



Georgia Raises A New State Flag

ATLANTA (April 29, 2003) – The Georgia legislature passed a bill last Friday to raise a new state flag immediately and to hold a referendum in March 2004 for voters to choose between the new flag and the current flag former Governor Barnes raised in 2001. The bill eliminates the controversial Rebel battle cross as an option in any statewide referendum.

The new Georgia flag is based on the red, white and blue Stars and Bars, the first national flag of the Confederacy. The flag also includes the state seal and “In God We Trust” within the blue field.

Governor Sonny Perdue’s original referendum package to the legislature included immediately raising a new state flag based on the Stars and Bars, a yes-or-no vote on that flag in March 2004, followed – if necessary – by a July vote between the 1956 state flag with the battle emblem and another past state flag. In the final hours of the legislative session, a compromise was reached and the second referendum was taken off the bill.

Though the final bill is not what Governor Perdue intended, he is expected to sign it this week and claims that the state government is living up to its promise to allow Georgians to decide what symbol they want to represent them.

"This body, after vigorous debate, has come together with a compromise that will give the people a voice and a choice that I think they deserve," Perdue said on Friday in a late evening speech before the House of Representatives.

“We are very happy with the outcome of the flag issue,” said Spurgeon Richardson. “It has been our position from the beginning that Georgia needs a flag that is inclusive, not divisive, and that is not offensive to our residents or visitors. I applaud our legislators for doing the right thing and creating a compromise that is a win-win situation for the state. Hopefully this decision will put the flag issue to rest.”

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Photo of new Georgia state flag attached.