

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2025

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HOUSE BILL 958
Committee Substitute Favorable 6/26/25
PROPOSED COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE H958-CSBKe-9 [v.15]
07/29/2025 03:26:14 PM

Short Title: Election Law Changes.

(Public)

Sponsors:

Referred to:

April 14, 2025

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
2 AN ACT TO MAKE VARIOUS CHANGES REGARDING ELECTION LAWS.
3 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:
4

5 **PART I. REVISIONS TO BALLOT COUNTING PROCEDURE**

6 **SECTION 1.1.(a)** G.S. 163-182.2(a)(4) is recodified as G.S. 163-182.2(a2).

7 **SECTION 1.1.(b)** G.S. 163-182.2(a)(6) is recodified as G.S. 163-182.2(a3).

8 **SECTION 1.1.(c)** G.S. 163-182.2, as amended by this section, reads as rewritten:

9 **"§ 163-182.2. Initial counting of official ballots.**

10 (a) The initial counting of official ballots cast at the precinct on election day and under
11 ~~Part 5 of Article 14A of this Chapter~~ shall be conducted according to the following principles:

12 (1) ~~Vote counting of ballots cast at the precinct on election day shall occur~~
13 ~~immediately after the polls close and shall be continuous until completed. If~~
14 ~~ballots cast under Part 5 of Article 14A of this Chapter are counted~~
15 ~~electronically, that count shall commence at the time the polls close. If ballots~~
16 ~~cast under Part 5 of Article 14A of this Chapter are paper ballots counted~~
17 ~~manually, that count shall commence at the same time as mail-in absentee~~
18 ~~ballots cast under Article 20 or Article 21A of this Chapter are counted.~~

19 (2) ~~Vote counting at the precinct shall be conducted with the participation of~~
20 ~~precinct officials of all political parties then present. Vote counting at the~~
21 ~~county board of elections shall be conducted in the presence or under the~~
22 ~~supervision of board members of all political parties then present.~~

23 (3) Any member of the public wishing to witness the vote count ~~at any level~~ shall
24 be allowed to do so. No witness shall interfere with the orderly counting of
25 the official ballots. Witnesses shall not participate in the ~~official~~ counting of
26 official ballots.

27 (4) Recodified.

28 (5) Precinct officials shall provide a preliminary report of the vote counting ~~on~~
29 ~~election day~~ to the county board of elections as quickly as possible. The
30 preliminary report shall be unofficial, has no binding effect upon the official
31 county canvass to follow, and shall include the number of provisional ballots
32 cast in that precinct.

33 (6) Recodified.

34 (a1) The initial counting of official ballots cast under Part 5 of Article 14A of this Chapter
35 shall be conducted according to the following principles:



- 1 (1) Vote counting shall occur between the hours of 9:00 A.M. and 5:00 P.M. on
2 election day at the hour and place stated in a resolution adopted by the county
3 board at least two weeks prior to the time the voting place opens in accordance
4 with G.S. 163-166.25. The county board shall not reveal the result of the count
5 prior to the close of polls on election day.
- 6 (2) Vote counting shall be conducted in the presence or under the supervision of
7 county board members of all political parties then present.
- 8 (3) Any member of the public wishing to witness the vote count shall be allowed
9 to do so. No witness shall interfere with the orderly counting of the official
10 ballots. Witnesses shall not participate in the counting of official ballots.
- 11 (4) County boards may review for approval any provisional official ballots and
12 may take preparatory steps for the count of such ballots at a meeting held by
13 the county board prior to election day, pursuant to a resolution adopted by the
14 county board at least two weeks in advance of the meeting, as long as the
15 preparatory steps do not reveal the result of the count prior to the close of polls
16 on election day.

17 (a2) If the county board finds that an individual voting a provisional official ballot (i) was
18 registered in the county as provided in 163-82.1, (ii) voted in the proper precinct under
19 G.S. 163-55 and G.S. 163-57, and (iii) was otherwise eligible to vote, the provisional official
20 ballots shall be counted by the county board no later than ~~5:00 P.M. on the third~~ fifth business
21 day after the election. Except as provided in G.S. 163-82.15(e), if the county board finds that an
22 individual voting a provisional official ballot (i) did not vote in the proper precinct under
23 G.S. 163-55 and G.S. 163-57, (ii) is not registered in the county as provided in G.S. 163-82.1, or
24 (iii) is otherwise not eligible to vote, the ballot shall not be counted. If a voter was properly
25 registered to vote in the election by the county board, no mistake of an election official in giving
26 the voter a ballot or in failing to comply with G.S. 163-82.15 or G.S. 163-166.11 shall serve to
27 prevent the counting of the vote on any ballot item the voter was eligible by registration and
28 qualified by residency to vote. When an individual has voted a provisional official ballot after
29 completing an affidavit under G.S. 163-166.16(d), and the county board has determined that there
30 are grounds to believe the affidavit is false within five business days after the election, the county
31 board shall determine whether to count the provisional official ballot by the date of the county
32 canvass.

33 (a3) In counties that use any certified mechanical or electronic voting system, subject to
34 the sample counts under G.S. 163-182.1 and subdivision (2) of subsection (b) of this section, and
35 of a hand-to-eye recount under G.S. 163-182.7 and G.S. 163-182.7A, a county board of elections
36 shall rely in its canvass on the mechanical or electronic count of the vote rather than the full
37 hand-to-eye count of the paper ballots or records. In the event of a material discrepancy between
38 the electronic or mechanical count and a hand-to-eye count or recount, the hand-to-eye count or
39 recount shall control, except where paper ballots or records have been lost or destroyed or where
40 there is another reasonable basis to conclude that the hand-to-eye count is not the true count.

41 (a4) Any resolution required by this section shall be published once a week for two weeks
42 prior to the election in a newspaper having general circulation in the county. Notice may
43 additionally be made on a radio or television station or both, but the notice shall be in addition to
44 the newspaper and other required notice.

45 (b) The State Board shall promulgate rules for the initial counting of all official ballots.
46 All election officials shall be governed by those rules. In promulgating those rules, the State
47 Board shall adhere to the following guidelines:

- 48 (1) For each voting system used, the rules shall specify the role of precinct
49 officials and of the county board ~~of elections~~ in the initial counting of official
50 ballots.

1 (2) For optical scan and direct record electronic voting systems, and for any other
2 voting systems in which ballots are counted other than on paper by hand and
3 eye, those rules shall provide for a sample hand-to-eye count of the paper
4 ballots of a sampling of a statewide ballot item in every county. The
5 presidential ballot item shall be the subject of the sampling in a presidential
6 election. If there is no statewide ballot item, the State Board shall provide a
7 process for selecting district or local ballot items to adequately sample the
8 electorate. The State Board shall approve in an open meeting the procedure
9 for random sampling for each election. The random sampling for any county
10 shall be done publicly after the initial count of election returns for that county
11 is publicly released or 24 hours after the polls close on election day, whichever
12 is earlier. The sample chosen by the State Board shall be of one or more full
13 precincts, full counts of mailed absentee ballots, and full counts of one or more
14 early voting sites. The size of the sample of each category shall be chosen to
15 produce a statistically significant result and shall be chosen after consultation
16 with a statistician. The actual units shall be chosen at random. In the event of
17 a material discrepancy between the electronic or mechanical count and a
18 hand-to-eye count, the hand-to-eye count shall control, except where paper
19 ballots have been lost or destroyed or where there is another reasonable basis
20 to conclude that the hand-to-eye count is not the true count. If the discrepancy
21 between the hand-to-eye count and the mechanical or electronic count is
22 significant, a complete hand-to-eye count shall be conducted. The sample
23 count need not be done on election night.

24 (3) The rules shall provide for accurate unofficial reporting of the results from the
25 precinct to the county board of elections with reasonable speed on the night
26 of the election.

27 (4) The rules shall provide for the prompt and secure transmission of official
28 ballots from the voting place to the county ~~board of elections~~ board.

29 (c) The State Board shall direct the county boards of elections in the application of the
30 principles and rules in individual circumstances."

31 **SECTION 1.2.** G.S. 163-230.1(e1) reads as rewritten:

32 "(e1) Curable Deficiencies. – If a container-return envelope contains a curable deficiency,
33 the county board shall promptly notify the voter of the deficiency and the manner in which the
34 voter may cure the deficiency. Curable deficiencies are deficiencies that can be cured with
35 supplemental documentation or attestation provided by the voter, including when any of the
36 following occurs:

37 (1) The voter did not sign the voter certification as required by
38 G.S. 163-231(a)(4).

39 (2) The voter signed the application in the wrong place on the application.

40 (3) The voter failed to include with the container-return envelope a photocopy of
41 identification described in G.S. 163-166.16(a) or an affidavit as described in
42 G.S. 163-166.16(d)(1), (d)(2), or (d)(3), as required by subsection (f1) of this
43 section.

44 The identification of the two persons witnessing the casting of the absentee ballot in
45 accordance with G.S. 163-231(a) is not a curable deficiency. Any container-return envelope with
46 a curable deficiency that is transmitted to the county board shall be considered timely if cure
47 documentation is received no later than 12:00 P.M. on the ~~third~~ fifth business day after the
48 election. Cure documentation may be transmitted via email to the county board if the deficiency
49 is one described in subdivision (3) of this subsection. The notification of voters regarding curable
50 deficiencies is an administrative task that may be performed by county board staff and is not
51 required to be performed at an absentee meeting as provided for in subsection (f) of this section.

