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OFFICIAL ELECTION INFORMATION

March 25, 2010

TO: County Election Superintendents
FROM: Kamanzi G. Kalisa, Elections Program Specialist
RE: General Primary Polling Place Compliance

To verify that each polling location is in full compliance with federal ADA standards, Georgia Election Code standards, and Georgia SEB rules, the Supervisor of Elections must file the attached signed statement with the Secretary of State of Georgia by certified mail no later than April 27, 2010.

The statement affirms:

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1. That all in person absentee polling locations within your counties will be accessible to voters with disabilities by June 7, 2010.
2. That all other polling locations within your counties will be accessible to voters with disabilities by July 20, 2010.
3. That your office has established an ADA improvement plan for addressing disabled voter access issues at polling places that might lack accessible features, and require you to submit a copy of your plan to the Secretary of State of Georgia by certified mail no later than April 27, 2010. Plans for addressing non-compliant in person absentee precincts must be implemented by June 7, 2010. Plans for addressing all other non-compliant precincts must be implemented by July 20, 2010.
4. That you have knowledge that grant funds may be available through the Secretary of State of Georgia should your office need financial assistance to bring all polling locations into compliance with the federal and state ADA standards. A grant application is enclosed.

The Americans with Disabilities Act was enacted by Congress on July 26, 1990. The Act provides the standards to ensure that polling locations are handicap accessible to those individuals with the full range of disabilities. The Office of the Secretary of State shall ensure that all polling locations meet the following prioritized criteria:

Parking, Accessible Route and Entrance to the Facility:

1. Parking areas shall be provided with sufficient disabled access parking spaces in proportion to the total number of parking spaces. (1 accessible space must be provided for every 25 parking spaces; 1 of every eight but not less than 1 shall

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be van accessible. Appropriate access aisles are shall be provided – 8' wide for van accessible spaces and 5' wide for auto accessible spaces).

2. Have a sign with the International Wheelchair Symbol for Accessibility denoting accessible parking spaces and the accessible entrance. The route from the parking area to the entrance shall be firm, stable and slip-resistant and at least 36 inches wide and free from protruding objects and limbs to at least 80" above the surface of the walkway/ramp.
3. The route shall be free from barriers (trashcans, planters, chairs) that would interfere with a person with disabilities entering or exiting.
4. Entrance ramps shall be a minimum of 36" in clear width between the handrails required on each side if the ramp has a projection of over 6 feet and shall be non slip with a slope no greater than 1 inch per foot.
5. Entrances shall have level landings at least a 5 feet x 5 feet with a minimum of 18" of pull side clearance at the door itself.
6. Doors shall have a minimum clear width of 32" measured from the surface of the open door leaf at 90 degrees to the opposing door jamb ideally, however most standard wheelchairs can navigate clear openings of 30". Please notify us of anything less than 32" clear for a determination.
7. Doors shall have an operating pressure of not more than 8.5 pounds for exterior doors and 5 lbs. for interior doors; however a person with a disability cannot be denied access because he cannot open a door with operating pressures in compliance with the Georgia Accessibility Code. If a person comes to the door and cannot open the door one of the polling representatives must be available to provide that individual with assistance.
8. Doors required to access the polling areas or entrance shall have accessible hardware (lever handles) or be left open or be attended for assistance.
9. Have a paved accessible parking access aisle that is attached to the accessible route to the entrance.
10. Although stairs cannot be considered part of an accessible route into the polling station if stairs provide access to an entry other than the accessible entry they shall have hand rails on each side.

Voting Area Access:

1. If a facility has an entrance level below the actual voting level an elevator is required to access the voting level with an opening width of at least 32 inches.

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2. Each polling station shall have at least one touch screen voting unit set up from 28 inches to 34 inches high or placed on a table with seating for a voter in a wheelchair or who has difficulty standing.
3. Have magnifying devices available for voters that request them.
4. Have ADA-compliant restrooms if a restroom is available for public use at that designated facility or allow the individual to vote immediately upon arrival to minimize the need.

If you have any questions or need additional information please contact Kamanzi G. Kalisa at (404) 463-1968 or kgkalisa@sos.georgia.gov.

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Kamanzi G. Kalisa
Office of the Secretary of State
Elections Program Specialist
Tel: (404) 463-1968
V/ TTY: (404) 656-1787
Fax: (770) 408-3861

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