

2026 MIDTERM ELECTIONS

VOTER'S GUIDE



BIG BETHEL AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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BIG BETHEL

African Methodist Episcopal Church

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July 30, 2026

My Dear Big Bethel Family
and Fellow Citizens of Georgia:

Every election cycle, we hear a repeated refrain: **"This is the most important election in your lifetime."** Guess what? **This time, it's true!!!**

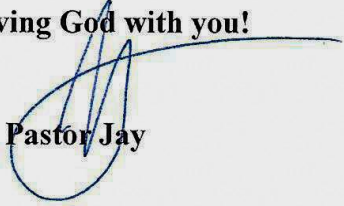
The November 2026 mid-term elections will be unique, and unlike any other elections, in the entire 250-years of America's history. **For the first time, a generation of American has lost rights instead of gaining them. That is not by coincidence.** It's by design. America was established to have a system of "checks and balances," with three co-equal branches of government. The system was set-up to allow for self-correction. That *has not* been the case.

Democracy is a real thing that must be preserved. It must be protected. The only way to do so is by voting.

I am thankful for the wonderful collaborative work of **Big Bethel's Project 2026 Ministry**, along with our **Social Action Ministry**. They have kept us abreast and informed of issues and regulations, as we approach the mid-term election. **Now, it's up to us to VOTE!**

Please use and share this very resourceful guidebook. It's up to us to lead and to vote!

I love you and thank God for the blessing of serving God with you!


Pastor Jay

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WHY VOTE?

Every generation carries a different set of stakes to the ballot box.

Midterm leaders set the budgets, the taxes, the schools, and the safeguards that shape daily life in our community. Here is what this election means for you at every stage of life.

Age 18 – 35 (Starting out)

- **Economic squeeze.** Midterm leaders set budgets, taxes, and housing rules, directly shaping wages, utility costs, and affordable housing for young Black Georgians.
- **Healthcare autonomy.** State lawmakers decide whether healthcare access expands or shrinks, influencing maternal care, insurance gaps, and reproductive freedom.
- **Environmental protection.** Georgia's tech boom strains power grids and affects Black neighborhoods, and state officials choose where facilities go and what environmental safeguards exist.
- **National leverage.** Because Georgia decides national power margins, young Black voters can force federal leaders to act on issues like student loans, justice reform, and economic investment.
- **Voting access.** Midterm participation helps counter restrictive voting laws that disproportionately affect young voters and communities of color.

Age 36 – 55 (Protecting what you've built)

- **Defending property wealth.** Voting installs local leaders who control zoning and property tax exemptions, stopping corporate buyers from driving families out of historic Black neighborhoods.

- **Combating school funding disparities.** Midterm results directly dictate the state education budget, ensuring under-resourced local schools get fair funding for counselors, infrastructure, and programs.
- **Reining in healthcare gaps.** State legislators decide whether to expand Medicaid, which dictates if local community clinics close down or receive vital funding.
- **Confronting ballot friction.** Electing fair administrators ensures clear and stable voting procedures, preventing confusing, last-minute rules that disrupt busy working adults.

Age 56 and Older (Securing your legacy)

- **Protecting fixed incomes.** State and local officials control senior tax exemptions and public transit funding, keeping costs predictable for those living on retirement.
- **Determining quality senior care.** Georgia lawmakers manage the state funding and regulations that directly impact nursing facilities, home healthcare, and prescription accessibility.
- **Preserving intergenerational wealth.** Choosing the right legislative gatekeepers helps correct systemic real estate appraisal gaps, ensuring family homes retain value when passed down.
- **Securing neighborhood identity.** Midterm winners decide infrastructure spending and industrial zoning, preventing hazardous projects from being built near older, established communities.
- **Safeguarding voting access.** Voting acts as a defense against modern administrative changes that restrict mail-in ballots and drop boxes, which older adults rely on.

