

Georgia Voting System Frequently Asked Questions: Meet Democracy Suite (D-Suite)

Q: Why is the State of Georgia replacing its current voting system?

The Georgia State Legislature approved the purchase of a new, statewide voting system in order to replace aging, paperless election equipment dating back to 2002. The new system offers Peach State voters more modern, up-to-date technology with important security and transparency features. The new system will also produce a paper ballot to allow for verification and auditing of election results.

Q: How does the new voting system work?

The Dominion Voting Democracy Suite (“D-Suite”) system features a ballot-marking device (BMD) that allows voters to verify their choices made on a touchscreen tablet, before printing a paper ballot and placing it into an optical scanner for counting. The paper ballots are used for verifying and auditing results. The next-generation system also offers enhanced audit capabilities for security, as well as features to improve the voter experience.

Q: What is the plan for installing the new system for use in Georgia elections?

The state is taking a phased-in approach, with a county pilot program for the November 2019 municipal election cycle. Statewide system replacement will be completed for the March 24, 2020 Presidential Preference Primary.

Q: How much does the new system cost, and what does the purchase include?

The system cost is approximately \$90 million. The contract includes voting system hardware, software, implementation, training and support for the new statewide system.

Q: How did the state choose the system?

Georgia’s Secure, Accessible, and Fair Elections (SAFE) Commission presented a report to the state legislature in January 2019, which used the expert recommendations to adopt a new law for the state’s voting system purchase. The procurement process was overseen by the Georgia Department of Administrative Services and handled the same way as other competitive bids. An evaluation committee scored each applicant based on an appraisal of cost and ability to meet the state’s voting system specifications, which included accuracy, security, auditability, and ease of use for poll managers and voters. Dominion Voting Systems had the highest overall score and was awarded the contract.

Q: Why is this the best system for Georgia?

Ballot marking devices (BMDs) offer reliability and assurance, balancing the need for both security and accessibility in the voting process. BMDs have proven to reduce the rate of undervotes, overvotes and stray-marked votes in elections. They can specifically alert voters if they have skipped or missed a ballot selection, ensuring that all voting choices are complete. The system also provides full accessibility for people with disabilities and/or language or literacy challenges, allowing all voters to privately and independently cast a ballot using the same system. BMDs also produce paper ballots for auditing and reduce paper volumes overall.

Q: Where can I learn more about the system?

The Secretary of State’s office will begin by conducting public demonstrations around the state, with additional county voter outreach opportunities in the fall. A full schedule will be

available on the Georgia Secretary of State's website as soon as possible: <https://sos.ga.gov/>.

Q: What are the general system components?

Democracy Suite ("D-Suite") includes:

- ImageCastX Ballot Marking Device (ICX/BMD): A universal voting device with accessible options, the ICX BMD operates with a printer that produces a paper ballot.
- ImageCast Precinct Polling Place Scanner (ICP/PPS): Allows ballots to be scanned, capturing ballot images for auditing/review.

Q: How is the new system secured?

The D-Suite system will enable Georgia to defend against cyber threats and deliver reliable election results which can be audited using paper ballots.

- Like the existing voting machines, the new machines do not connect to the Internet, which limits cybersecurity risks. They also create an auditable paper ballot, with other enhanced review capabilities for the public.
- Dominion's product security protocols meet or exceed federal U.S. Election Assistance Commission Voluntary Voting System Requirements (VVSGs).

- D-Suite has significant upgrades to help protect against cyber threats, including use of encryption, multi-factor authentication and role-based access controls.

Q: What if I'm concerned about computer-printed ballots with bar codes?

Most tabulation systems that count paper ballots currently use a barcode to accurately and efficiently count each vote. The Dominion BMD also produces a human-readable ballot summary for voter verification. Plus, election officials test and affirm the security of the system prior to every election, as well as during post-election audits. While voters can be confident in the ability of the BMD system to ensure trustworthy and accurate election results, Dominion will be working with the Secretary of State's office to address perceived concerns regarding use of marked ballots that feature barcodes. For example, the state can make scanned images of all ballots cast in statewide elections available, allowing anyone to do a ballot count to check the accuracy of results.