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Short Title: Restore Partisan Elections/Sup. & Dist. Court.

(Public)

Sponsors:

Referred to:

February 15, 2017

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT TO RESTORE PARTISAN JUDICIAL ELECTIONS FOR NORTH CAROLINA
SUPERIOR AND DISTRICT COURTS.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. G.S. 18C-112(e)(1) reads as rewritten:

"(e) If any member takes any of the following actions, the member vacates office as a member of the Commission and the vacancy shall be filled as provided by G.S. 18C-111(c):

(1) Files a notice of candidacy under G.S. 163-106 ~~or G.S. 163-323~~ or a petition under ~~G.S. 163-107.1 or G.S. 163-325.~~ G.S. 163-107.1."

SECTION 2. G.S. 163-1(b) reads as rewritten:

"(b) On Tuesday next after the first Monday in May preceding each general election to be held in November for the officers referred to in subsection (a) of this section, there shall be held in all election precincts within the territory for which the officers are to be elected a primary election for the purpose of nominating candidates for each political party in the State for those ~~offices, and nonpartisan candidates as to offices elected under the provisions of Article 25 of this Chapter.~~ offices."

SECTION 3. G.S. 163-22.3 reads as rewritten:

"§ 163-22.3. State Board of Elections littering notification.

At the time an individual files with the State Board of Elections a notice of candidacy pursuant to G.S. 163-106, 163-112, 163-291, ~~163-294.2, or 163-323,~~ or 163-294.2, is certified to the State Board of Elections by a political party executive committee to fill a nomination vacancy pursuant to G.S. 163-114, is certified to the State Board of Elections by a new political party as that party's nominee pursuant to G.S. 163-98, qualifies with the State Board of Elections as an unaffiliated or write-in candidate pursuant to Article 11 of this Chapter, or formally initiates a candidacy with the State Board of Elections pursuant to any statute or local act, the State Board of Elections shall notify the candidate of the provisions concerning campaign signs in G.S. 136-32 and G.S. 14-156, and the rules adopted by the Department of Transportation pursuant to G.S. 136-18."

SECTION 4. G.S. 163-82.10B reads as rewritten:

"§ 163-82.10B. Confidentiality of date of birth.

Boards of elections shall keep confidential the date of birth of every voter-registration applicant and registered voter, except in the following situations:

(1) When a voter has filed notice of candidacy for elective office under G.S. 163-106, 163-122, 163-123, or 163-294.2, ~~or 163-323,~~ has been nominated as a candidate under G.S. 163-98 or G.S. 163-114, or has otherwise formally become a candidate for elective office. The exception of this subdivision does



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1 not extend to an individual who meets the definition of "candidate" only by
 2 beginning a tentative candidacy by receiving funds or making payments or
 3 giving consent to someone else to receive funds or transfer something of value
 4 for the purpose of exploring a candidacy.

5 (2) When a voter is serving in an elective office.

6 (3) When a voter has been challenged pursuant to Article 8 of this Chapter.

7 (4) When a voter-registration applicant or registered voter expressly authorizes in
 8 writing the disclosure of that individual's date of birth.

9 (5) When requested by a county jury commission established pursuant to G.S. 9-1
 10 for purposes of preparing the master jury list in that county pursuant to
 11 G.S. 9-2.

12 The disclosure of an individual's age does not constitute disclosure of date of birth in violation
 13 of this section.

14 The county board of elections shall give precinct officials access to a voter's date of birth
 15 where necessary for election administration, consistent with the duty to keep dates of birth
 16 confidential.

17 Disclosure of a date of birth in violation of this section shall not give rise to a civil cause of
 18 action. This limitation of liability does not apply to the disclosure of a date of birth in violation of
 19 this subsection as a result of gross negligence, wanton conduct, or intentional wrongdoing that
 20 would otherwise be actionable."

21 **SECTION 5.** G.S. 163-106, as amended by Section 21(a) of S.L. 2016-125, reads as
 22 rewritten:

23 **"§ 163-106. Notices of candidacy; pledge; with whom filed; date for filing; withdrawal.**

24 ...