1 The voter shall be notified of curable deficiencies by mail, and by telephone or email if the
2 telephone number or email address was provided by the voter on the request form for absentee
3 ballots."

4 **SECTION 1.3.** G.S. 163-231 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

5 "(d) Counting of Executed Absentee Ballots. – Only those voted absentee ballots
6 transmitted to a county board in accordance with this section shall be counted."

7 **SECTION 1.4.** G.S. 163-234 reads as rewritten:

8 **"§ 163-234. Counting absentee ballots by county board.**

9 All absentee ballots returned to the county board in the container-return envelopes shall be
10 retained by the county board to be counted by the county board as follows:

11 ...

12 (2) The county board shall meet at ~~5:00 P.M.~~ 9:00 A.M. on election day in the
13 county board office or other public location in the county courthouse for the
14 purpose of counting all absentee ballots except those which have been
15 challenged before ~~5:00 P.M.~~ 9:00 A.M. on election day and those received
16 pursuant to G.S. 163-231(b)(2). Any elector of the county shall be permitted
17 to attend the meeting and allowed to observe the counting process, so long as
18 the elector does not in any manner interfere with the election officials in the
19 discharge of their duties. ~~The count of these absentee ballots shall be~~
20 ~~continuous until completed, and the members shall not separate or leave the~~
21 ~~counting place except for unavoidable necessity.~~

22 ~~The county board may begin counting absentee ballots issued under~~
23 ~~Article 21A of this Chapter between the hours of 9:00 A.M. and 5:00 P.M.~~
24 ~~and may begin counting all absentee ballots between the hours of 2:00 P.M.~~
25 ~~and 5:00 P.M. upon the adoption of a resolution at least two weeks prior to the~~
26 ~~election in which the hour and place of counting absentee ballots shall be~~
27 ~~stated. A copy of the resolution shall be published once a week for two weeks~~
28 ~~prior to the election, in a newspaper having general circulation in the county.~~
29 ~~Notice may additionally be made on a radio or television station or both, but~~
30 ~~the notice shall be in addition to the newspaper and other required notice. The~~
31 ~~count shall be continuous until completed and the members shall not separate~~
32 ~~or leave the counting place except for unavoidable necessity. The county~~
33 board shall not adjourn the meeting until the count of these absentee ballots is
34 complete. except that if the count has been completed prior to the time the
35 polls close, it shall be suspended until that time pending receipt of any
36 additional ballots. Nothing in this section prohibits a county board from taking
37 preparatory steps for the count earlier than the times specified in this section,
38 as long as the preparatory steps do not reveal to any individual not engaged in
39 the actual count election results before the times specified in this subdivision
40 for the count to begin. By way of illustration and not limitation, a preparatory
41 step for the count would be the entry of tally cards from direct record
42 electronic voting units into a computer for processing. The county board shall
43 not announce the result of the count ~~before 7:30 P.M.~~ prior to the close of polls
44 on election day.

45 ...

46 (11) ~~The county board shall meet after the day of the election and prior to the day~~
47 ~~of canvass to count absentee ballots received pursuant to G.S. 163-231(b)(2)~~
48 ~~upon the adoption of a resolution pursuant to subdivision (2) of this section.~~
49 ~~The county board shall comply with all other requirements of this section and~~
50 ~~G.S. 163-230.1 for the counting of these absentee ballots.~~

(12) No later than 5:00 P.M. on the ~~third~~ fifth business day after the election, the county board shall announce the tally of all absentee ballots, except those subject to a challenge or those cast in accordance with Article 21A of this Chapter."

SECTION 1.5. G.S. 163-275 is amended by adding a new subdivision to read:

"(15) For any person to reveal the result of any count of ballots prior to the close of polls on election day in accordance with G.S. 163-182.2 or G.S. 163-234."

SECTION 1.6. Section 1.5 of this Part becomes effective January 1, 2026, and applies to offenses committed on or after that date. The remainder of this Part becomes effective January 1, 2026, and applies to elections held on or after that date.

PART II. VARIOUS ELECTION ADMINISTRATION CHANGES

PARTY DESIGNATIONS ON BALLOT

SECTION 2.1.(a) G.S. 163-165.5(a)(4) reads as rewritten:

"(4) Party designations in partisan ballot items. Party designations shall be printed in the same font type and size as the name of the candidate."

SECTION 2.1.(b) This section becomes effective January 1, 2026, and applies to elections held on or after that date.

REMOVAL AND TRAINING OF PRECINCT OFFICIALS

SECTION 2.2.(a) Article 5 of Chapter 163 of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new section to read:

"§ 163-41.3. Removal of precinct officials; vacancies."

SECTION 2.2.(b) G.S. 163-41(d) is recodified as G.S. 163-41.3.

SECTION 2.2.(c) G.S. 163-41, as amended by this section, reads as rewritten:

"§ 163-41. Precinct chief judges and judges of election; appointment; terms of office; qualifications; ~~vacancies~~; oaths of office.

(a) Appointment of Chief Judge and Judges. – At the meeting required by G.S. 163-31 to be held on the Tuesday following the third Monday in August of the year in which they are appointed, the county board ~~of elections~~ shall appoint one person to act as chief judge and two other persons to act as judges of election for each precinct in the county. Their terms of office shall continue for two years from the specified date of appointment and until their successors are appointed and qualified, except that if a nonresident of the precinct is appointed as chief judge or judge for a precinct, that person's term of office shall end if the county board of elections appoints a qualified resident of the precinct of the same party to replace the nonresident chief judge or judge. It shall be ~~their~~ the duty of the precinct officials to conduct the primaries and elections within their respective precincts. Persons appointed to these offices must be registered voters and residents of the county in which the precinct is located, of good repute, and able to read and write. Not more than one judge in each precinct shall belong to the same political party as the chief judge.

(b) ~~The~~ As used in this Article, the term "precinct official" shall mean chief judges and judges appointed pursuant to this section, and all assistants appointed pursuant to G.S. 163-42, unless the context of a statute clearly indicates a more restrictive meaning.

~~(b1) No person shall be eligible to serve as a precinct official, as that term is defined above, who holds~~ official if any of the following apply:

(1) The person holds any elective office under the government of the United States, or of the State of North Carolina or any political subdivision thereof.

(2) ~~No person shall be eligible to serve as a precinct official who is~~ The person is a candidate for nomination or election.

(3) ~~No person shall be eligible to serve as a precinct official who holds~~ The person holds any office in a state, congressional district, county, or precinct political party or political organization, or who is a manager or treasurer for any candidate or political party, provided however that the position of delegate to a political party convention shall not be considered an office for the purpose of this subsection-subdivision.

(4) The person has been prohibited from serving as a precinct official in any subsequent election in accordance with G.S. 163-41.3(a).

...."

SECTION 2.2.(d) G.S. 163-41.3, as enacted by this section, reads as rewritten:

"§ 163-41.3. **Removal of precinct officials; vacancies.**

(a) Any precinct official may be removed from office, including on the day of the election or primary, for incompetency or failure to discharge the duties of office by the county board in accordance with G.S. 163-33. The county board may prohibit a precinct official who has been removed from office from serving as a precinct official in any subsequent election.

(b)

...."

SECTION 2.2.(e) G.S. 163-33(2) reads as rewritten:

"(2) To appoint all chief judges, judges, assistants, and other officers of elections, and designate the precinct in which each shall serve; and, after notice and hearing, to remove any chief judge, judge of elections, assistant, or other officer of election appointed by it for incompetency, failure to discharge the duties of office, failure to qualify within the time prescribed by law, fraud, or for any other satisfactory ~~cause.~~ cause, as provided in G.S. 163-41.3. In exercising the powers and duties of this subdivision, the board may act only when a majority of its members are present at any meeting at which such powers or duties are exercised."

SECTION 2.2.(f) G.S. 163-42(c) reads as rewritten:

"(c) In addition, a county board ~~of elections~~ by unanimous vote of all of its members may appoint any registered voter in the county as an emergency election-day assistant, as long as that voter is otherwise qualified to be a precinct official. The State Board ~~of Elections~~ shall determine for each election the number of emergency election-day assistants each county may have, based on population, expected turnout, and complexity of election ~~duties.~~ duties; however, each county must have, at a minimum, six emergency election-day assistants. The county board by unanimous vote of all of its members may assign emergency election-day assistants on the day of the election to any precinct in the county where the number of precinct officials is insufficient because of an ~~emergency occurring within 48 hours of the opening of the polls~~ emergency, the removal of a precinct official, or any other reason that prevents an appointed a precinct official from serving-servng throughout the day of the primary or election. A person appointed to serve as an emergency election-day assistant shall be trained and paid like other precinct assistants in accordance with G.S. 163-46. A county board ~~of elections~~ shall apportion the appointments ~~as of~~ emergency election-day assistant-assistants among registrants of each political party so as to make possible the staffing of each precinct with officials of more than one party, and the county board shall make assignments so that no precinct has precinct ~~officials~~ assistants all of whom are registered with the same party."

SECTION 2.2.(g) G.S. 163-82.24(a) reads as rewritten:

"(a) Training. – The State Board ~~of Elections~~ shall conduct training programs in election law and procedures. Every county elections director shall receive training conducted by the State Board at least as often as required in the following schedule:

(1) Once during each odd-numbered year before the municipal election held in the ~~county;~~ county.

