

**SANFORD D. BISHOP, JR.**

SECOND DISTRICT, GEORGIA

**COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS**

SUBCOMMITTEES:

RANKING MEMBER  
AGRICULTURE

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION/VA  
FINANCIAL SERVICES

WASHINGTON OFFICE:

2407 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-1002  
PHONE: (202) 225-3631  
FAX: (202) 225-2203



**Congress of the United States**

**House of Representatives**

**Washington, DC 20515**

August 20, 2018

DISTRICT OFFICES:

**ALBANY**

235 ROOSEVELT AVENUE  
ALBANY TOWERS, SUITE 114  
ALBANY, GA 31701  
PHONE: (229) 439-8067  
FAX: (229) 436-2099

**COLUMBUS**

18 NINTH STREET, SUITE 201  
COLUMBUS, GA 31901  
PHONE: (706) 320-9477  
FAX: (706) 320-9479

**MACON**

300 MULBERRY STREET, SUITE 502  
MACON, GA 31201  
PHONE: (478) 803-2631  
FAX: (478) 803-2637

The Honorable Jeff Sessions  
Attorney General  
United States Department of Justice  
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20530

The Honorable Brian P. Kemp  
Georgia Secretary of State  
214 State Capitol  
Atlanta, GA 30334

Dear Attorney General Sessions and Secretary of State Kemp:

I am writing to express my strong and vehement opposition to the proposal by the Randolph County Board of Elections and Registration to close seven out of nine polling places in the county in the weeks leading up to the November elections. This outrageous proposal is discriminatory and appears to be in clear violation of the federal Voting Rights Act as well as the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments to the United States Constitution. It should and must be immediately rejected so that the citizens of Randolph County are permitted to exercise their sacred and constitutional right to vote in a free and unfettered manner.

As you may be aware, Randolph County is part of Georgia's Second Congressional District, which I have represented in the United States Congress since 1993. The county is over 60% African-American, which is twice the percentage of the entire State of Georgia (32.2%). In fact, one of the polling places in Randolph County that is slated for closure – Cuthbert Middle School – serves a 96.7% African-American population.

Randolph County is one of the poorest in the State of Georgia as well. Thirty percent of its population live in poverty and its median income is forty percent lower than the rest of the state. As a result, a higher percentage of people in Randolph County (22.3%) lack vehicles as compared to all Georgia households (6.9%). With the closure of over 75% of the polling places in Randolph County, it is clear who will have to bear the burden of reduced access to the polls. Low-income African-Americans without a car will be forced to walk three-and-a-half hours to reach the new polling places if they want to vote in person on Election Day.

I also am deeply concerned that given the likelihood of high voter turnout in November, particularly due to an African-American woman gubernatorial nominee for the first time in Georgia's history, closing polling places so close to an election is likely to create voter confusion. The polling places targeted for closure were recently used in the primaries and primary run-offs earlier this year. While I strongly support bringing the public buildings in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act – the so-called justification that Randolph County is providing for eliminating the polling places – the constitutional right to vote should not be sacrificed.

I urge you to do all that you can to ensure that *all* Randolph County voters have their voices heard in every election. The right to vote is sacred and must be protected regardless of one's race, religion, gender, or creed. Randolph County's proposal to shut down 75% of polling places must be rejected.

With kind regards, I am

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Sanford D. Bishop, Jr." with a stylized flourish at the end.

Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.  
Member of Congress