

**State Election Board**  
**Executive Summary**  
**Case Number – 2008-000135**

Location:

Muscogee County

Election Involved:

Muscogee County Georgia

December 2, 2008, General Election Runoff

Complainant(s):

Ruth Turner

1914 Rosemont Drive

Columbus, GA 31902

Respondent(s):

Vickie Stafford

2857 Hilyer Drive

Columbus, GA 31907

Janice Bowden

3214 Oneal Street

Columbus, GA 31907

Ruth Turner

1914 Rosemont Drive

Columbus, GA 31907

Muscogee County Board of Elections

100 Tenth Street

Columbus, GA 31902

Allegation(s):

The allegations in this case were focused on the fact that Vickie Stafford was observed assisting electors in a nursing facility and requesting signatures from residents on sealed absentee ballots. In addition, the electors being assisted were not incompetent to vote or eligible for assistance. Furthermore, Vickie Stafford requested twenty-three (23) absentee ballots for the residents of the facility without their knowledge.

## Findings:

The complainant in this case took possession of the absentee ballots that her mother was asked to sign and submitted the ballots to the Muscogee County District Attorney's office. A subsequent investigation was conducted by that office, which ultimately declined prosecution. A follow-up investigation discovered that several electors were assisted although they were not physically disabled or illiterate. In addition, three (3) ballots were determined to have signatures that did not match the comparable signatures. Other electors interviewed stated they did not vote, could not remember voting, were told who to vote for, or were asked to sign the envelope after it was sealed. The ballots for the November General Election were also reviewed and it was determined that the electors with questionable ballots in the runoff election also had questionable ballots in the general election.

## Potential Violations:

There was sufficient evidence discovered to suggest that Vickie Stafford violated Title 21 of the O.C.G.A. in the following manner;

1. O.C.G.A. 21-2-568 (b) in that she completed two (2) absentee ballots for Roxie Taylor without her knowledge and had her sign the envelope after it was sealed.
2. O.C.G.A. 21-2-568 (b) in that on four (4) occasions she had electors sign the envelopes after they were sealed.
3. O.C.G.A. 21-2-603 in that she and Janice F. Bowden worked in concert to violate the election laws of this state.
4. O.C.G.A. 21-2-214 (c) in that she engaged in political activity while identifying herself as a Deputy Registrar.
5. O.C.G.A. 21-2-574 in that she illegally possessed ballots.

There was sufficient evidence uncovered to suggest that Janice F. Bowden violated Title 21 of the O.C.G.A. in the following manner;

1. O.C.G.A. 21-2-568 (b) in that she completed an absentee ballot for an elector.
2. O.C.G.A. 21-2-603 in that she worked in concert with Vickie Stafford to violate the election laws of this state.

There was sufficient evidence discovered to suggest that Ruth Turner violated O.C.G.A. 21-2-574 in that she illegally possessed ballots when she took possession of the ballots and delivered them to the District Attorney's office.

There was sufficient evidence discovered to suggest the Muscogee County Board of Elections violated Title 21 of the O.C.G.A. in the following manner;

1. O.C.G.A. 21-2-381 (D) in the December 3, 2008 runoff when they mailed ballots to addresses other than permanent addresses listed on the voter registration record.

2. O.C.G.A. 21-2-381 (D) in the November 4, 2008 General Election in that they mailed ballots to addresses other than the permanent addresses listed on the voter registration.
3. O.C.G.A. 21-2-500 in that ballot applications and/or envelopes for five (5) electors could not be produced.