

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF GEORGIA
ATLANTA DIVISION

JOSE MORALES, on behalf of himself)	
and those similarly situated)	
)	
Plaintiff,)	CIVIL ACTION
)	FILE NO. 1:08-CV-3172
v.)	
)	
KAREN HANDEL, in her official)	
Capacity as Georgia Secretary of State)	
)	
)	
Defendant.)	

PLAINTIFF’S MOTION FOR LEAVE TO AMEND
THE COMPLAINT AND MEMORANDUM
IN SUPPORT OF MOTION

Pursuant to Federal Rules of Civil Procedure 15, 18, 20, 21 and Local Rule 15, Plaintiff respectfully moves this Court for leave to amend his Complaint to add certain parties as additional plaintiffs and to add a cause of action under the Help America Vote Act of 2002 (“HAVA”), 42 U.S.C. § 15301, *et seq.*¹ The proposed amendment to the Complaint is attached hereto

¹ The proposed Amended Complaint also contains a limited number of minor changes to update facts. For example, Paragraph 55 previously stated that Plaintiff Morales “will be graduating in December 2008.” The Amended Complaint updates this information (in Paragraph 56) to state that Plaintiff Morales has in fact graduated. The Complaint has also been amended to clarify that Plaintiffs are seeking permanent relief that extends beyond the 2008 elections. Additional changes correct typographical errors and formatting.

as Exhibit A. Plaintiff submits the following memorandum in support of his motion.

I. INTRODUCTION

This is a civil rights lawsuit brought by plaintiff Jose Morales. Plaintiff Morales asserts claims against Karen Handel, Georgia Secretary of State, under Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (“VRA”), as amended, 42 U.S.C. § 1973c and Section 8(c) of the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 (“NVRA”), 42 U.S.C. § 1973gg-6. Plaintiff complaint for declaratory and injunctive relief was filed on October 9, 2008.

This action challenges the State of Georgia’s implementation of a systematic attempt to check the citizenship status and other data of new voter registrants and certain registered voters as part of its statewide voter registration database implemented under the Help America Vote Act of 2002 (“HAVA”), 42 U.S.C. § 15301, *et seq.* The implementation of this citizenship and other data verification scheme involves administrative record matching with the Department of Driver Services (“DDS”) database, which is linked to the Social Security Administration (“SSA”) database. Plaintiff contends that the State of Georgia failed to secure federal pre-clearance of this citizenship and other data verification scheme and the new procedures related to its implementation, in violation of Section 5 of the VRA.

This action also challenges the application of the citizenship and other data check procedures to registered voters and the removal of such registered voters within 90 days of a federal election, in contravention of Section 8(c) of the NVRA, 42 U.S.C. § 1973gg-6. This provision of the NVRA prohibits states from executing, later than 90 days prior to the date of a primary or general election for Federal office, any systematic list maintenance procedures resulting in the removal of voters from the official list of eligible voters. The only exceptions to the 90 day cutoff are removals done: (1) at the request of the registrant; (2) as provided by State law, by reason of criminal conviction or mental capacity; and (3) at the death of the registrant. 42 U.S.C. §§ 1973gg-6(c)(2)(B), 1973gg-6(a)(3)(A-B), 1973gg-6(a)(4)(A).

Plaintiff Jose Morales became a naturalized citizen in November 2007. Declaration of Jose Morales, Exhibit A to Complaint, at ¶ 2. He registered to vote early in September 2008. *Id.* at ¶ 9. Several weeks later he received a letter from Cherokee County notifying him that he was unable to vote unless he provided evidence of his citizenship. *Id.* at ¶ 10. A week later Plaintiff Morales received another letter indicating that he was required to provide Cherokee County with additional information, such as a passport or other document, to verify that he is a U.S. citizen. *Id.* at ¶ 12. After he received the second letter, Mr. Morales drove to the Cherokee County Elections office and proceeded to show his passport to a

clerk in the Elections office. *Id.* at ¶ 13. A week later he received a copy of his voting card in the mail. *Id.* at ¶ 15.

On October 7, 2008, Plaintiff Morales received another letter from the Cherokee County Elections and Registration office. *Id.* at ¶ 17. The letter informed him that he may not be qualified to vote because he may not be U.S. citizen. *Id.* The letter indicated that if he did not respond prior to an October 15, 2008 hearing date, and did not attend the hearing, his name “will be removed” from the list of registered voters. *Id.*

Plaintiff’s Complaint for Declaratory and Injunctive relief was filed on October 9, 2008. On October 27, 2008, the three-judge panel, convened to hear Plaintiff’s Section 5 claim pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 1973c and 28 U.S.C. § 2284, issued a preliminary injunction in the case. The panel concluded that the State of Georgia failed to pre-clear the database matching system used to verify voter registration application information. Order dated October 27, 2008 Order at 21, Docket No. 36. The Court also found that “this case . . . satisfies an exception to the mootness doctrine in that the injury complained of viz Section 5 constitutes a ‘wrong capable of repetition, yet evading review.’” *Id.* at 11-12 (quoting *Southern Pac. Terminal Co. v. ICC*, 219 U.S. 498, 515 (1911)).

II. LAW AND ARGUMENT

Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 15(a) requires that leave to amend a complaint “be freely given if justice so requires.” Fed. R. Civ. P. 15(a). Rule 18 provides that a party asserting a claim may join as many claims as it has against an opposing party. Further, Rule 20 provides that all persons may join as plaintiffs if they assert the right to relief “arising out of the same transaction, occurrence, or series of transactions or occurrences and any question of law or fact common to all plaintiffs will arise in the action.” Fed. R. Civ. P. 20. In addition, Rule 21 provides that “[o]n motion or on its own, the Court may at any time, on just terms, add or drop a party.” Fed. R. Civ. P. 21.