- 1 (2) Once during each even-numbered year before the first partisan ~~primary;~~
 2 ~~and primary.~~
 3 (3) Once during each even-numbered year after the partisan primaries but before
 4 the general election.

5 (a1) Every member of a county board ~~of elections~~ shall receive training conducted by the
 6 State Board at least once during the six months after the member's initial appointment and at least
 7 once again during the first two years of the member's service. The State Board ~~of Elections~~ shall
 8 promulgate rules for the training of precinct officials, which shall be followed by the county
 9 ~~boards of elections.~~ boards. At a minimum, the training for all precinct officials shall include
 10 information regarding all of the following:

- 11 (1) The duties of the office of precinct official.
 12 (2) How to confirm whether a person presenting to vote is registered in that
 13 county.
 14 (3) How to issue ballots.
 15 (4) How to properly provide voter assistance, including how to provide assistance
 16 to those curbside voting.
 17 (5) The procedure for opening and closing of polls.
 18 (6) The prohibition regarding election-related activity in the voting place and
 19 buffer zone of the voting place.
 20 (7) The potential for removal from office for failure to comply with the provisions
 21 of this Chapter."

22 **SECTION 2.2.(h)** This section becomes effective January 1, 2026, and applies to
 23 elections held on or after that date.
 24

25 COUNTING OF CHALLENGED BALLOT OF DECEASED VOTER

26 **SECTION 2.3.(a)** G.S. 163-90.2(a) reads as rewritten:

27 "(a) When any challenge is sustained for any cause listed under G.S. 163-85(c), the county
 28 board shall cancel or correct the voter registration of the voter. The county board shall maintain
 29 such record for at least six months and during the pendency of any appeal. ~~The Except as provided~~
 30 in this subsection, the challenged ballot shall be counted for any ballot items for which the
 31 challenged voter is eligible to vote, as if it were a provisional official ballot under the provisions
 32 of G.S. 163-166.11(4). For any challenge sustained for death of the voter under
 33 G.S. 163-85(c)(6), the challenged ballot shall not be counted if the voter died between the time
 34 the challenged ballot was cast and 6:30 A.M. on election day."

35 **SECTION 2.3.(b)** This section becomes effective January 1, 2026, and applies to
 36 elections held on or after that date.
 37

38 DISORDERLY CONDUCT AT VOTING PLACE

39 **SECTION 2.4.(a)** G.S. 14-132 reads as rewritten:

40 **"§ 14-132. Disorderly conduct in and injuries to public buildings and facilities.**

41 (a) It is a misdemeanor ~~if for~~ any person ~~shall to do any of the following:~~

- 42 (1) Make any rude or riotous noise, or ~~be guilty of engage in~~ any disorderly
 43 conduct, in or near any public building or ~~facility;~~ or facility.
 44 (2) Unlawfully write or scribble on, mark, deface, besmear, or injure the walls of
 45 any public building or facility, or any statue or monument situated in any
 46 public ~~place;~~ or place.
 47 (3) Commit any nuisance in or near any public building or facility.

48 (b) Any person in charge of any public building or facility ~~owned or controlled by the~~
 49 ~~State, any subdivision of the State, or any other public agency~~ shall have authority to arrest
 50 summarily and without warrant for a violation of this section.

1 (c) The term "public building or facility" as used in this section includes any building or
 2 facility together with the surrounding grounds and premises used in connection with the operation
 3 or functioning of such public building or facility which is any of the following:

- 4 (1) One to which the public or a portion of the public has access and is owned or
 5 controlled by the State, any subdivision of the State, any other public agency,
 6 or any private institution or agency of a charitable, educational, or
 7 ~~eleemosynary nature; or~~ philanthropic nature.
 8 (2) Dedicated to the use of the general public for a purpose which is primarily
 9 concerned with public recreation, cultural activities, and other events of a
 10 public nature or character.
 11 (3) Designated by the Director of the State Bureau of Investigation in accordance
 12 with G.S. 143B-987.
 13 (4) One temporarily in use as a voting place under Chapter 163 of the General
 14 Statutes during the hours for voting.

15 ~~The term "building or facility" as used in this section also includes the surrounding grounds and~~
 16 ~~premises of any building or facility used in connection with the operation or functioning of such~~
 17 ~~building or facility.~~

18 (d) Unless the conduct is covered under some other provision of law providing greater
 19 punishment, any person who violates any provision of this section is guilty of a Class 2
 20 misdemeanor."

21 **SECTION 2.4.(b)** G.S. 163-166.4(b) reads as rewritten:

22 "(b) Area for Election-Related Activity. – Except as provided in subsection (c) of this
 23 section, the county board ~~of elections~~ shall also provide an area adjacent to the buffer zone for
 24 each voting place in which persons or groups of persons may distribute campaign literature, place
 25 political advertising, solicit votes, or otherwise engage in election-related activity. It shall be a
 26 Class 3 misdemeanor for a person to steal, deface, vandalize, or unlawfully remove political
 27 advertising that is lawfully placed under this subsection."

28 **SECTION 2.4.(c)** This section becomes effective October 1, 2025, and applies to
 29 offenses committed on or after that date.

30 **BAN RANK CHOICE VOTING**

31 **SECTION 2.5.(a)** Article 14A of Chapter 163 of the General Statutes is amended by
 32 adding a new section to read:

33 **"§ 163-165.6A. Rank choice voting prohibited.**

34 No rank choice voting may be used in any primary or election. The term "rank choice voting"
 35 refers to a method that allows a voter the option to rank candidates for office in the voter's order
 36 of preference."

37 **SECTION 2.5.(b)** This section becomes effective January 1, 2026, and applies to
 38 elections held on or after that date.

39 **TIMELINE FOR COUNTY BOARD TO SEND ADDRESS VERIFICATIONS**

40 **SECTION 2.6.(a)** G.S. 163-82.7 reads as rewritten:

41 **"§ 163-82.7. Verification of qualifications and address of applicant; denial or approval of** 42 **application.**

43 ...

44 (c) Verification of Address by Mail. – If the county board ~~of elections~~ tentatively
 45 determines that the applicant is qualified to vote at the address given, then the county board shall
 46 send a notice within five business days of receipt of the registration application to the applicant,
 47 by nonforwardable mail, at the address the applicant provides on the application form. The notice
 48 shall state that the county will register the applicant to vote if the Postal Service does not return
 49
 50

1 the notice as undeliverable to the county board. The notice shall also inform the applicant of the
2 precinct and voting place to which the applicant will be assigned if registered.

3 ...

4 (e) Second Notice if First Notice Is Returned as Undeliverable. – If the Postal Service
5 returns the notice as undeliverable, the county board shall send a second notice within five
6 business days of the receipt of the notice as undeliverable from the Postal Service by
7 nonforwardable mail to the same address to which the first notice was sent. If the second notice
8 is not returned as undeliverable, the county board shall register the applicant to vote.

9 ..."

10 **SECTION 2.6.(b)** This section becomes effective January 1, 2026, and applies to
11 notices sent on or after that date.

12 **REQUIRE RETURN TO SENDER ON VOTER REGISTRATION MAILINGS**

13 **SECTION 2.7.(a)** G.S. 163-82.7 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

14 "(h) Return to Sender Requirement on Notices. – All notices sent to applicants pursuant
15 to this section shall include a pre-printed space on the notice which can be marked to indicate
16 that the applicant does not reside at the address given by the applicant and that the notice should
17 be returned to the appropriate sender."

18 **SECTION 2.7.(b)** G.S. 163-82.14(d)(2) is amended by adding a new
19 sub-subdivision to read:

20 "d. Contains a pre-printed space which can be marked to indicate that the
21 registrant does not reside at the address given by the registrant and that
22 the mailing should be returned to the appropriate sender."

23 **SECTION 2.7.(c)** This section becomes effective January 1, 2026, and applies to
24 notices sent on or after that date.

25 **CLOSING OF EQUIPMENT FOLLOWING EARLY VOTING**

26 **SECTION 2.8.(a)** G.S. 163-166.40 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

27 "(j) At the conclusion of the early voting period provided for in subsection (b) of this
28 section, all materials and voting equipment containing tallies of ballots or individual counts of
29 ballots cast during the early voting period, including any digital recordation of such, shall be kept
30 in a secure, locked location by the county board until the initial counting of early voting ballots
31 in accordance with G.S. 163-182.2(a1)."

32 **SECTION 2.8.(b)** This section becomes effective January 1, 2026, and applies to
33 elections held on or after that date.

34 **LIST-MAINTENANCE DATA SHARING AGREEMENTS**

35 **SECTION 2.9.(a)** G.S. 163-82.14(a1) reads as rewritten:

36 "(a1) Methods of List Maintenance; Cross State Checks. – List maintenance efforts under
37 this section shall be nondiscriminatory and shall comply with the provisions of the Voting Rights
38 Act of 1965, as amended, and with the provisions of the National Voter Registration Act. The
39 State Board, in addition to the methods set forth in this section, may use other methods toward
40 the ends set forth in subsection (a) of this section, including address-updating services provided
41 by the Postal Service and entering into data sharing agreements with other states to cross-check
42 information on voter registration and voting records. Any data sharing agreement shall require
43 the other state or states to comply with G.S. 163-82.10 and G.S. 163-82.10B. Any voter
44 registration data received from other states pursuant to a data sharing agreement with that state
45 is not a public record."

46 **SECTION 2.9.(b)** This section becomes effective January 1, 2026.

