Senate Resolution 1236
By: Senators Balfour of the 9th, Shafer of the 48th, Albers of the 56th and Jones of the 25th

ADOPTED SENATE

A RESOLUTION

Requesting the Georgia Secretary of State to look into the feasibility of vote-by-phone in Georgia by conducting a pilot program in the 2014 election for use by overseas and military voters; and for other purposes.

WHEREAS, the federal Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA) was enacted by Congress in 1986 to assist military and overseas citizens in the voting process and to increase their ability to cast a valid ballot; and

WHEREAS, in a 2009 report commissioned by the Overseas Vote Foundation, it was estimated that the State of Georgia had 141,100 eligible UOCAVA voters in 2008. However, in the 2012 general election, 20,492 UOCAVA ballots were transmitted in Georgia; and

WHEREAS, a 2013 nationwide survey of military and overseas voters, also conducted by the Overseas Vote Foundation, found 22 percent of respondents who attempted to vote in 2012 could not because they either did not get a ballot or received it too late; and

WHEREAS, the Georgia General Assembly has long been a supporter of our men and women in uniform and has passed numerous pieces of legislation to ensure they have every opportunity to vote in elections. Military voters have several opportunities to receive and cast their ballot, including by some electronic means; and

WHEREAS, technology exists that could allow military personnel to cast their ballot in a secure manner, instantaneously, and from anywhere in the world by utilizing vote-by-phone technology; and

WHEREAS, vote-by-phone has been tested, approved, and utilized in federal, state, and local elections in Maine, Connecticut, Vermont, New Hampshire, Oregon, Oklahoma, and Puerto Rico; and
WHEREAS, vote-by-phone has been successfully utilized in elections since 2006. To date, over 10,000 ballots have been securely and successfully cast; and

WHEREAS, to date, this technology has been used by blind and disabled voters, providing them with the ability to securely and privately cast a ballot. However, this technology has wide-ranging impact that could open up the opportunity to vote to tens of thousands of military personnel.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA that the Georgia Secretary of State is requested to look into the feasibility of vote-by-phone in Georgia by conducting a pilot program in the 2014 election for use by overseas and military voters.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Secretary of State is further requested to report back to the General Assembly the results of the pilot and any recommendation for further use of vote-by-phone.