

## **ACLU-GA Poll Worker Q&A Session**

October 8, 2020

### **Panelists**

Vasu Abhiraman, Policy Counsel

Lana Goitia, Voting Rights Organizer

Andrew Kurish, Fulton County Poll Manager

Nick Northen, Fulton County Poll Manager

Wendy Aina, Gwinnett County Poll Manager

### **Presentation**

Volunteering as a committed, competent poll worker is one of the most impactful ways to effect change in the 2020 election cycle.

Recap of the ACLU of Georgia Poll Worker Recruitment Program: The Three S's

1. **Solicit:** Get prospective poll workers to submit the ACLU-GA form: adopt a poll orgs, lawyers, those who are skilled in IT, overall younger.
2. **Shepherd:** Ensure that those who have submitted the form get officially signed up, trained, and scheduled with the county. Liaise with the county so the program can be executed.
3. **Support:** Be a resource, build a community, continue to liaise on behalf of poll workers with the county to ensure communication gaps are addressed.

### Hiring Timeline

- Most counties are still notifying poll workers of their placement, especially new poll workers. Keep an eye out for a call from a number you may not recognize - and emails from county officials.
  - Fulton County folks should have received an email on October 8.
- If you have outstanding forms, please get those in as soon as possible.
- Note: The ACLU of Georgia does not guarantee placement as a poll worker.

### Skills needed to be a Poll Worker

1. Organizational
2. Technological
3. Logistical
4. Problem Solving
5. Strong Voice
6. \*Don't think of yourself as "inexperienced" compared to anyone else. Prepare to walk in and take a leadership role, even as a first-time poll worker.

# Q&A (with questions timestamped)

## 13:06 What does a provisional ballot look like?

- Below is a provisional ballot. This ballot would be hand-filled and put into a provisional envelope instead of being scanned.
  - Some counties may use an electronic process for provisional ballot. You may learn this at your county training.
- Provisional ballots are the “best last option” for voting. In other words, provisional ballots should only be used if a voter has no alternative way to vote. With a provisional ballot, a voter’s vote can not be guaranteed. Issues such as signature placement can disqualify a provisional ballot. Additionally, provisional ballots are not standard across counties. Therefore, an election from a voter’s home precinct may not appear on a provisional ballot. For this reason, you should always make a voter aware of their option to use a provisional ballot -- but if alternatives exist, those should take priority.

