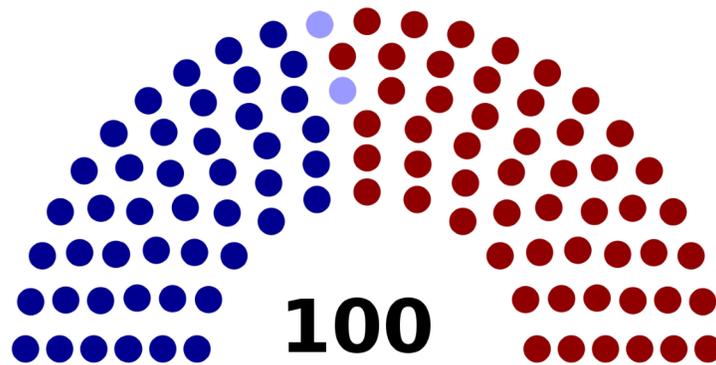


Down Ballot 2020:
Flip the Senate – Georgia Edition



*Because the Senate will be key to enabling or checking
what the President can and cannot do
regardless of who wins the White House*

15 November 2020

Table of Contents

Purpose.....	3
Executive Summary	4
Regular Election: Jon Ossoff (D) vs David Perdue (R).....	5
Special Election: Raphael Warnock (D) vs Kelly Loeffler (R)	7
Voter Registration and Turnout.....	9
Turnout Factors.....	11
Fundraising / Outside Spending	13
Noteworthy Recent Events	14
How to Help	16

Purpose

The purpose of this report is:

- To give readers information on the two Georgia Senate elections that will take place on 05 January and that will determine the fate of the Senate; and
- To provide information on how to support the two Democratic candidates in those elections.

Executive Summary

Once again, there is reason to be cautiously optimistic that Democrats can flip the Senate by winning two runoff elections in Georgia on 05 January.

- One election is the runoff of the regular election between Jon Ossoff (D) and incumbent Senator David Perdue (R).
- One election is a runoff for the special election between the Reverend Raphael Warnock (D) and incumbent Senator Kelly Loeffler (R).
- The races were essentially tied on 03 November, and the January outcome will almost certainly be driven by new voter registration and turnout.
- Although Georgia has a history of low Democratic turnout for runoff elections, there has been a sea change in Georgia politics this cycle.
 - Among other things, Joe Biden was the first Democrat to be elected to the Presidency in Georgia since Bill Clinton's 1992 victory.
 - Stacey Abrams's 10 years' worth of work in overcoming voter suppression in Georgia is showing its fruits.

Again, there are reasons to be cautiously optimistic.

The key dates related to the Georgia Senate runoff are:

- Nov. 18: Absentee ballots begin going out
- Dec. 07: Deadline to register
- Dec. 14: Early In-Person voting begins
- Jan. 05: Election Runoff

Regular Election: Jon Ossoff (D) vs David Perdue (R)

Candidates

Dem Challenger: Jon Ossoff – Investigative journalist – Ran for House seat in Georgia’s 6th Congressional district in 2017 and narrowly lost with 48.7% of the vote.

Campaign website: <https://electjon.com/>

Wikipedia Page: [Jon Ossoff](#)

GOP Incumbent: David Perdue – First-term Senator – Former businessman

03 November Results

Table 1, below, shows the results of the November election. As can be seen, Perdue only received 86,579 more votes than Ossoff...1.7%. The 114,891 votes that went to Shane Hazel, the Libertarian candidate are almost certainly the reason this is going into a runoff.

Candidate	Party	Votes	Percentage
David Perdue	Republican	2,458,665	49.7
Jon Ossoff	Democratic	2,372,086	48.0
Shane Hazel	Libertarian	114,891	2.3

Table 1: Regular Senate Election Results

Commentary

Jon Ossoff is a relatively charismatic candidate, and David Perdue is a relatively bland candidate.

Furthermore, Perdue made questionable stock transactions in the early days of the COVID crisis, and appears to have benefitted from insider information. Ossoff ripped Perdue so badly about this in their last debate that Perdue cancelled all follow-on debates. That segment is really worth watching:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6xYFCDqI43M>

Ossoff has subsequently challenged Perdue to three more debates between now and the runoff.

There has only been one poll since the election, and it show Perdue leading Ossoff by 4%: 50 to 46. The poll was conducted by the Remington Research Group, which has a below-average rating of C- by 538.

Special Election: Raphael Warnock (D) vs Kelly Loeffler (R)

Candidates

Dem Challenger: The Reverend Raphael Warnock – Minister, Ebenezer Baptist Church, Atlanta – No prior political office

GOP Incumbent: Kelly Loeffler – Business woman – no prior political office

03 November Results

This race was a jungle, with approximately 20 candidates running. Table 2, below, shows the results of the election. As can be seen, Warnock received the most votes, but Republican votes were split between two high-visibility contenders: incumbent Kelly Loeffler and Tea Party challenger Doug Collins.