25 (c) Time for Filing Notice of Candidacy. – Candidates seeking party primary nominations
 26 for the following offices shall file their notice of candidacy with the State Board of Elections no
 27 earlier than 12:00 noon on the second Monday in February and no later than 12:00 noon on the
 28 last business day in February preceding the primary:

29 Governor

30 Lieutenant Governor

31 All State executive officers

32 Justices of the Supreme Court

33 Judges of the Court of Appeals

34 Judges of the superior court

35 Judges of the district court

36 United States Senators

37 Members of the House of Representatives of the United States

38 District attorneys

39 Candidates seeking party primary nominations for the following offices shall file their notice
 40 of candidacy with the county board of elections no earlier than 12:00 noon on the second Monday
 41 in February and no later than 12:00 noon on the last business day in February preceding the
 42 primary:

43 State Senators

44 Members of the State House of Representatives

45 All county offices.

46 (d) Notice of Candidacy for Certain Offices to Indicate Vacancy. – In any primary in
 47 which there are two or more vacancies for associate justices for the Supreme Court, two or more
 48 vacancies for the Court of Appeals, ~~or two or more vacancies for district court judge,~~ or two
 49 vacancies for United States Senator from North Carolina, each candidate shall, at the time of filing
 50 notice of candidacy, file with the State Board of Elections a written statement designating the
 51 vacancy to which the candidate seeks nomination. A person seeking election for a specialized

1 district judgeship established under G.S. 7A-147 shall, at the time of filing notice of candidacy,
 2 file with the State Board of Elections a written statement designating the specialized judgeship to
 3 which the person seeks nomination. Votes cast for a candidate shall be effective only for
 4 nomination to the vacancy for which the candidate has given notice of candidacy as provided in
 5 this subsection.

6 ...
 7 (f) Candidates required to file their notice of candidacy with the State Board of Elections
 8 under subsection (c) of this section shall file along with their notice a certificate signed by the
 9 chairman of the board of elections or the director of elections of the county in which they are
 10 registered to vote, stating that the person is registered to vote in that county, if the candidacy is for
 11 superior court judge and the county contains more than one superior court district, stating the
 12 superior court district of which the person is a resident, stating the party with which the person is
 13 affiliated, and that the person has not changed his affiliation from another party or from
 14 unaffiliated within three months prior to the filing deadline under subsection (c) of this section. In
 15 issuing such certificate, the chairman or director shall check the registration records of the county
 16 to verify such information. During the period commencing 36 hours immediately preceding the
 17 filing deadline the State Board of Elections shall accept, on a conditional basis, the notice of
 18 candidacy of a candidate who has failed to secure the verification ordered herein subject to receipt
 19 of verification no later than three days following the filing deadline. The State Board of Elections
 20 shall prescribe the form for such certificate, and distribute it to each county board of elections no
 21 later than the last Monday in December of each odd-numbered year.

22 ...
 23 (j) No person may file a notice of candidacy for superior court judge, unless that person is,
 24 at the time of filing the notice of candidacy, a resident of the judicial district as it will exist at the
 25 time the person would take office if elected. No person may be nominated as a superior court
 26 judge under G.S. 163-114, unless that person is, at the time of nomination, a resident of the
 27 judicial district as it will exist at the time the person would take office if elected. This subsection
 28 implements Section 9(1) of Article IV of the North Carolina Constitution which requires regular
 29 superior court judges to reside in the district for which elected."

