



GEORGIA STATE ELECTION BOARD

State of Georgia

OFFICIAL MINUTES

Proceedings and Action Record

SPECIAL CALLED MEETING

MAY 1, 2026

Held via Zoom
Atlanta, Georgia





Meeting at a Glance

Key figures from the May 1, 2026 special called meeting of the Georgia State Election Board.

Item	Summary
Meeting Date	May 1, 2026
Meeting Type	Special Called Meeting (held via Zoom)
Duration	Approximately 1 hour 56 minutes
Purpose	Consideration of a petition for rule making previously submitted to the Board
Motions Considered	3 (excluding the procedural motion to adjourn)
Motions Adopted	3
Motions Failed	0
Motions Withdrawn	0
Rules Adopted	0 (rule-making petition denied)
Cases Heard	0
Cases Dismissed	0
Cases Continued	0
Letters of Instruction	0
AG Referrals	0
Board Leadership Change	None
Next Meeting	June 3, 2026 — Regular Meeting



Official Meeting Minutes Prepared by On the Record, LLC

MINUTES
STATE ELECTION BOARD MEETING
Special Called Meeting — May 1, 2026
Held via Zoom • Atlanta, Georgia
<https://www.youtube.com/live/G8hNsQ7RuCg>

***Record Note:** These minutes reflect the Special Called Meeting of the Georgia State Election Board held via Zoom on May 1, 2026, convened for the single purpose of considering a petition for rule making; the drop-bag, June-cases, and election-night items were added by motion at the meeting.*

CALL TO ORDER, INVOCATION, AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chairman John Fervier called the Special Called Meeting of the Georgia State Election Board to order on Friday, May 1, 2026. The Chairman stated that the meeting was being held via Zoom and had been specially called for the single purpose of considering a petition previously submitted to the Board. Executive Director James Mills gave the invocation, and Member Salleigh Grubbs led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Board Members participating were Chairman John Fervier, Vice Chair Dr. Jane Johnston, Member Janelle King, Member Salleigh Grubbs, and Member Sarah Ghazal, along with Executive Director James Mills.

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

Before the petition was taken up, Member Grubbs requested that a discussion of “drop bags” be added to the agenda following the petition. Member Ghazal objected that, without notice to the counties, no decisions could be made, and the Chairman noted that the meeting had been specially set for the single purpose of hearing the petition and questioned whether the matter could wait for the June 3, 2026 meeting. After discussion, and with Member Grubbs and Vice Chair Johnston in favor, the Chairman agreed to add the drop-bag matter for discussion only, with no action to be taken given the absence of public notice. Vice Chair Johnston also asked to add two additional items following the petition: the status of cases for the June meeting, and the presence of State Election Board members at election-night reporting at the Secretary of State’s central location.

Record Note: Because the added items were not noticed to the public or the counties, the Board treated them as discussion items; no rule or requirement affecting counties was adopted at this meeting.

I. PETITION FOR RULE MAKING – COALITION FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE

The Board considered a petition for rule making submitted by Coalition for Good Governance, Jeanne Dufort, Aileen Nakamura, and Marilyn Marks, seeking amendment of Rules 183-1-15-.02, 183-1-12-.01, and 183-1-12-.11 concerning the definition of a vote, compliance, and back-up balloting. The Chairman noted that the petition had first come before the Board at the April 15, 2026 meeting, had been discussed extensively at a prior meeting, and that minor revisions had been provided to the Board the preceding day.

Petitioner Marilyn Marks summarized the revisions and, over the course of the discussion, presented the petitioners' position that continued use of the current voting configuration violates ballot secrecy (the "DVS order" issue relating to the Dominion Voting System), that the only human-readable portion of the ballot required by law is the printed text rather than the QR code, and that the Board should initiate a 30-day rule-making comment period and move to the authorized hand-marked paper ballot backup system. Members questioned Ms. Marks regarding ballot secrecy as compared with absentee-by-mail voting, the timing and effective date of any rule and its application to the June 16, 2026 runoff, the numbered list of voters, and the cost of installing available Dominion software updates.

Motion: Chairman Fervier moved to deny the petition, stating that it is not grounded in statute, that the Board does not have the authority to make the change, and that it changes the definition of what constitutes a vote and the primary voting method for the State

Second: Not required (motion made by the Chairman)

Vote: Passed 4-1; the petition was denied

In Favor: Member Ghazal, Vice Chair Johnston, Member King, and Chairman Fervier

Opposed: Member Grubbs

Record Note: The Chairman called the vote by seniority via Zoom. As a Chairman's motion, no second was required.

