



February 26, 2019

Dear Members of the Georgia House of Representatives:

The Association County Commissioners of Georgia (ACCG), representing all 159 Georgia counties, respectfully asks for your support of HB 316 which entails touchscreen-marked paper ballots to replace our state's current voting equipment. We commend you for considering legislation that makes meaningful election reforms and will fund uniform voting equipment for all counties that is administratively feasible, produces a voter-verified paper trail, readily audited, secure, and user friendly.

Georgia's counties oversee and administer the state's election process. In this most important of roles, county commissioners are wholeheartedly committed to carrying out safe, secure, accessible and effective elections. County commissioners understand that as stewards of local taxpayer dollars, they must use limited resources wisely and responsibly. The provisions of HB 316 meet both tests.

Between the 2018 and 2019 sessions of the General Assembly, ACCG monitored and supported the work of the Secure, Accessible and Fair Elections (SAFE) Commission which was charged with researching and evaluating new voting equipment and with making recommendations on improving Georgia's voting rights, security and voting accessibility laws. It held four meetings and among other tasks heard from experts in subjects of elections and voting equipment, researched post-election audit procedures, and participated in public demonstrations of different types of elections equipment.

Four of the SAFE Commission's 18 members were county elections directors. All voted as part of the majority to recommend the purchase of touchscreen-marked paper ballots. ACCG's Policy Council relied upon them and considered the overwhelming preference expressed by county officials statewide in support of touchscreen-marked paper ballots when it voted unanimously to support HB 316.

Among the reasons cited by county commissioners and elections officials in preferring touchscreen-marked paper ballot-marking machines are that they: will minimize voter confusion and error, thus reducing the number of rejected votes; will seem familiar to voters, thus leading to ease of voting; can easily accommodate voters with certain disabilities, such as poor eyesight, which necessitates the use of larger font; will result in long-term cost-savings compared to printing, storing and securing hand-marked ballots; are less vulnerable to fraud than hand-marked paper ballots; etc.

Ballot marking devices with a paper trail will initially cost more than hand-marked paper ballots and the scanners to read them, but will result in long-term overall savings for counties. On behalf of the counties of Georgia and the ACCG Policy Council, please support HB 316.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dave Wills".

Dave Wills
Executive Director