In the Eleventh Circuit, a district court will allow a plaintiff to freely amend its complaint in the interest of justice, unless there is a substantial countervailing reason for not doing so. *See Espey v. Wainwright*, 734 F.2d 748 (11th Cir. 1984)(finding district court abused discretion in denying leave to amend). Indeed, without substantial reason “to deny leave to amend, the discretion of the court is not broad enough to permit denial.” *Burger King Corp. v. Weaver*, 169 F.3d 1310, 1319 (11th Cir. 1999)(quoting *Dussouv v. Gulf Coast Inv. Corp.*, 660 F.2d 594, 598 (5th Cir. 1981)). Amendment is particularly appropriate where there is no undue delay, prejudice, bad faith or dilatory move, repeated failure to cure deficiencies by amendments previously

allowed, or futility in amending. *McKinley v. Kaplan*, 177 F.3d 1253, 1258 (11th Cir. 1999) (citing *Forman v. Davis*, 371 U.S. 178, 182 (1962)).

In the instant case, where discovery has only recently begun, the proposed amendments will create no undue delay or prejudice and will further the purpose of Federal Rule 18 and Federal Rule 20 to properly join all relevant parties and claims between those parties in one action. As the Eleventh Circuit has noted, “[t]he Supreme Court has instructed the lower courts to employ a liberal approach to permissive joinder of claims and parties in the interest of judicial economy.” *Alexander v. Fulton County*, 207 F.3d 1303, 1323 (11th Cir. 2000)(citing *United Mine Workers v. Gibbs*, 383 U.S. 715, 724 (1966)). As discussed below, Plaintiff’s proposed amendment seeking to add several parties to the case as named plaintiffs, serves the interests of judicial economy in the resolution of the pending controversy because the proposed plaintiff organizations have been and will continue to be affected by Defendant’s implementation of the voter registration database matching procedures. Finally, Plaintiff’s amendment seeking to add a claim under HAVA serves the interest of justice and preserves judicial economy by allowing Plaintiff to include all claims relative to the same facts and circumstances in one case, rather than engaging in piecemeal litigation.

A. ADDITIONAL PLAINTIFFS

The proposed amendment to Plaintiff's Complaint seeks to add the following three parties as plaintiffs:

1. Georgia Association of Latino Elected Officials (GALEO)

The Georgia Association of Latino Elected Officials (GALEO) is a 501(c)(6) statewide nonprofit and non-partisan organization founded in Georgia. It was established to increase representation of Latino elected and appointed officials, to proactively address the issues and needs of the Latino community, and to engage the Latino community in the democratic and policy process across the State of Georgia. GALEO Mission Statement, available at http://www.galeo.org/about_galeo.php (last visit January 26, 2009).

A core component of GALEO's mission is to increase registration and voting by eligible Latino citizens. To that end, GALEO engages in extensive voter education campaigns, which include the following: (1) television, radio and print media Spanish public service announcements; (2) widespread distribution of literature regarding voter registration and other voting-related issues (in both English and Spanish); (3) administration of a voter information hotline and website (in both English and Spanish); (4) provision of electronic access to legislative voting records; and (5) voter mobilization efforts that include get out to vote phone calls and transporting voters to the polls. *See*

GALEO Mission Statement, *available at*

http://www.galeo.org/about_galeo.php (last visited on January 26, 2009).

The Eleventh Circuit recently reiterated the standard that an organizational plaintiff must meet in order to demonstrate an injury sufficient to confer standing. In *Common Cause, et al. v Billups, et al.*, -- F.3d --, 2009 WL 81326 (11th Cir. 2009), the Court determined that the NAACP had suffered sufficient injury to sue on its own behalf in a case challenging the State of Georgia's 2006 Photo ID Act, O.C.G.A § 21-2-417. In so ruling, the Court explained, "[A]n organization has standing to sue on its own behalf if the defendant's illegal acts impair its ability to engage in its projects by forcing the organization to divert resources to counteract those illegal acts." *Common Cause*, 2009 WL 81326, *6 (quoting *Florida State Conf of NAACP v. Browning*, 522 F.3d 1153, 1165-66 (11th Cir. 2008)). The Court further stated that when an organization will have to divert its resources, including personnel and time, from its regular activities to educate and assist voters with new voting requirements, the effect on the operations of the organization was a "concrete injury" sufficient to confer standing. *Common Cause*, 2009 WL 81326 at *6 (quoting *Florida State Conf. of NAACP*, 522 F.3d at 1165-66).

In the instant case, GALEO is actively involved in voting activities and will be forced to divert resources from its regular activities to educate and

assist voters in complying with the new voter registration procedures, for example, by having to explain to certain voters that they must show proof of citizenship and which documents are sufficient to prove citizenship. Further, some Latino citizens who are newly registered voters and some who already registered to vote could be delayed or denied the right to vote because of the Secretary of State's new voter registration procedures if they did not show proof of citizenship prior to Election Day. As a result of the Defendant's voter registration procedures involving Defendant's DDS database matching program, GALEO will be forced to divert resources to resolving problems encountered by citizens it registers. The voting changes will therefore frustrate a core component of GALEO's mission by interfering with its ability to ensure that eligible Latino citizens can and do register and vote. As such, GALEO has established an injury sufficient to confer standing. *Common Cause*, 2009 WL 81326, at *6 (quoting *Florida State Conf. of NAACP* 522 F.3d at 1165-66).

