

Secretary of State **NEWS**

Brian P. Kemp, Georgia Secretary of State

Press Office

214 State Capitol Atlanta, Georgia 30334

TEL: 404-656-4269 FAX: 404.657.5804



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Contact: Jared S. Thomas

Press Secretary

404-656-4269

Statement from Georgia Secretary of State Brian Kemp on Public Closure of the State Archives Effective November 1, 2012

The Governor's Office of Planning and Budget has instructed the Office of the Secretary of State to further reduce its budget for AFY13 and FY14 by 3% (\$732,626). As it has been for the past two years, these cuts do not eliminate excess in the agency, but require the agency to further reduce services to the citizens of Georgia. As an agency that returns over three times what is appropriated back to the general fund, budget cuts present very challenging decisions. We have tried to protect the services that the agency provides in support of putting people to work, starting small businesses, and providing public safety. To meet the required cuts, it is with great remorse that I have to announce, effective November 1, 2012, the Georgia State Archives located in Morrow, GA will be closed to the public. The decision to reduce public access to the historical records of this state was not arrived at without great consternation. To my knowledge, Georgia will be the only state in the country that will not have a central location in which the public can visit to research and review the historical records of their government and state. The staff that currently works to catalog, restore, and provide reference to the state of Georgia's permanent historical records will be reduced. The employees that will be let go through this process are assets to the state of Georgia and will be missed. After November 1st, the public will only be allowed to access the building by appointment; however, the number of appointments could be limited based on the schedule of the remaining employees.

Since FY08, the Office of the Secretary of State has been required to absorb many budget reductions, often above the minimum, while being responsible for more work. I believe that transparency and open access to records are necessary for the public to educate themselves on the issues of our government. I will fight during this legislative session to

have this cut restored so the people will have a place to meet, research, and review the historical records of Georgia.

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Jared S. Thomas
Press Secretary
Brian P. Kemp, Secretary of State
214 State Capitol
Atlanta, GA 30330
[404-656-4269](tel:404-656-4269) phone
[404-656-0513](tel:404-656-0513) fax