



Camden County Board of Elections & Registration

P.O. Box 608 / 200 East 4th Street • Woodbine, Georgia 31569

Phone: (912) 576.3245 • www.camdencountyga.gov

Office of Elections & Registration

WORK SESSION AGENDA

Thursday, March 25, 2021, 4:00 P.M.

**Camden County Government Services Complex
2nd Floor- Commissioner Chambers
Woodbine, GA**

***THE PUBLIC IS INVITED TO ATTEND THE WORK SESSION**

A. Call to Order

B. Pledge of Allegiance

C. Roll Call

D. Topics of Discussion

1. District 1 Polling Locations

2. Signature Verification Process

3. Budget Considerations regarding:

a. Dominion Voting Systems Warranties

b. National Change of Address/Extra Postage Costs

c. Relocation to Kingsland

d. Elections Vehicle

e. Signage- Digital, Billboards, etc.

f. Election Schedule October 2021 – June 2022

g. Festivals, Public Events, Voter Registration Events

4. Camden County Voter Challenges

Your Vote Counts

SHANNON NETTLES
Elections Supervisor

DEBORAH FELIX
Assistant Elections Supervisor

BARBARA HAHN
Member, District 1

JANNETT BRADFORD
Vice-Chair, District 2

ANTHONY KICKLIGHTER
Member, District 3

JOSEPH MICHAELS
Member, District 4

KYLE RAPP
Chairman, District 5



OFFICIAL ELECTION BULLETIN

December 18, 2020

TO: County Election Officials and County Registrars
FROM: Chris Harvey, Elections Division Director
RE: Absentee Ballot Signature Verification and Public Observation

Signature verification is a critical part of securing absentee ballots and must be conducted in a way that enhances the confidence of the electorate.

Absentee ballot applications containing the elector's signature (which would be any not coming from the Secretary of State's Absentee Ballot Application Portal or requested by an eligible family member pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 21-2-381(a)(1)(B)) must be compared to the applicant's voter registration signature as per O.C.G.A. § 21-2-381(b)(1) and determined whether they "appear to be valid" before mailing an absentee ballot to the voter. Applications containing a non-matching signature should be mailed a provisional ballot which can only be accepted if the cure process set forth is O.C.G.A. § 21-2-386(a)(1)(C). Absentee ballot applications that do not contain the required signature should be rejected.

When a voted absentee ballot has been returned by the voter, the signature on the oath envelope must then be compared to the voter registration signature and the absentee ballot application signature, if available (absentee ballots applied for through the portal will not have a signature as the voter's identity is confirmed by DDS data when using the portal.) The registrar or absentee ballot clerk must determine if the signature "appears to be valid." This signature verification requirement is detailed in O.C.G.A. 21-2-386(a)(1)(C).

We are aware of at least one instance where a voter "tested" the signature match process by intentionally signing his application in a different manner than his signature on file. If there is doubt as to the authenticity of the signature on a voted absentee ballot oath envelope following the review, the county election official should send the voter the required cure affidavit in order for the voter to provide the required documentation to confirm the authenticity of the signature. The cure process allows for both a thorough review of signatures and opportunity for voters to cure any issues.

Public Nature of Signature Comparison

Under O.C.G.A. 21-2-406, "...officials engaged in the conducting of primaries and elections held under this chapter shall perform their duties in public." Comparing signatures on absentee ballot applications and absentee ballots meet this criterion and therefore needs to be done publicly.

Performing a duty in public means that a member of the public can observe the official do the duty. There is, however, no necessity to allow a public observer to insert themselves into the duty or in any way interfere with the duty. The fact that an observer can watch an election official sitting at a desk or table, handling absentee ballot envelopes, and looking at a screen or piece of paper to compare a signature is compliance with this code section. A public observer is not expected to be able to see the specific data (signature on an envelope) or screen containing a voter registration signature from ENET (and also containing other PII) while observing this process.

There are not specially designated monitors for this process, and counties can and should set up reasonable settings and observation areas that take into account best practices for safety and security, especially with concerns for infection and possible communication of disease. While observers should be able to have a clear line of sight within a reasonable distance, election officials should be sufficiently separated from the public to ensure physical safety and security of data that might be available and subject to exposure during the comparison of signatures.

