

A Report to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee
March 6, 2020

Securing North Carolina's Elections



NORTH CAROLINA
STATE BOARD OF ELECTIONS

Overview

The State Board:

- Spends significant time and resources on security-related initiatives
- Considers security with every major decision made and with every policy or rule drafted
- Has reinforced and strengthened existing measures and established additional efforts to protect our elections before, during, and after the voting process

Topics for today:

- Efforts to secure North Carolina's elections, including cybersecurity
- Certification of voting systems and role in election security

Comprehensive Approach

- Election security partnerships
- Cybersecurity
- Pre-election and voting systems security
- Election site procedures and general policy
- Post-election procedures and audits
- Investigations
- Ways voters can help secure our elections

Election Security Partnerships

Constant coordination to ensure coordinated, comprehensive strategy for elections security posture with federal and state partners:

- US Department of Homeland Security (DHS)
- Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)
- Election Infrastructure Information Sharing & Analysis Center (EI-ISAC)
- NC Department of Information (NCDIT)
- NC National Guard (NCNG)
- NC Department of Public Safety (DPS)/NC Emergency Management (NCEM)
- Woodstar Labs
- National Association of State Election Directors (NASD)



Cybersecurity: Cyber Unit & Field Support

With our partners, developed sustainable cybersecurity strategy:

- Regular penetration testing and threat hunting on election systems
- Physical security reviews at the state and county levels
- Regular external vulnerability scanning and remediation of any findings
- Regular infrastructure system patching
- Build out of information security policies in alignment with NCDIT
- Incident response planning, tabletop exercises, and awareness training
- Additional cybersecurity monitoring and response by all partners during elections events
- Regular receipt and analysis of information and alerts related to cybersecurity risks with various partners and agencies

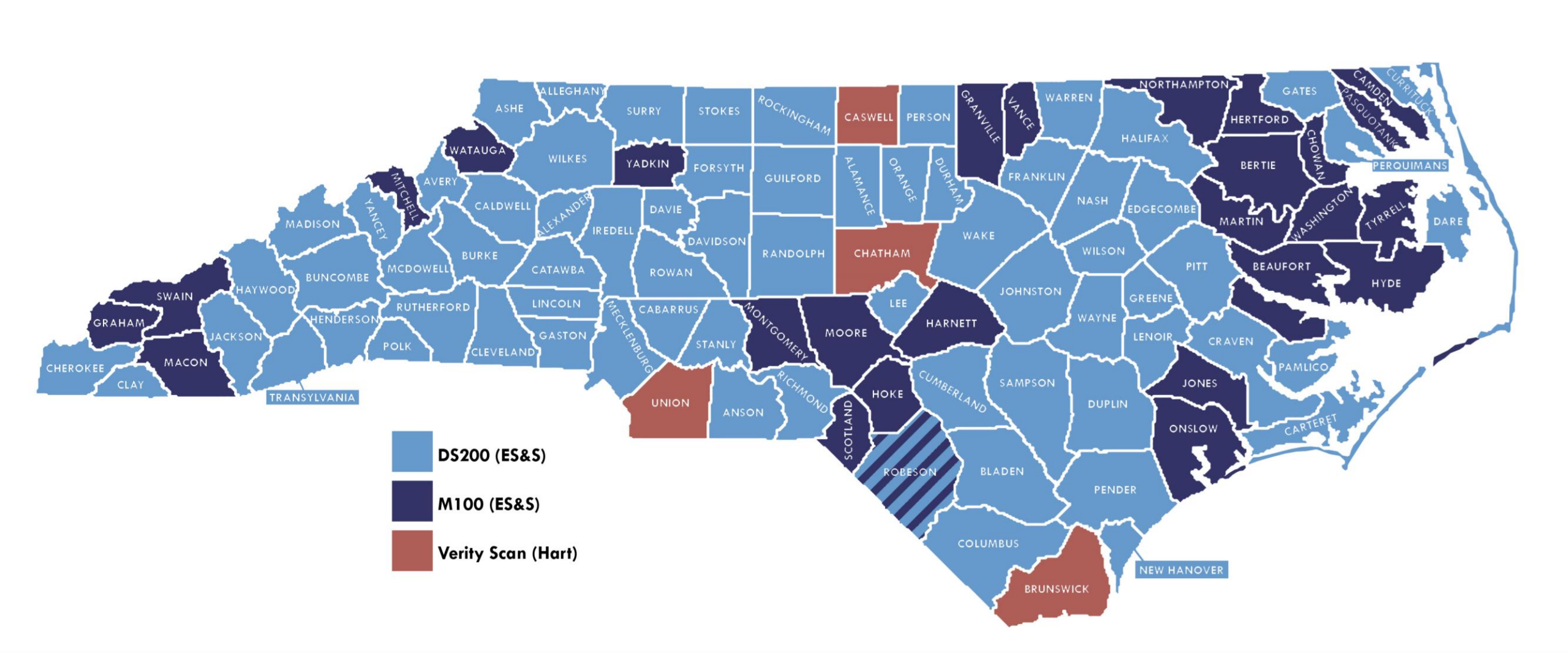
Cybersecurity: Cyber Unit & Field Support