30 **SECTION 6.** G.S. 163-107(a), as amended by Section 21(b) of S.L. 2016-125, reads
 31 as rewritten:

32 "(a) Fee Schedule. – At the time of filing a notice of candidacy, each candidate shall pay to
 33 the board of elections with which the candidate files under the provisions of G.S. 163-106 a filing
 34 fee for the office sought in the amount specified in the following tabulation:
 35

Office Sought	Amount of Filing Fee
Governor	One percent (1%) of the annual salary of the office sought
Lieutenant Governor	One percent (1%) of the annual salary of the office sought
All State executive offices	One percent (1%) of the annual salary of the office sought
All Justices of the Supreme Court, Judges of the Court of Appeals, and Justices, Judges, and District Attorneys of the General Court of Justice	One percent (1%) of the annual salary of the office sought
United States Senator	One percent (1%) of the annual salary of the office sought
Members of the United States House of Representatives	One percent (1%) of the annual salary of the office sought

1	State Senator	One percent (1%) of the annual salary of the
2		office sought
3	Member of the State House of	One percent (1%) of the annual salary of
4	Representatives	the office sought
5	All county offices not compensated by fees	One percent (1%) of the annual salary of the
6		office sought
7	All county offices compensated partly	One percent (1%) of the first annual
8	by salary and partly by fees	salary to be received (exclusive of fees)
9	The salary of any office that is the basis for calculating the filing fee is the starting salary for	
10	the office, rather than the salary received by the incumbent, if different. If no starting salary can be	
11	determined for the office, then the salary used for calculation is the salary of the incumbent, as of	
12	January 1 of the election year."	

SECTION 7. G.S. 163-107.1(c) reads as rewritten:

"(c) County, Municipal and District Primaries. – If the candidate is seeking one of the offices set forth in G.S. 163-106(c) but which is not listed in subsection (b) of this section, or a municipal or any other office requiring a partisan primary which is not set forth in G.S. 163-106(c) or (d), ~~he~~ the candidate shall file a written petition with the appropriate board of elections no later than 12:00 noon on Monday preceding the filing deadline before the primary. The petition shall be signed by five percent (5%) of the registered voters of the election area in which the office will be voted for, who are affiliated with the same political party in whose primary the candidate desires to run, or in the alternative, the petition shall be signed by no less than 200 registered voters regardless of said voter's political party affiliation, whichever requirement is greater. The board of elections shall verify the names on the petition, and if the petition is found to be sufficient, the candidate's name shall be printed on the appropriate primary ballot. Petitions for candidates for member of the U.S. House of Representatives, District Attorney, judge of the superior court, judge of the district court, and members of the State House of Representatives from multi-county districts or members of the State Senate from multi-county districts must be presented to the county board of elections for verification at least 15 days before the petition is due to be filed with the State Board of Elections, and such petition must be filed with the State Board of Elections no later than 12:00 noon on Monday preceding the filing deadline. The State Board of Elections may adopt rules to implement this section and to provide standard petition forms."

SECTION 8. G.S. 163-111(c)(1), as amended by Section 21(d) of S.L. 2016-125, reads as rewritten:

"(c) Procedure for Requesting Second Primary.

(1) A candidate who is apparently entitled to demand a second primary, according to the unofficial results, for one of the offices listed below, and desiring to do so, shall file a request for a second primary in writing with the Executive Director of the State Board of Elections no later than 12:00 noon on the ninth day (including Saturdays and Sundays) following the date on which the primary was conducted, and such request shall be subject to the certification of the official results by the State Board of Elections. If the vote certification by the State Board of Elections determines that a candidate who was not originally thought to be eligible to call for a second primary is in fact eligible to call for a second primary, the Executive Director of the State Board of Elections shall immediately notify such candidate and permit the candidate to exercise any options available to the candidate within a 48-hour period following the notification:

- Governor,
- Lieutenant Governor,
- All State executive officers,

~~Justices of the Supreme Court, Judges of the Court of Appeals, or
 Justices, Judges, or District Attorneys of the General Court of
 Justice,
 United States Senators,
 Members of the United States House of Representatives,
 State Senators in multi-county senatorial districts, and
 Members of the State House of Representatives in multi-county
 representative districts."~~

SECTION 9. G.S. 163-114 reads as rewritten:

"§ 163-114. Filling vacancies among party nominees occurring after nomination and before election.