Candidate	Party	Votes	Percentage
Raphael Warnock	Democratic	1,615,402	32.9
Kelly Loeffler	Republican	1,271,106	25.9
Doug Collins	Republican	978,927	19.9
Other Democrats		715,595	15.5
Other Republicans		172,208	3.4
Miscellaneous		109,796	2.4

Table 2: Itemized Special Senate Election Results

Table 3, on the next page, puts a slightly different perspective on the November results. In this case, one can see that all Democratic candidates came within 0.8% of all Republican candidates.

Party	Votes	Percentage
Democratic	2,375,895	48.4
Republican	2,422,241	49.2
Miscellaneous	109,796	2.4

Table 3: Party Distribution of Special Senate Election Results

Commentary

The special election is to fill the seat of Johnny Isakson (R), who retired in January 2020.

Governor Brian Kemp appointed business woman Kelly Loeffler at the time of Isakson’s retirement to fill the seat in the interim. Loeffler has no political background, and – like Perdue – has been criticized for using inside information to benefit on the stock market during the early days of the COVID crisis.

Ralph Warnock is a minister at the Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta, filling the position Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. held at one point. He is widely known, particularly in the black community.

There has only been one poll since the election, and it show Loeffler leading Warnock by 1%: 49 to 48. The poll was conducted by the Remington Research Group, which has a below-average rating of C- by 538.

Voter Registration and Turnout

Although turnout will be key in January, voter registration is an important, current effort. It is estimated that approximately 23,000 young people will become eligible to vote for this election, and a key effort right now is getting those people registered.

In January, turnout will be everything for this race, and the bad news is that Democrats in Georgia have a dismal record when it comes to turning out in runoffs. Table 4, below, shows turnout for the eight runoff elections since 1990.

- Column 3 – “General Election” – shows which party had the advantage in the general election, and what the margin was.
- Column 4 – “Turnout Change” – shows the change in turnout for the runoff election.
- Column 5 – “Runoff Election” – shows which party won the runoff, and what the margin was.
- Column 6 – “Margin Change” – shows how the margin changed between the general election and the runoff.

So in 1992, for example, the Democratic candidate for the Senate got 1.6% more of the vote than the Republican candidate in the general election. Turnout dropped 44% in the runoff, however, and the Republican candidate won by 1.3%, for an overall change of 2.9% in margin (1.6% + 1.3%).

Year	Office	General Election	Turnout Change	Runoff Election	Margin Change
1992	U.S. Senate	D +1.6	-44%	R +1.3	R +2.9
1992	Public Service Commissioner	R +0.7	-43%	R +13.6	R +12.9
1998	Public Service Commissioner*	D +15.8	-91%	D +31.4	D +15.6
2006	Public Service Commissioner	D +2.6	-89%	R +4.4	R +7.0
2008	U.S. Senate	R +2.9	-43%	R +14.9	R +12.0
2008	Public Service Commissioner	D +0.6	-44%	R +13.0	R +13.7
2018	Secretary of State	R +0.4	-62%	R +3.8	R +3.4
2018	Public Service Commissioner	R +2.1	-62%	R +3.5	R +1.4

Table 4: Georgia Special Election Turnout History

In all but one of those races (1998), Democrats got shellacked.

The good news, though, is that a political wind seems to have swept over Georgia in the past few years. Part of that is simply changing demographics, and part of that is attributable to Stacey Abrams's work with Fair Fight (discussed in the next section).

In addition, this is a runoff such as Georgia has never seen before. Between now and 05 January Georgia will be the center of the political universe, with tens of millions of dollars flowing in from both parties.

So turnout will probably not follow historic patterns this time.

Turnout Factors

The following factors will almost certainly affect turnout in the January runoff election.

Donald Trump

What is Donald Trump going to do?

At this point, no one knows. The conventional wisdom is that senior Republicans like Mitch McConnell are holding off on acknowledging Biden's win for fear it might spark something in Trump or his supporters that costs Republicans the Senate.

With state election certifications coming up, and the Electoral College scheduled to meet on 14 December, the issue of what Trump decides to do will almost certainly be apparent several weeks before the runoff. Until then, it remains anyone's guess.

Barrack and Michelle Obama

According to Politico, Georgia Democrats want Joe Biden's campaign and donors to do everything they can to help win the Senate runoffs. But they are not clamoring for the president-elect himself.

Although Biden won Georgia by over 14,000 votes, Georgia Democrats would rather he stay in Washington and tend to his transition, portraying himself as an above-the-fray government-fixer.

