

March 30, 2018

VoterGA Supporters,

SB403 died in the Senate just around midnight after being passed by the House at 10:45 pm. All the calls and Emails to the House Rules committee and Speaker Ralston's office made the difference and probably saved us from a hard wired \$130+ million deal for ES&S unverifiable ballot markers. I wrote this to give you a little background about what went on during Sine Die. The House rewrote the bill on the last day and turned it into a study committee with some leftover SB403 language mostly regarding definitions. That was more palatable to most Election Integrity advocates although we still continually opposed the bill.

Once we confirmed the House intended to adopt a study committee in lieu of a forced Request for Proposal being issued before the year end we knew we successfully avoided any purchase of ES&S unverifiable ballot markers this year. The study committee version still had some issues in that the committee was made up of legislators. The bill also left in some residual SB403 language that was unnecessary for a study and needed improvements in a few definitions. I considered those less critical since there would be no forced Request for Proposal (RFP) this year and we have a much better chance to get any corrections we need next year. By that time we will have continually built our relationships with an incoming SOS and can hopefully get the vendor out of bill language creation.

Sen. Thompson and Rep. Turner made a yeoman's effort to try to help achieve consensus on the last day by stripping the forced RFP language and implementing the study committee section. But as everyone knows that it is too late to be making major revisions to a bill. Nevertheless, I believe they should be commended though for their work along with Rep. Setzler who I think made the key decision to change the forced RFP language to a study committee for the House version. Even Rep. Brockway who opposed everything we tried to do in committee had a hand in the redrafting. It is hard to know what actually went on but I hope some folks reach out to any of them to thank them for their efforts. It must have been very frustrating for them and we will need to work with them again next year.

It is disappointing that we could not get the House leadership to work with us earlier but we established our credibility with them by trying. It appears that the most significant resistance was coming from Secretary Kemp and not Speaker Ralston. They finally relented to some degree because they know how serious we are now after receiving hundreds of your calls and Emails. Those will set us up nicely to achieve what we need next year because the leadership now realizes that they can't just ignore us when a bill is in committee. Thanks again to everyone so much for all you have done to save Georgia voters from enduring another 15 years of unverifiable voting. We can finally celebrate our victory now. I am going to take a break for a few days and go on a sorely needed vacation.

Garland
VoterGA.org
770 993-3622

