



DeKalb County Government

Manuel J. Maloof Center
1300 Commerce Drive
Decatur, Georgia 30030

Agenda Item

File ID: 2019-4621

Substitute

Public Hearing: YES NO

Department: Board of Commissioners

SUBJECT:

Commission District(s): All Districts

A Resolution By The Governing Authority Of DeKalb County, Georgia To The DeKalb County Delegation Of The General Assembly To The Implementation Of A Countywide Polling Place Program;

Information Contact: John Manson

Phone Number: 404 371 6207

PURPOSE:

To adopt a resolution that allows DeKalb County Voters to vote at any precinct within DeKalb County;

NEED/IMPACT:

To ensure voter turnout by allowing Voters easier access to the polls. This resolution would allow Voters to access polling places near their employment or on their way home.

FISCAL IMPACT:

N/A

RECOMMENDATION:

To approve the resolution and authorize the chief executive officer to execute all necessary documents.....

RESOLUTION

**A RESOLUTION OF THE GOVERNING AUTHORITY OF DEKALB COUNTY,
GEORGIA TO THE DEKALB COUNTY DELEGATION
OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY RELATING TO
THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A COUNTYWIDE POLLING PLACE PROGRAM**

WHEREAS, the right to vote is a fundamental principle of American Democracy; and

WHEREAS, removing impediments to civic participation will promote a more engaged and representative society; and

WHEREAS, allowing counties to implement a Countywide Polling Place Program in lieu of pre-designated, precinct-based polling locations will make voting more convenient and accessible for citizens; and

WHEREAS, a Countywide Polling Place Program would allow voters to cast ballots at any polling place in their county of residence regardless of their home of record; and

WHEREAS, Countywide Polling Place Programs have been successfully implemented in Texas;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the governing authority of DeKalb County, Georgia that the following is requested:

1. The General Assembly consider adopting legislation mirroring Chapter 43, Section 43.007. of the Texas Election Code.
2. The General Assembly allow counties to opt into a program enabling voters to cast ballots at the polling place of their choosing within their county of residence without regard to the precinct of their home address.
3. Participating counties in such a “Countywide Polling Place Program” must have the means to verify that a voter has not previously voted in the election.
4. Moreover, participating counties must allow a voter to cast a ballot in the same elections in which the voter would be entitled to participate based on their precinct of residence.

ADOPTED by the DeKalb County Board of Commissioners, this _____ day of _____, 2019.

JEFF RADER
Presiding Officer
Board of Commissioners
DeKalb County, Georgia

APPROVED by the Chief Executive Officer of DeKalb County, this ____ day of _____, 2019.

MICHAEL THURMOND
Chief Executive Officer
DeKalb County, Georgia

ATTEST:

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

BARBARA SANDERS-NORWOOD, CCC
Clerk

VIVIANE ERNSTES
County Attorney

DRAFT

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 549 (H.B. 2027), Sec. 4, eff. September 1, 2015.

Sec. 43.005. DESIGNATION OF LOCATION: CERTAIN SPECIAL ELECTIONS. The authority establishing election precincts under Section 42.062 shall designate the location of the polling place for each precinct.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 211, Sec. 1, eff. Jan. 1, 1986.

Sec. 43.006. CONFLICTS WITH OTHER LAW. A law outside this subchapter supersedes this subchapter to the extent of any conflict.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 211, Sec. 1, eff. Jan. 1, 1986.

The following section was amended by the 86th Legislature. Pending publication of the current statutes, see H.B. 3965, 86th Legislature, Regular Session, for amendments affecting the following section.

Sec. 43.007. COUNTYWIDE POLLING PLACE PROGRAM. (a) The secretary of state shall implement a program to allow each commissioners court participating in the program to eliminate county election precinct polling places and establish countywide polling places for:

- (1) each general election for state and county officers;
- (2) each election held on the uniform election date in May and any resulting runoff;
- (3) each election on a proposed constitutional amendment;
- (4) each primary election and runoff primary election if:
 - (A) the county chair or county executive committee of each political party participating in a joint primary election under Section 172.126 agrees to the use of countywide polling places; or
 - (B) the county chair or county executive committee of each political party required to nominate candidates by primary election agrees to use the same countywide polling places; and

(5) each election of a political subdivision located in the county that is held jointly with an election described by Subdivision (1), (2), (3), or (4).

