

Kemp, Duncan Block Key Election Integrity Bill to Unseal Ballots

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By VoterGA

ATLANTA -- A key integrity provision to unseal Georgia election ballots was blocked at the last minute on Sine Die by Gov. Brian Kemp and Lt. Gov. Geoff Duncan. Duncan prevented the Senate from confirming House changes to [SB89](#) which included language to unseal Georgia election ballots and improve ballot chain of custody procedures. SB89 language would have allowed counterfeit ballots to be detected and electronic votes to be verified. Those provisions are essential to deter fraud in upcoming elections.

Legislators made ballot images public records in 2021 but a year-long, statewide VoterGA analysis found it impossible to use them to verify the 2020 election results. VoterGA produced a [15-point analysis](#) that revealed electronic tampering in over 500,000 ballot images prior to certification. [Another VoterGA study](#) determined well over a million ballots across 70 counties were lost or destroyed despite federal and state retention law. Experts previously concluded [in court](#) that all of the nearly 5 million images stored have inadequate resolution to authenticate the corresponding ballots. Counterfeit ballots were discovered in the Nov. 2020 Fulton County hand count audit by [four senior poll managers and two audit monitors](#).

SB89 had the support of Republican House and Senate majorities including the Speaker of the House and Senate President Pro Tempore, Butch Miller, who carried the bill. There is no rational opposition against making ballots public since election officials retain custody of them during copying or inspections and can impose a reasonable charge for time expended under Open Records Request law. The language to unseal originated from a bi-partisan [HB933](#) bill and was just a one-minute vote away from passage into law when Duncan blocked it.

Despite the overwhelming evidence and support for SB89, Duncan used [dubious measures](#) to prevent the legislature from taking corrective action on behalf of all Georgia voters. Duncan's maneuvering included his challenged out of order ruling on the motion to vote, his repeated refusal to recognize the Senate President Pro Tempore who has [recognition priority](#) and his calling of a last hour 10-minute break that went on for nearly 37 minutes.

[VoterGA](#) co-founder Garland Favorito provided details indicating Duncan's subversive actions were taken at the request of Gov. Brian Kemp: "Our volunteers were in touch with a variety of Brian Kemp's policy people throughout the day on Sine Die. We emphasized how important SB89 is to the voters and the Governor's re-election. We noted that it is a win-win situation for everyone. We explained he only needed to call his good friend Geoff Duncan to ensure that SB89 got a vote. It is now clear that Kemp asked Duncan to block this key election integrity bill that would have been passed unanimously by Georgia's Republican Senators."

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[VoterGA](#) is a non-partisan, 501(c)3 registered non-profit organization created by a coalition of citizens working to restore election integrity in Georgia. We advocate for independently verifiable, auditable, recount capable and transparent elections.