



Aklima Khondoker  
Staff Attorney, ACLU of Georgia  
Remarks before the Lowndes County Board of Elections  
Lowndes County Elections Office  
2808 North Oak Street  
Valdosta, GA 31602  
March 12, 2019  
4:30 p.m.

Esteemed members of the Board, thank you for opening this forum so that we, together, can protect democracy for our students and our community. My name is Aklima Khondoker and I am a Staff Attorney at the ACLU of Georgia. We, just like each of you, work to protect and defend our democracy.

I am here to work together with you to ensure that students and community members can access their sacred constitutional right to vote. We are asking you to reopen a polling location on Valdosta State University's Campus in advance of early voting in October.

We ask you to consider these three reasons:

**First**, students want to vote. Civic engagement is the bedrock of our democracy and is at the core of higher education. College-aged voter turnout during the last midterm election cycle far exceeded that of the general population.

**Second**, the students, staff, faculty, and the ACLU of Georgia stand ready to make a polling location on campus work including recruiting and training poll workers for the campus location. Today's college students would welcome this experience as well as the additional income. Some of those students are here today ready to start working on this now.

**Third**, these closures *might* potentially lead to voting rights violations because students of color may be disproportionately impacted.

The ACLU of Georgia is eager to work together with the Lowndes County Board of Elections as well as the students and the entire VSU community to reopen a polling location on campus in advance of early voting in October so that all may exercise their sacred, constitutional right vote.

Thank you.