

SUBCHAPTER VIII. REGULATION OF ELECTION CAMPAIGNS.

Article 22.

Corrupt Practices and Other Offenses Against the Elective Franchise.

§§ 163-259 through 163-268: Repealed by Session Laws 1975, c. 565, s. 8.

§§ 163-269, 163-270: Repealed by Session Laws 1999-31, s. 5(b), effective May 4, 1999.

§ 163-271. Intimidation of voters by officers made misdemeanor.

It shall be unlawful for any person holding any office, position, or employment in the State government, or under and with any department, institution, bureau, board, commission, or other State agency, or under and with any county, city, town, district, or other political subdivision, directly or indirectly, to discharge, threaten to discharge, or cause to be discharged, or otherwise intimidate or oppress any other person in such employment on account of any vote such voter or any member of his family may cast, or consider or intend to cast, or not to cast, or which he may have failed to cast, or to seek or undertake to control any vote which any subordinate of such person may cast, or consider or intend to cast, or not to cast, by threat, intimidation, or declaration that the position, salary, or any part of the salary of such subordinate depends in any manner whatsoever, directly or indirectly, upon the way in which subordinate or any member of his family casts, or considers or intends to cast, or not to cast his vote, at any primary or election. A violation of this section is a Class 2 misdemeanor. (1933, c. 165, s. 25; 1967, c. 775, s. 1; 1987, c. 565, s. 11; 1993, c. 539, s. 1109; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c); 2017-6, s. 3; 2018-146, s. 3.1(a), (b).)

§ 163-272: Repealed by Session Laws 1971, c. 872, s. 3.

§ 163-272.1. Penalties for violation of this Chapter.

Whenever in this Chapter it is provided that a crime is a misdemeanor, the punishment shall be for a Class 2 misdemeanor. (1987, c. 565, s. 1; 1993, c. 539, s. 1110; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c); 2017-6, s. 3; 2018-146, s. 3.1(a), (b).)

§ 163-273. Offenses of voters; interference with voters; penalty.

(a) Any person who shall, in connection with any primary or election in this State, do any of the acts and things declared in this section to be unlawful, shall be guilty of a Class 2 misdemeanor. It shall be unlawful:

- (1) For a voter, except as otherwise provided in this Chapter, to allow his ballot to be seen by any person.
- (2) For a voter to take or remove, or attempt to take or remove, any ballot from the voting enclosure.
- (3) For any person to interfere with, or attempt to interfere with, any voter when inside the voting enclosure.
- (4) For any person to interfere with, or attempt to interfere with, any voter when marking his ballots.
- (5) For any voter to remain longer than the specified time allowed by this Chapter in a voting booth, after being notified that his time has expired.
- (6) For any person to endeavor to induce any voter, while within the voting enclosure, before depositing his ballots, to show how he marks or has marked his ballots.

- (7) For any person to aid, or attempt to aid, any voter by means of any mechanical device, or any other means whatever, while within the voting enclosure, in marking his ballots.

(b) Election officers shall cause any person committing any of the offenses set forth in subsection (a) of this section to be arrested and shall cause charges to be preferred against the person so offending in a court of competent jurisdiction. (1929, c. 164, s. 29; 1967, c. 775, s. 1; 1987, c. 565, s. 12; 1993, c. 539, s. 1111; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c); 2017-6, s. 3; 2018-146, s. 3.1(a), (b).)

§ 163-274. Certain acts declared misdemeanors.

(a) Class 2 Misdemeanors. – Any person who shall, in connection with any primary or election in this State, do any of the acts and things declared in this subsection to be unlawful, shall be guilty of a Class 2 misdemeanor. It shall be unlawful to do any of the following:

- (1) For any person to fail, as an officer or as a judge or chief judge of a primary or election, or as a member of any board of elections, to prepare the books, ballots, and return blanks which it is the person's duty under the law to prepare, or to distribute the same as required by law, or to perform any other duty imposed upon that person within the time and in the manner required by law.
- (2) For any member, director, or employee of a board of elections to alter a voter registration application or other voter registration record without either the written authorization of the applicant or voter or the written authorization of the State Board of Elections.
- (3) For any person to continue or attempt to act as a judge or chief judge of a primary or election, or as a member of any board of elections, after having been legally removed from such position and after having been given notice of such removal.
- (4) For any person to break up or by force or violence to stay or interfere with the holding of any primary or election, to interfere with the possession of any ballot box, election book, ballot, or return sheet by those entitled to possession of the same under the law, or to interfere in any manner with the performance of any duty imposed by law upon any election officer or member of any board of elections.
- (5) For any person to be guilty of any boisterous conduct so as to disturb any member of any election board or any chief judge or judge of election in the performance of that person's duties as imposed by law.
- (6) For any person to bet or wager any money or other thing of value on any election.
- (7) For any person, directly or indirectly, to discharge or threaten to discharge from employment, or otherwise intimidate or oppose any legally qualified voter on account of any vote such voter may cast or consider or intend to cast, or not to cast, or which that voter may have failed to cast.
- (8) For any person to publish in a newspaper or pamphlet or otherwise, any charge derogatory to any candidate or calculated to affect the candidate's chances of nomination or election, unless such publication be signed by the party giving publicity to and being responsible for such charge.