DEKALB COUNTY 888-DM		PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS	SPECIAL ELECTION CITY OF ATLANTA
<b>OFFICIAL ABSENTEE/PROVISIONAL/Emergency BALLOT</b> OFFICIAL GENERAL AND SPECIAL ELECTION BALLOT OF THE STATE OF GEORGIA NOVEMBER 3, 2020		For District Attorney of the Stone Mountain Judicial Circuit (Vote for One) <input type="radio"/> Sherry Boston (Incumbent) Democrat <input type="radio"/> Write-in	City of Atlanta Homestead Exemption (Vote for One) - 1 - Authorizes dedication of fees and taxes to their intended purposes by general state law. House Resolution 154 Act No. 597 "Shall the Constitution of Georgia be amended as to authorize the General Assembly to dedicate monies derived from fees or taxes in the public purpose for which such fees or taxes were intended?" <input type="radio"/> YES <input type="radio"/> NO
<b>INSTRUCTIONS:</b> To Vote: 1. Use black or blue ink to mark the ballot. 2. Completely fill in the empty oval to the left of the candidate name or choice in all cases you wish to vote. 3. If voting for a provision candidate, completely fill in the empty oval to the left of the Write-In selection, then write the name of the write-in candidate in the space provided. If you make a mistake or change your mind on a selection: A. Do not attempt to mark through the selection or attempt to erase. Write "Spelled" across the ballot and express the return strategies. B. Fold or return the spoiled ballot and envelope to your county board of registrars; a new official absentee ballot will be mailed to you. If you decide to vote in person, surrender the ballot to the poll manager of an early voting site within your county or the precinct to which you are assigned. You will then be permitted to vote a regular ballot. *Remember that the voter's intent is controlling in the absence of a ballot. In the absence of a ballot, the voter's intent is controlling in the absence of a ballot.		For Clerk of Superior Court of DeKalb County (Vote for One) <input type="radio"/> Debra DeBerry (Incumbent) Democrat <input type="radio"/> Write-in	Waives state and local sovereign immunity for violation of state laws, state and federal constitutions. House Resolution 1023 Act No. 596 "Shall the Constitution of Georgia be amended to waive sovereign immunity and allow the people of Georgia to petition the superior court for relief from governmental acts done outside the scope of local authority or which violate the laws of this state, the Constitution of Georgia, or the Constitution of the United States?" <input type="radio"/> YES <input type="radio"/> NO
For President of the United States (Vote for One) <input type="radio"/> Donald J. Trump - President <input type="radio"/> Michael R. Pence - Vice President (Incumbent) Republican <input type="radio"/> Joseph R. Biden - President <input type="radio"/> Kamala D. Harris - Vice President Democrat <input type="radio"/> Jo Jorgensen - President <input type="radio"/> Jeremy "Spiker" Cohen - Vice President Libertarian <input type="radio"/> Write-in		For Sheriff (Vote for One) <input type="radio"/> Harold Dennis Robinson <input type="radio"/> Meloy M. Maddox (Incumbent) Democrat <input type="radio"/> Write-in	STATEWIDE REFERENDUM - A - Establishes a tax exemption for certain real property owned by charities. House Bill 344 Act No. 149 "Shall the Act be approved which provides an exemption from an ad valorem taxes for all real property owned by a purely public charity, if such charity is exempt from taxation under Section 501(c)(3) of the Federal Internal Revenue Code and such real property is held exclusively for the purposes of building or repairing single-family homes to be donated to such charity by individuals selling homes that shall not bear interest?" <input type="radio"/> YES <input type="radio"/> NO
For United States Senate (Vote for One) <input type="radio"/> David A. Perdue (Incumbent) Republican <input type="radio"/> Jon Ossoff Democrat <input type="radio"/> Shane Hazel Libertarian <input type="radio"/> Write-in		For Tax Commissioner (Vote for One) <input type="radio"/> Irvin J. Johnson (Incumbent) Democrat <input type="radio"/> Write-in	For Chief Magistrate (Vote for One) <input type="radio"/> Barry A. Anderson (Incumbent) Democrat <input type="radio"/> Write-in
<b>SPECIAL ELECTION</b> For United States Senate (To Fill the Unexpired Term of Johnny Isakson, Resigned) (Vote for One) <input type="radio"/> Al Barfield Independent <input type="radio"/> Allen Buckley Independent <input type="radio"/> Doug Collins Republican <input type="radio"/> John Fortuin Green <input type="radio"/> Derrick E. Grayson Republican <input type="radio"/> Michael Todd Greene Independent <input type="radio"/> Annette Davis Jackson Republican <input type="radio"/> Deborah Jackson Democrat <input type="radio"/> Jamaica James Democrat <input type="radio"/> A. Wayne Johnson Republican <input type="radio"/> Tamara Johnson-Shealey Democrat <input type="radio"/> Matt Lieberman Democrat <input type="radio"/> Kelly Loeffler (Incumbent) Republican <input type="radio"/> Joy Felicia Slade Democrat <input type="radio"/> Brian Stovinski Libertarian <input type="radio"/> Valencia Stovall Independent <input type="radio"/> Ed Tarver Democrat <input type="radio"/> Kandice Taylor Republican <input type="radio"/> Raphael Warnock Democrat <input type="radio"/> Richard Dean Winfield Democrat <input type="radio"/> Write-in		For Public Service Commissioner (To Succeed Jason Shaw) (Vote for One) <input type="radio"/> Jason Shaw (Incumbent) Republican <input type="radio"/> Robert G. Bryant Democrat <input type="radio"/> Elizabeth Melton Libertarian <input type="radio"/> Write-in	For Solicitor General of DeKalb County (Vote for One) <input type="radio"/> Donna Coleman-Stobling (Incumbent) Democrat <input type="radio"/> Write-in
For Public Service Commissioner (To Succeed Lauren Babba McDonald, Jr.) (Vote for One) <input type="radio"/> Lauren Babba McDonald, Jr. (Incumbent) Republican <input type="radio"/> Daniel Blackman Democrat <input type="radio"/> Nathan Wilson Libertarian <input type="radio"/> Write-in		For Chief Executive Officer (Vote for One) <input type="radio"/> Michael "Mike" Thummond (Incumbent) Democrat <input type="radio"/> Write-in	SPECIAL ELECTION DEKALB COUNTY Ethics Question (Vote for One) "Shall the Act be approved which revises the Board of Ethics for DeKalb County?" <input type="radio"/> YES <input type="radio"/> NO
For U.S. Representative in 117th Congress From the 8th Congressional District of Georgia (Vote for One) <input type="radio"/> Angela Stanton-King Republican <input type="radio"/> Nikema Williams Democrat <input type="radio"/> Write-in		For County Commissioner District 6 (Vote for One) <input type="radio"/> Edward "Ted" Terry Democrat <input type="radio"/> Write-in	For DeKalb County Soil and Water Conservation District Supervisor (Vote for One) <input type="radio"/> Dell F. McGregor <input type="radio"/> Write-in
For State Senator From 42nd District (Vote for One) <input type="radio"/> Elena Parent (Incumbent) Democrat <input type="radio"/> Ed Tarver Democrat <input type="radio"/> Write-in		For State Representative In the General Assembly From 83rd District (Vote for One) <input type="radio"/> Mary Margaret Oliver (Incumbent) Democrat <input type="radio"/> Write-in	