2. The Center for Pan Asian Community Services (CPACS)

The Center for Pan Asian Community Services, Inc. (CPACS) is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization. Its mission is to create and deliver culturally competent and comprehensive social and health services to counteract problems faced by immigrants, refugees, and racial-ethnic minorities. *See*

About CPACS, available at <http://www.icpacs.org/?db=intro> (last visited on January 26, 2009).

CPACS also works with civic organizations, businesses and media to increase the number of Asian American voters in the State of Georgia by hosting voter registration drives, voter education training sessions, conducting media outreach through radio and print, distributing literature, administering a voter information hotline and providing information on upcoming political candidates. *Id.*

The Secretary's enforcement of the new voter registration procedures will frustrate CPACS's mission by interfering with its efforts to register eligible voters, and will force CPACS to divert resources that would otherwise be spent on other organizational goals to resolving registration problems. *Common Cause*, 2009 WL 81326 at *6 (quoting *Florida State Conf. of NAACP*, 522 F.3d at 1165-66). As such, CPACS has established an injury sufficient to confer standing.

3. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (the NAACP) is the nation's oldest civil rights organization and was formed in 1909. The Georgia State Conference of NAACP Branches is composed of 63

NAACP Branches located throughout the State of Georgia. The mission of the NAACP is to ensure the political, educational, social, and economic equality of rights of all persons and to eliminate racial hatred and racial discrimination.

The NAACP has advocated for the advancement and protection of voting rights for minorities, and has throughout its history fought for access to the ballot for its members and others. It has also fought to ensure that racial minorities, low income, and economically disadvantaged persons have access to the ballot box and the equal opportunity to participate in the political process.

The Secretary's enforcement of the new voter registration procedures will frustrate the NAACP's mission by interfering with its efforts to register eligible voters, and will force it to divert resources that would otherwise be spent on other organizational goals to resolving registration problems. *Common Cause*, 2009 WL 81326 at *6 (quoting *Florida State Conf. of NAACP*, 522 F.3d at 1165-66). As such, the NAACP has established an injury sufficient to confer standing.

B. ADDITIONAL CLAIM UNDER HAVA

Plaintiff's Amended Complaint also contains an additional cause of action under the Help America Vote Act ("HAVA"), 42 U.S.C. § 15301, *et seq.* This claim alleges that Defendant's DDS matching program and

procedures implementing the program fail to provide adequate safeguards to prevent the removal of eligible registered voters from the statewide voter registration database, in violation of HAVA, 42 U.S.C. § 15438(a)(4)(B).

IV. CONCLUSION

As shown by the foregoing discussion, Plaintiff's proposed amendments to the Complaint serve the interests of justice and judicial economy because the proposed plaintiff organizations have been and will continue to be affected by Defendant's implementation of the new voter registration DDS database matching procedures. Likewise, adding the cause of action under HAVA also serves the interest of justice and preserves judicial economy by allowing Plaintiffs to include all claims relative to the same facts and circumstances in one case, rather than engaging in piecemeal litigation. Finally, this case does not involve undue delay, prejudice, bad faith or dilatory move, failure to cure deficiencies through previous amendments, or futility in amending.

For these reasons stated above, Plaintiff respectfully requests that the Court (1) grant him leave to amend his Complaint, and (2) consider the Amended Complaint, attached hereto as Exhibit A, to be filed.

Dated: February 5, 2009

Respectfully Submitted,

/s/ Elise S. Shore

Elise Sandra Shore

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CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE

This is to certify that the foregoing document was prepared using 14 pt
Times New Roman font.

This 5th day of February, 2009.

/s/ Elise Sandra Shore
ELISE SANDRA SHORE

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I, the undersigned, hereby certify that I have this the 5th day of February, 2009, electronically filed the foregoing **PLAINTIFF'S MOTION FOR LEAVE TO AMEND THE COMPLAINT AND MEMORANDUM IN SUPPORT OF MOTION** with the Clerk of Court using the CM/ECF system, which will send notification of such filing to all parties to this matter via electronic notification or otherwise:

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EXHIBIT A

November 4, 2008 election, and in future federal elections, and to require that appropriate immediate remedial measures are taken to ensure that all qualified and eligible voters in the State of Georgia have access to the ballot on Election Day.

2. Plaintiffs have no plain, speedy, or adequate remedy at law other than the relief requested in this Complaint. Unless enjoined by this Court, the new voter registration list maintenance procedures involving citizen checks and the other related procedures regarding absentee voting and voter challenge hearings in the State of Georgia, will continue to impermissibly burden qualified and eligible citizens' rights to vote in Georgia.

THREE-JUDGE PANEL

3. On October 22, 2008, by order of the Honorable Judge Edmonson of the Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals, a Three Judge Panel was convened and heard oral argument on Plaintiff's motion for Preliminary Injunction. On October 27, 2008, the Court granted Plaintiff's Motion for Preliminary Injunction, finding, among other things, that the State had violated Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act by failing to obtain preclearance for the database matching procedures from the Department of Justice.

JURISDICTION

4. Jurisdiction is based upon 28 U.S.C. §§ 1343(a) (3) & (4) and upon 28 U.S.C. § 1331 for causes of action arising from 42 U.S.C. § 1973c, 42 U.S.C. § 1973gg-6, and 42 U.S.C. § 1983 and 42 U.S.C. § 15483.

Jurisdiction for Plaintiffs' claim for declaratory relief is based upon 28 U.S.C. §§ 2201 and 2202. Jurisdiction for Plaintiffs' claim for attorneys fees is based on 42 U.S.C. §§ 1973l(e) and 1988.

