



DAVID RALSTON
SPEAKER

House of Representatives

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The Honorable Brad Raffensperger
Georgia Secretary of State
214 State Capitol
Atlanta, GA 30334

VIA EMAIL: Brad@sos.ga.gov

Dear Mr. Secretary:

Thank you for your distinguished service to our state, particularly during this challenging time.

I appreciate you taking time on Monday to discuss concerns I have with plans for the May 19th General Primary. In those conversations, I shared my views on problems I can envision with conducting this primary. Subsequent to those discussions, I have given even more thought to the serious reservations I continue to have on this matter.

You and I both agree that the right to vote is one of our most cherished freedoms. It is a right which, to the extent possible, should be free of impact from circumstances which create obstacles to its exercise.

At the present time, our state, the entire nation and the world are confronted by a public health emergency of unprecedented magnitude.

Our prayer is that we will be on the other side of this difficult period sooner rather than later. However, the inescapable truth is that we do not know the duration of the immediate health peril. Reputable scientists and physicians cannot agree on its duration.

All of which means that the precautionary measures recommended by the CDC and adopted in executive order by Governor Kemp will continue for an unknown period of time.

Faced with this uncertainty, many neighboring states have postponed primary run-offs, the general primaries having already been held. These include Alabama moving from March 31st until July 14th, Texas from May 26th until July 14th, North Carolina from May 12th until June 23rd, and Kentucky from May 19th until June 23rd. Pushing the primary back a month or more gives us more time to allow the situation to improve so that voters can vote in the manner in which they are most familiar. More importantly, it would make our highest priority the health and safety not only of voters, but our hard-working poll workers and elections officials.

A May 19th primary in Georgia would put our state the earliest, by more than a month, than any other in the south.

I realize you have developed plans to accommodate any continuing public health concerns. While I commend the goal, I respectfully submit that many of these measures deserve full and thorough legislative consideration before implementation.

Accordingly, I would request that the General Primary scheduled now for May 19th be postponed to a date no earlier than June 23rd. Further, that the General Primary be conducted utilizing the same procedures which have served our state well, until the elected representatives of Georgia's citizens have a full opportunity to discuss and consider any changes.

Thanking you in advance for your consideration, I remain

Very truly yours,

David Ralston, Speaker
Georgia House of Representatives