## 20:32 What is a provisional ballot referring to?

- Provisional ballots are used for voters who, for one of a number of possible reasons, are not able to vote on a touch screen machine. Common reasons for using a provisional ballot:
  - A voter arrives at the wrong polling location (this is the most common reason).
  - A voter's registration can not be verified.
  - A voter did not bring their ID or citizenship verification.
- You may be told that anyone can be given a provisional ballot. This is not true. Examples of people who can not be given a provisional ballot:
  - A voter who admits they have already voted.
  - A voter who does not want to use the voting machine.
- Again, provisional ballots are the “best last option” for voting.

**24:48 Is it okay to provide snacks and drinks to voters as they wait in line?**

- The big concern with this is “vote buying” or campaigning. Communication of political messages are not allowed at the polls. As a poll worker, you may need to confront folks who try to do so.
- In the past, poll workers have offered bottles of water to voters. Offering a voter a water bottle is a great way to signal to the voter that you care about their voting experience.
- Some counties, including Gwinnett, have an “adopt a precinct” program where outside organizations can provide food and water. Check out [Pizza to the Polls](#) for similar efforts.

**29:25 Are there any challenges for Gwinnett poll workers specifically?**

- Often polling sites will look different during different elections. Wendy, a previous Gwinnett poll worker, suggests making an effort to make the site look familiar to the voter.

**32:25 Can you describe the equipment set up for touch screen voting units? (This question is only applicable to poll workers outside of Fulton)**

- Equipment comes in a rolling case, delivered the evening before. Poll workers are responsible for ensuring correct counts of equipment.

**Tip:** Certain phrases and comments can be alarming to voters. For example, never tell someone that they can't vote. Instead, you can say “you've already voted.” You should also be overly cautious as to not influence a voter's vote. For example, you should not name candidates in your explanation of ballots or elections. This can be perceived as trying to influence a vote.

**Tip:** Find a way to explain the special election to replace Senator Isakson. This is a jungle primary, so voters will likely have questions about this race. There will not be listings of the candidates affiliation for this race. This could cause confusion as well.

- Example explanation: “Senator Isakson resigned. Governor Kemp appointed a temporary senator. Now this race is to fill that seat moving forward. If any of those candidates do not receive 50 plus 1 percent of the vote by November 3rd, there will be a runoff election with the top two candidates.”
  - Do not name the candidates or party affiliations in your explanation. This can be perceived to be influencing the voter's vote.

