

## **GA Registration Law Does Not Require Exact Name Match**

ATLANTA GA – Georgia voter registration law has been blamed in many recent news reports and by defenders of the office of Secretary of State (SOS) for a hold-up of **53,000 voter registrations** that have been submitted by Georgians but **not approved** by the office. They claim the law requires an “**exact match**” of the voter registration name against other databases before the registration application can be approved. However, a simple review of the actual law shows that is not true and **discretion** in how to verify voter name matches belongs to voter registrars.

A new provision to verify the authenticity of voter registrations was implemented last year when the General Assembly passed [HB268](#) and the Governor Deal signed it into law as Act 250. The [text](#) of Section 8 explains the process at a general level but has **no specific language** to require the SOS office to perform an “exact match” of a voter registration application name against another database such as a Georgia driver’s license database. **Exact name matching is a protocol** that was implemented by Secretary of State Brian Kemp upon passage of the law.

Attorneys for voting and civil rights groups challenged Kemp’s protocol in a July [letter](#) stating it already proved to be **error laden** in other states. The letter contends Kemp is violating Section 8 of the National Voter Registration Act in insisting the law requires an exact name match instead of using his **discretion** to determine “Tom Smith” and “Thomas Smith” is the same person. [O.C.G.A. § 21-2-220.1]

A similar controversial SOS protocol was originally used in the 2000 Florida election by SOS Katherine Harris to remove up to **69,000 voter names** from Florida voting roles. Another similar protocol was used by Kansas SOS Kris Kobach who is being sued under voter suppression claims after developing the protocol into a national “**Crosscheck**” program. Investigative reporter Greg Palast broke all three stories. He contended the protocol influenced the outcome of the tight 2000 Florida election that eventually determined who became President of the United States. Palast is a part of the lawsuit against Kris Kobach.

Ironically, Pres. Donald Trump took a highly unusual step of endorsing both Kemp and Kobach during their Republican primaries where they defeated Lt. Governors who were expected to win. Kobach’s margin of victory was achieved in his home Johnson County, which was riddled with election delays and problems after they purchased new unverifiable ES&S EVS 6000 voting machines that embed votes in bar codes. Georgia uses old unverifiable ES&S TSX and TSR6 voting machines.