2026 MIDTERM ELECTIONS — DATES TO REMEMBER

DATE	WHAT HAPPENS
Monday, August 17	First day to request an Absentee Ballot
Tuesday, September 15	Uniformed and Overseas Citizens (UOCAVA) Absentee Ballots begin getting mailed
Monday, October 5	Absentee Ballots begin getting mailed
Monday, October 5	Voter Registration deadline (by 5:00 p.m.)
Tuesday, October 13	First day for Advanced/Early Voting
Sat., October 17 & 24	Mandatory Saturday Voting
Sun., October 18 & 25	Optional Sunday Voting
Friday, October 23	Last day to request an Absentee Ballot
Friday, October 30	Last day for Advanced/Early Voting
Tuesday, November 3	ELECTION DAY (7:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.)
Thursday, November 5	Last day for an Absentee Ballot correction (curing)
Friday, November 6	Last day to return UOCAVA Absentee Ballot (must be postmarked by Nov. 3, 2026)
Friday, November 6	Provisional Ballot Voter Documentation Deadline (5:00 p.m.)

GET READY TO VOTE

Start with My Voter Page

Georgia Secretary of State website

mvp.sos.ga.gov/MVP/mvp.do



-
- ✓ Check your voter status
 - ✓ Verify local voting rules & locations
 - ✓ Double check your voting location and hours of operation
 - Locate your early voting poll location (if applicable)
 - Verify your ID matches your voter registration info
 - Print/scan your precinct card

Need a Ride to the Polls?

If you are a Georgia voter in need of a ride to the polls, help is available.



CALL
1-877-524-8683

VISIT
RIDETOTHEPOLL.COM

Did You Know?

- You can be **purged/removed** from the voter roll **if you have not voted**, updated your voter registration, or renewed your license/state ID for three years.
- **If you are incarcerated but have not yet been convicted, you may be eligible** to vote via an absentee ballot.
- If you were **previously convicted of a felony, you may be eligible** to vote.
- You **cannot** be arrested for outstanding warrants on your way to/from the polls.
- My Voter Page has been updated with **Ballot Tracking Notifications! Sign up today!**
- **Seniors (75 and older) or physically impaired voters** have additional rights. If you are unable to stand in line, you can:
 - **Request to be moved to the front of the line if you are voting between 9:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m. (polls are open 7 a.m.–7 p.m.)**
 - **If outside of the “line skipping” window above, request that a chair be provided**
 - **Request to have your place in line held and be notified when it is your turn**
- You **may be eligible** to vote via a **provisional ballot** if you are a registered voter and:
 - You arrive at a polling place, absentee polling place, or a registration office in your county of residence and your name is not listed on the registered electors list.
 - You arrive at a polling place in your county of residence but not your assigned precinct after 5:00 p.m. but before the regular closing time — you may be allowed to cast a provisional ballot and will likely need to execute a sworn statement.

- If your **polling location encounters conditions** (late opening, machine outages, water leaks, etc.) that **prevent equal access** for the same amount of time as other polling locations statewide, you are entitled to equal access to voting.

Please Contact the Election Protection Hotline at:

1-866-OUR-VOTE (English)

888-VE-Y-VOTA (Spanish)

844-YALLA-US (Arabic)

888-API-VOTE (AAPI)

to report any issue IMMEDIATELY!



VOTING AFTER A FELONY CONVICTION

OFF PAPER? YOU CAN VOTE!

You can vote in Georgia if:

- You are not *currently* serving a sentence for a felony conviction
- You are serving a felony First Offender or Conditional Discharge sentence and the status has not been revoked
- Your sentence (incarceration, parole, & probation) is complete - you just have to re-register

When your sentence is complete, your right to vote is *automatically* restored. You just need to re-register in order to vote.

Outstanding monetary obligations do not keep you from voting if your sentence is complete.



WHY Vote? WHO can I vote for?

Vote to have a say in the officials governing your community.



GJP.org/voting

Questions?
Ann@GJP.org or (404) 827-0027 option 5

GEORGIA
JUSTICE
PROJECT

Register. It's your
right. Your vote is
your voice.

LONG PROBATION SENTENCE?

If you meet the following
criteria, you may be eligible for
early termination of your felony
probation!

