



AP Images
Voters in Atlanta

Voting Deadlines Extended in Georgia's Cobb County

ATLANTA — Most registered Georgians have until tomorrow, December 6, to cast their ballots — whether in-person or absentee — for the special Senate runoff election between Democratic incumbent Raphael Warnock and Republican challenger Herschel Walker.

Yet mere days ahead of a crucial race that will further determine the balance of power in the upper chamber and

The New American

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Date: December 5, 2022



remains within the margin of error, [according to recent polling](#), a federal judge has ruled that some voters in Cobb County will have until December 9 to return their ballots.

Judge Kellie Hill on December 2 issued an order extending the deadline for absentee ballots in the county after some 1,000 voters experienced a delay in receiving absentee ballots in the November 8 general election. The “human error” resulted in [emergency litigation](#) filed on November 6 by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), ACLU of Georgia, Southern Poverty Law Center, and Dechert LLC.

In that lawsuit, plaintiffs sought the overnight delivery of absentee ballots to hundreds of voters, who were given an additional seven days to turn in their ballots on November 14, the same deadline for voters overseas or in the military.

“Hundreds of eligible Cobb County voters did everything right and yet find themselves on the brink of total disenfranchisement because they were never mailed their absentee ballots, as is required under Georgia law. Even Cobb County has acknowledged they made a ‘critical error’ and ‘let these voters down.’ Only this court can right the wrong done to these hundreds of voters and ensure that they are able to exercise their fundamental right to vote in this November election,” said Jonathan Topaz, staff attorney with the ACLU’s Voting Rights Project.

In the latest ruling, those who requested absentee ballots on or before November 26, 2022, are required to return their ballots to the Cobb County Elections office by December 9, 2022, to ensure those votes will be counted. All absentee ballots must be postmarked no later than election day, December 6.

The New American reached out to Cobb County officials for clarification on how the error of the general election impacts the runoff deadline. As of this writing, the elections department has not yet responded.

On Friday, Superior Court Judge Hill [ruled](#) that a “‘confluence of deadlines,’ including a holiday, a new state statute, and the Thanksgiving holiday ... led to a delay in sending out some absentee ballots.”

Hill’s order also states that voters have the option of submitting a [Federal Write-in Absentee Ballot](#) (FWAB) to the Cobb elections office if they have not yet received their ballot. This FWAB must also be postmarked no later than election day, December 6, and received at the Election Office by December 9.

In a state with 7.4 million registered voters, Georgians are showing up at the polls. Turnout for the November 8 midterms was a whopping [60-percent higher](#) than in the 2018 midterm election, with analysts pinning the increase on a peak in voter interest as well as use of the state’s three-week early voting period.

While there is no party registration in Georgia, “voter data from the 2022 spring primary shows that around 34 percent of early voters so far participated in the Republican primary, 32 percent in the Democratic primary and the rest did not vote in that election,” per the [Georgia Public Broadcasting](#).

Moreover, a *New York Times* [report](#) stated that Democrats outspent Republicans in the general election, raising more than \$100 million, compared with \$76 million spent by Republicans. The paper also reminded readers that former football star and Heisman Trophy winner Herschel Walker took 1.9 million votes in November — “landing 37,000 votes short of Mr. Warnock and roughly 60,000 votes shy of the 50 percent threshold for winning the seat outright.” Thus, this race is far from decided.

Early voting in the Peach State, where residents have the option of either casting a ballot in person or by absentee, began on November 14 and ended December 2, with a record-breaking number of residents participating. As of this writing, Cobb County voters — of which there are more than 500,000 registered — had cast 159,615 early ballots. The total of [absentee ballots issued](#) is 24,151, with 13,294 of those ballots returned, exceeding by several thousand the number of absentee ballots issued in the state’s most populous Fulton county. And with the deadline extension, there will certainly be more to come in the days after the election.

Voter [turnout statewide](#) has reached 26.7 percent, with more than 1.8 million votes cast as of this writing. Some prognosticators have suggested that if Herschel Walker is to defeat Raphael Warnock, he will need some 1.5

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million votes on Election Day, when Republicans typically turn out to vote.

Of course, any time there are delays in casting or counting ballots, there are increased opportunities for all kinds of fraud, especially stuffing the ballot box, where additional fraudulent votes are added to the race.

“The integrity of our elections are really determined by the integrity of the people running the elections,” said a poll worker in Cherokee County, shedding light on the massive responsibility of election workers, both paid and volunteer.

As *The New American's* election-integrity expert Kurt Hyde commented, “There was a time in American history when all aspects of the election were open to the public, and absentee ballots, where they were allowed, required an ‘excused absence.’”

Hyde continued, “if the processing of these absentee requests had been monitored by the public and the absentee ballot requests required an excused absence, then errors like what happened in Cobb County would be a lot less likely to occur.”