5. Venue is proper in this court under 28 U.S.C. § 1391(b).

PARTIES

6. Plaintiff Jose Julian Morales is a resident of Cherokee County, Georgia. Mr. Morales is a U.S. Citizen and a legally registered Georgia elector. Mr. Morales is Latino.

7. Plaintiff Georgia Association for Latino Elected Officials (GALEO) is a 501(c)(6) statewide nonprofit and non-partisan organization. GALEO maintains an office at 1100 Peachtree Street, Suite 2800, Atlanta, GA 30309. GALEO was established to increase representation of Latino elected and appointed officials, to proactively address the issues and needs of the Latino community, and to engage the Latino community in the democratic and policy process across the State of Georgia. A core component of GALEO's mission is to increase registration and voting by

eligible Latino citizens. To that end, GALEO engages in extensive voter education campaigns, which include the following: (1) television, radio and print media Spanish public service announcements; (2) widespread distribution of literature regarding voter registration and other voting-related issues (in both English and Spanish); (3) administration of a voter information hotline and website (in both English and Spanish); (4) provision of electronic access to legislative voting records; and (5) voter mobilization efforts that include get-out-to-vote phone calls and transporting voters to the polls. The Secretary's enforcement of the new voter registration procedures will frustrate GALEO's mission by interfering with its efforts to register eligible voters, and will force GALEO to divert resources from its regular activities to educate and assist voters in complying with the new voter registration procedures, by for example, having to explain to certain voters that they must show proof of citizenship and which documents are sufficient to prove citizenship. Indeed, during the November 2008 elections, some of GALEO's resources were expended to address voter issues and problems that arose as a result of the Secretary of State's new voter registration procedures. The Secretary's enforcement of the new voter registration procedures will frustrate a core component of GALEO's mission by

interfering with its ability to ensure that eligible Latino citizens can register and vote.

8. Plaintiff The Center for Pan Asian Community Services, Inc. (CPACS) is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization. It maintains an office at 3760 Park Ave., Doraville, GA 30340. CPACS's mission is to create and deliver culturally competent and comprehensive social and health services to counteract problems faced by immigrants, refugees, and racial-ethnic minorities. CPACS also works with civic organizations, businesses and media to increase the number of Asian American voters in the State of Georgia by hosting voter registration drives, voter education training sessions, conducting media outreach through radio and print, distributing literature, administering a voter information hotline and providing information on upcoming political candidates. The Secretary's enforcement of the new voter registration procedures will frustrate CPACS's mission by interfering with its efforts to register eligible voters, and will force CPACS to divert resources that would otherwise be spent on other organizational goals to resolving registration problems.

9. Plaintiff National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) is the nation's oldest civil rights organization and was formed in 1909. The Georgia State Conference of NAACP Branches is

composed of 63 NAACP Branches located throughout the State of Georgia. The mission of the NAACP is to ensure the political, educational, social, and economic equality of rights of all persons and to eliminate racial hatred and racial discrimination. The NAACP has advocated for the advancement and protection of voting rights for minorities, and has throughout its history fought for access to the ballot for its members and others. It has also fought to ensure that racial minorities, low income, and economically disadvantaged persons have access to the ballot box and the equal opportunity to participate in the political process. The Secretary's enforcement of the new voter registration procedures will frustrate the NAACP's mission by interfering with its efforts to register eligible voters, and will force it to divert resources that would otherwise be spent on other organizational goals to resolving registration problems.

10. The rights this suit seeks to vindicate are germane to the purposes of the organizational plaintiffs, and the claims alleged herein do not require the participation of their individual members or clients in the lawsuit. Indeed, without the relief requested herein, these organizations will be harmed by the substantial diversion of their resources and the frustration of their organizational purposes.

11. Defendant Karen Handel is Secretary of State of Georgia and is sued in her official capacity. The Secretary of State is the chief election officer of Georgia, and as such, is responsible for the administration of state laws affecting voting, and for assuring that elections in the State are conducted in accordance with law. The Secretary maintains the official list of registered voters for Georgia and is required to conduct the training of voter registrars and superintendents of election; O.C.G.A. § 21-2-50, specifically § 21-2-50(a)(11) and (14). The Secretary's principal office is in Atlanta, Georgia.

STATEMENT OF FACTS AND LAW

The Help America Vote Act of 2002

12. In 2002, Congress enacted the Help America Vote Act ("HAVA"), 42 U.S.C. § 15301 *et seq.*, to respond to the serious problems with the administration of elections in the United States revealed by the 2000 presidential election.

13. In order to improve the accuracy and reliability of voter registration lists, HAVA requires that all states that conduct voter registration, including the State of Georgia, implement a single, statewide, computerized database of registered voters. 42 U.S.C. § 15483(a)(1)(A).

14. HAVA specifies minimum standards that each state, including the State of Georgia, must adhere to when creating and maintaining its statewide, computerized database of registered voters. These standards include: “the name of each registered voter [must] appear[] in the computerized list,” 42 U.S.C. § 15483(a)(1)(B)(i); and “only voters who are not registered or who are not eligible to vote [may be] removed from the computerized list.” 42 U.S.C. § 15483(a)(1)(B)(ii).

15. The HAVA requirements set forth in 42 U.S.C. § 15483(a) for the creation and maintenance of statewide voter registration database establish mandatory prohibitions against a state’s (including Georgia) removal of individual eligible registered voters from the statewide voter registration database. Each state must implement “[s]afeguards to ensure that eligible voters are not removed in error from the official list of eligible voters.” 42 U.S.C. § 15483(a)(4)(B).