**Tip:** If you have the opportunity to, print out extra sample ballots. This is a helpful resource when voters are in line.

**40:23 Do you feel that the standard Fulton County training is sufficient for being a poll manager, assuming no prior polling experience?**

- If you take the manager training in Fulton County, this is as sufficient as you can get. You can take this training and do a great job as a manager.
- When you leave the training, you should review the manual, especially if you're in a manager role. You should also follow up with questions if you have them.

**42:36 Will safety measures be taken to protect against COVID-19?**

- This heavily depends on which county you're in. Fulton and Gwinnett are providing PPE. Other counties may not do so. It is important to remember that you are assuming some risk by working in person.

**47:21 Can you make a voter wear a mask?**

- No, you may not force a voter to wear a mask. If a voter is not wearing a mask, you may politely offer them a mask and ask if they are willing to use it. If they say no, they must still be able to vote. You can spray everything they touch with disinfectant after they leave.

**47:50 Can sample ballots be given to voters?**

- Yes, you may hand them out to voters. However, reusing sample ballots is not encouraged due to COVID. There must also be at least two sample ballots posted in the precinct.

**48:40 Can voters take sample ballots or other notes with them to the voting machine?**

- Yes. Voters can take any notes in paper form with them to vote. However, they are not allowed to reference their cell phone while voting.

**49:23 Are there any constitutional amendments on the ballot?**

- Yes. There are two constitutional amendments. As a poll worker, you will receive a packet with the full text of those constitutional amendments. This packet is available upon request to voters; they have a legal right to review this before voting.

**50:20 If you have a question in real time on voting day, is there someone you can call?**

- This heavily depends on which county you are in.
- In general - if you're a clerk, ask your manager first. If you are a manager and don't know the answer to a question, call the registration number - or call who is paying you.

**52:02 How do you check if a voter has already voted?**

- The poll pad will show if a voter has voted absentee by mail or absentee in person. You will not be able to check a voter in if they have already voted without having to put in supervisory passwords. This would require that a manager be involved.
  - There are instances where you would need to do this (for example, if a voter voted for the wrong person on the machine and would like to spoil their ballot).

- If you are not familiar with this protocol after being trained, please contact Vasu or the training lead in your county.

**54:54 How has the process of cancelling ballots gone in your experience?**

- The process of cancelling an absentee ballot is necessary when someone requested an absentee ballot, their ballot has not been received yet by their county, and they wish to vote in person.
  - To send them to a voting machine, their ballot must be canceled.
  - For most counties, you must call the county and have the ballot marked as “canceled” on the county’s end before they can use a voting machine.
  - Important to follow this process to avoid accusations of “double voting”. No voter who requested an absentee ballot should be sent to the ballot-marking device unless they turned in their absentee ballot or their ballot has been confirmed to be canceled.

**57:33 Should poll workers be available the day before Election Day to help set up the polling location they’ve been assigned to?**

- Your poll manager should reach out to you at least a week before to coordinate how you can help with set-up.
  - Set-up may occur the day before or a few days before Election Day
  - Set-up can last as long as a few hours
  - Be sure to let your poll manager know of any scheduling conflicts that may interfere with helping set-up

**1:00:15 What are poll watchers?**

- Poll watchers are officially appointed by a party or a candidate and are there on behalf of a candidate or party to ensure the integrity of the process.
  - They are allowed to be almost anywhere in the precinct.
  - They shouldn’t be actively engaging with voters and are especially not allowed to talk about politics with anyone.
  - As poll workers, you can interact with poll watchers and get their thoughts on election operations (but not politics)
  - They watch the precinct and make sure nothing’s going on that they don’t like.
  - If a voter walks up to them and asks to speak with them, they should calmly and respectfully leave the main polling area before speaking with the voter.

