Exhibit 28
All of Georgia’s 6.9 million active voters will be mailed absentee ballot request forms for the May 19 primary, a major push to encourage voting by mail during the coronavirus pandemic, Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger announced Tuesday.

The absentee voting effort will allow Georgians to decide on their choices for president and other elected offices from home, without having to visit in-person voting locations where the coronavirus could more easily spread. Early voting and Election Day precincts will remain open.
All active Georgia voters will be mailed absentee ballot request forms.

This is a significant change in the way elections are run in Georgia. While the state has allowed any voter to cast a ballot by mail since 2005, just 7% of voters did so in the 2018 election for governor.

The state's absentee ballot initiative follows an agreement by Raffensperger, a Republican, and the Democratic Party of Georgia to delay the previously scheduled March 24 presidential primary because of the coronavirus. The presidential primary will now be held May 19, along with races for the U.S. Senate, the U.S. House, the Georgia General Assembly and local offices.

"Times of turbulence and upheaval like the one we Georgians face require decisive action if the liberties we hold so dear are to be preserved," Raffensperger said. "I am acting today because the people of Georgia, from the earliest settlers to heroes like Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Congressman John Lewis, have fought too long and too hard for their right to vote to have it curtailed."

Voters will still be required to return their absentee ballot request forms before they receive an actual ballot.

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Absentee ballot request forms will be mailed to voters next week. Then voters will choose whether they want to vote in the Democratic Party or Republican Party.
All active Georgia voters will be mailed absentee ballot request forms. Voters can fill out the forms, sign their names, add a 55-cent stamp, and put the forms in the mail. County election offices will also accept absentee ballot requests by email.

Then election officials will mail the appropriate ballot, which will be counted if it’s received by election offices by the time polls close at 7 p.m. May 19.

State Sen. Nikema Williams, the chairwoman of the Democratic Party of Georgia, praised Raffensperger’s decision. The secretary of state’s office had previously considered only sending absentee request forms to older voters.

“This global health emergency showcases exactly why we must embrace solutions that ensure every voter can cast their ballot and have their vote counted without risking their health or that of their loved ones,” Williams said. “I want to thank the secretary of state for putting the people before partisanship.”

Williams said more changes are needed to protect voting rights. Election officials should count absentee ballots postmarked by Election Day, and absentee ballots and applications should include prepaid postage, she said.

It will cost the state government and taxpayers about $13 million to mail the absentee ballot request forms and issue ballots.

Mailing actual ballots to every voter instead of ballot request forms would have been more expensive.

Election officials would have had to send three ballots — Democratic, Republican and nonpartisan — risking voter confusion and ballot rejections if voters returned more than one ballot. Georgia is an open primary state, meaning any voter can vote in any party’s primary election.
All active Georgia voters will be mailed absentee ballot request forms.

The sharp ramp-up of absentee voting in Georgia could pose a challenge for election officials more accustomed to in-person voting, said Amber McReynolds, the CEO of Vote at Home, an organization that supports voting by mail.

“When they’re going to send out applications, if they expect to get even 30% of them back, that’s a couple of million pieces of paper that's going to have to be processed,” said McReynolds, a former Denver elections director.

Before the presidential primary was postponed, about 275,000 voters cast ballots during early voting. Those ballots will still be counted.

Voters who already participated in the presidential primary will receive ballots with other races during the May 19 election. Voters who haven’t yet participated in the presidential primary will receive ballots that include both presidential candidates and other candidates.

“These steps are critical in this temporary environment to protect our poll workers and give our counties time to successfully plan for the Georgia general primary in May,” said state Senate President Pro Tempore Butch Miller, a Republican from Gainesville.

Raffensperger said it’s also important to maintain in-person voting options for people who are homeless, need language assistance and have disabilities.

In addition, eliminating in-person voting would disproportionately disenfranchise black, Latino and young voters, according to the secretary of state’s office, citing research from the Brennan Center for Justice, a policy institute at New York University that focuses on democracy and criminal justice.
All active Georgia voters will be mailed absentee ballot request forms. Instructed to maintain a safe distance to limit the threat of spreading the coronavirus.

Because many elderly poll workers have quit, Raffensperger said he will work to help county election offices hire younger poll workers who are less likely to be at risk from the coronavirus.


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