II. DROP BAGS

Member Grubbs opened the added discussion and asked Executive Director Mills to explain his position. Executive Director Mills stated that Fulton County had recently begun using "drop bags" during early voting, delivered nightly to the county voting hub, and that the term "drop bag" is not defined in the election code. He expressed concern about chain of custody and asked the Board to authorize a program under which observers, under contract with the agency, would observe the chain of custody of drop bags and drop boxes in selected counties and report back to the Board.

Member Ghazal stated that counties have long accepted absentee ballots delivered in person at additional registrar sites under O.C.G.A. § 21-2-382 (referencing §§ 21-2-381 and 21-2-385), that Gwinnett and DeKalb Counties have long-standing written procedures, and that the practice is lawful, making the matter appropriate

for rule making rather than investigation. Members discussed the scope of any observation, the estimated cost (approximately \$7,500 using about eight observers for two counties), the authority of observers, public access, and the need to obtain each county's written procedures. The Chairman noted an email from Cobb County indicating that drops are accepted at all of its locations without a written policy.

Motion: Member Grubbs moved to give the Executive Director approval to implement a program, to include a contractor agreement, to observe the drop-bag and drop-box chain of custody in the counties he sees fit where they have implemented this program

Second: Member King

Vote: Passed by voice vote (4-0)

III. CASES FOR THE JUNE MEETING

Vice Chair Johnston reported that no new cases were ready for the June meeting because the Secretary of State's office had not provided investigative summaries (SOIs) and reports (ROIs) in the standard format used for the prior fifteen years, and that required notification to complainants and respondents was overdue. She stated that Secretary of State investigators were working approximately 146 cases. The Chairman reported that he had spoken with Chief Kauf and expected at least thirty cases in the prior format by the following Tuesday, with additional cases to be delivered by the end of May for the July meeting, and that he would resume pre-meetings with the Secretary of State's office to prioritize serious matters. Members expressed concern that having Charlene McGowan, the attorney for the Secretary of State, review and approve which cases reach the Board created a gatekeeping function and a potential conflict of interest. No motion was made; the matter was left with the Chairman to pursue.

IV. STATE ELECTION BOARD MEMBERS AT ELECTION-NIGHT REPORTING

Vice Chair Johnston raised the request, previously brought by Member Grubbs, that at least two State Election Board members be present where election-night reporting occurs at the Secretary of State's central location for the receipt of county tabulation. Members discussed the lack of response from the Secretary of State's office and Director Blake Evans, the constitutional role of the Secretary of State, conflict-of-interest and public-safety considerations, whether candidates may be present, and the importance of bipartisan representation and public transparency ahead of the May 19, 2026 primary.

Motion: Vice Chair Johnston moved that, if there is no response from the Secretary of State's office to arrange State Election Board member observation of election-night reporting at the Secretary of State's location within a week, the Board move the matter up the chain and request assistance

Amendment: On Member Grubbs's suggestion, and accepted by Vice Chair Johnston, the motion was amended to first reach out to the Attorney General's office rather than the Department of Justice

Second: Member King

Vote: Passed 3-1

Opposed: Member Ghazal

Record Note: Member Ghazal raised a point of privilege that the correct term is the "Democratic Party." Executive Director Mills initially described the amendment as

substituting “the DOJ for the Attorney General”; the Chairman clarified that the motion, as amended, directs the Board to reach out to the Attorney General. The ayes were recorded collectively and not called individually.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the Chairman thanked those in attendance and entertained a motion to adjourn.

Motion: Vice Chair Johnston moved to adjourn

Second: Member Grubbs

Vote: Passed by voice vote

The meeting was adjourned.

CERTIFICATION

I certify that these Minutes were prepared from the official verbatim stenographic record of the Special Called Meeting of the Georgia State Election Board, conducted via Zoom on May 1, 2026. This publication accurately reflects the actions taken by the Georgia State Election Board and summarizes the proceedings in accordance with the official transcript maintained by On the Record, LLC.

Jamie White

Georgia Certified Court Reporter, Cert. No. 4628-9611-1917-4656 — On the Record, LLC