If any person nominated as a candidate of a political party for one of the offices listed below (either in a primary or convention or by virtue of having no opposition in a primary) dies, resigns, or for any reason becomes ineligible or disqualified before the date of the ensuing general election, the vacancy shall be filled by appointment according to the following instructions:

17	Position	
18	President	Vacancy is to be filled by appointment of
19	Vice President	national executive committee of
20		political party in which vacancy occurs
21		
22	Presidential elector or alternate elector	Vacancy is to be filled by appointment of
23	Any elective State office	State executive committee of political
24	United States Senator	party in which vacancy occurs
25		
26	A district office, including:	Appropriate district executive committee of
27	Member of the United States House	political party in which vacancy occurs
28	of Representatives	
29	<u>Judge of district court</u>	
30	District Attorney	
31	State Senator in a multi-county	
32	senatorial district	
33	Member of State House of	
34	Representatives in a multi-county	
35	representative district	
36		
37	State Senator in a single-county	County executive committee of political
38	senatorial district	party in which vacancy occurs,
39	Member of State House of	provided, in the case of the State
40	Representatives in a single-county	Senator or State Representative in a
41	representative district	single-county district where not all the
42	Any elective county office	county is located in that district, then in
43		voting, only those members of the
44		county executive committee who reside
45		within the district shall vote
46	<u>Judge of superior court in a</u>	<u>County executive committee of political</u>
47	<u>single-county judicial district</u>	<u>party in which vacancy occurs;</u>
48	<u>where the district is the whole</u>	<u>provided, in the case of a superior court</u>
49	<u>county or part of the county</u>	<u>judge in a single-county district where</u>
50		<u>not all the county is located in that</u>
51		<u>district, then in voting, only those members</u>

1 of the county executive committee who
2 reside within the district shall vote
3 Judge of superior court in a Appropriate district executive committee of
4 multicounty judicial district political party in which vacancy occurs.

5 The party executive making a nomination in accordance with the provisions of this section shall
6 certify the name of its nominee to the chairman of the board of elections, State or county, that has
7 jurisdiction over the ballot item under G.S. 163-182.4. If at the time a nomination is made under
8 this section the general election ballots have already been printed, the provisions of
9 G.S.163-165.3(c) shall apply. If a vacancy occurs in a nomination of a political party and that
10 vacancy arises from a cause other than death and the vacancy in nomination occurs more than 120
11 days before the general election, the vacancy in nomination may be filled under this section only if
12 the appropriate executive committee certifies the name of the nominee in accordance with this
13 paragraph at least 75 days before the general election.

14 In a county which is partly in a multicounty judicial district, in choosing that county's member
15 or members of the judicial district executive committee for the multicounty district, only the
16 county convention delegates or county executive committee members who reside within the area
17 of the county which is within that multicounty district may vote.

18 In a county not all of which is located in one congressional district, in choosing the
19 congressional district executive committee member or members from that area of the county, only
20 the county convention delegates or county executive committee members who reside within the
21 area of the county which is within the congressional district may vote.

22 In a county which is partly in a multi-county senatorial district or which is partly in a
23 multi-county House of Representatives district, in choosing that county's member or members of
24 the senatorial district executive committee or House of Representatives district executive
25 committee for the multi-county district, only the county convention delegates or county executive
26 committee members who reside within the area of the county which is within that multi-county
27 district may vote.

28 An individual whose name appeared on the ballot in a primary election preliminary to the
29 general election shall not be eligible to be nominated to fill a vacancy in the nomination of another
30 party for the same office in the same year."

31 **SECTION 10.** G.S. 163-122 reads as rewritten:

32 **"§ 163-122. Unaffiliated candidates nominated by petition.**

33 (a) Procedure for Having Name Printed on Ballot as Unaffiliated Candidate. – Any
34 qualified voter who seeks to have his name printed on the general election ballot as an unaffiliated
35 candidate shall:

- 36 (1) If the office is a statewide office, file written petitions with the State Board of
37 Elections supporting his candidacy for a specified office. These petitions must
38 be filed with the State Board of Elections on or before 12:00 noon on the last
39 Friday in June preceding the general election and must be signed by qualified
40 voters of the State equal in number to two percent (2%) of the total number of
41 voters who voted in the most recent general election for Governor. Also, the
42 petition must be signed by at least 200 registered voters from each of four
43 congressional districts in North Carolina. No later than 5:00 p.m. on the
44 fifteenth day preceding the date the petitions are due to be filed with the State
45 Board of Elections, each petition shall be presented to the chairman of the
46 board of elections of the county in which the signatures were obtained.
47 Provided the petitions are timely submitted, the chairman shall examine the
48 names on the petition and place a check mark on the petition by the name of
49 each signer who is qualified and registered to vote in his county and shall attach
50 to the petition his signed certificate. Said certificates shall state that the
51 signatures on the petition have been checked against the registration records

1 and shall indicate the number of signers to be qualified and registered to vote in
2 his county. The chairman shall return each petition, together with the certificate
3 required in this section, to the person who presented it to him for checking.
4 Verification by the chairman of the county board of elections shall be
5 completed within two weeks from the date such petitions are presented.

6 (2) ~~If-Except as provided in this subsection, if~~ the office is a district office under
7 the jurisdiction of the State Board of Elections under G.S. 163-182.4(b), file
8 written petitions with the State Board of Elections supporting that voter's
9 candidacy for a specified office. These petitions must be filed with the State
10 Board of Elections on or before 12:00 noon on the last Friday in June preceding
11 the general election and must be signed by qualified voters of the district equal
12 in number to four percent (4%) of the total number of registered voters in the
13 district as reflected by the voter registration records of the State Board of
14 Elections as of January 1 of the year in which the general election is to be held.
15 Each petition shall be presented to the chairman of the board of elections of the
16 county in which the signatures were obtained. The chairman shall examine the
17 names on the petition and the procedure for certification and deadline for
18 submission to the county board shall be the same as specified in (1) above.

19 (3) If the office is a county office or a single county legislative district, file written
20 petitions with the chairman or director of the county board of elections
21 supporting his candidacy for a specified county office. These petitions must be
22 filed with the county board of elections on or before 12:00 noon on the last
23 Friday in June preceding the general election and must be signed by qualified
24 voters of the county equal in number to four percent (4%) of the total number of
25 registered voters in the county as reflected by the voter registration records of
26 the State Board of Elections as of January 1 of the year in which the general
27 election is to be held, except if the office is for a district consisting of less than
28 the entire county and only the voters in that district vote for that office, the
29 petitions must be signed by qualified voters of the district equal in number to
30 four percent (4%) of the total number of voters in the district according to the
31 voter registration records of the State Board of Elections as of January 1 of the
32 year in which the general election is to be held. Each petition shall be presented
33 to the chairman or director of the county board of elections. The chairman shall
34 examine, or cause to be examined, the names on the petition and the procedure
35 for certification shall be the same as specified in (1) above.

36 (4) If the office is a partisan municipal office, file written petitions with the
37 chairman or director of the county board of elections in the county wherein the
38 municipality is located supporting his candidacy for a specified municipal
39 office. These petitions must be filed with the county board of elections on or
40 before the time and date specified in G.S. 163-296 and must be signed by the
41 number of qualified voters specified in G.S. 163-296. The procedure for
42 certification shall be the same as specified in (1) above.

43 (5) If the office is a superior court judge or a district court judge, regardless of
44 whether the district lies entirely in one county or in more than one county, file
45 written petitions with the State Board of Elections supporting that voter's
46 candidacy for a specified office. These petitions must be filed with the State
47 Board of Elections on or before 12:00 noon on the last Friday in June preceding
48 the general election and must be signed by qualified voters of the district equal
49 in number to two percent (2%) of the total number of registered voters in the
50 district as reflected by the voter registration records of the State Board of
51 Elections as of January 1 of the year in which the general election is to be held.

1 Each petition shall be presented to the chairman of the board of elections of the
2 county in which the signatures were obtained. The chairman shall examine the
3 names on the petition, and the procedure for certification and deadline for
4 submission to the county board shall be the same as specified in (1) above.

5 Upon compliance with the provisions of (1), (2), (3), or (4) of this subsection, the board of
6 elections with which the petitions have been timely filed shall cause the unaffiliated candidate's
7 name to be printed on the general election ballots in accordance with Article 14A of this Chapter.