47 **PROHIBIT PAYMENT PER SIGNATURE FOR PETITIONS**

1 **SECTION 2.10.(a)** G.S. 163-221 reads as rewritten:

2 "**§ 163-221. Persons may not sign name of another to petition. Prohibited petition activities.**

3 (a) No person may sign the name of another person to any of the following:

4 (1) Any petition calling for an election or referendum.

5 (2) Any petition under G.S. 163-96 for the formulation of a new political party.

6 (3) Any petition under G.S. 163-107.1 requesting a person to be a candidate.

7 (4) Any petition under G.S. 163-122 to have the name of an unaffiliated candidate
8 placed on the general election ballot, or under G.S. 163-296 to have the name
9 of an unaffiliated or nonpartisan candidate placed on the regular municipal
10 election ballot.

11 (5) Any petition under G.S. 163-213.5 to place a name on the ballot under the
12 Presidential Preference Primary Act.

13 (6) Any petition under G.S. 163-123 to qualify as a write-in candidate.

14 (b) Any name signed on a petition, in violation of this section, shall be void.

15 **(b1) No person may be compensated based on the number of signatures collected for a**
16 **petition.**

17 (c) Any person who willfully violates this section is guilty of a Class 2 misdemeanor."

18 **SECTION 2.10.(b)** This section becomes effective December 1, 2025, and applies to
19 offenses committed on or after that date.

20
21 **ALLOW COUNTY BOARD TO INITIATE VOTER CHALLENGES FOR EARLY**
22 **VOTING AND ABSENTEE BALLOTS**

23 **SECTION 2.11.(a)** Article 8 of Chapter 163 of the General Statutes is amended by
24 adding a new section to read:

25 "**§ 163-90.4. Audit and challenge of ineligible votes cast.**

26 (a) After each primary or election, the State Board shall conduct a uniform statewide
27 audit to identify any ballots cast under Part 5 of Article 14A of this Chapter and ballots cast under
28 Article 20 of this Chapter that are ineligible to be counted in that primary or election for one of
29 the reasons identified in G.S. 163-87, as evidenced by official government database records. The
30 State Board shall distribute the results of this audit to the county boards no later than 5:00 P.M.
31 on the fourth business day before canvass.

32 (b) No later than 5:00 P.M. on the third business day before canvass, each county board
33 shall review the results of the audit conducted by the State Board under subsection (a) of this
34 section, analyze the records of voters identified in the audit from the respective county, and, if
35 determined by the county board that any vote cast was ineligible to be counted, the chair of the
36 county board shall serve a challenge on the voter casting that ballot. The county board shall
37 conduct the challenge proceedings under the applicable provisions of G.S. 163-89. The county
38 board's staff shall present evidence in support of the challenge and shall bear the burden of proof.

39 (c) For purposes of this Article, the chair of the county board shall be deemed to be a
40 registered voter of the same county as the challenged voter."

41 **SECTION 2.11.(b)** G.S. 163-89 reads as rewritten:

42 "**§ 163-89. Procedures for challenging ballots cast during early voting and absentee ballots.**

43 (a) Time for Challenge. – ~~The~~Ballots cast under Part 5 of Article 14A of this Chapter and
44 absentee ballot of any voter ~~ballots cast under Article 20 and Article 21A of this Chapter that are~~
45 ~~received by the county board of elections pursuant to G.S. 163-231(b)(1) may be challenged no~~
46 ~~later than 5:00 P.M. on the fifth business day after the primary or general election or county bond~~
47 ~~election. The absentee ballot of any voter~~ Ballots cast under Article 20 and Article 21A of this
48 Chapter that are received by the county board of elections pursuant to G.S. 163-231(b)(2) may
49 be challenged no later than 5:00 P.M. on the next business day following the deadline for receipt
50 of such absentee ballots.

1 (b) Who May Challenge. – Any registered voter of the same county as the ~~absentee~~
2 challenged voter may challenge that voter's ~~absentee~~-ballot.

3 (c) Form and Nature of Challenge. – Each challenged ~~absentee~~-ballot shall be challenged
4 separately. The burden of proof shall be on the challenger. Each challenge shall be made in
5 writing and, if ~~they are~~ available, shall be made on forms prescribed by the State ~~Board of~~
6 Elections-Board. Each challenge shall specify the reasons why the ballot does not comply with
7 the provisions of this ~~Article-Chapter~~ or why the ~~absentee-challenged~~ voter is not legally entitled
8 to vote in the particular primary or election. The challenge shall be signed by the challenger.

9 (d) To Whom Challenge Addressed; to Whom Challenge Delivered. – Each challenge
10 shall be addressed to the county ~~board of elections-board~~. It may be filed with the county board
11 at its offices or with the chief judge of the precinct in which the ~~challenger and absentee~~
12 challenged voter ~~are~~-is registered. If it is delivered to the chief judge, the chief judge shall
13 personally deliver the challenge to the ~~chairman~~chair of the county ~~board of elections-on the day~~
14 of the county canvass-board.

15 (e) Hearing Procedure. – All challenges filed under this section shall be heard by the
16 county board ~~of elections-on the day set for the canvass of the returns~~. All members of the county
17 board shall attend the canvass and all members shall be present for the hearing of challenges to
18 ~~absentee~~challenged ballots. The hearing of challenges shall be audio and video recorded.

19 ~~Before the board hears a challenge to an absentee ballot, the chairman shall mark the word~~
20 "challenged" after the voter's name in the register of absentee ballot applications and ballots
21 ~~issued and in the pollbook of absentee voters.~~

22 ~~The county board then shall hear the challenger's reasons for the challenge, and its challenge.~~
23 For challenges to ballots cast under Article 20 of this Chapter, the county board shall make its
24 decision without opening the container-return envelope or removing the ballots from it.

25 The county board shall have authority to administer the necessary oaths or affirmations to all
26 witnesses brought before it to testify to the qualifications of the voter challenged or to the validity
27 or invalidity of the ballot.

28 ~~If the challenge is sustained, the chairman shall mark the word "sustained" after the word~~
29 "challenged" following the voter's name in the register of absentee ballot applications and ballots
30 ~~issued and in the pollbook of absentee voters; the voter's ballots shall not be counted; and the~~
31 ~~container return envelope shall not be opened but shall be marked "Challenge Sustained." All~~
32 ~~envelopes so marked shall be preserved intact by the chairman for a period of six months from~~
33 ~~canvass day or longer if any contest then is pending concerning the validity of any absentee~~
34 ~~ballot, then the challenged ballot shall be counted for any ballot items for which the challenged~~
35 voter is eligible to vote, as if it were a provisional official ballot under the provisions of
36 G.S. 163-166.11(4).

37 ~~If the challenge is overruled, the absentee ballots shall be removed from the container return~~
38 ~~envelopes and counted by the board of elections, county board, and the county board shall adjust~~
39 ~~the appropriate abstracts of returns to show that the ballots have been counted and tallied in the~~
40 ~~manner provided for unchallenged absentee ballots tallied.~~

41 ~~If the challenge was delivered to the county board by the chief judge of the precinct and was~~
42 ~~sustained, the county board shall reopen the appropriate ballot boxes, remove such ballots,~~
43 ~~determine how those ballots were voted, deduct such ballots from the returns, and adjust the~~
44 ~~appropriate abstracts of returns.~~

45 ~~Any voter whose ballots have been challenged may, either personally or through an~~
46 ~~authorized representative, appear before the county board at the hearing on the challenge and~~
47 ~~present evidence as to the validity of the ballot.~~

48 (f) Notations on Absentee Ballots. – For ballots cast under Article 20 of this Chapter, the
49 following shall occur during and after the hearing process:

1 (1) Before the county board hears the challenge, the chair shall mark the word
 2 "challenged" after the voter's name in the register of absentee ballot
 3 applications and ballots issued and in the pollbook of absentee voters.

4 (2) If the challenge is sustained, the chair shall mark the word "sustained" after
 5 the word "challenged" following the voter's name in the register of absentee
 6 ballot applications and ballots issued and in the pollbook of absentee voters,
 7 and the container return envelope shall not be opened but shall be marked
 8 "Challenge Sustained." All envelopes so marked shall be preserved intact by
 9 the chair for a period of six months from canvass day or longer if any contest
 10 then is pending concerning the validity of any challenged ballot."

11 **SECTION 2.11.(c)** G.S. 163-90.2 reads as rewritten:

12 **"§ 163-90.2. Action when challenge sustained, overruled, or dismissed.**

13 (a) When any challenge is sustained for any cause listed under G.S. 163-85(c), the county
 14 board shall cancel or correct the voter registration of the voter. The county board shall maintain
 15 such record for at least six months and during the pendency of any appeal. The challenged ballot
 16 shall be counted for any ballot items for which the challenged voter is eligible to vote, as if it
 17 were a provisional official ballot under the provisions of G.S. 163-166.11(4).

18 (b) When any challenge made under G.S. 163-85 is overruled or dismissed, the county
 19 board shall erase the word "challenged" which appears on the person's registration records.

20 (c) A decision by a county board of elections on any challenge made under the provisions
 21 of this Article shall be appealable to the Superior Court of the county in which the offices of that
 22 county board are located within 10 days. If the appeal is made by the State Board, that appeal
 23 shall be to the Superior Court of the county in which the challenge originated. Only those persons
 24 against whom a challenge is ~~sustained or sustained,~~ persons who have made a challenge which
 25 is ~~overruled-overruled,~~ or a county board that initiated a challenge shall have standing to file such
 26 appeal."

