QR Code Removal Project

Executive Summary

SB 189 (2024) requires that the *"official tabulation of any ballot scanner shall be based upon the text portion or the machine mark, provided that such mark clearly denotes the elector's selection and does not use a QR code, bar code, or similar coding, of such ballots and not any machine coding that may be printed on such ballots."*

Georgia's current voting system utilizes Optical Mark Recognition technology, which means it determines the voter's intent by reading the location of marks on the page. In order to have shorter ballots for in-person voting, Georgia currently utilizes a summation ballot that shows only the voter's positive choices, and then provides the requisite positional data in a QR code at the top of the page.

In order to remove the QR code from in-person ballots, Georgia needs to transition to "full face" ballots, which show both the positive and negative choices, similar to a hand-marked paper ballot. Since these ballots require more information on the page, they require longer sheets of paper. Georgia's current in-person voting system is equipped to handle 8.5" x 11" paper. Longer ballots could go up to 8.5" x 19", front and back.

As a result of these requirements, Georgia needs new printers for every in-person voting booth. This means that Georgia needs to purchase 33,000 printers that (1) meet the new ballot length requirements, (2) are secure from public access, (3) are quick enough to get people through the voting process efficiently, and (4) small enough to be easily transported to polling locations for early in-person voting and election day voting.

Georgia has been given until July 1, 2026 to implement these changes. A major obstacle to meeting this deadline is finding an appropriate window of time. Georgia requires a uniform election system, meaning that we cannot incrementally implement the new equipment. During 2025, there is a state-wide race for the Public Service Commission in June, likely a runoff in July, and then a General election in November, with a potential runoff in December. In 2026, the Primary election takes place in May, with a likely runoff in June.

In addition to the tight window of time, Georgia has strict voting system requirements. The voting system (equipment and software) must be Election Assistance Commission certified, and acceptance tested by Secretary of State employees. As a result of these requirements, there must be two teams of people to (1) update the system and implement the new equipment and (2) acceptance test the system and equipment.

The first team will be Dominion employees, who are able to uninstall the old operating system and software, install the new operating system and software, and ensure that the equipment is functioning properly. The second team will be Secretary of State employees who will go in after the Dominion team to acceptance test all of the equipment and officially hand it over to the counties. We are also requesting funds for a project management team who will help coordinate between SOS, equipment vendors, Dominion, and all 159 counties.

Special Considerations

- EAC Certified and SOS Accepted Voting System (Software and Equipment)
- Uniform Voting System (no piecemeal updates between elections)
- Limited window due to special PSC elections

Required Personnel

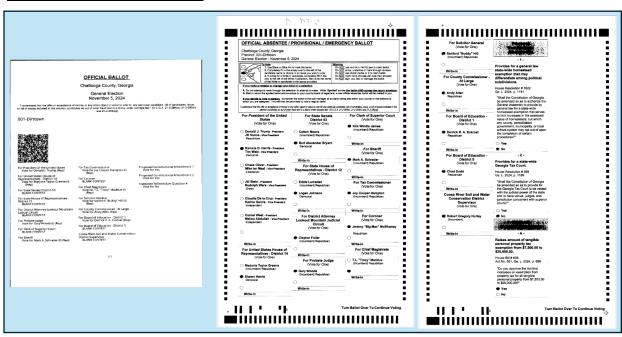| Title	Count	Hours	Wage	Total Cost	Justification
Acceptance Testing Lead (SOS)	12	1040	$40	$833,664 (includes fringe)	SOS employees required to acceptance test every piece of equipment in the state (new printers, scanners, BMDs)
Acceptance Testing Specialist (SOS)	75	1040	$25	$2,691,000 (includes fringe)	
Travel (SOS)		Estimate		$1,125,000	Hotels, Gas, Rental vehicles
Project Management Team (Outside group)		Contract		$2,250,000	Outside group to construct the governance structure for the project, coordinate between vendors, SOS, and counties. Assist in contract negotiations.
Voting Equipment Upgrade Team (Dominion)		Contract		$7,752,990.39	Dominion techs who are able to uninstall and reinstall the new OS and software. They will touch every ballot marking device (32,144), central scanner (226), precinct scanner (3937), and mobile ballot printer (159).
		Personnel Costs:		$14,652,654	

Required Equipment

	Count	Per unit Cost	Total	Justification
Printers (HP 4001dn with extended trays)	33,000	$750	$24,750,000	Necessary to fit all of the voter's choices on one ballot
Scanners ICP 2	3,937	$6,593	$25,956,641.00	New scanners are better equipped for a larger ballot and more image information.
EMS Servers Precision 3450 XE PowerEdge R640 SQL Server 2016	155 20 20	$1,760 $16,500 $990	$622,600	Necessary to upgrade the elections equipment in every county
	Equipment Costs:		$51,329,241	

Total Implementation Costs: ==$65,981,895==

Implementation Window

2025	**Jan**	**Feb**	**March** Special Elections	**April** Session Ends PSC Qualifying	**May** Estimated Gov. Signs FY 26 Budget	**June** PSC Primary
	July PSC Primary Runoff	**Aug** Ballot Building Municipal Qualifying	**Sept**	**Oct** PSC Early Voting	**Nov** PSC Gen	**Dec** General Runoff
2026	**Jan** **OPEN**	**Feb** **OPEN**	**March** Special Elections	**April** Ballot Building	**May** Primary	**June** Primary Runoff
	July **SB 189 Imple-mentation Deadline**	**Aug**	**Sept** Ballot Building	**Oct** Early Voting	**Nov** General Election	**Dec**

Summation vs. Full Face Ballot

Summation
- Shows positive choices
- Uses optical mark recognition (OMR) to read QR code
- Voter can verify choices
- Prints on 8.5" x 11" watermarked security paper

Full Face
- Shows positive and negative choices
- Uses optical mark recognition (OMR) to read the location of marks on the page
- Voter can verify choices
- Prints on up to 8.5" x 19" watermarked security paper, front and back