

# GA Officials Sow Distrust By Dismissing Election Integrity Concerns

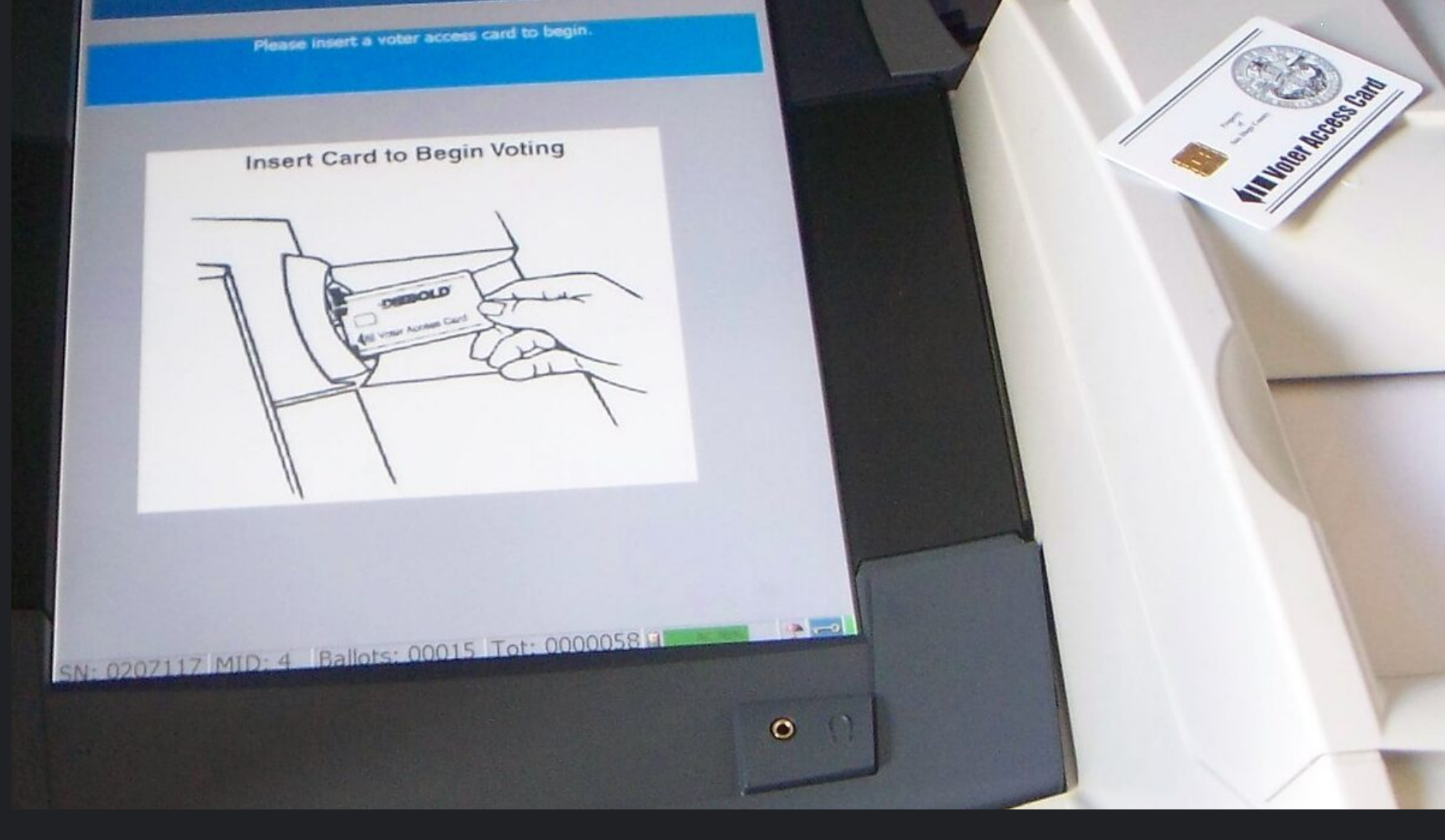


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Election integrity advocates eagerly await the final verdict in a Georgia case about the security of the state's voting machines. The decision would significantly affect the election procedures in this key state and beyond. Yet, regardless of the outcome, the case brought by a group of bipartisan plaintiffs against Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger points to a growing lack of confidence in elections that stretches beyond Georgia and party lines.

The *Curling v. Raffensperger* lawsuit alleges that Georgia's electronic ballot-marking devices are unreliable for counting the results, threatening a constitutional right to vote. One concern is that voters are unable to confirm that their vote is accurately reflected in the QR codes. When voters opt to vote in person on a machine, they make their selections, and then a ballot is produced that features both a QR code and readable human text, indicating for whom the individual voted.

A discrepancy between a QR code and the readable text is not totally unheard of. Although the issue concerned a different brand of machine, [Curling plaintiffs took the stand](#) and pointed to an issue in Northampton County, Pennsylvania, where voting machines flipped votes during the last Pennsylvania municipal election. Election officials in Northampton [reassured](#) voters that although the readable text on their ballot indicated a vote for a different candidate than desired, the QR code still accurately reflected their intended choice.

The glitch itself was concerning, but the way election officials addressed the issue is perhaps just as problematic. While Northampton County [acknowledged](#) the situation, they completely neglected to address complaints that election officials at certain precincts had [instructed](#) voters to vote the opposite of their intention so that the readable text would flip to reflect their desired candidate — a suggestion that could have affected the results of the election. Over in Georgia, several *Curling* plaintiffs took notice of the oversight that Northampton seemed to try to sweep under the rug and cited it as an event contributing to their skepticism toward their own machines.

## Concerning Cases

The *Curling* testimony points to unsatisfying responses to election issues in Georgia as well. Witness Jeanne Dufort testified that during the 2020 election, a coding error caused ballots for a Republican commissioner to report as votes for the Democrat candidate. Dufort also testified that in 2022, results showed no one had voted for a certain candidate even though the candidate knew she had voted for herself and believed her husband and daughter voted for her as well, indicating a serious error in reporting.

Another witness, Aileen Saya Nakamura, described issues with Georgia's new GARVIS system, which is used to upload voter registration to electronic poll books used to check in voters. Because of glitches in the system, voters had to be turned away at the polls. Much like the issue in Northampton, the error is concerning, but again, the response from Georgia's secretary of state was even more troubling, as the secretary of state's website reported only that the GARVIS test in that election was ["successful,"](#) and neglected to make any mention of having to turn voters away.

Cross-examination of Georgia State Election Board Acting Chair Matt Mashburn also alluded to an unsatisfactory response to citizens' election concerns by the board. The chairman was questioned about whether the board had investigated a complaint filed by Kevin Moncla and Joseph Rossi about potential violations to Georgia's election code in Fulton County. Although Mashburn could not fully remember the document presented, many Georgians remember the complaint dated July 8, 2022, and are [exasperated](#) by the board's delay in investigating the complaint.

Citizens have a right to know that their elections are secure. It is inappropriate for election officials to shirk reasonable questions about the security of an election, and it only feeds tension and distrust. Machines or no machines, the *Curling* trial has documented numerous election process issues that must be resolved not just in word, but in deed.

If election officials think glossing over issues with sweeping statements and avoiding deeply important details is going to keep election integrity advocates in the dark about underlying problems, they've underestimated the intelligence of concerned citizens and should reconsider their approach. Not only do citizens see when their officials' narratives conflict with their experience at the polls, but eventually the rest of the country begins to take notice as well.

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