**1:01:49 Do poll watchers have any ID or certification that poll workers can see to verify that they were sent officially?**

- Poll watchers should have a county-issued name tag and an appointment letter from the party or candidate they are there on behalf of.
  - This letter should include their name, specific precincts they’ve been appointed to, and the signature of the authorizing entity.
  - The poll manager is responsible for making sure that documentation is verified upon their arrival at the precinct.
- If poll watchers are doing something they shouldn’t be, try to address it nicely.

- If it's a bigger issue, the poll manager has the right and duty to remove them from the precinct.
- Some things poll watchers shouldn't be doing: staring at poll pads to see who people are voting for, taking photos or videos in the precinct
- Most poll watchers are very professional and mindful of their duties.

**01:04:10 What are poll observers?**

- The public as a whole has the right to observe, but they do not have the right to be in the enclosed space of the precinct.
  - Example: they can wait in the precinct's lobby and observe from there.
  - They can't campaign or exit poll - those are restricted to a certain distance away from the precinct.
- They have the right to be there, to watch set-up in the morning, to watch close-out in the evening.
- They don't have to meet a specific requirement to act as a poll observer. As such, poll workers will typically face more challenges with unofficial poll observers than official poll watchers.
  - If they're pushing the limits of what they can do, they need to be asked to either stop or leave.

**01:06:10 Can poll watchers or observers take photos or videos of a precinct's opening or closing procedures?**

- You should check with county leadership on this.
  - They shouldn't take photos from inside the precinct, even if it's before or after hours.
  - They also shouldn't be taking photos or videos of poll workers transporting ballots from the scanner to transportation.
- Since the law is unclear though (and especially in light of First Amendment concerns), it's best to check with your county.

**01:08:33 How safe and secure will the polling place be?**

- Additional security will depend on the county and the type of facility.
  - Some polling places may have off-duty police officers (ex. Fulton County's precincts located in school buildings, courthouses) that are there to maintain the peace and not to potentially intimidate voters.
  - If you need to talk to someone who's being disruptive, you can certainly take the off-duty officers with you.
  - Officers can also help with conflict between polling employees.
- In general, polling sites should very likely not have safety issues.

**01:11:35 What's a brief overview of a typical day in the life of a poll manager?**

- Poll managers should be at a precinct around 4:45 AM, so 15 minutes before poll workers report to a precinct at 5 AM.
  - Typical wake-up for this is around 3:30 AM
- Definitely double-check to make sure all your supplies are in the car before you head to the precinct.
- When you get to the polling place, you'll be busy all day until about 7:30 PM.

- Managers should start with morning oaths
  - May need to run through them twice if poll workers arrive in multiple groups.
- Important to delegate but supervise if your team is big enough!
- Get ballot marking devices up first, then poll pads, then scanners.
  - You should have your equipment all up and running before the precinct opens.
  - Set-up typically takes about an hour and a half for normal-size precincts
- As manager, be sure to bounce around and check-in with your people - assign them to opening stations and make sure they're comfortable at their assigned stations
- IMPORTANT: as a manager, don't get stuck on any 1 thing! Your team should be able to handle the little things
- Check on how your poll workers are interacting with voters, and coach them if they say something that's not quite right.
- In small precincts, you'll be in the workflow during the day: checking in voters, handling provisional ballots, cancelling absentee ballots
  - In larger precincts, you may be more involved in higher level crisis handling than in the workflow
- At around 4 or 5 PM, start getting paperwork in line, assigning seal numbers to equipment on the paperwork and taping those numbers to the top of the equipment
  - Helps you close faster
  - At about 6 PM, notice the signs that should be thrown away at the end of the election day.
- After closing, you'll have to do a lot of paperwork.
  - Easiest to do scanner, then BMD, then poll pad paperwork
  - Provisional ballot recap sheet
- After poll workers go home and you put tape on the door, you'll take stuff to your county's check-in center
  - They'll do a quick audit and check the numbers for what you bring back.
- Across the board, something will likely go wrong, and it's okay. If something goes wrong, immediately tell your supervisor about it.
  - Your day won't be defined by the mistake but by how you respond to it
- When interacting with voters, don't let them see you nervous.
  - This undermines their confidence in the election process and in the integrity of the election.

