



MINUTES
STATE ELECTION BOARD MEETING
Wednesday, October 22, 2025
9:00 a.m.

Coverdell Legislative Office Building (CLOB), Room 307 Atlanta, Georgia
<https://www.youtube.com/@GAStateElectionBoard/streams>

CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Mr. John Fervier, as Chairman, called the State Election Board ("Board") meeting to order at 9:25 a.m. A quorum was present for each Board action taken. The following Board Members were present: Mr. John Fervier, Dr. Janice Johnston, as Vice Chair, Mrs. Janelle King, Mr. Rick Jeffares, and Mrs. Sara Tindall Ghazal.

Vice Chair Dr. Johnston gave the invocation, and Member King led the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF BOARD MEETING MINUTES

The Board voted and approved the minutes from the State Election Board Meeting held on September 23, 2025, and September 24, 2025.

Motion: Member Jeffares motioned to approve the minutes from September 23, 2025, and September 24, 2025, SEB Meeting.

Second: Member King

Discussion: No discussion

Vote: Approved 4-0 with no opposition

The current agenda was amended by Member Ghazal to add and discuss the petition from Cobb County for a waiver and offer the opportunity for Cobb County to present their petition under new business. Vice Chair, Dr. Johnston added under old business a letter of support on behalf of the Board to the Election Assistance Commission and the Resolution.

PUBLIC COMMENT

The following individuals spoke out for public comments: Elizabeth Hendrickson, Brant Meadows, Earl Ferguson, Joseph Rossi, Amanda Prettyman, Sam Carline, Marisa Pyle, Richard Schroeder, Maria Gaudio, Sandra Burchardt, Janet Grant, Konrad Hayashi, Liz Throop, Max Clavijo, and Laren Collins.

OLD BUSINESS

A. Special Presentations

Vice Chair Dr. Johnston announced that Clay Parikh will speak about cyber security during the November 12, 2025, SEB board meeting. At the request of the Board Majority, Chairman Fervier agreed he would contact the Secretary of State, Brad Raffensperger, to speak on the SB189 and the method of voting without QR codes after July 1, 2026.

B. Rule Petition

1. Discussion of proposed rule petition.

Rule 183-1-12-.02 Definitions

Presenting Petitioners: Jeanne Dufort and Salleigh Grubbs

Following the presentation and discussion from the presenting petitioners, the Board voted to move forward to initiate rule making procedures to Rule 183-1-12-.02 Definitions.

Motion: Member Jeffares motioned to move amending Rule 183-1-12-.02 Definitions forward to initiate rule making procedures.

Second: Member King

Discussion: No discussion

Vote: Approved 2-0 with Member Ghazal and Vice Chairman Dr. Johnston abstaining.

At 10:40 a.m., the Board broke for a break. The meeting resumed at 10:52 a.m.

C. D&O Insurance

Executive Director Mills stated this would be discussed in his Executive Director's Report.

D. 2024 SEB Rules

Vice Chair, Dr. Johnston stated that of 11 rules, seven were challenged and went to the Supreme Court, which set new hurdles for rule approval. Four of the 11 rules were adopted and published. Three additional rules met the new Supreme Court requirements and were approved for adoption by the Board but needed to make sure the Secretary of State gets these certified and published. Chairman Fervier confirmed receipt of a response from the Secretary of State's office regarding the publication procedures for the three rules and will forward it to Executive Director Mills and Hope. Vice Chair, Dr. Johnston requested that the certification from the Secretary of State be sent to the State Election Board for their records and that the rules be published promptly. In addition, the State Election Board will notify all county supervisors of the new rules.

E. Resolution to Recommend legislation to the General Assembly

1. Ending No-Excuse Absentee Voting

Vice Chair, Dr. Johnston proposed a resolution for the Board to send a Letter to the General Assembly recommending the end of no-excuse absentee voting.

Motion: Vice Chair, Dr. Johnston moved to send a letter to the General Assembly to recommend consideration to end no excuse absentee voting for the State of Georgia.

Second: Member King

Discussion: no further discussion.

Vote: Passed 3-2 with Member Ghazal and Chairman Fervier voting in opposition.

2. Requiring a timely receipt of all ballots. Proposed legislation requiring all ballots, including UOCAVA (overseas and military) ballots, to be received by 7 p.m. on Election Day.

Motion: Vice Chair, Dr. Johnston moved with the clarification by Member Ghazal for prohibition of electronic voting to specify that electronic sending of ballot is permissible but return of ballot is still required by mail to the election office and recommend to the General Assembly to require timely receipt of all ballots by 7 p.m. on election day.

Second: Member King

Discussion: no further discussion

Vote: Passed 3-1 with Member Ghazal in opposition

F. Election Assistance Commission

Vice Chair, Dr. Johnston reported that the Election Assistance Commission (EAC) receive a petition for America First Legal. The petition aims to revise the federal voter registration application to require proof of citizenship. The public comment period for the petition ended on the 20th, with over 300,000 comments submitted to the EAC. A letter of support for the petition was sent with the signatures of Member Jeffares, King, and Vice Chair, Dr. Johnston. The letter was sent in a personal capacity, not on behalf of the board. Member Ghazal declined to have her name on the letter and Chairman Fervier did not reply regarding signing the letter.

NEW BUSINESS

Cobb County Special Election Waiver: Debbie Fisher of the Cobb County Board of Elections petitioned to waive pre-certification rules for a November 18, 2025, special election. The election's timing conflicts with another ongoing race, creating an immense logistical burden on staff. The request is to handle pre-certification electronically for this special election. The Board members agreed to call for a Zoom Meeting on November 7th, if possible.

Motion: Member Ghazal motioned to post notice and schedule vote 15 days after proper motion.

Second: Member King

Discussion: No discussion

Vote: Approved 5-0 with no opposition. Chairman Fervier exercised his right to vote.

REPORTS

A. Executive Director's Report

D&O Insurance: The Board discussed Director and Officers insurance due to increasing legal challenges faced by Board Members. Executive Director Mills is working on obtaining quotes. Board Members expressed significant concern and disappointment over the potential lack of defense from the Attorney General's office for individual members, fearing it would deter volunteers, especially since they were initially told they would have AG representation. The application process will require the SEB budget, and current challenges could further increase costs.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Board moved to enter an executive session at 11:52 p.m. and put the Regular meeting in recess.

Motion: Member Ghazal moved to enter into an executive session for personnel reasons

Second: Member Jeffares

Vote: Passed unanimously (4-0)

In Favor: Vice Chairman, Dr. Janice Johnston, Member Janelle King, Member Rick Jeffares, and Member Sara Tindall Ghazal

The Board returned from executive session at 1:11 p.m. for a public vote.

A. Personnel Vote

Motion: Member King motioned to move Autumn Miller from part time to a full-time position.

Second: Member Jeffares

Discussion: no further discussion

Vote: Passed 4-0

B. Legal Matters Vote

Motion: Member Ghazal motioned to move forward with negotiations as per their discussions to settle the lawsuit

Second: Member Jeffares

Discussion: no further discussion

Vote: Passed 4-0

I. ANNOUNCEMENTS

A. Next Board Meeting: November 12, 2025

II. ADJOURNMENT

The Board adjourned at 1:27 p.m. The Chair entertained a motion to adjourn. Passed 4-0 with no opposition.