27 **SECTION 2.11.(d)** This section becomes effective January 1, 2026, and applies to
 28 challenges filed on or after that date.

29
 30 **APPLY TEMPORARY MORATORIUM ON THE EXPIRATION OF CERTAIN CLASS**
 31 **C DRIVERS LICENSES TO PHOTO IDENTIFICATION PRESENTED FOR VOTING**

32 **SECTION 2.12.(a)** During the time period that a Class C drivers license expiration
 33 date is extended in accordance with Section 18 of S.L. 2025-47, that Class C drivers license shall
 34 be deemed valid and unexpired for the purposes of G.S. 163-166.16.

35 **SECTION 2.12.(b)** This section is effective when it becomes law, and shall expire
 36 December 31, 2027.

37
 38 **REQUIRE APPLICANTS TO PROVIDE FULL SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER ON**
 39 **VOTER REGISTRATION FORM**

40 **SECTION 2.13.(a)** G.S. 163-82.4 reads as rewritten:

41 **"§ 163-82.4. Contents of application form.**

42 (a) Information Requested of Applicant. – The form required by G.S. 163-82.3(a) shall
 43 request ~~the applicant's~~ all of the following from the applicant:

- 44 (1) ~~Name,~~ Name.
 45 (2) ~~Date of birth,~~ birth.
 46 (3) ~~Residence address,~~ address.
 47 (4) ~~County of residence,~~ residence.
 48 (5) ~~Date of application,~~ application.
 49 (6) ~~Gender,~~ Gender.
 50 (7) ~~Race,~~ Race.
 51 (8) ~~Ethnicity,~~ Ethnicity.

- 1 (9) Political party affiliation, if any, in accordance with subsection (d) of this
 2 ~~section,section.~~
 3 (10) Telephone number (to assist the county board of elections in contacting the
 4 voter if needed in processing the ~~application~~),application).
 5 (11) Drivers license ~~number or, number,~~ if the applicant ~~does not have~~ has a drivers
 6 license ~~number, the last four digits of the applicant's social security~~
 7 ~~number,number.~~
 8 (12) ~~and any~~ Any other information the State Board finds is necessary to enable
 9 officials of the county where the person resides to satisfactorily process the
 10 application.

11 ~~The~~ In addition, the form shall require the applicant to provide the applicant's full social
 12 security number and require the applicant to state whether the applicant is currently registered to
 13 vote anywhere, and at what address, so that any prior registration can be cancelled. The portions
 14 of the form concerning race and ethnicity shall include as a choice any category shown by the
 15 most recent decennial federal census to compose at least one percent (1%) of the total population
 16 of North Carolina. The county board shall make a diligent effort to complete for the registration
 17 records any information requested on the form that the applicant does not complete, but no
 18 application shall be denied because an applicant does not state race, ethnicity, gender, or
 19 telephone number. The application shall conspicuously state that provision of the applicant's
 20 telephone number is optional. If the county board maintains voter records on computer, the free
 21 list provided under this subsection shall include telephone numbers if the county board enters the
 22 telephone number into its computer records of voters.

23 (b) No Drivers License or Social Security Number Issued. – The State Board shall assign
 24 a unique identifier number to an applicant for voter registration if the applicant has not been
 25 issued ~~either~~ a current and valid drivers license ~~or a social security~~ number. That unique identifier
 26 number shall serve to identify that applicant for voter registration purposes.

27 "

28 **SECTION 2.13.(b)** The State Board of Elections shall update voter registration
 29 forms required by G.S. 163-82.3(a) to require the applicant to provide his or her full social
 30 security number, as required by this section, no later than July 1, 2026. The State Board of
 31 Elections and county boards of elections shall continue to accept a voter registration application
 32 form that lacks a full social security number until December 31, 2026. As of January 1, 2027,
 33 the State Board of Elections and county boards of elections shall only accept voter registration
 34 application forms containing a voter's full nine-digit social security number.

35 36 **REQUIRE DMV TO FURNISH FULL SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBERS FOR DMV** 37 **CUSTOMERS TO THE STATE BOARD OF ELECTIONS**

38 **SECTION 2.14.** Notwithstanding G.S. 20-7, no later than January 1, 2026, the
 39 Department of Transportation shall cooperate with the State Board of Elections to provide to the
 40 State Board of Elections the full nine-digit social security number of any registered voter in this
 41 State for which the Division of Motor Vehicles has a record of such information.

42 43 **INCREASE COMPENSATION OF MEMBERS OF COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS**

44 **SECTION 2.15.(a)** G.S. 163-32 reads as rewritten:

45 "**§ 163-32. Compensation of members of ~~county boards of elections~~ county boards.**

46 In full compensation of their services, members of the county board ~~of elections~~ (including
 47 the ~~chairman~~ chair) shall be paid by the county ~~twenty five dollars (\$25.00)~~ one hundred dollars
 48 (\$100.00) per meeting for the time they are actually engaged in the discharge of their duties,
 49 together with reimbursement of expenditures necessary and incidental to the discharge of their
 50 duties; provided that members are not entitled to be compensated for more than one meeting held
 51 in any one 24-hour period. In its discretion, the board of county commissioners of any county

1 may pay the ~~chairman-chair~~ and members of the county board of elections compensation in
2 addition to the per meeting and expense allowance provided in this paragraph.

3 In all counties the ~~county board of elections~~ shall pay its clerk, assistant clerks, and other
4 employees such compensation as it shall fix within budget appropriations. Counties which adopt
5 full-time and permanent registration shall have authority to pay directors of elections whatever
6 compensation they may fix within budget appropriations."

7 **SECTION 2.15.(b)** This section becomes effective July 1, 2027.

9 PART III. DUTY & STRUCTURE OF THE STATE BOARD OF ELECTIONS

11 AUTHORITY IN ELECTION LITIGATION

12 **SECTION 3.1.(a)** G.S. 163-25 reads as rewritten:

13 "**§ 163-25. Authority of State Board to assist in litigation.**

14 (a) The State Board shall possess authority to assist any county board of elections in any
15 matter in which litigation is contemplated or has been initiated, ~~provided, the~~ in accordance with
16 all of the following:

17 (1) ~~The county board of elections in such county petitions, requests, by majority~~
18 ~~resolution, for such assistance from the State Board and, provided further, that~~
19 ~~the Board.~~

20 (2) The State Board determines, in its sole discretion by majority vote, to assist in
21 any such the matter.

22 (3) ~~It is further stipulated that the The State Board shall does not be authorized~~
23 ~~under this provision to enter into any litigation in assistance to counties, any~~
24 ~~county board or county boards except in those instances where the uniform~~
25 ~~administration of this Chapter has been, or would be threatened.~~

26 (b) ~~The Attorney General shall provide the State Board with legal assistance in execution~~
27 ~~of its authority under this section or, in the Attorney General's discretion, recommend that may~~
28 ~~employ staff counsel or retain private counsel be employed to provide legal services. Private~~
29 ~~counsel may be retained for any of the following matters:~~

30 (1) Any matter in which litigation is contemplated or has been initiated.

31 (2) Any matter in which the State Board is assisting in litigation in accordance
32 with subsection (a) of this section.

33 (3) Any matter arising in connection with the State Board's actions under this
34 Chapter.

35 (4) Any matter arising in connection with the Executive Director's actions under
36 this Chapter.

37 (c) ~~If the Attorney General recommends employment State Board determines retention~~
38 ~~of private counsel, counsel is necessary, the State Board may employ counsel with the approval~~
39 ~~of the General Assembly use funds available to the State Board to retain private counsel under~~
40 ~~this section. The State Board shall supervise and manage counsel retained under this section.~~

41 (d) G.S. 114-2.3 and G.S. 147-17 shall not apply to counsel employed or retained under
42 this section.

43 (e) All communications or documents made or used in connection with the provision of
44 legal services by counsel employed or retained under this section are not "public records" as
45 defined by G.S. 132-1 and shall not be open to public inspection, examination, or copying."

46 **SECTION 3.1.(b)** This section is effective when it becomes law and applies to
47 counsel employed on, retained on, or hired or retained after that date.

49 DESIGNATION OF EXEMPT POSITIONS AT THE STATE BOARD OF ELECTIONS

50 **SECTION 3.2.(a)** G.S. 126-5(c1) is amended by adding the following new
51 subdivisions to read:

1 "(42) The Executive Director of the State Board of Elections.

2 (43) Employees of the State Board of Elections, that the Executive Director of the
3 State Board of Elections, at any time, in the Executive Director of the State
4 Board of Elections' discretion, exempts from the application of this Chapter
5 by means of a letter to the Director of the Office of State Human Resources
6 designating these employees. The Executive Director of the State Board of
7 Elections may exempt no more than five employees under the authorization
8 set forth in this subdivision. Any exemptions under this subdivision shall not
9 affect, or be counted against, the number of exempt positions the Auditor may
10 designate in accordance with subdivision (2) of subsection (d) of this section."