- 1 Completed 3 years of your probation sentence
- 2 No probation revocations in the past 24 months
- 3 No new arrests (other than non-serious traffic offenses)
- 4 Paid all restitution (not including fines and fees)



How to Request Early Termination

- 1 Contact your probation officer and request early termination if you meet the eligibility criteria. If on non-report, call the DCS Call Center at (678) 783-4337
- 2 If you are still experiencing issues requesting early termination, reach out to DCS directly at early.termination@dcs.ga.gov
- 3 Questions?
 - GJP.org/probation
 - Probation@GJP.org
 - 404.827.0027 option 6



GJP.org/probation

GEORGIA
JUSTICE
PROJECT

PATHWAYS
OVER PROBATION

CANDIDATE ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES*

(Clayton, Cobb, Dekalb, Fulton, Gwinnett Counties) †

Federal Positions

United States Representative

- Helps make national laws that affect everyday life.
- Represents your district's needs in Congress.
- Sets the cost of utilities like electricity and water rates.
- Works on laws about expanding healthcare like the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare).
- Helps decide policies on climate change and clean energy.
- Works on laws to increase the minimum wage.

United States Senator

- Approves important national leaders like judges and cabinet members.
- Helps make major laws that impact the entire country.
- Works on laws about expanding healthcare like the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare).
- Oversees federal redistricting efforts that affect Georgia, including redistricting for the 2028 presidential election.
- Protects voter information from being handed over to federal databases.

State Positions

State Senator & State Representative

- Decide how state money is spent on schools, roads, and services.
- Shape district maps that determine who represent you.
- Handle redistricting that will occur for the 2028 presidential election.
- Work on laws to increase the minimum wage.

- Work on expanding healthcare access through programs like the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare).

Governor

- Decides how your state tax dollars are used.
- Signs or vetoes laws that affect schools, safety, and services.
- Sets policies on utility costs like electricity and water rates.

Lt. Governor

- Steps in if the Governor cannot serve.
- Breaks tie votes in the State Senate.

Secretary of State

- Oversees elections and voter registration.
- Regulates businesses and professional licenses.
- Prevents handing over voter information to a federal database.

Attorney General

- Protects citizens from crime, corruption, and fraud.
- Serves as the state's top legal officer.

Insurance & Safety Fire Commissioner

- Ensures insurance companies treat customers fairly.
- Protects people and property from fire hazards.

Commissioner of Labor

- Helps workers find jobs and training.
- Oversees unemployment benefits.

Commissioner of Agriculture

- Ensures safe food in stores.
- Supports Georgia farmers and protects natural resources.

State School Superintendent

- Oversees public schools statewide.

- Decides how education funds are used.

Public Service Commission

- Regulates electricity, gas, and phone services.
- Ensures utility prices are fair.

Supreme Court Justice

- Reviews major legal cases in Georgia.
- Ensures state laws follow the constitution.

Judge, Court of Appeals

- Reviews appeals from lower courts.
- Ensures fair legal decisions.

County Positions

Judge, Superior Court

- Handles serious criminal and civil cases.
- Oversees important family and property matters.

Clerk, Superior Court

- Keeps official court and property records.
- Ensures legal documents are properly filed.
- Maintains criminal and civil court records.

Chief Magistrate Judge

- Handles small claims and minor disputes.
- Issues warrants and resolves landlord/tenant issues.

State Court Judge & Associate Judge

- Handles misdemeanors and traffic cases.
- Oversees civil cases with jury trials.

County Commissioner

- Decides how county tax dollars are spent.

- Sets policies for services like police, fire, and roads.

District Attorney

- Prosecutes serious crimes to keep communities safe.
- Ensures justice is applied fairly.

County School Board

- Sets school policies and budgets.
- Decides how schools improve and grow.

Sheriff

- Oversees county law enforcement and jails.
- Ensures public safety in unincorporated areas.

County Commissioner (Financial Oversight)

- Manages county funds and taxes.
- Oversees major county services.

County Solicitor of State Court

- Handles misdemeanor cases.
- Recommends fair sentences and diversion programs.

County Solicitor General

- Prosecutes misdemeanors like DUI and assault.
- Enforces county laws.

Super County Commissioner

- Oversees all major county functions.
- Sets policies on taxes, zoning, and public works.

City / Local Positions

City Manager (appointed v. elected)

- Runs daily city operations.
- Manages city staff and budgets.

Mayor

- Represents the city and its residents.
- Sets budget priorities for city services.

City Council

- Makes city laws and policies.
- Oversees city budget and public services.

Water Authority (At Large & District)

- Ensures clean and safe water.
- Protects rivers and prevents pollution.

