

Voting Rights Plaintiffs Ask SOS Candidate to Step Down

ATLANTA, GA – Plaintiffs who recently filed suit in Georgia to restore voting that can be verified, audited and recounted issued a public call today for Secretary of State candidate Gail Buckner to withdraw from the race because of her opposition to statewide vote auditing measures during the 2006 session. The plaintiffs offered copies of a convincing scorecard issued for the Secretary of State race by Count Paper Ballots, which helped organize the press conference.

Garland Favorito explained the plaintiffs concern: “Rep. Buckner is the only legislator in the General Assembly who is on record as opposing all four 2006 statewide vote count audit measures. No other legislator publicly opposed more than one”. He contended that Rep. Buckner:

- Voted against Rep. Karla Drenner’s SB500 amendment to restore statewide audit trails that were stripped from the pilot bill by author, Bill Stephens;
- Voted against the SB500 House committee substitute bill that provided election night audit procedures for the audit trail pilot;
- Opposed the bi-partisan HB790 vote count verification act in committee;
- Ridiculed the bi-partisan SB591 precinct vote count bill during the debates.

Rep. Buckner sponsored no statewide auditing legislation. The pilot she supported tests audit trails in 3 of 3,083 precincts but never permanently implements them.

Plaintiffs say that Georgia Election Code Section 21-2-134 allows a candidate to withdraw and have their party replace them until 10 days prior to the election. Five of them, accompanied by four other concerned activists, delivered a letter seeking a replacement to Democratic Party Chairman, Bobby Kahn. Frieda Smith, one of several lifelong Democratic plaintiffs, stated: I attended a hearing and felt totally betrayed. It is in the best interest of everyone if our party offered a candidate for this office who supports credible voting rather than one who opposes it”.

Ricardo Davis, Constitution Party of Georgia chairman, explained why plaintiffs decided to speak out: “We have a duty to inform Georgians about this remarkable conflict. Georgia cannot afford another Secretary of State so adamantly opposed to verifiable, auditable voting. That is why we had to file the suit in the first place.” The lawsuit can be viewed on the VoterGa web site at www.voterga.org.

Media Contacts: Phyllis Huster (678) 362-9111, Garland Favorito (404) 664-4044