16. With regard to voter removal, HAVA further specifies that states subject to the National Voter Registration Act, including the State of Georgia, may remove individuals from the registration list only “in accordance with the provisions of the National Voter Registration Act.” 42 U.S.C. § 15483(a)(2)(A)(i).

17. HAVA specifically recognizes that states, including the State of Georgia, retain substantial discretion in making “specific choices on the methods of complying with the requirements of this statute.” 42 U.S.C. § 15485.

18. To facilitate state efforts to remove duplicate registration records for the same individual from the statewide registration database, HAVA requires that states, including the State of Georgia, implement a two-step procedure.

19. First, states are to assign “a unique identifier [in the database] . . . to each legally registered voter in the State.” 42 U.S.C. § 15483(a)(1)(A)(iii). The identifier is either: (a) the registrant’s driver’s license number; (b) the last four digits of the registrant’s social security number for those applicants without a driver’s license, or (c) another number generated by the state for those who lack both a driver’s license and a social security number. 42 U.S.C. § 15483(a)(5)(A).

20. Second, in order to make sure that the identifying numbers are correctly entered into the registration database, states must “coordinate” their voter registration database with the state driver’s license database and the Social Security Administration database by attempting to match each

registration record with a record in one of the two other databases.

42 U.S.C. §§ 15483(a)(1)(A)(iv) & 15483(a)(5)(B).

21. However, HAVA generally does not require that states, including the State of Georgia, utilize the aforementioned database matching to test or otherwise evaluate the *eligibility* to vote of citizens who seek to register to vote in their state of residence. The only exception, according to HAVA, are first-time voters who register to vote by mail, who generally under HAVA must provide certain documentary identification in order to vote, but are excused from that requirement if the state is able to successfully match their registration record with a driver's license or social security record. 42 U.S.C. § 15483(b).

22. Instead, as determined by the Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals in *Florida State Conference of the NAACP v. Browning*, 522 F.3d 1153 (2008), Georgia and other states subject to HAVA have the discretion to decide, as a threshold matter, whether to use database matching to evaluate voter eligibility. Likewise, if a state does decide to use database matching for that purpose, the specific standards and procedures that will be implemented are left to the discretion of the state. As stated by the Eleventh Circuit, “[t]here is nothing at all in [HAVA] that discusses the requirements

and procedures for establishing eligibility and identity of in-person registrants.” *Id.* at 1155.

The State of Georgia’s Implementation of Database Matching for Registered Voters

23. Following the enactment of HAVA, the State of Georgia initially declined to implement a procedure for matching registration records with driver’s license or social security records, asserting that it was covered by an exception to that requirement included in HAVA. 42 U.S.C. § 15483(a)(5)(D). However, the Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals subsequently held that this exception did not apply to Georgia. *Schwier v. Cox*, 439 F.3d 1285 (2006).

24. On April 23, 2007, the United States Department of Justice, which has enforcement authority under HAVA, wrote to the Georgia Secretary of State to inquire about the state’s apparent continuing failure to implement the database matching requirements of HAVA.

25. On May 23, 2007, the Office of the Georgia Attorney General responded by letter to the U.S. Department of Justice, advising that state was in compliance with a consent order entered in the *Schwier* litigation and that the state was in compliance with HAVA’s database matching requirement.

26. Immediately prior to this exchange of correspondence, in March 2007, the Georgia Secretary of State and the Georgia Department of Driver Services (DDS) entered into an agreement to permit the Secretary of State to attempt to match individual records in the statewide registration database with driver's license records. Approximately a month later, on April 23, 2007, a user agreement was finalized between the Georgia Department of Driver Services and the Social Security Administration to allow state officials to also seek to match registration records with records included in the Social Security Administration database.

The State of Georgia's Implementation of Database Matching for Registered Voters

Class Action Allegations

27. This action is maintainable as a class action under Rule 23(a), (b)(1) and (b)(2), F.R.Civ.P.

28. The plaintiff class is defined as: Citizens of the United States and residents of the State of Georgia who have timely submitted a voter registration form and have been or will in the future be flagged as non-citizens during the citizenship status check performed using the databases maintained by both the Georgia Department of Driver Services and the federal Social Security Administration. On information and belief, the class is believed to consist of no less than 2,000 individuals.

29. Plaintiff Morales is an adequate representative of the class. He presents typical claims of class members, has no conflicts with class members, and is represented by experienced counsel.

30. Adjudications with respect to the individual class members would create a risk that of an outcome that would substantially impair the ability of class members to protect their interests.

31. The defendant has acted and refused to act on grounds that apply generally to the class.

32. The questions of fact common to the class include, without limitation, the following:

(a) whether the Defendant obtained preclearance from either the United States Attorney General or the United States District Court for the District of Columbia for its actions taken related to its voter registration database, including verifying voter information against databases maintained by both the Georgia Department of Driver Services and the federal Social Security Administration, and generating and distributing reports of the results of those checks to county registrars as the basis for voter challenges, hearings, correspondence or removal; and

(b) whether the Defendant is performing a list maintenance program by systematically checking the citizenship of at least some registered voters

and directing counties to take action against those who are flagged within 90 days of the November 4, 2008 federal election and in future federal elections;

33. Questions of law common to the class include, without limitation, the following:

(a) whether defendant's actions violate Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act, 42 U.S.C. § 1973c;

(b) whether defendant's actions violate the National Voter Registration Act, 42 U.S.C. § 1973gg, *et seq.* and

(c) whether defendant's actions violate the Help America Vote Act, 42 U.S.C. § 15301 *et seq.*

The State of Georgia's Use of Database Matching to Attempt to Verify that Certain Registrants are United States Citizens and Thus Are Eligible to Vote in Georgia

34. The State of Georgia requires that, in order to vote in any election conducted in that state, an individual must be a citizen of the United States. O.C.G.A. § 21-2-216.

