



Cobb County Board of Registration and Elections
Director Janine Eveler
Rep. Teri Anulewicz
736 Whitlock Ave. NW, Suite 400
Marietta, GA 30064
Transmitted via email

Re: Pollworker Incentive Pay and Center for Technology and Civic Life Grants

Dear Members of the Board, Director Eveler, and Rep. Anulewicz,

We wish to express our appreciation for all the efforts you made to provide Cobb County voters with a safe and secure election in November, to conduct a massive manual tally immediately afterwards under intense scrutiny and pressure, and a machine recount shortly thereafter.

We hope you were able to get some rest over the Thanksgiving holiday, in advance of the next challenge: preparing for an election in January that is likely to see extremely high turnout and a great deal of attention from media and others outside of Georgia. We know that the pandemic continues, and that you and your staff must be exhausted. So we were not surprised to see Director Eveler report that it has been difficult to hire experienced poll managers to staff early voting sites during the holiday season.

We encourage you to apply for **grant funds** from the non-partisan, non-profit Center for Technology and Civic life, **the availability of which has been specifically extended for Georgia election officials:**

<https://www.techandcivicle.org/our-work/election-officials/grants>. As CTCL indicates, these funds can be used for a variety of purposes including incentive pay for pollworkers and poll managers.

Neighboring metro-Atlanta counties such as Fulton, DeKalb, and Gwinnett counties all received sizeable grants from CTCL for running elections during Covid-19, and were able to put these funds to voter friendly uses such as secure dropboxes, language translation, and voter education. DeKalb County recently noted at a Board of Elections meeting that it would be applying for \$3 million more, to assist with the runoff elections.

With grant funds, Cobb County could provide **the incentive pay that already tired workers deserve and need, so that more early vote locations can be kept open for more hours. Postcards in multiple languages can also be sent to voters directing them to the online absentee ballot request tool, the website with the list of early vote sites, and all dropbox/dropoff locations. In addition, funds can be used for translation, as well as promoting the Advancing Justice voter hotline (404-955-7322) offering assistance in multiple languages.** Items that can be translated include voter guides (paper and online), sample ballots, and signage on dropboxes and at voting locations.

We are deeply concerned that a drastic reduction in early vote sites and hours could lead to the kind of long lines and problems seen in the June 2020 primaries across the country.

First, we note that Cobb County voters have not requested absentee ballots at the same rate that they had this number of weeks before the November election. Due to the holidays and other uncertainties around voter turnout patterns, it is likely that Cobb County could see even higher in-person, including early in-person, turnout than it did in November.

Second, our analysis indicates that the **impacts of the proposed early vote site changes will not be borne equitably by voters**. The two [densest subdivisions](#) of Cobb County are Smyrna and Vinings, followed by Marietta and Fair Oaks. **Vinings, Smyrna, and Fair Oaks appear to be losing a great deal of access to early voting under the current plan**. While Vinings previously had three early vote sites within 10 miles of its center, and one within 4 miles, the closest site will now be 10.5 miles away.¹ Similarly, Smyrna previously had an early vote site in the middle of town, plus three more within 10 miles; the current plan calls for just one site within 10 miles, and it is 7 miles away. And Fair Oaks, the subdivision with the highest percentage of Black and Latino voters, will be going from four early sites within 10 miles to just one. **Notably, the closest site to all four of these densest subdivisions will now be the main elections office, which could lead to long lines and overcrowding**. Marietta, which houses the main elections office site, and which previously had six more sites within 10 miles of the center, will of course retain the main office site, as well as three more within 10 miles.

Within less dense areas, **Powder Springs, for example, seems set to bear a much greater cost than Kennesaw**. Previously, Powder Springs had an early vote site in the center of town, plus two more within 10 miles. Now the plan calls for just one, 7.1 miles away. In contrast, Kennesaw previously had one right in center of town, plus four more within 10 miles. Kennesaw will have a site within town, just 2.7 miles from the center, and will retain two more within 10 miles.

We are concerned that Cobb County voters, in particular minority voters, are set to experience long lines and potential disenfranchisement in the upcoming runoffs, due to difficulties with staffing more early vote sites. We urge you to request funds from CTCL and use those to notify voters of their options and reward experienced workers for their service so that a larger number of early vote sites may be kept open, particularly in locations that will serve the densest portions of the county. Please let us know if we can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

Gowri Ramachandran
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Brennan Center for Justice

Aunna Dennis, Executive
Director
Common Cause Georgia

LaVita Tuff
Policy Director
Advancing Justice - Atlanta

¹ These figures represent driving distance estimated by Google maps, from the center of these towns to the early vote sites.