- (9) For any person to publish or cause to be circulated derogatory reports with reference to any candidate in any primary or election, knowing such report to be false or in reckless disregard of its truth or falsity, when such report is calculated or intended to affect the chances of such candidate for nomination or election.
- (10) For any person to give or promise, in return for political support or influence, any political appointment or support for political office.
- (11) For any chair of a county board of elections or other returning officer to fail or neglect, willfully or of malice, to perform any duty, act, matter or thing required or directed in the time, manner and form in which said duty, matter or thing is required to be performed in relation to any primary, general or special election and the returns thereof.
- (12) For any clerk of the superior court to refuse to make and give to any person applying in writing for the same a duly certified copy of the returns of any primary or election or of a tabulated statement to a primary or election, the returns of which are by law deposited in his office, upon the tender of the fees therefor.
- (13) For any person willfully and knowingly to impose upon any blind or illiterate voter a ballot in any primary or election contrary to the wish or desire of such voter, by falsely representing to such voter that the ballot proposed to the voter is such as the voter desires.
- (14) Except as authorized by G.S. 163-82.15, for any person to provide false information, or sign the name of any other person, to a written report under G.S. 163-82.15.
- (15) For any person to be compensated based on the number of forms submitted for assisting persons in registering to vote.
- (16) For any person who is not an elections official or who is not otherwise authorized by law to retain a registrant's signature, full or partial Social Security number, date of birth, or the identity of the public agency at which the registrant registered under G.S. 163-82.20, any electronic mail address submitted under Article 7A of this Chapter, or drivers license number from any form described in G.S. 163-82.3 after submission of the form to the county board of elections or elections official.

(b) Class 1 Misdemeanor. – Any person who, in connection with any primary or election in this State, violates any provision of this subsection is guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor. It shall be unlawful to do any of the following:

- (1) For any person who has access to an official voted ballot or record to knowingly disclose in violation of G.S. 163-165.1(e) how an individual has voted that ballot.
- (2) For any person to impersonate a chief judge, judge of election, or other precinct official while in the discharge of duties in the registration of voters or in conducting any primary or election.
- (3) For any person other than the State Board or a county board of elections, or any employee of the State Board or a county board of elections, to affix or print any identifier for the purpose of tracking the form on any absentee ballot request form. (1931, c. 348, s. 9; 1951, c. 983, s. 1; 1967, c. 775, s. 1; 1979, c. 135, s. 3; 1987, c. 565, s. 13; c. 583, s. 9; 1993, c. 539, s. 1112; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s.

14(c); 1993 (Reg. Sess., 1994), c. 762, s. 58(a)-(c); 1999-424, s. 7(h); 1999-426, s. 2(a); 1999-455, s. 21; 2007-391, ss. 9(b), 16(b); 2013-381, s. 14.1; 2017-6, s. 3; 2018-13, s. 3.9(a); 2018-146, s. 3.1(a), (b); 2023-140, s. 37(a).)

§ 163-275. Certain acts declared felonies.

Any person who shall, in connection with any primary, general or special election held in this State, do any of the acts or things declared in this section to be unlawful, shall be guilty of a Class I felony. It shall be unlawful:

- (1) For any person fraudulently to cause that person's name to be placed upon the registration books of more than one election precinct or fraudulently to cause or procure that person's name or that of any other person to be placed upon the registration books in any precinct when registration in that precinct does not qualify the person to vote legally therein, or to impersonate falsely another registered voter for the purpose of voting in the stead of the other voter.
- (2) For any person to give or promise or request or accept at any time, before or after any such primary or election, any money, property or other thing of value whatsoever in return for the vote of any elector.
- (3) For any person who is an election officer, a member of an election board or other officer charged with any duty with respect to any primary or election, knowingly to make any false or fraudulent entry on any election book or any false or fraudulent returns, or knowingly to make or cause to be made any false statement on any ballot, or to do any fraudulent act or knowingly and fraudulently omit to do any act or make any report legally required of that person.
- (4) For any person knowingly to swear falsely with respect to any matter pertaining to any primary or election.
- (5) For any person convicted of a crime which excludes the person from the right of suffrage, to vote in any primary or election knowing the right of citizenship has not been restored in due course and by the method provided by law.
- (6) For any person to take corruptly the oath prescribed for voters.
- (7) For any person with intent to commit a fraud to register or vote at more than one precinct or more than one time, or to induce another to do so, in the same primary or election, or to vote illegally at any primary or election.
- (8) For any chief judge or any clerk or copyist to make any entry or copy with intent to commit a fraud.
- (9) For any election official or other officer or person to make, certify, deliver or transmit any false returns of any primary or election, or to make any erasure, alteration, or conceal or destroy any election ballot, book, record, return or process with intent to commit a fraud.
- (10) For any person to assault any chief judge, judge of election or other election officer while in the discharge of duties in the registration of voters or in conducting any primary or election.
- (11) For any person, by threats, menaces or in any other manner, to intimidate or attempt to intimidate any chief judge, judge of election or other election officer in the discharge of duties in the registration of voters or in conducting any primary or election.