(b) The commissioners court of a county that desires to participate in the program authorized by this section shall hold a public hearing on the county's participation in the program. The commissioners court shall submit a transcript or electronic recording of the public comments made at the hearing to the secretary of state. A county that has previously participated in a similar program and held a public hearing on the county's participation in that program is not required to hold a hearing under this subsection.

(c) In conducting the program, the secretary of state shall provide for an audit of the direct recording electronic voting units before and after the election, and during the election to the extent such an audit is practicable.

(d) The secretary of state shall select to participate in the program each county that:

- (1) has held a public hearing under Subsection (b);
- (2) has submitted documentation listing the steps taken to solicit input on participating in the program by organizations or persons who represent the interests of voters;
- (3) has implemented a computerized voter registration list that allows an election officer at the polling place to verify that a voter has not previously voted in the election;
- (4) uses direct recording electronic voting machines; and
- (5) is determined by the secretary of state to have the appropriate technological capabilities.

(e) Each countywide polling place must allow a voter to vote in the same elections in which the voter would be entitled to vote in the county election precinct in which the voter resides.

(f) In selecting countywide polling places, a county must adopt a methodology for determining where each polling place will be located. The total number of countywide polling places may not be less than:

- (1) except as provided by Subdivision (2), 50 percent of the number of precinct polling places that would otherwise be located in the county for that election; or

(2) for an election held in the first year in which the county participates in the program, 65 percent of the number of precinct polling places that would otherwise be located in the county for that election.

(g) A county participating in the program must establish a plan to provide notice informing voters of the changes made to the locations of polling places under the program. The plan must require that notice of the location of the nearest countywide polling place be posted on election day at each polling place used in the previous general election for state and county officers that is not used as a countywide polling place.

(h) In adopting a methodology under Subsection (f) or creating the plan under Subsection (g), the county shall solicit input from organizations or persons located within the county who represent minority voters.

(i) The secretary of state may only select to participate in the program six counties with a population of 100,000 or more and four counties with a population of less than 100,000.

(j) Not later than January 1 of each odd-numbered year, the secretary of state shall file a report with the legislature. The report must include any complaints or concerns regarding a specific election that have been filed with the office of the secretary of state before the preparation of the report and any available information about voter turnout and waiting times at the polling places. The report may include the secretary of state's recommendations on the future use of countywide polling places and suggestions for statutory amendment regarding the use of countywide polling places.

(k) Each county that previously participated in a program under this section is authorized to continue participation in the program for future elections described by Subsection (a) if:

(1) the commissioners court of the county approves participation in the program; and

(2) the secretary of state determines the county's participation in the program was successful.

(l) Subsections (b), (c), and (d) do not apply to a county participating in the program under Subsection (k).

(m) In adopting a methodology under Subsection (f), the county must ensure that:

(1) each county commissioners precinct contains at least one countywide polling place; and

(2) the total number of permanent branch and temporary branch polling places open for voting in a county commissioners precinct does not exceed more than twice the number of permanent branch and temporary branch polling places in another county commissioners precinct.

(n) To the greatest extent possible, countywide polling places shall be located in a precinct where the political party that received the greatest number of votes in the last gubernatorial election is the same political party with which the presiding judge is affiliated.

Added by Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. 606 (H.B. 719), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2009.

Amended by:

Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 1002 (H.B. 2194), Sec. 8, eff. September 1, 2011.

Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 1169 (S.B. 578), Sec. 2, eff. September 1, 2013.

Acts 2017, 85th Leg., R.S., Ch. 828 (H.B. 1735), Sec. 11, eff. September 1, 2017.

SUBCHAPTER B. BUILDING FOR USE AS POLLING PLACE

Sec. 43.031. POLLING PLACE IN PUBLIC BUILDING. (a) In this subchapter, "public building" means a building owned or controlled by the state or a political subdivision.

(b) Each polling place shall be located inside a building.

(c) The building selected for a polling place shall be a public building if practicable. The entity that owns or controls a public building shall make the building available for use as a polling place in any election that covers territory in which the building is located. If more than one authority requests the use of the building for the same day and simultaneous use is impracticable,