

Senate Resolution 483

By: Senator Robertson of the 29th

A RESOLUTION

1 Creating the Senate Study Committee on Georgia County Boards of Elections and
2 Registration; and for other purposes.

3 WHEREAS, the General Assembly may by local Act create a board of elections and
4 registration in any county of this state and empower such board with the powers and duties
5 of the election superintendent relating to the conduct of primaries and elections and with the
6 powers and duties of the board of registrars relating to the registration of voters and absentee
7 balloting procedures; and

8 WHEREAS, such boards shall consist of not fewer than three members; and

9 WHEREAS, individual Georgians understand that the supervision of Georgia election laws
10 differ from county to county as found in 2018 when the spokeswoman for the Georgia
11 Secretary of State's office stated: "Each county elections office decides how to process its
12 absentee ballots"; and

13 WHEREAS, if each county has the freedom to decide how to interpret election law, voters
14 should be assured that there is a uniform process for how individuals are appointed to county
15 boards of elections and registration; and

16 WHEREAS, the Georgia Constitution does not require counties to have boards of elections
17 and registration; and

18 WHEREAS, each county with a board of elections and registration has a different
19 composition with the only mandate being that it shall consist of not fewer than three
20 members; and

21 WHEREAS, some county boards of elections and registration are composed of five members
22 who are appointed for four-year terms, two members by the county legislative delegation,

23 one member by the Democratic Party, one member by the Republican Party, and one member
24 by the chairperson of the county board of commissioners; and

25 WHEREAS, some county boards of elections and registration are composed of five members
26 who serve two-year terms of office with the chairperson being appointed by the governing
27 authority of the county from the nomination of the county legislative delegation, two
28 members being appointed by the governing authority from the nomination of the chairperson
29 of the county executive committee of the Republican Party, and two members being
30 appointed by the governing authority from the nomination of the chairperson of the county
31 executive committee of the Democratic Party; and

32 WHEREAS, a study is needed to better understand whether the General Assembly needs to
33 create a uniform standard for the creation of county boards of elections and registration; and

34 WHEREAS, a study is needed to better understand whether the General Assembly should
35 consider creating a uniform standard for county board of elections and registration
36 appointments, while examining other factors related to the uniform execution of election and
37 voter registration laws and the role of the county board of elections and registration in
38 ensuring trust in the Georgia electoral system.

39 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE:

40 (1) **Creation of Senate study committee.** There is created the Senate Study Committee
41 on Georgia County Boards of Elections and Registration.

42 (2) **Members and officers.**

43 (A) The committee shall be composed of eight members.

44 (B) The President of the Senate shall appoint six members of the Senate, at least two
45 of whom shall be members of the minority caucus, as members of the committee and
46 shall designate one of such members as chairperson. The President of the Senate shall
47 also appoint an additional two citizens to serve as members of the committee.

48 (3) **Powers and duties.** The committee shall undertake a study of the conditions, needs,
49 issues, and problems mentioned above or related thereto and recommend any action or
50 legislation which the committee deems necessary or appropriate. In particular, the
51 committee shall study the appointments of members of boards of elections and
52 registration; registration of electors; appointments, training, and directing deputy
53 registrars to register qualified electors more adequately and sufficiently; applications for
54 absentee ballots; transmission of absentee ballots to applicants therefor; receiving and

55 counting absentee ballots; informing and advising the governing authorities of the
56 counties; and provisional ballots.

57 (4) **Meetings.** The chairperson shall call all meetings of the committee. The committee
58 may conduct such meetings at such places and at such times as it may deem necessary or
59 convenient to enable it to exercise fully and effectively its powers, perform its duties, and
60 accomplish the objectives and purposes of this resolution.

61 (5) **Allowances, expenses, and funding.**

62 (A) The legislative members of the committee shall receive the allowances provided
63 for in Code Section 28-1-8 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated.

64 (B) The allowances authorized by this resolution shall not be received by any member
65 of the committee for more than five days unless additional days are authorized. Funds
66 necessary to carry out the provisions of this resolution shall come from funds
67 appropriated to the Senate.

68 (6) **Report.**

69 (A) In the event the committee adopts any specific findings or recommendations that
70 include suggestions for proposed legislation, the chairperson shall file a report of the
71 same prior to the date of abolishment specified in this resolution, subject to
72 subparagraph (C) of this paragraph.

73 (B) In the event the committee adopts a report that does not include suggestions for
74 proposed legislation, the chairperson shall file the report, subject to subparagraph (C)
75 of this paragraph.

76 (C) No report shall be filed unless the same has been approved prior to the date of
77 abolishment specified in this resolution by majority vote of a quorum of the committee.
78 A report so approved shall be signed by the chairperson of the committee and filed with
79 the Secretary of the Senate. Any member of the committee may file a minority report
80 that shall accompany the majority report.

81 (D) In the absence of an approved report, the chairperson may file with the Secretary
82 of the Senate copies of the minutes of the meetings of the committee in lieu thereof.

83 (7) **Abolishment.** The committee shall stand abolished on December 1, 2019.