



Written by [Michael Tennant](#) on December 28, 2025

## Georgia County Cops to Illegally Counting 315,000 Early Ballots in 2020

Fulton County, Georgia, officials recently confessed that they included in their 2020 election tallies over 315,000 ballots that were not properly certified — a major scandal in a state that former President Joe Biden won by fewer than 12,000 votes.

The admission came during a December 9 hearing before the Georgia State Election Board (SEB), the result of a 2022 challenge brought by election-integrity activist David Cross. Cross alleged that Fulton County certified in-person early votes in 2020 even though poll workers had failed to sign the associated tabulator tapes as required by state law.



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### Tale of the Tape

Tabulator tapes are printed “receipts” that indicate the number of votes cast for each candidate on a particular ballot scanner. Under Georgia’s election rules, each polling place must print three tapes for each scanner after the polls close. In addition, they must print a “zero tape” proving that the scanner’s vote count for each candidate is zero at the beginning of the day. All tapes must be signed by a poll manager and two witnesses.

Cross, who spent \$15,800 on public-records requests, told the SEB that not one of Fulton County’s nearly 150 early-voting tabulator tapes was signed. Those tapes represented 315,000 votes, accounting for “just over 60% of the votes cast in 2020 in Georgia’s most populous county,” according to [The Washington Stand](#). Moreover, Cross claimed to have received no zero tapes at all.

To these charges, Fulton County pleaded no contest. “We do not dispute that the tapes were not signed,” county attorney Ann Brumbaugh told the SEB. “It was a violation of the rule.”

How could the county respond otherwise? According to [The Federalist](#):

Georgia’s Secretary of State Office investigated the alleged failure to sign tabulation tapes and “substantiated” the findings that Fulton County “violated Official Election Record Document Processes when it was discovered that thirty-six (36) out of thirty-seven (37) Advanced Voting Precincts in Fulton County, Georgia failed to sign the Tabulation Tapes as required [by SEB rules],” according to a 2024 investigation summary. In addition to probing the unsigned tabulation tapes, the investigation also found that officials at 32 polling sites failed to verify their zero tapes.



## County Line

Fulton County blames the missing signatures on “clerical errors.” Brumbaugh insisted they won’t happen again because the county has implemented “enhanced” training for poll workers to ensure that they sign the tapes.

Even if one could swallow the notion that every polling place screwed up because of poor training, he would be hard-pressed to chalk up the numerous other irregularities Cross found to human error. Among them were “polls that were opened eight days late, polls closed at impossibly late hours, like 2:09 a.m. ... and poll closing times that do not match the tapes,” Cross testified. He said he also discovered memory cards whose contents were printed from multiple scanners.

“These are not clerical errors,” declared Cross. “They are catastrophic breaks in chain of custody and certification.”

He continued:

Because no tape was ever legally certified, Fulton County had no lawful authority to certify its advanced voting results to the secretary of state. Yet it did. And Secretary [Brad] Raffensperger accepted and folded those uncertified numbers into Georgia’s official total without questioning them.

This is not partisan. This is statutory. This is the law. When the law demands three signatures on tabulator tapes and the county fails to follow the rules, those 315,000 votes are, by definition, uncertified.

The SEB uncovered further irregularities. SEB Vice Chair Janice Johnston said she was unable to match the zero tapes to the end-of-day tapes. “So I go back to the report, and I read the report,” she added. “And the investigator says, we asked for all of the opening and closing tapes, and the county reported back, ‘This is all they have,’ which is woefully incomplete.”

## State’s Evidence

Fulton County claims to have lost some of its election records, making it impossible to determine what happened in 2020. But not everyone is buying that story. The SEB is demanding more tapes — 10 are known to be missing — “asserting there are hundreds of additional boxes of election material that haven’t been examined in Fulton County’s possession,” according to [WXIA](#).

Indeed, the county is acting as if it has much to hide. [WRDW](#) reported:

Last week, Fulton County Judge Robert McBurney sided with the Election Board and ruled that the county must turn over documents to the board, including scanned ballot images from the 2020 election, immediately. The county had been fighting the release of those documents for well over a year.

The Justice Department is also [suing](#) the county for the records on the SEB’s behalf.

As to Cross’ complaint, WXIA wrote:

Ultimately the SEB voted 3-0 to refer the case to the Georgia Attorney General’s Office for



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possible sanctions against Fulton County, as well as requesting a \$5,000 fine for each of the missing tabulator tapes — possibly totaling \$670,000 or more.

Despite this, Raffensperger continues to defend the certification of Fulton County’s early votes, [posting](#) December 20 on X that “Georgia has the most secure elections in the country” and “a clerical error at the end of the day does not erase valid, legal votes.”

To which his gubernatorial opponent, Lieutenant Governor Burt Jones, [retorted](#): “If only Georgia had an official responsible for preventing clerical errors that undermine election integrity. Is there anyone in Georgia who has that job, Brad?”



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