Recorder Court Judge

- Helps people understand legal options.
- Handles minor cases and pleas.

Soil and Water Conservation

- Protects local soil and water resources.
- Guides environmental programs.

Water and Sewer Commissioner

- Oversees water treatment and sewer systems.
- Ensures compliance with environmental laws.

** This is not a full list of all Federal, State, County and/or city/local positions within the counties listed.*

† All positions may not be on the ballot in all districts.

GET TO KNOW THE CANDIDATES

Do your research in advance so you are ready to cast your vote for the candidates that align best with your values, beliefs, and community needs.

As we get closer to Election Day, many of the high-profile races will engage in debates. Keep an eye out for the advertisements.

Some ways to watch/research:

- Atlanta Press Club
- Local News - check your listings
- Internet / YouTube

Know Before You Go.

- ☐ Download a sample ballot so you are aware of what questions you will be asked.
- ☐ Visit your county website for additional polling location information in your area.

Get Involved

“The Voter Education and Outreach Team is happy to train citizens who want to volunteer with the Department of Registration and Elections by hosting voter registration drives through our Deputy Registrar Program. If you are interested in becoming a Deputy Registrar, please email veo@fultoncountyga.gov or call 404-612-7020.”

Additional Information on how to get involved

- **Resources**
 - www.fultoncountyga.gov
 - <https://www.fultoncountyga.gov/inside-fulton-county/fulton-county-departments/registration-and-elections/voter-education>
- You can also get involved by signing up to become a **paid Election Poll Official (Poll Worker)**. Visit your county website for more information.

EXCHANGING AN ABSENTEE BALLOT FOR IN-PERSON VOTING

If you requested and received an Absentee Ballot but did not mail it in time to make the deadline, you may still vote in person. It is **required** that you bring the Absentee Ballot with you to your polling location on Election Day. They will collect it, void it, and give you a voter card.

If You Left Your Absentee Ballot at Home

1. **Tell the Poll Worker**

Say you requested an absentee ballot, left it behind, and want to vote in person instead.

2. **Sign a Cancellation Form**

Fill out a quick form swearing you haven't voted and asking to cancel your mail-in ballot.

3. **Wait for System Check**

The worker will check state records to make sure your mail ballot hasn't already been received.

- **Not received?** Your mail ballot is canceled, and you get a normal ballot.
- **Already received?** Your vote is counted, so you cannot vote again.

4. **Show Photo ID**

Bring a valid Georgia photo ID (like a driver's license or passport).

5. **Throw Away the Mail Ballot Later**

If you find the unmailed ballot at home later, destroy it — do not try to use or mail it.

GET READY TO VOTE — SAMPLE VOTING PLAN

Your Step-by-Step Game Plan

A BEFORE ELECTION DAY

☐ Check my voter status

- ☐ Active Status
- ☐ Name/Address Change needed?
- ☐ New/Updated ID needed?
VoteRiders – 866-ID-2-VOTE (866-432-8683)

☐ Verify my voting location and hours of operation

☐ Voting date: _____

☐ Voting Day/Date (alternate): _____

☐ Confirm ID matches my voter registration info

☐ Print/scan your precinct card

☐ Print/review your sample ballot

☐ Double-check my voter status

☐ Double-check your voting location and hours of operation

☐ Return/Mail Absentee ballot (if applicable)

B ON ELECTION DAY

☐ Triple-check my voter status

☐ Triple-check my voting location and hours of operation

☐ Triple-check voter status & location

☐ Save a **photo of your “Active” status** from county or My Voter Page website

☐ Bring **valid ID**, precinct card & sample ballot

☐ Pack your patience!

☐ Review your printed ballot before submitting

☐ Verify your ballot was accepted **online** or verify your ballot status with Ballot Tracking Notification settings.

☐ Protection Hotline: 866-OUR-VOTE / VOTE-365.org

Make sure at least five people vote with you. Follow up with:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

GEORGIA VOTING & ELECTION GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Absentee Ballot

In Georgia, any registered voter can request an absentee ballot by mail without needing an excuse (known as no-excuse absentee voting). You must submit an application between 78 and 11 days before an election. Under Georgia law, applications require a driver's license number, state ID number, or last four digits of your SSN to verify identity. Returned ballots are dropped off at secure indoor drop boxes during early voting hours or mailed/delivered to your County Board of Registrars by 7:00 PM on Election Day.

