

Georgia insight

Sue Ella Deadwyler
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"She hath done what she could."
Mark 14:8a
"...and having done all ... stand."
Ephesians 6:13c

Voter Registration, Early Voting, and a "Do-Over" Election

- **October 9** Last day to register and be eligible to vote November 6
- **October 15 – 31** Advanced absentee in-person voting for November 6
- **October 27** Mandatory Saturday voting for November 6
- **November 2** Last day for a registrar to issue or mail absentee ballots for November 6

May 22nd Election Overturned in House District 28, Do-Over December 4

"More votes than 67 were cast in an incorrect district. Outcome of the election is in question because we do not know how those votes would have been voted. A new election must be held."

– Banks County Superior Court Senior Judge David Sweat, September 18, 2018

News Flash! Her ballot was for the wrong district. During a conversation, Representative Dan Gasaway's wife learned that her co-worker would have voted for Mr. Gasaway in the May 22nd Primary Election, but couldn't because his name was not on her ballot. So, why not request a correct ballot? Perhaps, she wasn't familiar with her House district number or the names of candidates running in her district. All are *very* important facts to know before voting.

After incumbent Representative Gasaway lost the Primary by 67 votes, he soon learned that seventy-four people had been given wrong ballots and had voted on wrong ballots in the State House Primary for District 28, which includes Habersham, Banks, and Stephens Counties.

In Habersham County 72 people voted the wrong ballot; two voted wrong ballots in Stephens County; but no votes were contested in Banks County.

Gasaway filed a lawsuit, claiming that some voters who live along the District 28/District 10 dividing line in Habersham County were given the wrong ballots for the May Primary Election.

The complexity of the situation was explained by Habersham County Commission Chairman Victor Anderson who said, "On some properties they had to actually determine where the house is in relation to that line [on the reapportionment map showing district boundaries], even though part of the property was in 28 and part in 10. Where the house resides, determines where the voter lives. It was a fairly complicated process."

The Habersham County Board of Elections and County officials had filed a motion to dismiss Gasaway's civil suit, but withdrew their suit on August 30th, conceding that errors were made.

On September 18th Banks County Superior Court Senior Judge David Sweat heard the case for seven hours before adjourning. Ten minutes after reconvening the next day he said, "More votes than 67 were cast in an incorrect district. The outcome of the election is in question because we do not know how those votes would have been voted. A new election must be held."

"Do-over" election in House District 28 is December 4th. Early voting begins in November.

ACTION – Please learn which candidates in your district should be on your ballot before you vote absentee, or early voting, or on Election Day. If your absentee ballot does not list the candidates who are running in your district, request a correct absentee ballot. If you vote in person and receive an incorrect ballot, immediately inform the Poll Manager and request a correct ballot. Do not vote on an incorrect ballot.

September 2018

Q. Why is Marijuana, a Schedule I Drug?

A. It has a high potential for abuse and no acceptable and safe medical use in the U.S.

“This is not a war on drugs: it is a defense of our brains – the repository of our humanity! Marijuana fails to meet any of [the] five criteria for accepted medical use in the U.S. At present, it belongs in Schedule I.”

– Dr. Bertha Madras, Psychobiology Professor Harvard Medical School, Cross-appointment Boston, Massachusetts General Hospital

The Next Governor and New Legislators will reject or approve Marijuana Cultivation

So far, Georgia has rejected bills to legalize recreational marijuana but is one of 23 states that have legalized it in some form, such as “medical” marijuana. Eight states and Washington, D.C. legalized recreational marijuana, despite risks of addiction and abuse.

Georgia’s Creeping Acceptance of Marijuana Possession

July 2016 Clarkston passed an ordinance authorizing a \$75 fine and no jail time for possessing an ounce or less of marijuana. Arresting officers have discretion to impose the local charge or revert to state law that punishes possession of any amount with six months in jail or a fine up to \$1,000.

October 2017 Mayor Kasim Reed signed a City of Atlanta marijuana ordinance into law, to reflect the City Council’s, unanimous, reduction of the penalty for possessing an ounce or less of marijuana to a \$75 fine and no jail time.

