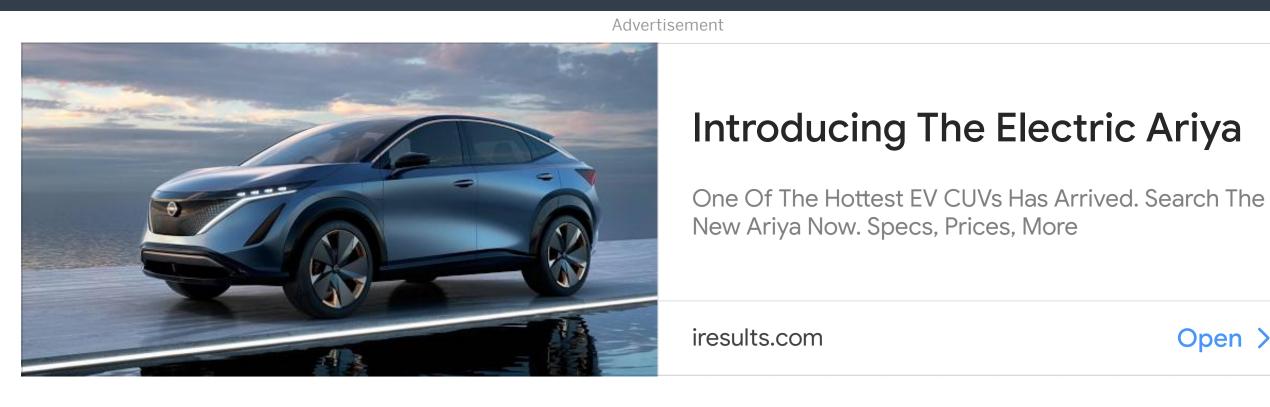
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News

Alabama voting machines challenged as unreliable in court hearing

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By Mike Cason | mcason@al.com

Montgomery County Circuit Judge Greg Griffin is holding a hearing today on a lawsuit that seeks to block Alabama's use of electronic ballot-counting machines in the November election.

Plaintiffs in the case claim the machines are unreliable and susceptible to hacking and tampering that can change election results. They have asked the court to order the state to count ballots by hand through a process outlined in their lawsuit.

Attorney General Steve Marshall has asked the court to dismiss the case, saying the claims are based on speculation and innuendo.

The lawsuit was filed in May by former gubernatorial candidate Lindy Blanchard, state Rep. Tommy Hanes, a Republican from Jackson County, Dr. David Calderwood of Madison County, and Focus on America, a social welfare organization.

Blanchard, who finished second to Gov. Kay Ivey in the Republican primary, withdrew from the lawsuit. Dean Odle, another Republican candidate for governor in this year's primary, attended this morning's hearing and said he supports the plaintiffs in the case.

Former Gov. Don Siegelman filed a statement supporting the plaintiffs. Siegelman is expected to testify remotely this afternoon. Siegelman's statement was about his experience in 2002, when he lost to Bob Riley. Unofficial totals showed Siegelman had won, but late in the evening on election night, Baldwin County officials said a computer glitch had skewed the totals. Riley won by a razor-thin margin.

One of lawyers representing the plaintiffs in the case is Andrew Parker of Minnesota, who has represented My Pillow founder Mike Lindell in litigation related to Lindell's unsubstantiated claims about electronic vote tampering in the 2020 presidential election, including his claims that 100,000 votes were changed in Alabama. Alabama Secretary of State John Merrill said no votes were changed electronically in Alabama. Merrill is a defendant in the case, along with the five members of the Electronic Voting Committee, the panel created by the Legislature to inspect and certify voting machines used in Alabama elections.

This morning, Deputy Attorney General Jim Davis, representing the defendants, asked Griffin to dismiss the case before hearing arguments on the plaintiffs' motion for an injunction. But Griffin later said he would hear the injunction arguments before ruling on the motion to dismiss.

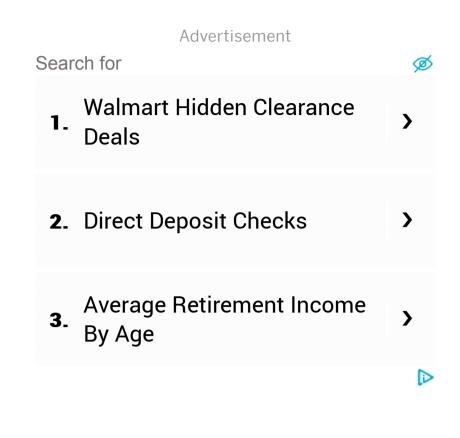
Davis urged the judge to dismiss the case for multiple reasons, including the timing. He said it would cause an upheaval to overhaul the vote-counting procedure this close to an election. Davis said the plaintiffs are not claiming that any vote-counting machines in Alabama have been hacked or will be, only that it is could be done under circumstances that would require a series of improbable events, including making the ballot-scanning machines capable of connection to the internet.

"They can't allege that happened," Davis said. "They only allege it might."

Jay Hinton, an attorney for the plaintiffs, told Griffin that the lawsuit is a voting rights case. Hinton said it's not meant to challenge the outcome of any previous elections but is to protect the constitutional right to have votes counted accurately. Hinton said he did not believe there was a reliable way to use computers in the vote-counting process.

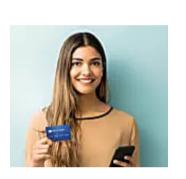
"Hand-counting, it may be difficult," Hinton told the judge. "But you know what? Constitutional rights are often difficult to preserve."

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