Instead, they say, send any Obama to help motivate the base in the runoffs.

Will Obama and/or Michelle do it?

Stacey Abrams

Stacey Abrams has been described as a force of nature.

Since 2010 Ms. Abrams has been singularly focused on easing voter suppression and turning out the vote. She gained prominence in her 2018 gubernatorial

campaign against then-Secretary of State, Brian Kemp. She lost that election by fewer than 55,000 votes (out of total of almost 4 million votes) under questionable circumstances. It was the closest gubernatorial race in Georgia since 1966, and Abrams never conceded.

That race propelled Ms. Abrams into the national spotlight, and she is seen as the face of Georgia's changing political landscape.

Whether her efforts can produce similar results in January remain to be seen.

Here is a 17-minute YouTube interview with her that is really worth watching:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XYsFWrY2-WA>

The Georgia Political Machine

Georgia has a long history of voter suppression.

When current Governor Brian Kemp was Secretary of State, this was particularly noteworthy, with high barriers to voter registration and difficulties for minority voting.

The current Secretary of State, Republican Brad Raffensperger, has shown a remarkable degree of integrity and moral courage in defending the Presidential vote. He has stood up to attacks from the two incumbent Republican Senators as well as other members of his own party.

Whether that integrity carries over into the January vote is an open question.

Fundraising / Outside Spending

At this point there are no definitive sources for how the campaigns are doing with fundraising, nor what the outside spending picture looks like. This will hopefully be available in future reports.

Noteworthy Recent Events

Trump's refusal to concede complicates runoffs

The Washington Post reports that “Georgia’s Jan. 5 runoffs will decide whether Perdue and Loeffler return to Washington, and whether the Senate has a slim Republican majority or a 50-50 split. President Trump’s refusal to concede the presidential race has, for now, added some confusion to the GOP’s message.”

“Democrats tell their audiences that victory would give Vice President-elect Kamala D. Harris a tie-breaking Senate vote, unlocking the party’s agenda. Republicans warn that there’d be no stopping the Democrats if the Senate seats are lost. But so long as Trump remains unwilling to concede, they’re unwilling to explain exactly why.

Perdue and Kelly are forming a “unity” ticket.

Republican senators David Perdue and Kelly Loeffler are appearing in videos together, releasing statements together and, on Friday, 13 November they held a joint rally in this city outside Atlanta, according to NBC News reported.

“After running different styles of campaigns, Perdue and Loeffler are heading into the January 5 runoffs with a new tactic to try to keep the Senate in GOP hands: joining forces and presenting themselves to Georgia voters as a unity ticket.”

Republican National Committee will spend \$20 million on Georgia

The Republican National Committee said it is funding more than 600 staffers in the state with an investment of at least \$20 million ahead of the Jan. 5 runoffs for the seats held by GOP Sens. Kelly Loeffler and David Perdue, according to Associated Press reports.

“The GOP’s investment follows on the party’s massive ground game and data operation in the 2020 presidential race, which fought a large Democratic operation. The party said it organized more than 2.6 million volunteers and had more than 3,000 paid field staffers across key

battleground states. In Georgia alone, the RNC says it knocked on more than 3 million doors, made more than 8 million phone calls and registered at least 16,000 voters in the leadup to the presidential election.”

How to Help

There are numerous organization and websites joining this fight and soliciting donations. Follow-on newsletters will attempt to list more of them.

In the meantime, this particular newsletter is focused on the three primary forces:

- Jon Ossoff's campaign
- Raphael Warnock's campaign
- Stacey Abrams's "Fair Fight Action"

1. Social Media.

Probably the easiest and least expensive way to support Ossoff, Warnock, and Abrams is by simply giving them support on social media. Follow them on Twitter and retweet them, and/or follow them on FaceBook, and "Like" their posts. Here are their respective FaceBook sites:

Jon Ossoff: <https://www.facebook.com/jonossoff>

Raphael Warnock: <https://www.facebook.com/reverendwarnock>

Fair Fight Action: <https://www.facebook.com/FairFightAction>

2. Donate Money.

Any amount helps, even \$5.

The following link will allow you to choose an amount to donate, and it will be split evenly between Jon Ossoff, Raphael Warnock, and Fair Fight Action:

<https://secure.actblue.com/donate/georgiasenate>

More donation venues will be listed in future newsletters.

3. Donate Time.

Probably the most taxing, but almost certainly one of the most effective, ways to support the campaigns is by donating time in ways such as phone banking.

Future reports will list good phone banking operations and provide tutorials.

Finally...

***Very important:** Although turnout will be critical in January, voter registration is important right now. It is estimated that approximately 23,000 young people will become eligible to vote for this election, and a key effort right now is getting those people registered. Please do not wait until the approach of the election in January to get involved. Please get involved now!*