**01:24:34 Is there any rule against passing out candy to voters?**

- You probably won't get the official okay from your county, but county officials have never really tried to prevent it from happening.
  - Make sure parents are okay with their kids taking candy.
  - This is a way of enhancing the voter experience.

**01:25:50 How are hourly counts typically done and how long should they take?**

- Get a count from the scanner, get a count from the BMDs, and get a count of check-ins from the poll pads. These counts should match up unless you have spoiled or unaccompanied ballots.

- A spoiled ballot occurs when a voter comes up to you because they picked the wrong person or forgot to vote in a race that they wanted to. Tl;dr - if a voter says their ballot is wrong, it's a spoiled ballot.
- An unaccompanied ballot occurs when a voter leaves their ballot on the printer and walks out the door, puts their ballot next to the scanner, or leaves during the ballot review session.
  - These will all count in the “total ballots printed” but will not be included in all of your numbers.
- An easy way to handle hourly counts: pause check-in for less than a minute. In this time, get a single count of check-ins.
  - Then, resume check-in, and have voters pause after check-in. Once everyone that's actively at a machine has stopped voting, get a tally of the ballots printed on the BMDs. At this point, let people who are waiting after checking in go to a machine.
  - Once everybody who was at a machine before you paused check-in has put their ballot through the scanner, get the scanner counts.
- Try not to take a longer break from voting or stop the entire process during hourly counts since this can lead to long lines.
- If a voter asks, say you're getting a quick count for records and accountability purposes.

**01:30:05 If a person comes in with their absentee ballot, should that be taken from the voter?**

- If they are trying to hand in a voted absentee ballot to have it counted, then don't take it.
  - You can direct them to a nearby dropbox
  - If they come in during early voting, direct them to county-approved dropboxes
- If they want to vote in person instead of voting absentee, then cancel their ballot and send them to vote at a machine.

**01:32:25 Can you define the role of an assistant manager more clearly?**

- It depends heavily on who your manager is. Some managers will delegate to you and oversee your actions.
  - You should be ready to take over a task if necessary.
- Ask your manager for explicit clarity for what they want you to do that day.
- Assistant managers may also be assigned to a specific “area”: handling provisionals, people in the wrong area, etc.
- They should be put where polling managers think they'll be most useful.
- If you're an assistant manager, try to learn more about the process.

**01:36:15 For Gwinnett County, will off-duty police also be present?**

- Speak to your coordinator or area lead about that - they'll have more info.

**01:36:52 Gwinnett County training only covered what is necessary to get the job done, not how to speak to voters. What would generally be offensive to say to the average, reasonable person?**

- Gwinnett County's training is hardcore: they emphasize not interacting with the voter except when necessary because for every interaction, a voter can somehow possibly be offended
- Your tone and inflection is generally most important to customer service

- Your hope is to keep the number of complaints at your precinct as close to 1 as possible

**01:41:07 Are there worries about unofficial “poll watchers” that have been recruited by a candidate?**

- Members of the public have the right to be where members of the public have the right to be (outside the enclosed area).
- They don't have the right to interact with voters, intimidate voters, or have a firearm at a polling place. It is against the law in Georgia to have a firearm at a polling place.
- If they're being disruptive, ask them to stop or leave.
  - If they need to be removed, law enforcement will help with that.

**01:42:50 Dominion technician applications are already asking for paperwork to commit to working. When will Fulton County stop hiring poll workers, so I can be a Dominion technician if needed?**

- If you're waiting for a training date from Fulton County and have already submitted your pay card form, call Johnny Harris (number on the pay card form) or call your regional coordinator if you've already spoken to them.
- If you haven't already spoken to your regional coordinator, call the general office and ask to speak with the regional coordinator for your city.
- Fulton County is still actively hiring poll workers.

**Other: Do poll workers get to vote first?**

- No. If you are working on Election Day, you should make plans to vote early by mail or in person.