 106


Representative Dale Rutledge
House District 109

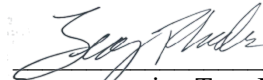

Representative Dave Belton
House District 112


Representative Terry England
House District 116

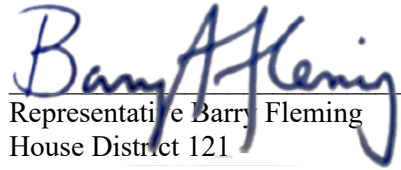

Representative Houston Gaines
House District 117



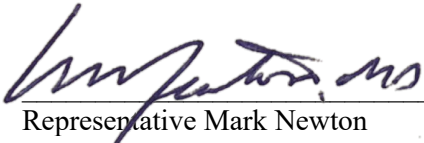
Representative Marcus Wiedower
House District 119



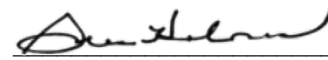
Representative Trey Rhodes
House District 120



Representative Barry Fleming
House District 121



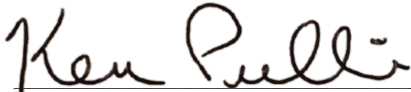
Representative Mark Newton
House District 123



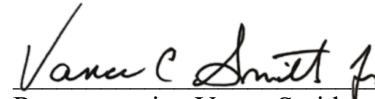
Representative Susan Holmes
House District 129



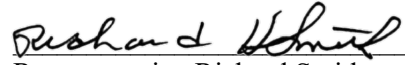
Representative David Knight
House District 130



Representative Ken Pullin
House District 131



Representative Vance Smith
House District 133



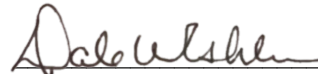
Representative Richard Smith
House District 134



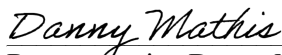
Representative Mike Cheokas
House District 138



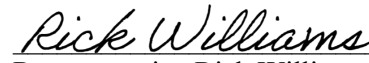
Representative Robert Dickey
House District 140



Representative Dale Washburn
House District 141



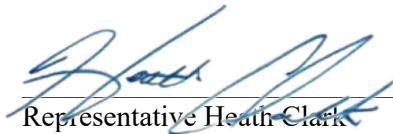
Representative Danny Mathis
House District 144



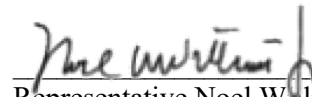
Representative Rick Williams
House District 145



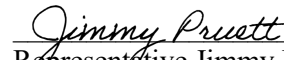
Representative Shaw Blackmon
House District 146



Representative Heath Clark
House District 147



Representative Noel Williams
House District 148



Representative Jimmy Pruett
House District 149



Representative Gerald Greene
House District 151



Representative Bill Yearta
House District 152



Representative Clay Pirkle
House District 155




Representative Greg Morris
House District 156




Representative Bill Werkheiser
House District 157





Representative Butch Parrish
House District 158



Representative Jan Tankersley
House District 160



Representative Bill Hitchens
House District 161



Representative Ron Stephens
House District 164



Representative Jesse Petrea
House District 166

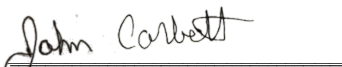

Representative Dominic LaRiccia
House District 169



Representative Penny Houston
House District 170

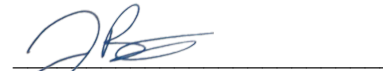

Representative Joe Campbell
House District 171

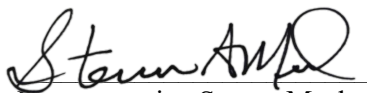

Representative Sam Watson
House District 172

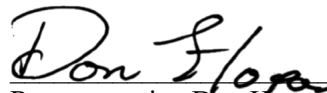

Representative Darlene Taylor
House District 173

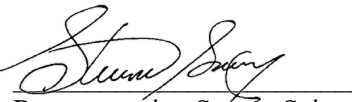

Representative John Corbett
House District 174



Representative John LaHood
House District 175

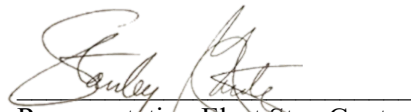

Representative James Burchett
House District 176



Representative Steven Meeks
House District 178

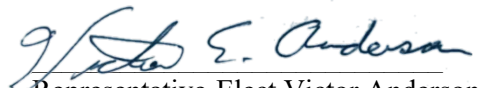

Representative Don Hogan
House District 179



Representative Steven Sainz
House District 180

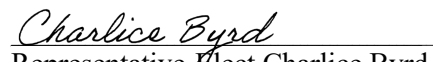

Representative-Elect Mike Cameron
House District 1


Representative-Elect Stan Gunter
House District 8


Representative-Elect Will Wade
House District 9


Representative-Elect Victor Anderson
House District 10


Representative-Elect Tyler Paul Smith
House District 18


Representative-Elect Charlice Byrd
House District 20

Lauren McDonald

Representative-Elect Lauren McDonald
House District 26

Rob Leverett

Representative-Elect Rob Leverett
House District 33

Clint Crowe

Representative-Elect Clint Crowe
House District 110

Beth Camp

Representative-Elect Beth Camp
House District 131

David Jenkins

Representative-Elect David Jenkins
House District 132

Buddy DeLoach

Representative-Elect Buddy DeLoach
House District 167