March 2018 The City of South Fulton¹ reduced to \$150 the fine for small amounts of marijuana, but authorized law enforcement to charge offenders under state or local law.

June 2018 Fulton County Commissioners passed a resolution authorizing a \$75 fine and no jail time for possessing less than an ounce of marijuana in the Fulton Industrial District. As the only unincorporated area in Fulton County, it is located between Atlanta and the City of South Fulton.

Georgia Women Sell Marijuana Edibles at Savannah Church Event²

Acting upon a tip, the Chatham-Savannah Counter Narcotics Team established surveillance of 28-year-old Ebony Cooper and 26-year-old Leah Pressley, who sold their products during a September 14th Savannah, Georgia church event that was hosted by a vendor outside the church. Although both participated as local entrepreneurs, Cooper was said to be the only one “openly selling the edibles ... cereal treats, brownies, and puddings,” as well as “actively advertising her edibles on various social media sites.”

After buying several of the edibles, narcotics officers followed them to an off-site location, where they were arrested, charged with a felony and taken to the Chatham County jail. A large stock of marijuana edibles, a loaded firearm and \$1,000 in cash were confiscated.

ACTION – 1. Oppose legalization of (a) recreational marijuana, (b) marijuana cultivation and (c) hemp-growing. 2. Vote for candidates who will oppose expanding Georgia marijuana law and (e) will prohibit in-state cultivation. Global fact: There is NO CANNABIS SEED available that guarantees the production of hemp-grade marijuana.

¹ March 23, 2018 article by Reporter Joe Reisigl: “Regardless of South Fulton’s new law, Georgia law still supersedes the city legislation. Georgia law punishes possession of any amount of marijuana with six months in jail or a fine of up to \$1,000. It is the arresting officer’s discretion to choose which to enforce, although the final punishment will fall on a judge. The new law only affects the city of South Fulton. Get caught in College Park? You’re looking at Georgia law. Cross into Union City? Same deal.”

² Article by Michael Harriot, Chatham County, September 18, 2018

Troubling News about Smart Meters

In 2007, Georgia Power and other electric companies began replacing analog meters with smart meters that record and remotely transmit power use in real time. As a result, power companies (a) don't need meter-readers anymore; (b) they can increase prices by time-of-use; and (c) cut off high-use appliances at any time.

By 2011 Georgia Power had installed 1.7 million smart meters and continued installation until all analog meters were replaced. Since Georgia Power allowed no consumer opt-outs, by 2012 the Senate introduced S.B. 459, which the Senate passed, but the House didn't.

For all those years, Georgia Power allowed no opt-out for consumers who preferred analog meters, while customers of other energy providers were given a choice.

That situation changed on December 17, 2013 when the Public Service Commission approved a Smart Meter Opt-Out charge for Georgia Power. Since then, Georgia Power has allowed opt-outs, but consumers must pay an additional \$19 per month to have the analog meter read.

Now the court is involved. Last month on August 16th the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that smart meter data collection constitutes a search under the Fourth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, as well as the Illinois Constitution. The court, also, decided the search is reasonable, despite these facts: (a) Smart meters indicate when people are home, (b) when the home is vacant, and (c) the occupants' sleeping and eating routines. Smart meters (d) monitor and record the power usage of specific appliances that (e) may be targeted for peak-use cut-off.

In 2012, fifty-four international experts¹, including 16 from the U.S., documented adverse neurological effects of smart meter radiation. They found that smart meters on homes can cause much higher radio frequency (RF) exposure than cell towers, "if [smart meters] are ... on a common wall with a bedroom or kitchen rather than a garage wall. With both cell towers and smart meters, the entire body is immersed by microwaves that go out in all directions," which increases the risk of overexposure to many sensitive organs including the eyes and testicles.

On July 22nd Harvard Medical School graduate Dr. David Carpenter, who has worked in the area of electromagnetic fields and public health for over 18 years, adamantly warned that there is no evidence that smart meters are in any way safe for human beings.