Live video streams available online also satisfy making the performance of the duty public as long as the display provides a reasonable viewing opportunity for the online viewer.

If a county will be using different locations and times for this process, counties should use reasonable efforts to notify the public. The entire goal is to allow the public to observe this process, however, it is also vitally important that this critical work be handled efficiently so that absentee ballots can flow smoothly into office, and voters can be advised of the status of their absentee ballots. Ideally, counties will be able to establish a location and time where this process can happen regularly, and observers can come and go with little need for additional notification.

There is no statutory authority to restrict cameras, phones or other devices from being present in the public observation areas designated by the county officials, but county officials can make reasonable demands on observers for the sake of good order and an environment conducive to allow workers to perform their duties without being interrupted or distracted. The fact that the

duty must be done publicly does not mean that the county must provide enough space for everyone who may want to observe. Again, reasonable restrictions on the number of observers, based on the local conditions, may be imposed by the county officials.

These guidelines will likely need to be modified by local offices in order to meet local circumstances. Local boards of election and registration can have a role in observing and creating guidelines for these processes, and are the responsible parties for making sure that the law is being met, and that the process is one that is consistent, legal, and secure.



OFFICIAL ELECTION BULLETIN

December 9, 2020

TO: County Election Officials and County Registrars

FROM: Chris Harvey, Elections Division Director

RE: Absentee Ballot and Absentee Ballot Application Signature Verification

Signature Verification Process is Public

We have received numerous questions asking whether the signature verification process on absentee ballot applications and absentee ballot envelopes is open to the public. The short answer is yes, it is. Pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 21-2-406, “[s]uperintendents, poll officers, and other officials engaged in the conducting of primaries and elections held under this chapter shall perform their duties in public. Additionally, O.C.G.A. § 21-2-483(b), states that “[a]ll proceedings at the tabulating center and precincts shall be open to the view of the public, but no person except one employed and designated for the purpose by the superintendent or the superintendent's authorized deputy shall touch any ballot or ballot container.”

The fact that the signature verification process is public under Georgia law does not mean that public observers should be allowed to see confidential information or to interfere in the process. See O.C.G.A. § 21-2-597. The elections superintendent must ensure that any public viewing area or video feed offers meaningful access to view the process, but the superintendent should also put in place reasonable regulations to protect the voter's/applicant's personal identification information (PII) and/or non-public data from public view and to ensure that no observer interferes with the verification process. A good template may be the processes you have put in place for the early processing of absentee ballots, which is also publicly viewable but has protections in place to protect confidential information and prevent interference with official duties.

Any interference or attempted interference with official election duties should be reported to the Secretary of State's office for investigation and, if necessary, local law enforcement.

Signature Verification Process for Absentee Ballots and Absentee Ballot Applications

O.C.G.A. § 21-2-386(a)(1)(B) requires “[u]pon receipt of each ballot, the registrar or absentee ballot clerk to compare the signature or mark with the signature or mark on the absentee elector’s voter registration card or the most recent update to such absentee elector’s voter registration card AND application for absentee ballot or a facsimile of said signature or mark taken from said card or application.” It further provides, “if the information and signature appear to be valid and other identifying information appears to be correct, [the registrar or absentee ballot clerk shall] so certify by signing or initialing his or her name below the voter’s oath.” O.C.G.A. § 21-2-386(a)(1)(B).

O.C.G.A. § 21-2-381(b)(1) requires “[u]pon receipt of a timely application for absentee ballot, a registrar shall enter thereon the date received. The registrar or absentee ballot clerk shall determine, in accordance with the provisions of this chapter, if the applicant is eligible to vote in the primary or election involved. In order to be found eligible to vote an absentee ballot by mail, the registrar or absentee ballot clerk shall compare the identifying information on the application with the information on file in the registrar’s office and, if the application is signed by the elector, compare the signature or mark of the elector on the application with the signature.” “If found eligible, the registrar or absentee ballot clerk shall certify by signing in the proper place on the application.” O.C.G.A. § 21-2-381(b)(2)

As set forth in Georgia law a thorough process for signature verification is required at both the absentee ballot application and absentee ballot stage. As you are all aware, numerous allegations have been raised about the signature match process following the November election. While we have not seen any evidence to the contrary, please be sure that your office is following the thorough signature verification requirements set out in Georgia law. If you have any question as to the validity of a signature on either an absentee ballot or absentee ballot application after following your signature verification process, you should utilize the cure procedures set forth in O.C.G.A. § 21-2-386(a)(1)(C), O.C.G.A. § 21-2-381(b)(3), and SEB Rule 183-1-14-.13.

