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Judge accused of putting thumb on scales of justice reverses herself

Stacey Abrams' sister now says counties can require provisional ballotsBy **Bob Unruh**

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A federal judge in Georgia who was accused by critics of putting her thumb on the scales of justice by ordering two counties to allow people to vote even after they had moved away from their recorded addresses has reversed herself.

The dispute was aggravated because the judge is Leslie Abrams Gardner, appointed by Barack Obama and the sister of open-election activist Stacey Gardner, who failed in her bid to become the state's governor.

The judge had ordered two counties to allow more than 4,000 people to vote in the coming Senate runoff races even though they formally notified the

Post Office their addresses were changed.

Commentator Ari Fleischer, a press secretary for former President George W. Bush, pointed out the extremism involved in the conclusion that was expected to benefit Democrats in the Georgia runoffs involving incumbent GOP Sens. David Perdue and Kelly Loeffler, and their challengers.

 **Ari Fleischer** 
@AriFleischer 

This makes no sense. A judge (the sister of Stacey Abrams) ruled that when someone tells the US Postal Service they have moved they still can vote from their old address.

Rules have no meaning any more. This is nuts.

Judge blocks voter purge in 2 Georgia counties
Judge Leslie Abrams Gardner, sister of Stacey Abrams, rejected a call for her to recuse.
[politico.com](https://www.politico.com)

8:57 AM · Dec 29, 2020 

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"This makes no sense. A judge (the sister of Stacey Abrams) ruled that when someone tells the U.S. Postal Service they have moved they still can vote

from their old address. Rules have no meaning any more. This is nuts," Fleischer wrote.

According to [Politico](#), the judge now says counties may require those voters to cast provisional ballots.

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The judge still said, however, that there must be additional evidence – other than the change of address – to disallow those ballots.

"The challenge to their eligibility will not be sustained absent specific evidence of ineligibility," ordered Gardner.

Politico explained, "Gardner, the sister of former Georgia Democratic gubernatorial nominee Stacey Abrams, had drawn fierce criticism from allies of President Donald Trump for declining to recuse from the case. Gardner, an appointee of President Barack Obama, issued a seven-page rebuttal to the calls for recusal on Thursday, saying the effort was rooted in 'unsupported, irrational, and highly tenuous speculation' about her ability to be impartial."

The report noted that the newest order was "a significant rollback of her initial restriction on Muscogee, which prevented the county from requiring the challenged voters to cast provisional ballots at all. The original restraining order prompted condemnation from Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger and drew the attention of figures such as Donald Trump Jr., who called out her connection to Abrams to fan allegations of bias."

The legal fight developed when the ballots of those voters who moved away were challenged. An activist organization, Majority Forward, then sued to

restore them.

"The Muscogee County Board of Elections is pleased that Judge Abrams Gardner's Order dissolves the previous temporary restraining order and allows the Muscogee County Board of Elections and Registration to resume the use of provisional ballots and its adjudication of the election challenge," said a statement officials released.

"This is a substantial victory for the Board and demonstrates that the lawsuit is based on a false narrative and that the temporary restraining order should never have been entered."

The fight is over voters who have moved from their addresses in Ben Hill and Muscogee counties.

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