The World Health Organization classifies wireless radiation as a 2B cause of cancer and lists 22² symptoms consumers have reported. Wireless smart meters average 9,600 radio frequency emissions daily, but that may increase to 190,000 per day, which is two and one-half times above safe levels.

ACTION – Contact officials and candidates with these recommendations: (a) Amend federal and local smart meter laws with penalty clauses requiring elimination of consumer health risks (b) or remove and replace smart meters with non-hazardous analog meters.

¹ The online report summary is entitled, "Smart Meters: Correcting the Gross Misinformation," agfauteux, 11 juin 2012.

² Sleep problems, stress, headaches, ear pain or noises, memory or learning problems, fatigue or muscle or physical weakness, disorientation or dizziness or balance problems, eye problems or eye pain or pressure in the eyes, cardiac symptoms or heart palpitations or heart arrhythmias or chest pain, leg cramps or neuropathy, arthritis or body pain or sharp or stabbing pains, nausea or flu-like symptoms, sinus problems or nose bleeds, respiratory problems or coughing or asthma, skin rashes or facial flushing, urinary problems, endocrine disorders or thyroid problems or diabetes, high blood pressure, changes in menstrual cycle, hyperactivity or changes in children's behavior, seizures, recurrence of cancer.

Source: EMF Safety Network Survey 2011; Dr. Ron Powell, "Symptoms after Exposure to Smart Meter Radiation."

Paper Ballots May be Used in the Future, but Not on November 6

Judge Amy Totenberg, U.S. District Court, Georgia Northern District Atlanta Division, on September 17th denied a requested preliminary injunction against the use of electronic voting machines in the upcoming General Election. While basing her denial on the disruptive risk of changing voting equipment so close to the midterm elections, she declared support for paper ballots and her intention to expedite judgment if the case were to come before her in the future. She, also, commented on Georgia's slow response to "serious vulnerabilities of its voting system ... [and declared that] further delay is not tolerable...."

When citing concerns about electronic voting systems, the judge referenced a National Academy of Science report which was released September 6, 2018 under this headline: "New Report identifies Steps to Secure Americans' Votes; All U.S. Elections Should Use Paper Ballots by 2020 Presidential Election; Internet Voting Should Not Be Used at This Time."

Plaintiffs in the case, uneasy that touchscreen voting machines might be hacked, requested a preliminary injunction to stop their use in this year's General Election.

Georgia and four other states, plus 300 counties in eight additional states use touchscreen voting with no paper trail. The Georgia situation is of national interest. A similar case in South Carolina elicited this response to Judge Totenberg's decision: "My view is that this ruling has huge national significance. The court acknowledged that states violate the Constitution if they fail to provide an election system that can stand up to modern cyber-threats."

Elections: The National Academy of Science Report (NASR)

NASR's Six Recommendations for Elections

- Elections should be conducted with human-readable paper ballots.
- States should mandate a specific type of audit known as a "risk-limiting" audit prior to the certification of election results.
- Internet voting should not be used at the present time, and it should not be used in the future until and unless very robust guarantees of secrecy, security, and verifiability are developed and in place.
- Election administrators should routinely assess voter registration database integrity and install systems that detect efforts to interfere with voter registration systems.
- Jurisdictions that use electronic poll books should have backup plans to provide access to current voter registration lists in the event of any disruption.
- Election systems should continue to be a critical infrastructure of Dept. of Homeland Security.

NASR's Recommendations to Congress

- Appropriate funding to modernize election systems.
- Fund state and local governments for ongoing improvement of cybersecurity capabilities.
- Require state and local election officials to report voting system failures arising in elections.
- Fully fund the U.S. Election Assistance Commission for current and future responsibilities.
- Authorize and fund a major voting initiative that supports research on elections.
- Fund modernization of state and local election systems, as well as ongoing cybersecurity capabilities, the reporting of system failures and voting difficulties.

Georgia Insight is a conservative publication financed entirely by its recipients.