

GEORGIA

PROGRAM

The Georgia Election Program consisted of field programs with volunteers in five counties (Clayton County, Cobb County, DeKalb County, Fulton County, and Gwinnett County) and a call center in Atlanta for the 1-866-OUR-VOTE and 1-888-VE-Y-VOTA Hotline numbers. Election Protection worked with both state and county election administrators to address problems that arose before Election Day.

Voters in Fulton County faced significant registration and provisional ballot problems, as well as challenger activity.

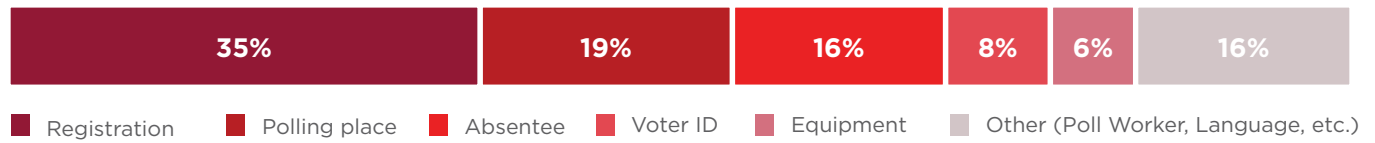
BEFORE ELECTION DAY

Voter Registration

Election Protection became aware that the voter registrations of many new citizens were not processed or were flagged as requiring additional citizenship verification. Through Election Protection Coalition partners at the Asian American Legal Defense Fund, volunteers were able to confirm that voters in over 18 Georgia counties were affected by this problem, with the majority in Gwinnett and Fulton Counties. For example, a new citizen in Gwinnett County reported that within minutes of being sworn in as a U.S. Citizen on September 21, 2012, she and others present submitted voter registration forms. However, when early voting began, she checked her registration status and polling location online but did not find her name listed on the My Vote Page of the Secretary of State's website. Election Protection volunteers contacted both state and county officials to inquire about the voter's registration. The Gwinnett County Board of Elections responded to the inquiry by sending the voter a letter requesting that she provide additional proof of citizenship in order to complete her voter registration process. This voter was finally able to cast a regular ballot on November 2, 2012.

Another Hotline caller, who had been a U.S. Citizen since July 2009, was told that her citizenship was being challenged when she attempted to vote early in Fulton County. Although she showed the poll worker her passport, driver's license, utility bills and precinct

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voter card, she was not allowed to vote a regular ballot. She was told that she could either vote a provisional ballot, or go to the nearest Georgia driver's license facility to clear her "challenged" status by showing them her passport, and then return to vote. She chose the second option. However, at the local driver's license facility, she was told that they could not help her and was sent to another location. At the second driver's license facility, she was told that they could not verify her U.S. Citizenship. She called the State Election Division and the Fulton County Registrar but did not get much assistance. She finally contacted Election Protection. Election Protection volunteers were able to work with the Secretary of State's office to verify her citizenship, and she was finally allowed to cast her vote using a regular ballot.

Challenger Activity

Another significant problem in Fulton County involved challenges to students' eligibility. Students at the Atlanta University Center (AUC) Consortium schools had their right to vote challenged. The AUC Consortium consists of Clark Atlanta University, Spelman College, Morehouse College, and Morehouse School of Medicine. Before Election Day, the Georgia Election Protection leadership became aware that the voter registrations of AUC Consortium students had been challenged by a representative of True the Vote on the grounds that they were ineligible to vote based on their student status and their residency status. In meetings with the Fulton County Board of Elections they were told that these challenges would be rejected because none of the True the Vote representatives were county residents, and they were therefore were not permitted by law to challenge the eligibility of voters. Additionally, the challenge law does not allow challenges based on the status of a group; the challenge must be based on knowledge of the individual voter. However, on Election Day, many students were listed as being challenged and were offered only provisional ballots.

ELECTION DAY

Voter Registration and Provisional Ballots in Fulton County

In Fulton County, the names of hundreds of registered voters were erroneously not placed on precinct voter rolls, which was likely a contributing factor to the large number of provisional ballots cast in the county. 5,038 provisional ballots were cast in Fulton County, which represents a marked difference from 2008, when 4,100 voters voted provisionally.

Although these voters did not appear on the precinct voter rolls, their names were listed on the My Voter Page on the Secretary of State's website. Some voters used their smartphones to show poll workers that their names appeared on the website but received inconsistent responses from poll workers, who sometimes insisted that the voter use a provisional ballot and other times allowed the voter to use a regular ballot.

In addition, Fulton County did not have enough provisional ballots to meet the overwhelming demand. The county had the ability to print provisional ballots on demand, but did not have many printed ahead of time. Election Protection received reports that, although precincts had hundreds of voters in line waiting for the precinct to receive replacement provisional ballots, the County delivered less than ten replacement ballots at a time. Because of the shortage of provisional ballots, some voters were denied the opportunity to vote, as they could not wait in line.

On Election Day, Election Protection received a report of a registered voter and resident of Fulton County who attempted to vote at her assigned precinct at Centennial Park Elementary School. The voter was initially told that she was not registered because her name did not appear in the precinct poll book. However, a poll worker was able to confirm through the Secretary of State's My Voter webpage that this voter was properly registered and at the correct precinct. The poll worker advised her that she would have to vote a provisional ballot; however, the precinct had run out of provisional ballots. As a result, this voter was not able to vote at all.

A Fulton County report on its 2012 election administration cited a number of contributing factors to voter registration problems. The report found that properly registered voters failed to appear in their precincts' poll books because of the late entry of voter registration information into the state's database, as well as the delayed delivery of supplemental voter lists to poll managers. Entry of voter registration and delivery of supplemental lists were taking place up through the Saturday and Sunday before Election Day. There was even one

instance in which a poll manager did not receive the supplemental list until late on Election Day, after many voters had already appeared at the polls.

Student Voters

Over 250 Morehouse College students were not able to cast regular ballots on Election Day. For some, their names were not on the voter rolls, and others were told that there was a question regarding their residency status. Many students stood in lines for over seven hours waiting for the precinct to receive replacement provisional ballots, the only voting option available to them. There were reports that students at a polling place at Spelman College encountered similar problems.