11 **SECTION 3.2.(b)** G.S. 126-5(d)(2) reads as rewritten:

12 "(2) Exempt Positions in Council of State Departments and Offices and the Office
13 of the State Controller. – The Secretary of State, the Auditor, the Treasurer,
14 the Attorney General, the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the
15 Commissioner of Agriculture, the Commissioner of Insurance, the Labor
16 Commissioner, and the State Controller may designate exempt positions. The
17 number of exempt policymaking positions in each department headed by an
18 elected department head listed in this subdivision is limited to 25 exempt
19 policymaking positions or two percent (2%) of the total number of full-time
20 positions in the department, whichever is greater. The total number of
21 full-time positions in the Department of the State Auditor shall not include
22 employees of the State Board of Elections. The number of exempt managerial
23 positions is limited to 25 positions or two percent (2%) of the total number of
24 full-time positions in the department, whichever is greater. The number of
25 exempt policymaking positions designated by the Superintendent of Public
26 Instruction is limited to 70 exempt policymaking positions or two percent
27 (2%) of the total number of full-time positions in the department, whichever
28 is greater. The number of exempt managerial positions designated by the
29 Superintendent of Public Instruction is limited to 70 exempt managerial
30 positions or two percent (2%) of the total number of full-time positions in the
31 department, whichever is greater. The total number of exempt positions,
32 policymaking and managerial, designated by the Office of the State Controller
33 is limited to 10."
34

35 **PART IV. REVISIONS TO UNIFORM MILITARY AND OVERSEAS VOTERS ACT**

36 **PHOTO ID REQUIRED FOR UOCAVA VOTERS**

37 **SECTION 4.1.(a)** G.S. 163-258.10 reads as rewritten:

38 "**§ 163-258.10. ~~Timely casting~~ Casting of ballot.**

39 (a) To be valid, a military-overseas ballot shall either be received by the appropriate
40 county board of elections no later than the close of the polls, or the covered voter shall submit
41 the ballot for mailing, electronic transmission, or other authorized means of delivery not later
42 than 12:01 A.M., at the place where the voter completes the ballot, on the date of the election.

43 (b) The covered voter shall submit the military-overseas ballot with a copy of one of the
44 following forms of photographic identification:

45 (1) An unexpired military identification card issued by the United States
46 government.

47 (2) An unexpired United States passport card or the photo page of an unexpired
48 United States passport.

49 (3) An unexpired North Carolina drivers license.
50

1 (c) The State Board shall provide the means for any photographic identification
2 electronically submitted in accordance with this section to be submitted in a secure manner."

3 **SECTION 4.1.(b)** This section becomes effective January 1, 2026, and applies to
4 elections held on or after that date.

6 CHANGE TO DEFINITION OF COVERED VOTER

7 **SECTION 4.2.(a)** G.S. 163-258.2(1) reads as rewritten:

8 "(1) "Covered voter" means any of the following:

- 9 a. A uniformed-service voter or an overseas voter who is registered to
10 vote in this State.
- 11 b. A uniformed-service voter defined in subdivision (7) of this section
12 whose voting residence is in this State and who otherwise satisfies this
13 State's voter eligibility requirements.
- 14 c. An overseas voter who, before leaving the United States, was last
15 eligible to vote in this State and, except for a State residency
16 requirement, otherwise satisfies this State's voter eligibility
17 requirements.
- 18 d. An overseas voter who, before leaving the United States, would have
19 been last eligible to vote in this State had the voter then been of voting
20 age and, except for a State residency requirement, otherwise satisfies
21 this State's voter eligibility requirements.
- 22 e. ~~An overseas voter who was born outside the United States, is not~~
23 ~~described in sub-subdivision c. or d. of this subdivision, and, except~~
24 ~~for a State residency requirement, otherwise satisfies this State's voter~~
25 ~~eligibility requirements, if:~~
- 26 1. ~~The last place where a parent or legal guardian of the voter~~
27 ~~was, or under this Article would have been, eligible to vote~~
28 ~~before leaving the United States is within this State; and~~
- 29 2. ~~The voter has not previously registered to vote in any other~~
30 ~~state."~~

31 **SECTION 4.2.(b)** G.S. 163-258.5 reads as rewritten:

32 **"§ 163-258.5. Overseas voter's registration address.**

33 In registering to vote, an overseas voter who is eligible to vote in this State shall use and shall
34 be assigned to the precinct of the address of the last place of residence of the voter in this State,
35 ~~or, in the case of a voter described by G.S. 163-258.2(1)e., the address of the last place of~~
36 ~~residence in this State of the parent or legal guardian of the voter. State.~~ If that address is no
37 longer a recognized residential address, the voter shall be assigned an address for voting
38 purposes."

39 **SECTION 4.2.(c)** This section becomes effective January 1, 2026, and applies to
40 elections held on or after that date.

42 PART V. CAMPAIGN FINANCE REVISIONS

44 INCREASE THRESHOLD FOR REPORTING CERTAIN CONTRIBUTIONS

45 **SECTION 5.1.(a)** G.S. 163-278.10A reads as rewritten:

46 **"§ 163-278.10A. Threshold of ~~\$1,000~~ \$3,000 for financial reports for certain candidates.**

47 (a) Notwithstanding any other provision of this Chapter, a candidate for a county office,
48 municipal office, local school board office, soil and water conservation district board of
49 supervisors, or sanitary district board shall be exempted from the reports of contributions, loans,
50 and expenditures required in G.S. 163-278.9(a), 163-278.40B, 163-278.40C, 163-278.40D, and

1 163-278.40E if to further the candidate's campaign that ~~candidate~~candidate complies with all of
 2 the following:

- 3 (1) Does not receive more than ~~one thousand dollars (\$1,000)~~three thousand
 4 dollars (\$3,000) in contributions, and contributions.
 5 (2) Does not receive more than ~~one thousand dollars (\$1,000)~~three thousand
 6 dollars (\$3,000) in loans, and loans.
 7 (3) Does not spend more than ~~one thousand dollars (\$1,000)~~three thousand
 8 dollars (\$3,000).

9 To qualify for the exemption from those reports, the candidate's treasurer shall file a certification
 10 that the candidate does not intend to receive in contributions or loans or expend more than ~~one~~
 11 ~~thousand dollars (\$1,000)~~three thousand dollars (\$3,000) to further the candidate's campaign.
 12 The certification shall be filed with the Board at the same time the candidate files the candidate's
 13 Organizational Report as required in G.S. 163-278.7, G.S. 163-278.9, and G.S. 163-278.40A. If
 14 the candidate's campaign is being conducted by a political committee which is handling all
 15 contributions, loans, and expenditures for the candidate's campaign, the treasurer of the political
 16 committee shall file a certification of intent to stay within the threshold amount. If the intent to
 17 stay within the threshold changes, or if the ~~one thousand dollar (\$1,000)~~three-thousand-dollar
 18 (\$3,000) threshold is exceeded, the treasurer shall immediately notify the Board and shall be
 19 responsible for filing all reports required in G.S. 163-278.9 and 163-278.40B, 163-278.40C,
 20 163-278.40D, and 163-278.40E; provided that any contribution, loan, or expenditure which
 21 would have been required to be reported on an earlier report but for this section shall be included
 22 on the next report required after the intent changes or the threshold is exceeded.

23"

24 **SECTION 5.1.(b)** G.S. 163-278.12 reads as rewritten:

25 "**§ 163-278.12. Special reporting of contributions and independent expenditures.**

26 (a) Subject to G.S. 163-278.39 and G.S. 163-278.14, individuals and other entities not
 27 otherwise prohibited from doing so may make independent expenditures. In the event an
 28 individual, person, or other entity making independent expenditures but not otherwise required
 29 to report them makes independent expenditures in excess of ~~one hundred dollars (\$100.00),~~
 30 thousand dollars (\$1,000), that individual, person, or entity shall file a statement of such
 31 independent expenditure with the appropriate board of elections in the manner prescribed by the
 32 ~~State Board of Elections.~~ Board.

33 (b) Any person or entity other than an individual that is permitted to make contributions
 34 but is not otherwise required to report them shall report each contribution in excess of one
 35 ~~hundred dollars (\$100.00)~~thousand dollars (\$1,000) with the appropriate board of elections in
 36 the manner prescribed by the State ~~Board of Elections.~~ Board.

37 (c) In assuring compliance with subsections (a) and (b) of this section, the State Board of
 38 ~~Elections~~ shall require the identification of each person or entity making a donation of more than
 39 one ~~hundred dollars (\$100.00)~~thousand dollars (\$1,000) to the entity filing the report if the
 40 donation was made to further the reported independent expenditure or contribution. If the donor
 41 is an individual, the statement shall also contain the principal occupation of the donor. The
 42 "principal occupation of the donor" shall mean the same as the "principal occupation of the
 43 contributor" in G.S. 163-278.11.

44 (d) Contributions or independent expenditures required to be reported under this section
 45 shall be reported within 30 days after they exceed one ~~hundred dollars (\$100.00)~~thousand dollars
 46 (\$1,000) or 10 days before an election the contributions or independent expenditures affect,
 47 whichever occurs earlier.

48 ..."

49 **SECTION 5.1.(c)** No earlier than October 1, 2025, the State Board of Elections shall
 50 adjust the thresholds imposed by G.S. 163-278.10A and G.S. 163-278.12, as enacted by this
 51 section, effective for the election cycle beginning January 1, 2027.

48-HOUR REPORT REQUIREMENTS

SECTION 5.2.(a) G.S. 163-278.9 reads as rewritten:

"§ 163-278.9. Statements filed with Board.

(a) Except as provided in G.S. 163-278.10A, the treasurer of each candidate and of each political committee shall file with the Board under certification of the treasurer as true and correct to the best of the knowledge of that officer the following reports:

...

