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## Bipartisan Rules Posted for Paper-Ballot System

**(ATLANTA)** -- The State Elections Board voted Tuesday to post for public comment updated rules for county officials to run elections on Georgia's new paper-ballot system, another key step in the implementation of the largest voting system rollout in U.S. history.

An important aspect of the rules are procedures for maintaining the integrity of the touchscreen ballot-marking devices, known as BMDs. The rules require county poll managers to test each BMD before every election to ensure that voters' selections will be accurately printed on the ballots.

"These rules, and the verification procedures they contemplate, are critical in assuring voters that their choices will be recorded faithfully and counted accurately," said Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger, chairman of the five-member State Elections Board.

The proposed rules reflect best practices recommended by election-security experts and House Bill 316 passed earlier this year by the Georgia General Assembly. They also incorporate comments from the American Civil Liberties Union, the Democratic Party of Georgia, the Brennan Center for Justice, and a working group of local election officials.

"The Secretary of State's Office was so good to work with. They took our suggestions, and so what has resulted is something that is workable for county poll workers and also very convenient for voters," said Executive Director of the Richmond County Board of Elections Lynn Bailey, a member of the working group. "At the same time, it includes all the necessary safeguards to maintain the integrity of the elections."

Posting of the rules Tuesday by the State Elections Board keeps on schedule the statewide implementation of the new secure paper-ballot system. The panel defeated a separate set of proposals that would have delayed implementation and conflicted with election laws and court mandates.

"The State Elections Board moved forward based on bipartisan recommendations that are sensible and designed to ensure the paper-ballot system is a success," said Deputy Secretary of State Jordan Fuchs. "Unfortunately, there are fringe groups trying to derail Georgia's paper-ballot implementation. Their ideas have failed to be persuasive today as they have in the General Assembly, in multiple courts and in last year's election."

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Georgia is replacing its first-generation electronic voting machines with a secure paper-ballot system. It was piloted in six counties last month and will be used next in a special election for House District 171 on Jan. 28. Voters statewide will use them starting with the March 24 Presidential Preference Primary.

They are being demonstrated across the state in conjunction with community groups. Currently, they are on display at the Martin Luther King Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change through the Martin Luther King National Holiday.

Voters in the new system will make their selections by touchscreen as they have for the past 17 years, except that then they will print out their ballot and review it before casting it.

The proposed rules will be posted at [sos.ga.gov](https://sos.ga.gov) later this week to [https://sos.ga.gov/index.php/elections/state\\_election\\_board](https://sos.ga.gov/index.php/elections/state_election_board).

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