35. The State of Georgia assigns to its county boards of registrars the responsibility for determining the eligibility to vote of each person who applies to register to vote in the state. O.C.G.A. § 21-2-226(a). However, Georgia statutes do not specify any standards that shall be used by county

boards of registrars to identify any particular class of registration applicants whose eligibility to vote should receive special scrutiny. Likewise, Georgia statutes do not specify the procedures that should be followed by county boards of registrars if and when it is decided that the eligibility to vote of a particular class of registrants should be specially scrutinized. O.C.G.A. §§ 21-2-226(a), 21-228.

36. When individuals in the State of Georgia apply for a driver's license, they are required by state law to advise the Georgia Department of Driver Services whether they have United States citizenship at that time. This information is included in the driver's license database maintained by the Department of Driver Services.

37. Individuals who become naturalized United States citizens after obtaining a Georgia driver's license are neither required nor requested to advise the Georgia Department of Driver Services of their changed citizenship status until they apply for a driver's license renewal when, according to the Georgia Department of Driver Services, the citizenship information in the Department's database is updated. Accordingly, the driver's license database maintained by the Department includes inaccurate citizenship information on a portion of those state residents who are naturalized United States citizens.

38. Beginning on a date in or after March 2007, state officials have implemented database matching between the state registration database and the driver' license database so as to identify those individuals whose records are matched in the two databases and who are displayed as being a non-citizen in the driver's license database. The matching process yields computer printouts and screens that identify individuals who meet these criteria.

39. On a date in or after March 2007, the Georgia Secretary of State directed all county election officials to begin to utilize the aforementioned computer printouts and screens as a means for targeting individuals whose eligibility to vote should be reviewed. Further, the Secretary of State directed all county election officials that, if such a review is not undertaken prior to the time that a putative non-citizen registrant applies to vote absentee or appears at the polls to vote on election day, the registrant shall not be permitted to cast a regular ballot unless the county registrar confirms that the individual is a United States citizen. If the registrar does not confirm citizenship, the voter then is required to cast a "challenged" ballot.

40. The Georgia Secretary of State has not instituted uniform state procedures which are to be utilized by county boards of registrars in evaluating whether individuals whose names appear on the aforementioned

computer printouts and screens are United States citizens. The Secretary of State also has not specified the documentation that may be produced by such an individual in order to prove citizenship (instead, the Secretary has simply advised the boards, as a point of information, of the different documents that the United States Citizen and Immigration Services, and the United States Department of Health and Human Services, view as acceptable proof of United States Citizenship).

Guidance from the Georgia Secretary of State

41. A Memorandum issued on September 12, 2008 from the Elections Division Director in the Office of the Secretary of the State to all County Elections Officials explained that each new voter registrant's information will be entered into the Defendant's statewide voter registration system. The Memorandum further stated that no newly registered voter would be considered as "registered" to vote until the statewide system has performed a citizenship status check on the voter registrant. The status check consists of matching the registrant's information with the "DDS" database for verification of each applicant's citizenship status through the Social Security Administration.

42. A Memorandum issued on September 24, 2008 from the Elections Division Director to all County Elections Officials further

elaborated on the administrative record matching procedures between the statewide voter registration database system and DDS. Pursuant to these procedures, the DDS database is routinely queried to identify all new registration applicants or existing registrants who make significant changes to their registration (such as a change of name) who allegedly have previously informed DDS that they were not United States citizens. The individuals identified by these matching procedures are listed in county-level reports provided by Defendant.

43. The Memorandum issued on September 24, 2008 from the Elections Division Director also provides detailed instructions governing the procedures to be used during in-person absentee voting for individuals who are flagged as “non-citizen” in the database. It states, “[I]f DDS records show that the person is not a United State citizen, the voter maintenance screen (2) and absentee ballot maintenance screen (16) show a flashing red warning indication of the individual’s non-citizen status.” The Memorandum also explains that poll officers should not “allow an individual to cast a regular ballot . . . without confirming through the registrar that such individual is a United States citizen.”

County Responses to Secretary of State Guidance

44. Prior to filing the complaint in this case, several counties in the State had begun using the State-generated report as the basis for a mailing to demand that the recipients provide proof of their citizenship.

45. Prior to filing the complaint in this case, other county election officials, including election officials in Cherokee County, had set hearings for registrants or electors who are “flagged” as “non-citizens” in the database.

The National Voter Registration Act of 1993

46. Congress has established a comprehensive registration system for federal elections through, among other statutes, the National Voter Registration Act of 1993, 42 U.S.C. § 1973gg, *et seq* (“NVRA”).

47. Section 8(c) of the National Voter Registration Act of 1993, 42 U.S.C. § 1973gg-6 (“NVRA”) prohibits states from executing, later than 90 days prior to the date of a primary or general election for Federal office, any program the purpose of which is to systematically remove the names of ineligible voters from the official lists of eligible voters, except at the request of the registrant, or by reason of disfranchising criminal conviction, mental incapacity, or death of the registrant. 42 U.S.C. § 1973gg-6(c)(2)(A). The only exceptions to the 90 day cutoff are removals done: (1) at the request of

the registrant; (2) as provided by State law, by reason of criminal conviction or mental capacity; and (3) at the death of the registrant. 42 U.S.C. §§ 1973gg-6(c)(2)(B), 1973gg-6(a)(3)(A-B), 1973gg-6(a)(4)(A).