(2) 48-Hour Report. – A political committee, political party or affiliated party committee that receives a contribution or transfer of funds shall disclose within 48 hours of receipt a contribution or transfer of ~~one two thousand~~ two thousand dollars ~~(\$1,000)–(\$2,000)~~ or more received before an election but after the period covered by the last report due before that election. The disclosure shall be by report to the ~~State Board~~ identifying the source and amount of the funds. The State Board shall specify the form and manner of making the report, including the reporting of in-kind contributions. The State Board shall increase the dollar amount of the reporting threshold effective each election cycle beginning the period from January 1 of an odd-numbered year through December 31 of the next even-numbered year based on the Consumer Price Index as provided in G.S. 163-278.13(b). The State Board shall set the revised threshold in October of the even-numbered year, publish the revised threshold in the North Carolina Register, and notify the Revisor of Statutes who shall adjust the dollar amount in this subdivision.

...

(a1) Subdivision (a)(2) of this section shall not apply to any candidate campaign committee, as defined by G.S. 163-278.38Z, in a primary election in which the candidate is unopposed on that ballot.

...."

SECTION 5.2.(b) G.S. 163-278.9A(a)(3) reads as rewritten:

"(3) 48-Hour Report. – A referendum committee that receives a contribution or transfer of funds shall disclose within 48 hours of receipt a contribution or transfer of ~~one two thousand~~ two thousand dollars ~~(\$1,000)–(\$2,000)~~ or more received before a referendum but after the period covered by the last report due before that referendum. The disclosure shall be by report to the ~~State Board of Elections~~ identifying the source and amount of such funds. The State Board ~~of Elections~~ shall specify the form and manner of making the report, including the reporting of in-kind contributions. The State Board shall increase the dollar amount of the reporting threshold effective each election cycle beginning the period from January 1 of an odd-numbered year through December 31 of the next even-numbered year based on the Consumer Price Index as provided in G.S. 163-278.13(b). The State Board shall set the revised threshold in October of the even-numbered year, publish the revised threshold in the North Carolina Register, and notify the Revisor of Statutes who shall adjust the dollar amount in this subdivision."

SECTION 5.2.(c) No earlier than October 1, 2025, the State Board of Elections shall adjust the thresholds imposed by G.S. 163-278.9(a)(2) and G.S. 163-278.9A(a)(3), as enacted by this section, effective for the election cycle beginning January 1, 2027.

CONTRIBUTIONS BY FOREIGN NATIONALS

SECTION 5.3.(a) G.S. 163-278.6 is amended by adding a new subdivision to read:

"(52) The term "foreign national" means any of the following:

- 1 a. An individual who is not a citizen or lawful permanent resident of the
 2 United States.
 3 b. A government of a foreign country, or any political subdivision
 4 thereof.
 5 c. A foreign political party.
 6 d. Any person that is organized under the law of, or has its principal place
 7 of business in, a foreign country.
 8 e. Any person organized and operating in the United States that is wholly
 9 or majority owned by a foreign national or combination of foreign
 10 nationals unless both of the following apply:
 11 1. Any contribution or expenditure the person lawfully makes
 12 derives entirely from funds generated by operations in the
 13 United States.
 14 2. All decisions concerning the contribution or expenditure are
 15 made by individuals who are United States citizens or lawful
 16 permanent residents, except for setting overall budget
 17 amounts."

18 **SECTION 5.3.(b)** G.S. 163-278.9A, as amended by Section 5.2 of this act, reads as
 19 rewritten:

20 **"§ 163-278.9A. Statements filed by referendum committees.**

21 (a) The treasurer of each referendum committee shall file under verification with the
 22 Board the following reports:

23 ...

24 (1a) Organizational Funding Certification. – The treasurer shall file a signed
 25 statement with the Board no later than the tenth day following the organization
 26 of a referendum committee affirming that no preliminary activity was funded
 27 by one or more foreign nationals. Preliminary activity includes conducting a
 28 poll, public opinion survey, or focus group; drafting referendum language;
 29 telephone calls; and travel.

30 ...

31 (b) Except as otherwise provided in this Article, each report shall be current within seven
 32 days prior to the date the report is due and shall list all contributions received and expenditures
 33 made which have not been previously reported.

34 (c) Any report disclosing contributions required by this section shall include an
 35 affirmation by the treasurer that the contributor associated with each contribution is not a foreign
 36 national."

37 **SECTION 5.3.(c)** G.S. 163-278.15(a) reads as rewritten:

38 "(a) No candidate, political committee, political party, affiliated party committee, or
 39 treasurer shall solicit or accept any contribution made by any of the following:

- 40 (1) A corporation, foreign or domestic, regardless of whether such corporation
 41 does business in the State of North Carolina, or made by Carolina.
 42 (2) ~~any~~Any business entity, labor union, professional association, or insurance
 43 company.
 44 (3) Any foreign national.

45 (a1) This section does not apply with regard to entities permitted to make contributions by
 46 G.S. 163-278.19(h)."

47 **SECTION 5.3.(d)** G.S. 163-278.19 reads as rewritten:

48 **"§ 163-278.19. Violations by foreign nationals, corporations, business entities, labor unions,**
 49 **professional associations and insurance companies.**

1 (a) Except as provided in subsections (c), (d), (f), (g), (h), and (i) of this section it shall
2 be unlawful for any foreign national, corporation, business entity, labor union, professional
3 association or insurance company directly or indirectly do any of the following:

4 (1) To make any contribution to a candidate or political committee.

5 (2) To pay or use or offer, consent or agree to pay or use any of its money or
6 property for any contribution to a candidate or political committee.

7 (3) To compensate, reimburse, or indemnify any person or individual for money
8 or property so used or for any contribution or expenditure so made.

9 (a1) It shall also be unlawful for any officer, director, stockholder, attorney, agent or
10 member of any foreign national, corporation, business entity, labor union, professional
11 association or insurance company to aid, abet, advise or consent to any such contribution, or for
12 any person or individual to solicit or knowingly receive any such contribution. Supporting or
13 opposing the election of clearly identified candidates includes supporting or opposing the
14 candidates of a clearly identified political party. Any officer, director, stockholder, attorney,
15 agent or member of any foreign national, corporation, business entity, labor union, professional
16 association or insurance company aiding or abetting in any contribution made in violation of this
17 section shall be guilty of a Class 2 misdemeanor, and shall in addition be liable to such foreign
18 national, corporation, business entity, labor union, professional association or insurance company
19 for the amount of such contribution and the same may be recovered ~~of him~~ upon suit by any
20 stockholder or member ~~thereof~~ thereof against the aiding or abetting officer, director,
21 stockholder, attorney, agent or member.

22 (b) A transfer of funds shall be deemed to have been a contribution made indirectly if it
23 is made to any committee, affiliated party committee, or political party account, whether inside
24 or outside this State, with the intent or purpose of being exchanged in whole or in part for any
25 other funds to be contributed or expended in an election for North Carolina office or to offset any
26 other funds contributed or expended in an election for North Carolina office.

27 (c) Proceeds of loans made in the ordinary course of business by financial institutions
28 may be used for contributions made in compliance with this Subchapter. Financial institutions
29 may also grant revolving credit to political committees and referendum committees in the
30 ordinary course of business.

31 (d) It shall, however, be lawful for any corporation, business entity, labor union,
32 professional association or insurance company to do any of the following:

33 (1) ~~communicate~~ Communicate with its employees, stockholders or members and
34 their families on any ~~subject~~; to subject.

35 (2) ~~conduct~~ Conduct nonpartisan registration and get-out-the-vote campaigns
36 aimed at their employees, stockholders, or members and their ~~families~~;
37 or families.

38 (3) ~~for~~ For officials and employees of any corporation, insurance company or
39 business entity or the officials and members of any labor union or professional
40 association to establish, administer, contribute to, and to receive and solicit
41 contributions to a separate segregated fund to be utilized for political
42 purposes, and those individuals shall be deemed to become and be a political
43 committee as that term is defined in G.S. 163-278.6(74) or a referendum
44 committee as defined in G.S. 163-278.6(84); provided, however, that it shall
45 be unlawful for any such fund to make a contribution or expenditure by
46 utilizing contributions secured by physical force, job discrimination, financial
47 reprisals or the threat of force, job discrimination or financial reprisals, or by
48 dues, fees, or other moneys required as a condition of membership or
49 employment or as a requirement with respect to any terms or conditions of
50 employment, including, without limitation, hiring, firing, transferring,

1 promoting, demoting, or granting seniority or employment-related benefits of
2 any kind, or by moneys obtained in any commercial transaction whatsoever.

3 (e) A violation of this section is a Class 2 misdemeanor. In addition, the acceptance of
4 any contribution, reimbursement, or indemnification under subsection (a) shall be a Class 2
5 misdemeanor.

6 (f) Whenever a candidate or treasurer is an officer, director, stockholder, attorney, agent,
7 or employee of any corporation, business entity, labor union, professional association or
8 insurance company, and by virtue of ~~his~~the position therewith uses office space and
9 communication facilities of the corporation, business entity, labor union, professional association
10 or insurance company in the normal and usual scope of ~~his~~ employment, the fact that the
11 candidate or treasurer receives telephone calls, mail, or visits in such office which relates to
12 activities prohibited by this Article shall not be considered a violation under this section.

