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SAFE Commission to Recommend Unsafe Voting Systems

ATLANTA, GA – The final report expected this week from Brian Kemp’s Secure, Accurate and Fair Elections (SAFE) [commission](#) will recommend voting systems that experts deem **unsafe**. The report will recommend electronic ballot markers over hand marked paper ballots including **ballot markers that embed hidden unverifiable votes in digital bar codes** for tabulation. Such systems were strongly discouraged as security risks by computer scientists, Election Integrity advocates, public speakers at all commission meetings and even the commission’s own cyber security expert.

On the eve of what would turn out to be its last meeting, SAFE commission members received a draft of recommendations for the commission to make from Secretary of State (SOS) legal counsel Ryan Germany. **The draft conflicted with positions of the commission’s cyber security expert Dr. Wenke Lee**, reports from dozens of computer scientists, [recommendations](#) from [Verified Voting](#) and [VoterGA](#) as well as nearly all members of the general public who spoke during public comment periods.

VoterGA obtained a copy of the [draft](#) and found **it contained recommendations never expressed by any commission member at any meeting**. The report recommended that the recount trigger percentage be lowered from a 1% margin of victory to .5% but no member ever expressed that as a need. Likewise, the report stated that all forms of tabulation should be considered **despite overwhelming expert and public testimony against unverifiable systems that tabulate hidden votes embedded in bar codes**.

At the January 10th [meeting](#), the room was packed with media, election officials and members of the public who were dismayed at how the draft was ramrodded through the commission **over many objections** from Lee, Sen. Lester Jackson, Rep. James Beverly and Libertarian John Monds. Sen Jackson expressed concern the report was produced by SOS office, **not by commission members**. Beverly and Monds made several attempts to ensure the **new voting system must tabulate human readable marks**. Dr. Lee raised a variety of cyber security concerns that were rebuffed over a period of several hours.

In 2017, Germany authored another [SOS report](#) that claimed the destruction of elections data was “standard procedure” after Brian Kemp [publicly chastised](#) it as “inexcusable conduct”. A VoterGa [audit](#) found Germany **did not follow standard SOS investigation procedures and failed to investigate** why no backup existed, why SOS data retention policies were violated, and who may have hacked into the data before it was destroyed.