

Voting Bills in the Georgia General Assembly

Emory Votes Initiative | February 25, 2021

The Georgia legislature is currently debating dozens of proposals that would affect voting procedures in our state. Given their significance, **the Emory Votes Initiative encourages members of our community to learn about these proposals and let your representatives know where you stand on them.**

Of the bills moving quickly through the assembly, we are keeping our eyes on a few in particular that could add barriers for students and other disadvantaged individuals:

- [House Bill 531](#) would make significant changes to Georgians' options to vote absentee, early, by drop box, and by provisional ballot. It passed the House Special Committee on Election Integrity February 24 and next heads to the House floor via the Rules Committee.
- [Senate Bill 67](#) and [Senate Bill 241](#) would add ID requirements for voters requesting an absentee ballot or voting by drop box. Senate Bill 241 would also end "no excuse" absentee voting.

[This](#) story summarizes Georgia's election reform bills as of mid-February. For updates, you can track bills by number [here](#) and read the latest coverage from the [AJC](#) (access via Emory [Libraries](#)), [GPB](#), and [WABE](#).

How do you figure out your own views on the proposed changes? Keeping in mind the university's mission to apply knowledge in the service of humanity—and EVI's commitment to civic engagement and ease of voting—we encourage you to consider how they meet some core requirements of democracy:

- Do the proposed procedures ensure and promote universal adult suffrage among citizens?
- Would they strengthen the integrity of our elections—that is, help elections reflect citizens' will?
- Are they based on valid, reliable evidence?

For additional pros and cons, you might weigh a [report](#) by the Georgia Republican Party's Election Confidence Task Force, outlining concerns about election integrity, against the Brennan Center's national [overview](#) of legislation pending, contesting claims of widespread voter fraud.

Whatever your position, we encourage you to make your voice heard.

1. **Find your legislators** [here](#) or [here](#). Note their names and contact information.
2. **Call or write.** It can be short. Elected officials and their staff count on hearing from constituents about important issues. This is part of their job; you are not "bothering" them. Whether or not you vote locally, if you live here you are a constituent. In some cases it may also be worth contacting other legislators, for example committee members considering a particular bill.

Time is of the essence. Georgia's part-time General Assembly convenes in Atlanta for 40 nonconsecutive days a year. Bills are constantly being introduced, getting amended, moving through committee, and reaching floor votes. For a bill to reach the governor's desk, it must pass one chamber to reach the other by the 28th day of the session, "Crossover Day," around March, then be passed by the other. Your voice matters as much now, between elections, as during them.