

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

SECRETARY OF STATE TO USE UNVERIFIABLE VOTING IN BID FOR GOVERNOR

Secretary of State Karen Handel recently announced a bid to become governor of Georgia in 2010 and by doing so, has set up a conflict of interest unprecedented in any other state. The Secretary of State is responsible for conducting all state elections including her own and Georgia is the only state in the union planning to conduct the 2010 elections on unverifiable voting machines installed statewide. Georgia's E-voting systems have no Voter Verified Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) ballots that can be verified by the voter, audited by election officials and retained for recounts.

Ironically, when Karen Handel ran for the office in 2006 she gained support from many E-Voting rights activists after producing a "Basics" platform report that defined the exact steps necessary to solve Georgia's voting dilemma. Her platform report stated:

- "The electronic voting machines currently used in Georgia's elections are already obsolete"
- "Voters should have the ability to review their ballot both electronically and manually on paper",
- "Procedures must be established for audits of elections to verify that the electronic vote totals are accurate."
- "The paper audit trail should be the determining factor in discrepancies in the vote and should be the ballot of record."

In spite of these statements, Secretary Handel has taken no significant action in the first two years of her term to rectify Georgia's E-voting problems but instead, has focused on defending Voter ID photo requirements. E-Voting rights activists who supported her in 2006 are now dismayed that she has been preoccupied with the potential of individual vote fraud cases while ignoring the vulnerability to mass disenfranchisement for all Georgia voters.

Secretary Handel is now considered to be the gubernatorial front runner after all other leading candidates in her party dropped out of the primary within the first 30 days of her announcement. That includes the Lt. Governor, the House Speaker Pro tempore and a U.S. Congressman. In the most bizarre of these withdrawals, Lt. Governor, Casey Cagle, announced he would not run for Governor due to health reasons but stated he still plans to run again for Lt. Governor.

Insiders have long believed that Karen Handel was a designated choice of current Governor, Sonny Perdue. Perdue was elected during 2002 in a stunning upset when the unverifiable voting machines were first implemented by former Secretary of State, Cathy Cox. Purdue, who was outspent by a huge margin, stunned incumbent Roy Barnes while Saxby Chambliss upset triple amputee, Senator Max Cleland. Those races were recognized nationally as landmark upsets in 2002 and referred to by TV talk show host, Sean Hannity, as the "earthquake in Georgia".

Now the only apparent defense that Georgians have to avoid a major conflict of interest in the 2010 elections is a law suit pending before the Georgia Supreme Court. That suit challenges the legality and constitutionality of current Georgia elections based on admissions collected from the state's own expert witnesses during depositions. These admissions include the lack of an independent audit trail that was legally required, the inability to detect vote machine recording

errors and the inability to detect manipulation of election results on the tabulation servers. Plaintiffs contend that such evidence clearly shows that their right to vote and have their vote properly counted has been abridged. More details about the lawsuit are available at voterga.org.