13 (g) Notwithstanding the prohibitions specified in this Article and Article 22 of this
14 Chapter, a political committee organized under provisions of this Article shall be entitled to
15 receive and the corporation, business entity, labor union, professional association, or insurance
16 company designated on the political committee's organizational report as the parent entity of the
17 employees or members who organized the political committee is authorized to give reasonable
18 administrative support that shall include record keeping, computer services, billings, mailings to
19 members of the political committee, membership development, fund-raising activities, office
20 supplies, office space, and such other support as is reasonably necessary for the administration
21 of the political committee.

22 The approximate cost of any reasonable administrative support shall be submitted to the
23 political committee, in writing, and the political committee shall include that cost on the report
24 required by G.S. 163-278.9(a)(4). Also included in the report shall be the approximate allocable
25 portion of the compensation of any officer or employee of the corporation, business entity, labor
26 union, professional association, or insurance company who has devoted more than thirty-five
27 percent (35%) of ~~his~~that employee's time during normal business hours of the corporation,
28 business entity, labor union, professional association, or insurance company during the period
29 covered by the required report. The approximate cost submitted by the parent corporation,
30 business entity, labor union, professional association, or insurance company shall be entered on
31 the political committee's report as the final entry on its list of "contributions" and a copy of the
32 written approximate cost received by it shall be attached.

33 The reasonable administrative support given by a corporation, business entity, labor union,
34 professional association, or insurance company shall be designated on the books of the
35 corporation, business entity, labor union, professional association, or insurance company as such
36 and may not be treated by it as a business deduction for State income tax purposes.

37 (h) This section does not prohibit a contribution by an ~~[a]~~ person or entity ~~that~~that meets
38 all of the following criteria:

39 (1) Has as an express purpose promoting social, educational, or political ideas and
40 not to generate business ~~income;~~income.

41 (2) Does not have shareholders or other persons which have an economic interest
42 in its assets and ~~earnings;~~and earnings.

43 (3) Was not established by a business corporation, by an insurance company, by
44 a business entity, including, but not limited to, those chartered under Chapter
45 55, Chapter 55A, Chapter 55B, or Chapter 58 of the General Statutes, by a
46 professional association, or by a labor union and does not receive substantial
47 revenue from such entities. Substantial revenue is rebuttably presumed to be
48 more than ten percent (10%) of total revenues in a calendar year.

49 (4) Is not a foreign national.

50 (i) If a political committee has as its only purpose accepting contributions and making
51 expenditures to influence elections, and that political committee incorporates as a nonprofit

1 corporation to shield its participants from liability created outside this Subchapter, that political
2 committee is not considered to be a corporation for purposes of this section. Incorporation of a
3 political committee does not relieve any individual, person, or other entity of any liability, duty,
4 or obligation created pursuant to any provision of this Subchapter. To obtain the benefits of this
5 subsection, an incorporating political committee must state exactly the following language as the
6 only purpose for which the corporation can be organized: "to accept contributions and make
7 expenditures to influence elections as a political committee pursuant to G.S. 163-278.6(74)
8 only." No political committee shall do business as a political committee after incorporation unless
9 it has been certified by the State Board as being in compliance with this subsection."

10 **SECTION 5.3.(e)** G.S. 163-278.19B(a) reads as rewritten:

11 "(a) Notwithstanding the provisions of ~~G.S. 163-278.19~~, G.S.163-278.19 and except for a
12 foreign national, a person prohibited by that section from making a contribution may donate to
13 political parties, and affiliated party committees and political parties and affiliated party
14 committees may accept from such a person, money and other things of value donated to a political
15 party headquarters building fund. A foreign national shall not make any contribution or donation
16 to a political party or affiliated party committee."

17 **SECTION 5.3.(f)** Article 22A of Chapter 163 of the General Statutes is amended by
18 adding a new section to read:

19 "**§ 163-278.19C. Contributions by foreign nationals.**

20 (a) A foreign national shall not direct, dictate, control, or participate in the
21 decision-making process of any individual's, person's, or referendum committee's activities to
22 influence a referendum, including the making of contributions or independent expenditures. A
23 foreign national shall not coordinate with any individual, person, or referendum committee to
24 influence a referendum.

25 (b) A foreign national may not solicit, directly or indirectly, the making of a contribution
26 to influence a referendum. A foreign national may not solicit, directly or indirectly, the making
27 of an expenditure by another individual or person to influence a referendum.

28 (c) A referendum committee shall not, directly or indirectly, solicit or accept any
29 contribution from a foreign national.

30 (d) Any investigation and enforcement proceeding for alleged violations of this section
31 shall strictly comply with the confidentiality procedures and requirements laid out in this
32 Chapter, including but not limited to G.S. 163-278.22 and G.S. 163-278.27."

33 **SECTION 5.3.(g)** G.S. 163-278.19A reads as rewritten:

34 "**§ 163-278.19A. Contributions allowed.**

35 Notwithstanding any other provision of this Chapter, Except as provided in
36 G.S. 163-278.19C, it is lawful for any person as defined in G.S. 163-278.6(72) to contribute to a
37 referendum committee."

38 **SECTION 5.3.(h)** G.S. 163-278.27(a) reads as rewritten:

39 "(a) Any individual, candidate, political committee, referendum committee, treasurer,
40 person or media who intentionally violates the applicable provisions of G.S. 163-278.7,
41 163-278.8, 163-278.9, 163-278.10, 163-278.11, 163-278.12, 163-278.13, 163-278.13B,
42 163-278.14, 163-278.16, 163-278.16B, 163-278.17, 163-278.18, 163-278.19, 163-278.19C,
43 163-278.20, 163-278.39, 163-278.40A, 163-278.40B, 163-278.40C, 163-278.40D, 163-278.40E,
44 or 163-278.40J is guilty of a Class 2 misdemeanor. The statute of limitations as stated in
45 G.S. 15-1 shall run from the day the last report is due to be filed with the appropriate board of
46 elections for the election cycle for which the violation occurred."

47 **SECTION 5.3.(i)** This section becomes effective January 1, 2026.

49 PART VI. SIGNATURE VERIFICATION PILOT PROGRAM

50 **SECTION 6.(a)** The State Board of Elections shall select 10 counties in the State in
51 which to conduct a pilot program during the primary held in 2026 for signature verification on

1 executed absentee ballots. In selecting the 10 counties for the pilot, the State Board of Elections
2 shall seek diversity of population size, regional location, and demographic composition, and may
3 use the same 10 counties that were selected for the pilot program in accordance with S.L.
4 2023-140. The pilot program shall consist of county boards of elections using signature
5 verification software to check the signatures of voters noted on all executed absentee ballots
6 received by the county boards of elections in the 2026 primary. The State Board of Elections
7 shall select the signature verification software and ensure that the software is available for all 10
8 counties to use in the 2026 primary. The State Board of Elections shall assist the selected county
9 boards of elections in implementing the signature verification software, including assisting the
10 selected county boards of elections in any training needed on how the software is to be used for
11 signature matching on executed absentee ballots.

12 **SECTION 6.(b)** The State Board of Elections shall closely monitor the pilot program
13 established in this section. The selected county boards of elections shall report to the State Board
14 of Elections its findings on the use of the signature verification software during the 2026 primary,
15 including all of the following:

- 16 (1) Whether the signature verification software was used for all executed absentee
17 ballots, and what the voter signature on the executed absentee ballot was
18 matched against.
- 19 (2) How many executed absentee ballots were counted by the county board of
20 elections in the 2026 primary.
- 21 (3) How many executed absentee ballots were flagged by the signature
22 verification software, and any information known on how close of a match the
23 signatures must be for the signature match software to not flag the voter's
24 signature.
- 25 (4) Information on how the signature matching software flagged an executed
26 absentee ballot with a signature that did not match the signature on file for the
27 voter, including any known information on the rate of error in the software.

28 **SECTION 6.(c)** In implementing the pilot program established in this section, no
29 executed absentee ballot shall be rejected by the county board of elections for failing any
30 signature verification. All executed absentee ballots that are otherwise eligible to be counted in
31 accordance with Chapter 163 of the General Statutes shall be counted.

32 **SECTION 6.(d)** The State Board of Elections shall report its findings, along with
33 any recommendations, to the General Assembly on or before May 1, 2026. The report shall be
34 delivered to the Joint Legislative Elections Oversight Committee and shall also include the
35 following:

- 36 (1) A compilation of the information reported from the selected county boards of
37 elections as required by subsection (b) of this section.
- 38 (2) The estimated cost to implement signature verification for absentee ballots
39 statewide.
- 40 (3) Any suggested law changes to fully implement signature verification
41 statewide for absentee ballots, including suggestions on a process for how a
42 voter can cure a deficiency related to signature verification of absentee ballots.
- 43 (4) Any other information relevant to signature verification of absentee ballots.

44 **PART VII. TRAINING FOR COUNTY BOARDS OF ELECTIONS**

45 **SECTION 7.1.** The School of Government at the University of North Carolina at
46 Chapel Hill shall work jointly with the State Board of Elections to develop a uniform curriculum
47 to provide trainings for county directors of elections and employees of county boards of elections
48 on the election laws and procedures as provided for in Chapter 163 of the General Statutes.
49

1 **SECTION 7.2.** The State Board of Elections shall partner with local community
2 colleges to provide a location in which any training conducted by the State Board of Elections or
3 a county board of elections may be held.

4

5 **PART VIII. EFFECTIVE DATE**

6 **SECTION 8.** Except as otherwise provided, this act is effective when it becomes
7 law.