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## Georgia Elections Officials Make Record Turnout for Training Conference

**(SAVANNAH)** – More than 700 local and state elections officials from across Georgia are attending a four-day conference, the largest conference of its kind in the country and a record attendance for the Georgia Association of Voter Registration and Election Officials.

“This turnout illustrates how closely the state and county officials work together to ensure Georgians enjoy smooth, accurate and secure elections,” said Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger. “This conference focuses on training the people who run the elections just as the Secure the Vote voter-education initiative I launched last week is about preparing the people doing the voting. Good education yields good results.”

In preparation for the 2020 contests, the state conference has specialized topics, including the implementation of the state’s new secure paper-ballot voting system. Secretary Raffensperger will give the keynote address as the meeting wraps up Wednesday morning.

Coordinated by the Carl Vinson Institute of Government at the University of Georgia, the conference includes presentations on outreach and voter education, overseas voters, voter-registration drives by independent groups, advance voting, recent legislation, Election Day tasks and use of the state’s electronic records database. State officials and representatives of the maker of the new voting system, Dominion Voting Systems, will offer training and answer questions.

Among those attending are election superintendents from the six counties that participated in a pilot of the paper-ballot system during this fall’s municipal elections. They’ll talk about the lessons they learned from the extraordinarily low incident rate of 0.164 percent during the Nov. 5 election and the error-free runoffs Dec. 3.

“I do believe a lot of (the record attendance) has to do with the new machines,” said Jean Lord, event manager with the Vinson Institute. “This is the education for election leaders to find out more about the pilot and be ready for the Presidential Preference Primary and the 2020 general election. I think that’s what really drove up the numbers, plus the opportunity to see Secretary Raffensperger speak on Wednesday.”

Recounts with paper ballots are a process that hasn’t been possible in the last 17 years as Georgia used first-generation electronic voting. A brand new topic from past conferences will be post-election audits.

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With paper ballots, elections officials can now perform risk-limiting audits, which are scientific sampling techniques to assess the election results.

The Georgia Secretary of State is the state's chief election officer and has the mission to help ensure secure and accurate elections. County election officials run the actual elections and handle voter registration.

Georgia is a leader in election innovation and access with automatic voter registration through the Department of Driver Services, three weeks of early voting – including a Saturday, and no-excuse absentee voting. It is the top state in the number of motor voter registrations and in the last election cycle experienced record registration and a record increase in turnout.

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