48. The State of Georgia is subject to the NVRA.

The Citizenship Check and Removal of Registered Voters Within 90 Days of A Federal Election Violates the National Voter Registration Act

49. Defendant Secretary of State is systemically checking the citizenship of at least some registered voters and directing counties to take action against those who are flagged within 90 days of the November 4, 2008 federal election and in future federal elections.

The Voting Rights Act and Section 5 Pre-clearance

50. Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, 42 U.S.C. §1973c, is a temporary provision that freezes changes in election practices or procedures in states with a documented history of discriminatory voting practices until the new procedures have been determined, either by the United States District Court for the District of Columbia or the United States Attorney General, not to have the purpose or effect of denying or abridging the right to vote on account of race, color or membership in a language minority group. This process is referred to as “pre-clearance.”

51. Georgia is currently one of the states covered by Section 5 and required to obtain pre-clearance prior to implementing any changes to election practices or procedures.

52. The actions the State of Georgia has taken relating to its voter registration database, including verifying voter information against databases maintained by both the Georgia Department of Driver Services and the federal Social Security Administration (SSA), and generating and distributing reports of the results of those checks to county registrars as the basis for voter challenges, hearings, correspondence or removal, constitute voting changes which require federal pre-clearance.

53. All of these voting changes were implemented without seeking federal pre-clearance.

Plaintiff Jose Morales' Voting Rights Have Been Violated

54. Plaintiff Jose Morales is a resident of Cherokee County, Georgia and has been a resident of Georgia since 2000. Attached hereto is the declaration of Plaintiff José Julian Morales attesting to the facts set forth in this Complaint.

55. Mr. Morales has been a Legal Permanent Resident of the United States since he was approximately 2 or 3 years old. He became a

United States Citizen in November 2007. He obtained his Georgia driver's license in April 2006.

56. Mr. Morales is currently studying International Affairs at Kennesaw State University in Kennesaw, Georgia. He graduated in December 2008 with a B.A. in International Affairs.

57. On or around the beginning of September 2008, Mr. Morales filled out a voter registration form on campus through a student organization.

58. Approximately two weeks after filling out his voter registration form, he received a letter from Cherokee County. The letter indicated that he would not be able to vote unless he provided evidence of his citizenship in court. The letter also indicated that he would be eliminated from the voter list if he did not prove his citizenship.

59. Approximately a week later, Mr. Morales received another letter. The letter indicated he had to provide additional information such as a copy of his driver's license, passport or other document, that verifies he is a U.S. citizen.

60. Approximately two weeks later, Mr. Morales received a second letter indicating that he needed to provide documentary evidence of his citizenship.

61. Accordingly, Mr. Morales drove to Cherokee County Elections and Registration office located at 400 E. Main Street, in Canton, Georgia, in order to prove his citizenship. The office is located about 30 minutes from Mr. Morales' home.

62. Mr. Morales indicated to the Clerk that he had been asked to prove his citizenship in order to vote and proceeded to show the clerk his passport.

63. Mr. Morales then asked the Clerk in the Cherokee County Elections and Registration office if his passport was sufficient evidence to enable him to vote.

64. The Clerk indicated that his passport was sufficient to prove his citizenship, and that he would be receiving a voter registration card in the mail. Mr. Morales received his voting card approximately a week later.

65. On or around October 3, 2008, Mr. Morales received a notification in the mail to pick up certified mail addressed to him at his local post office.

66. On or around October 7, 2008, Mr. Morales retrieved the certified mail from the post office. The certified mail was a letter from the Cherokee County Elections and Registration office which indicated that he

may not be qualified to vote in Cherokee County because he may not be a U.S. citizen.

67. The letter also stated that if Mr. Morales did not contact the Cherokee County Elections and Registration office before October 15, 2008, or appear at a hearing on the same date, his name would be removed from the list of registered voters. Although Mr. Morales had apparently resolved the issue of sufficiently proving his citizenship, the letter indicated he still needed to present proof of citizenship

68. As demonstrated from paragraphs 54 - 67, Plaintiff Morales was required to undertake numerous additional steps, after registering to vote in Georgia, to ensure that he was able to cast a vote that would be counted in elections conducted by the State of Georgia.

CLAIM ONE
(Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965)

69. Plaintiffs hereby incorporate by reference all foregoing paragraphs as if set forth fully herein.

70. Because Defendant has failed to secure federal pre-clearance of the new voter registration list maintenance procedures based on citizenship which affect voting, these new procedures are legally unenforceable under Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, as amended, 42 U.S.C. § 1973c. Any removal of voters from the voter registration list based on these list

maintenance procedures is void and violate the rights of Plaintiffs as secured by Section 5 of the VRA. Unless enjoined, Defendant will proceed with the voter removals in violation of Section 5.

71. Accordingly, Plaintiffs are entitled to a declaration that Defendants' implementation of the new voter registration list maintenance procedures based on citizenship violates their rights under Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act and to an order temporarily and permanently enjoining use of citizenship information collected via the unprecleared procedures.

CLAIM TWO
(Violation of Section 8(c) of the National Voter Registration Act)

72. Plaintiffs hereby incorporate by reference all foregoing paragraphs as if set forth fully herein.

73. Defendant's application of citizenship check procedures to registered voters and removal of such registered voters within 90 days of a federal election violates Section 8(c) of the NVRA, 42 U.S.C. § 1973gg-6, which prohibits states from executing, later than 90 days prior to the date of a primary or general election for Federal office, any program the purpose of which is to systematically remove the names of ineligible voters from the official lists of eligible voters, except at the request of the registrant, or by reason of disfranchising criminal conviction, mental incapacity, or death of the registrant. 42 U.S.C. § 1973gg-6(c)(2)(A).