Advanced In-Person Voting (Advanced Voting)

This is Georgia's official statutory term for early voting. State law requires three full weeks of Advanced Voting prior to general elections. It begins on the fourth Monday before Election Day and includes mandatory voting on two Saturdays (with optional Sunday hours set by individual counties). During Advanced Voting, voters can cast a ballot at any designated early voting location in their home county — you are not limited to your local neighborhood precinct.

Elector

The formal legal term used in the Georgia Election Code to refer to any individual who is fully qualified and registered to vote in the state. (It also refers to the 16 individuals chosen to represent Georgia in the U.S. Electoral College.)

GOTV (Get Out the Vote)

Campaign or grassroots efforts focused on turning out voters across Georgia. In Georgia, GOTV organizers must navigate specific state rules — for instance, non-poll workers are legally prohibited from distributing food, water, or campaign materials within 150 feet of a polling place building or within 25 feet of any voter standing in line.

Nonpartisan / Nonpartisan Ballot

Refers to races, offices, or election ballots where candidates run without political party affiliations or labels. In Georgia, judicial elections (such as State Supreme Court justices, Court of Appeals judges, and Superior Court judges) and many local school board races are nonpartisan. Because Georgia has open primaries and does not register voters by party, voters participating in a Primary Election

must choose a ballot: choosing a Democratic or Republican ballot includes that party's primary candidates plus all nonpartisan races. Choosing a Nonpartisan ballot limits your vote only to nonpartisan offices and local ballot referendums; selecting a nonpartisan ballot during a primary leaves you eligible to vote in either party's runoff if one occurs.

Poll Watcher

An observer designated and credentialed by a political party or candidate to monitor the election process. In Georgia, poll watchers must complete state training, wear official badges, and abide by strict guidelines. They may observe line lengths, check-in desks, and vote-counting procedures, but are strictly forbidden from speaking to voters or interfering with precinct staff.

Poll Worker

(Also referred to in official state code as a poll officer or election official.) A temporary county worker or volunteer trained to facilitate and oversee the voting process at polling locations during early voting and on Election Day. They are nonpartisan officials responsible for ensuring that elections are conducted fairly, securely, and in accordance with Georgia election law. Poll Clerk: greets voters, checks voter identification, verifies registration in the voting system, hands out voter access cards or paper ballots, and assists voters with equipment instructions. Assistant Poll Manager: helps oversee operations, ensures compliance with election rules, and assists with opening and closing procedures. Poll Manager/Coordinator: supervises precinct operations, manages poll clerks, manages polling place setup and teardown, handles voter issue escalations, and transports official ballot supplies to county headquarters after polls close.

Precinct Card (Voter Registration Card)

An official paper notice mailed by your County Board of Registrars after you register or change your address. It lists your voting precinct name, assigned Election Day polling place address, and district numbers (congressional, state senate, state house, county commission). You do not need to bring your Precinct Card to vote.

Provisional Ballot

A backup ballot issued at a polling station if a voter's eligibility cannot be immediately confirmed — for example, if you don't bring an approved photo ID

or appear at the wrong precinct on Election Day. In Georgia, if you cast a provisional ballot due to lack of ID, you have 3 days after the election to present a valid photo ID to your county registrar for your vote to count. If you vote out-of-precinct before 5:00 PM on Election Day, you will be directed to your correct location; after 5:00 PM, you may be allowed to vote provisionally.

Voter Card (Georgia Voter Identification Card)

In Georgia, this often refers specifically to the Free Georgia Voter Identification Card. Because Georgia strictly enforces photo ID laws for in-person voting, any registered voter who does not possess a driver's license, passport, or other valid photo ID can obtain a free Voter ID Card from any County Registrar's office or Georgia DDS center.

Make your voting plan now!

NOTES

"Let us not grow weary in doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up."
Galatians 6:9

About Big Bethel A.M.E. Church

Founded in 1847, Big Bethel A.M.E. Church is Atlanta's oldest Black congregation, rooted in the historic Sweet Auburn District. Known as the "City Hall of Sweet Auburn," it has long served as a center for education, civil rights organizing, and community leadership.

More information is available at www.bigbethelame.org

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