8 An individual whose name appeared on the ballot in a primary election preliminary to the
9 general election shall not be eligible to have his name placed on the general election ballot as an
10 unaffiliated candidate for the same office in that year.

11 (b) Form of Petition. – Petitions requesting an unaffiliated candidate to be placed on the
12 general election ballot shall contain on the heading of each page of the petition in bold print or in
13 all capital letters the words: "THE UNDERSIGNED REGISTERED VOTERS IN _____
14 COUNTY HEREBY PETITION ON BEHALF OF _____ AS AN UNAFFILIATED
15 CANDIDATE FOR THE OFFICE OF _____ IN THE NEXT GENERAL ELECTION.
16 THE UNDERSIGNED HEREBY PETITION THAT SUBJECT CANDIDATE BE PLACED ON
17 THE APPROPRIATE BALLOT UPON COMPLIANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS
18 CONTAINED IN G.S. 163-122."

19 ~~(e) This section does not apply to elections under Article 25 of this Chapter.~~

20 (d) When any person files a petition with a board of elections under this section, the board
21 of elections shall, immediately upon receipt of the petition, inspect the registration records of the
22 county and cancel the petition of any person who does not meet the constitutional or statutory
23 qualifications for the office, including residency.

24 The board shall give notice of cancellation to any person whose petition has been cancelled
25 under this subsection by mail or by having the notice served on that person by the sheriff and to
26 any other candidate filing for the same office. A person whose petition has been cancelled or
27 another candidate for the same office affected by a substantiation under this subsection may
28 request a hearing on the issue of constitutional or statutory qualifications for the office. If the
29 person requests a hearing, the hearing shall be conducted in accordance with Article 11B of
30 Chapter 163 of the General Statutes.

31 (e) Any candidate seeking to have that candidate's name printed on the general election
32 ballot under this section shall pay a filing fee equal to that provided for candidates for the office in
33 G.S. 163-107 or comply with the alternative available to candidates for the office in
34 G.S. 163-107.1."

35 **SECTION 11.** G.S. 163-123(g) reads as rewritten:

36 "~~(g) Municipal and Nonpartisan Elections Excluded. – This section does not apply to~~
37 ~~municipal elections conducted under Subchapter IX of Chapter 163 of the General Statutes, and~~
38 ~~does not apply to nonpartisan elections except for elections under Article 25 of this~~
39 ~~Chapter Statutes."~~

40 **SECTION 12.** G.S. 163-165.5(a)(3) reads as rewritten:

41 "**§ 163-165.5. Contents of official ballots.**

42 (a) Except as provided in this section, each official ballot shall contain all the following
43 elements:

44 ...

45 (3) The names of the candidates as they appear on their notice of candidacy filed
46 pursuant to G.S. 163-106 ~~or G.S. 163-323,~~ or on petition forms filed in
47 accordance with G.S. 163-122. No title, appendage, or appellation indicating
48 rank, status, or position shall be printed on the official ballot in connection with
49 the candidate's name. Candidates, however, may use the title Mr., Mrs., Miss,
50 or Ms. Nicknames shall be permitted on an official ballot if used in the notice
51 of candidacy or qualifying petition, but the nickname shall appear according to

1 standards adopted by the State Board of Elections. Those standards shall allow
2 the presentation of legitimate nicknames in ways that do not mislead the voter
3 or unduly advertise the candidacy. In the case of candidates for presidential
4 elector, the official ballot shall not contain the names of the candidates for
5 elector but instead shall contain the nominees for President and Vice President
6 which the candidates for elector represent. The State Board of Elections shall
7 establish a review procedure that local boards of elections shall follow to ensure
8 that candidates' names appear on the official ballot in accordance with this
9 subdivision."

10 **SECTION 13.** Article 25 of Subchapter X of Chapter 163 of the General Statutes is
11 repealed.

12 **SECTION 14.** This act is effective with respect to primaries and elections held on or
13 after January 1, 2018.