74. Accordingly, Plaintiffs are entitled to a declaration that Defendant's application of citizenship check procedures to registered voters and removal of such registered voters based on the citizenship check procedures violates their rights under the NVRA and to an order temporarily and permanently enjoining application of the citizenship check procedures within 90 days of a Federal election.

CLAIM THREE
(Violation of Section 303 of the Help America Vote Act)

75. Plaintiffs hereby incorporate by reference all foregoing paragraphs as if set forth fully herein.

76. The HAVA protections against the removal of individual eligible registered voters from the Georgia statewide voter registration database, as set forth in 42 U.S.C. § 15483(a), may be enforced against the Defendant through 42 U.S.C. § 1983.

77. Under the voter registration procedures issued pursuant to the Defendant's authority, any registered voter who has been flagged as a non-citizen under the DDS matching program is subject to removal from the Georgia statewide voter registration database unless 1) he or she affirmatively provides additional information to the satisfaction of voter registration officials, and 2) those officials then timely and accurately update the statewide voter registration database.

78. Upon information and belief, pursuant to the Defendant's DDS matching program multiple eligible registered voters have erroneously been flagged as non-citizens and made subject to removal from the voter registration list.

79. Pursuant to the Defendant's DDS matching program Plaintiff Morales was subject to removal from the voter registration database even after he produced satisfactory evidence of citizenship due to the failure to timely update the Georgia statewide voter registration database.

80. Because multiple eligible registered voters have erroneously been flagged as non-citizens and made subject to removal from the voter registration list as a direct consequence of the Defendant's DDS matching program and the Defendant's procedures implementing that program, those procedures violate HAVA, 42 U.S.C. § 15483(a)(1)(B)(i), because "only voters who are not registered or who are not eligible to vote [may be] removed from the computerized list."

81. The Defendant's DDS matching program and the Defendant's procedures implementing that program lack adequate safeguards to prevent eligible registered voters from being flagged as non-citizens.

82. The Defendant's DDS matching program and the Defendant's procedures implementing that program fail to provide adequate safeguards to

prevent eligible registered voters who have been flagged as non-citizens from being removed from the statewide voter registration database.

83. The Defendant's DDS matching program and the Defendant's procedures implementing that program lack adequate safeguards to ensure that the Georgia statewide voter registration database is timely and accurately updated to reflect eligible registered voters who have satisfied the identification requirements demanded of them.

84. Because the Defendant's DDS matching program and the Defendant's procedures implementing that program fail to provide adequate safeguards to prevent the removal of eligible registered voters from the statewide voter registration database, those procedures violate HAVA, 42 U.S.C. § 15483(a)(4)(B), which requires "[s]afeguards to ensure that eligible voters are not removed in error from the official list of eligible voters."

85. As a direct consequence of the Defendant's DDS matching program and the Defendant's procedures implementing that program, Plaintiffs are being deprived of federal rights guaranteed under HAVA and 42 U.S.C. § 1983.

86. Absent this Court's intervention, Plaintiffs will suffer irreparable injury to their federal rights through the Defendant's DDS

matching program and the Defendant's procedures implementing that program.

87. Plaintiffs have no adequate remedy at law for the deprivation of their federal rights through the Defendant's DDS matching program and the Defendant's procedures implementing that program.

88. Defendant's conduct must be enjoined to prevent the Defendant's DDS matching program and the Defendant's procedures implementing that program from interfering with Plaintiffs' federal rights and thereby causing them irreparable injury.

REQUEST FOR DECLARATORY RELIEF

89. Pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 1973c and 28 U.S.C. § 2201, Plaintiffs seek a declaration that Defendant's implementation of the database matching for registered voters and voter registrants violates the right of Plaintiffs as secured by the Voting Rights Act, the National Voter Registration Act and the Help America Vote Act.

BASIS FOR EQUITABLE RELIEF

90. Plaintiffs have no plain, adequate or complete remedy at law to redress the wrongs alleged herein and this suit for declaratory judgment and injunctive relief is their only means of securing adequate redress from Defendant's unlawful practices. Plaintiffs will continue to suffer irreparable

injury from Defendant's acts, policies and practices set forth herein unless Defendants are enjoined by this Court.

PRAYER

WHEREFORE, Plaintiffs respectfully pray that this Court enter Judgment granting Plaintiffs:

A. A declaratory judgment that Defendant's actions violate the rights of Plaintiffs as secured by Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, 42 U.S.C. § 1973c, Section 8 (c) of the National Voter Registration Act of 1993, 42 U.S.C. § 1973gg-6(c)(2)(A) and Section 303 of the Help America Vote Act, 42 U.S.C. § 15483.

B. Preliminary and permanent injunctive relief enjoining Defendant, her successors in office, agents, employees, attorneys and those persons acting in concert with her or at her direction from using citizenship information collected through implementation of the database matching system for registered voters and voter registrants; ordering Defendant to employ her full authority to direct all County Boards of Elections to cease using the citizenship check feature of the voter registration database as the basis for voter challenges, hearings.

C. Engage in affirmative, corrective measures, including but not limited to sending letters rescinding its previous correspondence to county

registrars relating to the citizenship checking feature and to report immediately to the Court any county that refuses to comply;

D. An order of this Court retaining jurisdiction over this matter until the Defendant has complied with all the orders and mandates of the Court;

E. The costs of this suit, including reasonable attorneys' fees; and

F. Such other and further relief as the Court may deem just and proper.

DATED: February 5, 2009

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ ELISE SANDRA SHORE

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