- Building internal State Board of Elections cybersecurity team
 - Information Security and Compliance Manager
 - 3 Cybersecurity Practitioners
 - 8 Security & Support Technicians to service all 100 counties
- Training for State Board and County Board officials
 - Multiple state election conferences
 - Tabletop exercises
 - 6 regional cybersecurity workshops led by NCNG
 - Online learning modules

Voting Systems Certification & Security

- 3 new voting systems certified for NC in August 2019
 - Addressed decertification of direct record electronic (DRE) units
- Certification Process
 - Certified by US Election Assistance Commission
 - Tested by nationally certified laboratories
 - Additional testing to meet NC certification program
 - Public demonstration before county recommendation and use in an election or simulated election
 - Acceptance testing upon delivery
- **Beginning with the 2020 elections, all 100 counties will use paper ballots**

NC March 2020 Primary: Tabulators



Ongoing Pre-Election & Voting Systems Security

- Logic & Accuracy Testing
 - Before **every election**, on **every machine**, for **every ballot style** and **every contest and candidate/choice**
 - Verified against test script and through mock election process
- By law, voting machines may not be connected to the internet. Results are transmitted by clean media (e.g., USB drive).
- Must be kept in secure, safe, and environmentally controlled locations with access logged and inventory documented and verified
- Annual maintenance of all voting systems
- Voting systems and ballot materials are secured with tamper-evident seals

Election Procedures

- Chain of Custody
 - Created for all types of voting: absentee by mail, one-stop early voting, and Election Day
 - Verify number of ballots prior to election, reconcile throughout the day, and account for materials at close/return
 - Also includes keys and media
- Polling places staffed with trained, bipartisan officials who take an oath
- Zero reports printed and verified before voting begins (no ballots cast)
- Observers are allowed as prescribed by law

Post-Election Audits & Procedures

5 post-election audits are performed after each election to detect irregularities, such as equipment tampering, ballot stuffing, and voting machine or tabulation errors

1. Voter History Audit
2. Manual Entry Audit
3. Provisional Audit
4. Sample Audit
5. Close Contest Audit
6. *Pilot Program for March 2020: Risk Limiting Audit*

Investigations

State Board of Elections has dedicated investigations division staffed with professional investigators. Investigate:

- Reports of fraud
- Other irregularities and misconduct
- Refers to prosecutors when warranted by evidence

How Voters Can Help Secure Elections

- Check their ballot before casting it
- Report problems
- Volunteer to work in elections
- Get information from trusted sources
- Verify information before sharing on social media
- ... and VOTE

Voter Confidence Campaign

- #YourVoteCountsNC
- “How We Secure Elections in North Carolina” document
- Dedicated webpage
- “10 Facts About Election Security in North Carolina” handout
- Public Service Announcements
- Social media posts
- Media interviews and presentations
- Roundtable with Acting Secretary of Homeland Security Chad Wolf (2/27/2020, Mecklenburg County)





NORTH CAROLINA

STATE BOARD OF ELECTIONS

10 FACTS ABOUT ELECTION SECURITY IN NORTH CAROLINA



1. NO EVIDENCE OF SUCCESSFUL ATTACK



North Carolina elections officials have no evidence that any election system or voting system in the state has ever been the target of a successful cyber attack.

2. PARTNERSHIPS



Elections officials are in regular contact and have strong and growing relationships with partners in federal and state governments, who assist with cyber and physical security, share information, plan for election events and respond to incidents.

3. PAPER BALLOTS



Under state law, all voting systems used in North Carolina must use paper ballots, producing a paper trail that can be audited. In 2020, all 100 counties will use paper ballots. By federal law, ballot marking devices must be available at every polling place for any voter who needs or wishes to use one to mark a ballot.

4. CERTIFIED VOTING SYSTEMS



All voting machines used in North Carolina are certified by the U.S. Election Assistance Commission after testing by certified laboratories. They are also certified by the State Board of Elections after additional testing, and all systems certified in North Carolina are certified, used and audited in other states.

5. NO INTERNET



By state law, voting machines may not be connected to the Internet, limiting the possibility of cyber interference.

6. LOGIC & ACCURACY TESTING



Before every election, county boards of elections conduct logic and accuracy tests on every machine that will be used to ensure proper coding of ballots and counting of votes for every contest on the ballot.

7. BIPARTISAN, TRAINED OFFICIALS



Every polling place is staffed with bipartisan, trained officials from the local community who take an oath to uphold state elections laws and work together to ensure election security. Bipartisan State and County Boards of Elections oversee all aspects of elections.

8. AUDITS



After every election and before results are certified, the State and County Boards of Elections conduct audits designed to detect irregularities, such as equipment tampering, ballot stuffing and voting machine or tabulation errors.

9. INVESTIGATIONS DIVISION



North Carolina is one of few states with dedicated Investigations Division, which investigates reports of fraud and other irregularities and refers cases to prosecutors when warranted by evidence.

10. INFORMED VOTERS



Every voter can help promote election security by voting, checking their ballot before casting it, reporting problems with the voting process to poll workers and volunteering to work in elections. Also, voters should get information on elections from trusted sources, particularly elections officials, and verify information about elections before sharing it on social media.

Upcoming Needs

- Need for secure physical building
- 2020 HAVA state matching funds
- Electronic Registration Information Center (ERIC) membership