Your policies and procedure regarding signature match must follow Georgia law, and they should also be accomplished in a manner that helps provide confidence in the process to the voting public.



OFFICIAL ELECTION BULLETIN

November 24, 2020

TO: County Election Officials and County Registrars
FROM: Chris Harvey, Elections Division Director
RE: Determining Residency in Voter Registrations

There have been numerous social media posts about people “moving” to Georgia solely for the purpose of voting in the January 5, 2021 Runoff elections. We have also heard reports of people who voted in another state in November, but may now “decide” that they want to be residents of Georgia again. Residency is not determined based on what election you want to vote in. In Georgia, residency for voter registration purposes is determined by county registrars applying the factors set forth in O.C.G.A. § 21-2-217 and other relevant statutes.

To be a qualified voter in Georgia, you have to be both a resident of Georgia and the county in which you are registering. O.C.G.A. § 21-2-216(a)(4). Additionally, if you used to be a resident of Georgia but you are no longer one, you cannot legally vote in Georgia even if you are still on the list of registered voters. “No person shall remain an elector longer than such person shall retain the qualifications under which such person registered.” O.C.G.A. § 21-2-216(f). As the Attorney General’s office recently pointed out:

Georgia law provides that it is a felony to either register to vote knowing one does not possess the qualifications for voting in Georgia ([O.C.G.A. § 21-2-561](#)) or to attempt to vote knowing one does not possess the qualifications for voting in Georgia ([O.C.G.A. § 21-2-571](#)). Those who are found to be in violation could subject themselves to prosecution.

It is the duty of the county board of registrars to determine the eligibility of each person applying to register to vote in their county. O.C.G.A. § 21-2-226(a). The board of registrars also has the right and is charged with the duty of examining from time to time the qualifications of each elector of the county or municipality whose name is entered upon the list of electors. O.C.G.A. § 21-2-228.

Nothing in this Official Election Bulletin is intended to introduce any new tests, standards, or evaluations than that which have previously existed for the purposes of determining eligibility to register to vote in Georgia.

When reviewing an application for voter registration, the board of registrars shall determine an applicant's residency in Georgia and the county in which the application is submitted, using the criteria set forth in O.C.G.A. § 21-2-217. In determining an applicant's residency, the registrar shall review all available evidence, including any identifying documents submitted with the application.

Each application shall be considered individually.

If the registrar determines that additional evidence is needed to determine residency, the registrar may utilize his or her statutory authority in O.C.G.A. § 21-2-228 to further evaluate the applicant's residency status using the criteria set forth in O.C.G.A. § 21-2-217, as well as other related statutes.

If the registrar cannot determine to his or her satisfaction that the applicant properly resides in Georgia and the county in which the application is submitted, the registrar shall process the application, mark the applicant as "Challenged" in the voter registration system, and initiate a hearing as set forth in O.C.G.A. § 21-2-228. In the event that the applicant is found ineligible, the person shall be notified of the reasons for ineligibility. Such notices shall be sent to the person in writing by non-forwardable, first-class mail at the mailing address listed on the application, and the voter shall be removed from the list of eligible electors. O.C.G.A. § 21-2-226(d) and 228(f).

In determining residency, the registrar shall consider the criteria set forth in O.C.G.A. § 21-2-217.

If the registrar determines that an applicant has submitted false information, the board of registrars shall reject the application and shall refer the application to the district attorney of the county for criminal prosecution. If the false information is not discovered until after the applicant's application has been approved and the applicant's name added to the list of electors, the giving of such false information shall be cause to challenge the applicant's right to remain on the list of electors, which, if sustained, shall result in such applicant's name being removed from the list and the application being submitted to the district attorney of the county for criminal prosecution. O.C.G.A. § 21-2-220(e). The registrar shall also notify the Secretary of State's office in order to initiate a State Election Board investigation.