

# Georgia nonprofit releases state-level democracy and elections evaluation

*Report scores state of Georgia's performance and details recommended steps for improvement*

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Much has been accomplished in Georgia over the last few years, but there are ways that we need to improve. That's why our democracy and election report includes important next steps for improvement."

*Natalie Crawford, Executive Director*

organization focused on the economy, affordable health care, and democracy and elections in the Peach State, released its inaugural [report](#) assessing Georgia's democracy and elections performance since the 2020 election cycle. Using a custom-developed [rubric](#), Georgia First scored state-level performance across four categories: Elections Integrity & Security, Elections Administration, Elections Funding, and Voter Access & Participation. While the report gives Georgia high marks for integrity and security related criteria, some of the lowest marks received are specific to local control and local impacts.

The results of the [Georgia: Democracy & Elections Report 2023](#) are based on Georgia First's three core beliefs—that

the state of Georgia should adopt common sense policies that build trust in elections; should refrain from enacting partisanly charged elections policies; and has a responsibility to ensure newly enacted elections requirements are adequately funded. There are also six additional guiding principles, covering issues such as electoral map development, voter responsibility, voting options, and benefits of increased voter participation, that serve as the lens in which Georgia First examined Georgia's performance.

It is through that organizational lens and the Georgia First custom scoring rubric that Georgia earned an "Above Average" score for 2023.

"We recognize some may take exception with Georgia's score, considering recent media coverage of election system vulnerabilities," said Shannon Ferguson, co-author and Georgia First's director of strategy and communications. "Our work focused on overall state performance, and something as complex as a state's voting system really warrants a dedicated assessment tool."

The report outlines overall threats to democracy in the United States, examines the current Georgia democracy and elections landscape, and assesses Georgia's existing regulatory conditions and legislative actions between 2021–2023. Additionally, the authors inventoried recent third-party state-level assessments, conducted by a variety of nonprofit organizations.

Georgia First hopes its Georgia report can serve as a starting point for more thoughtful and balanced discussions across political parties and under the Gold Dome in Atlanta. Conversations that are based in fact not conspiracies and start from a shared viewpoint—all states benefit from a more engaged citizenry, regardless of political party affiliation or ideologies.

Co-author and Georgia First founder, Natalie Crawford said, "We believe the Georgia First rubric can be used to assess other states and may explore possible collaborations with other interested nonprofits and academics. Our focus is Georgia, but we'd never pass up an opportunity to promote bipartisan research."

"A lot of good things have been accomplished in Georgia over the last few years but there also are ways that we need to improve," said Crawford. "That's why our report includes important next steps for improvement."

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## PEOPLE OVER POLITICS

Nonprofit rated Georgia's state-level democracy and election performance "Above Average," but notes needed improvements in areas such as adequate local funding and voter accessibility.

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