- (12) For any chief judge, judge of election, member of a board of elections, assistant, marker, or other election official, directly or indirectly, to seek, receive or accept money or the promise of money, the promise of office, or other reward or compensation from a candidate in any primary or election or from any source other than such compensation as may be provided by law for that person's services.
- (13) For any person falsely to make or present any certificate or other paper to qualify any person fraudulently as a voter, or to attempt thereby to secure to any person the privilege of voting, including declarations made under this Chapter, G.S. 130A-93.1(c), and G.S. 161-10(a)(8).
- (14) For any officer to register voters and any other individual to knowingly and willfully receive, complete, or sign an application to register from any voter contrary to the provisions of G.S. 163-82.4.
- (15) Reserved for future codification purposes.
- (16) For any person falsely to make the certificate provided by G.S. 163-229(b)(2).
- (17) For any person, directly or indirectly, to misrepresent the law to the public through mass mailing or any other means of communication where the intent and the effect is to intimidate or discourage potential voters from exercising their lawful right to vote.
- (18) For any person, knowing that a person is not a citizen of the United States, to instruct or coerce that person to register to vote or to vote.
- (19) To counterfeit, sell, lend to, or knowingly permit the use of, by one not entitled thereto, a form of photo identification provided in G.S. 163-166.16 for the purposes of voting. (1901, c. 89, s. 13; Rev., s. 3401; 1913, c. 164, s. 2; C.S., s. 4186; 1931, c. 348, s. 10; 1943, c. 543; 1965, c. 899; 1967, c. 775, s. 1; 1979, c. 539, s. 4; 1979, 2nd Sess., c. 1316, ss. 27, 28; 1981, cc. 63, 179; 1985, c. 562, s. 5; 1987, c. 565, s. 14; c. 583, s. 7; 1989, c. 770, s. 38; 1991, c. 727, s. 1; 1993, c. 553, s. 68; 1993 (Reg. Sess., 1994), c. 762, s. 58(d)-(g); 1999-424, s. 7(i); 2007-391, s. 17(a); 2013-381, s. 3.4; 2014-111, s. 15(c); 2015-264, s. 26; 2017-6, s. 3; 2018-144, s. 3.2(c), (d); 2018-146, s. 3.1(a), (b); 2023-140, s. 38.)

§ 163-276. Convicted officials; removal from office.

Any public official who shall be convicted of violating any provision of Article 14A or 22 of this Chapter, in addition to the punishment provided by law, shall be removed from office by the judge presiding, and, if the conviction is for a felony, shall be disqualified from voting until his citizenship is restored as provided by law. (1949, c. 504; 1967, c. 775, s. 1; 1985, c. 563, s. 11.3; 2002-159, s. 21(c); 2017-6, s. 3; 2018-146, s. 3.1(a), (b).)

§ 163-277. Compelling self-incriminating testimony; person so testifying excused from prosecution.

No person shall be excused from attending or testifying or producing any books, papers or other documents before any court or magistrate upon any investigation, proceeding or trial for the violation of any of the provisions of this Article, upon the ground or for the reason that the testimony or evidence, documentary or otherwise, required of him may tend to incriminate or degrade him, but such person may be subpoenaed and required to testify by and for the State relative to any offense arising under the provisions of this Article; but such person shall not be

prosecuted or subjected to any penalty or forfeiture for or on account of any transaction, matter or thing concerning which he may so testify or produce evidence, documentary or otherwise, and no testimony so given or produced shall be used against him upon any criminal investigation or proceeding, but such person so compelled to testify with respect to any acts of his own shall be immune from prosecution on account thereof, and shall be pardoned for any violation of law about which such person shall be so required to testify. (1931, c. 348, s. 11; 1967, c. 775, s. 1; 2017-6, s. 3; 2018-146, s. 3.1(a), (b).)

§ 163-278. Duty of investigating and prosecuting violations of this Article.

(a) It shall be the duty of the State Board and the district attorneys to investigate any violations of this Article, and the State Board and district attorneys are authorized and empowered to subpoena and compel the attendance of any person before them for the purpose of making such investigation.

(b) The State Board and the district attorneys are authorized to call upon the Director of the State Bureau of Investigation to furnish assistance by the State Bureau of Investigation in making the investigations of such violations. The State Board and county boards of elections shall cooperate with the State Bureau of Investigation at all times in such investigations and shall provide any information requested by the State Bureau of Investigation.

(c) The State Board shall furnish the district attorney a copy of any investigations of violations of this Article. The district attorney shall initiate prosecution and prosecute any violations of this Article.

(d) The provisions of G.S. 163-278.28 shall be applicable to violations of this Article. (1931, c. 348, s. 12; 1967, c. 775, s. 1; 1975, c. 565, s. 7; 2014-100, s. 17.1(p); 2017-6, s. 3; 2018-146, s. 3.1(a), (b); 2023-140, s. 39(a).)

§ 163-278.1. Reserved for future codification purposes.

§ 163-278.2. Reserved for future codification purposes.

§ 163-278.3. Reserved for future codification purposes.

§ 163-278.4. Reserved for future codification purposes.