

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2025

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HOUSE BILL 958  
Committee Substitute Favorable 6/26/25  
Committee Substitute #2 Favorable 7/31/25  
Committee Substitute #3 Favorable 6/16/26  
Committee Substitute #4 Favorable 6/24/26  
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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.



1 (6) Recodified.  
2 (a1) The initial counting of official ballots cast under Part 5 of Article 14A of this Chapter  
3 shall be conducted according to the following principles:

4 (1) Vote counting shall occur at the time and place stated in a resolution adopted  
5 by the county board at least two weeks prior to election day, provided that the  
6 time stated in the resolution is between 9:00 A.M. and 5:00 P.M. on election  
7 day. The county board shall not reveal the result of the count prior to the close  
8 of polls on election day.

9 (2) Vote counting shall be conducted in the presence or under the supervision of  
10 county board members of all political parties then present.

11 (3) Any member of the public wishing to witness the vote count shall be allowed  
12 to do so. No witness shall interfere with the orderly counting of the official  
13 ballots. Witnesses shall not participate in the counting of official ballots.

14 (4) County boards may review for approval any provisional official ballots and  
15 may take preparatory steps for the count of such ballots at a meeting held by  
16 the county board prior to election day, pursuant to a resolution adopted by the  
17 county board at least two weeks in advance of the meeting, as long as the  
18 preparatory steps do not reveal the result of the count prior to the close of polls  
19 on election day.

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

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

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

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

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

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

34 **SECTION 1.2.(a)** G.S. 163-82.4(f) reads as rewritten:

35 "(f) Correcting Registration Forms. – If the voter fails to complete any required item on  
36 the voter registration form but provides enough information on the form to enable the county  
37 board to identify and contact the voter, the voter shall be notified of the omission and given the  
38 opportunity to complete the form at least by 12:00 P.M. on the ~~third~~ fifth business day after the  
39 election. If the voter corrects that omission within that time and is determined by the county  
40 board to be eligible to vote, the county board shall permit the voter to vote. If the information is  
41 not corrected by election day, the voter shall be allowed to vote a provisional official ballot. If  
42 the correct information is provided to the county board by at least 12:00 P.M. on the ~~third~~ fifth  
43 business day after the election, the county board shall count any portion of the provisional official  
44 ballot that the voter is eligible to vote."

45 **SECTION 1.2.(b)** G.S. 163-166.12(d) reads as rewritten:

46 "(d) Voting When Identification Numbers Do Not Match. – Regardless of whether an  
47 individual has registered by mail or by another method, if the individual has provided with the  
48 registration form a drivers license number or last four digits of a Social Security number but the  
49 computer validation of the number as required by G.S. 163-82.12 did not result in a match, and  
50 the number has not been otherwise validated by the county board, in the first election in which  
51 the individual votes that individual shall submit with the ballot the form of identification

1 described in subsection (a) or subsection (b) of this section, depending upon whether the ballot  
2 is voted in person or absentee. If that identification is provided no later than 12:00 P.M. on the  
3 ~~third-fifth~~ business day after the election and the county board does not determine that the  
4 individual is otherwise ineligible to vote a ballot, the failure of identification numbers to match  
5 shall not prevent that individual from registering to vote and having that individual's vote  
6 counted."

7 **SECTION 1.2.(c)** G.S. 163-166.16(c) reads as rewritten:

8 "(c) Provisional Ballot Required Without Photo Identification. – If the registered voter  
9 cannot produce the identification as required in subsection (a) of this section, the registered voter  
10 may cast a provisional ballot that is counted only if the registered voter brings an acceptable form  
11 of photograph identification listed in subsection (a) of this section to the county board no later  
12 than 12:00 P.M. on the ~~third-fifth~~ business day after the election. The State Board shall provide  
13 the registered voter casting a provisional ballot due to failure to provide photo identification an  
14 information sheet on the deadline to return to the county board to present photo identification,  
15 and what forms of photo identification are acceptable, in order for the voter's provisional ballot  
16 to be counted."

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

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

- 23 (1) The voter did not sign the voter certification as required by  
24 G.S. 163-231(a)(4).
- 25 (2) The voter signed the application in the wrong place on the application.
- 26 (3) The voter failed to include with the container-return envelope a photocopy of  
27 identification described in G.S. 163-166.16(a) or an affidavit as described in  
28 G.S. 163-166.16(d)(1), (d)(2), or (d)(3), as required by subsection (f1) of this  
29 section.

30 The identification of the two persons witnessing the casting of the absentee ballot in  
31 accordance with G.S. 163-231(a) is not a curable deficiency. Any container-return envelope with  
32 a curable deficiency that is transmitted to the county board shall be considered timely if cure  
33 documentation is received no later than 12:00 P.M. on the ~~third-fifth~~ business day after the  
34 election. Cure documentation may be transmitted via email to the county board if the deficiency  
35 is one described in subdivision (3) of this subsection. The notification of voters regarding curable  
36 deficiencies is an administrative task that may be performed by county board staff and is not  
37 required to be performed at an absentee meeting as provided for in subsection (f) of this section.  
38 The voter shall be notified of curable deficiencies no later than the close of business on the next  
39 business day following the county boards' review of the ballot by mail, and by telephone or ~~email~~  
40 email, if the telephone number or email address was provided by the voter on the request form  
41 for absentee ballots."

42 **SECTION 1.3.(a)** G.S. 163-166.11 reads as rewritten:

43 **"§ 163-166.11. Provisional voting requirements.**

44 (a) If an individual seeking to vote claims to be a registered voter in a jurisdiction as  
45 provided in G.S. 163-82.1 and though eligible to vote in the election does not appear on the  
46 official list of eligible registered voters in the voting place, that individual may cast a provisional  
47 official ballot as follows:

- 48 (1) An election official at the voting place shall notify the individual that the  
49 individual may cast a provisional official ballot in that election.
- 50 (2) The individual may cast a provisional official ballot at that voting place upon  
51 executing a written affirmation before an election official at the voting place,

1 stating that the individual is a registered voter in the jurisdiction as provided  
2 in G.S. 163-82.1 in which the individual seeks to vote and is eligible to vote  
3 in that election.

4 (3) A voter who has moved within the county more than 30 days before election  
5 day but has not reported the move to the county board of elections shall not  
6 be required to vote a provisional official ballot at the early voting site, as long  
7 as the early voting site has available all the information necessary to determine  
8 whether a voter is registered to vote in the county and which ballot the voter  
9 is eligible to vote based on the voter's proper residence address. The voter with  
10 that kind of unreported move shall be allowed to vote the same kind of  
11 absentee ballot as other early voters as provided in G.S. 163-166.40.

12 (4) At the time the individual casts the provisional official ballot, the election  
13 officials shall provide the individual written information stating that anyone  
14 casting a provisional official ballot can ascertain whether and to what extent  
15 the ballot was counted and, if the ballot was not counted in whole or in part,  
16 the reason it was not counted. The State Board or the county board of ~~elections~~  
17 shall establish a system for so informing a provisional voter, which shall be  
18 available to every provisional voter without charge and contain reasonable  
19 procedures to protect the security, confidentiality, and integrity of the voter's  
20 personal information and vote.

21 (5) The cast provisional official ballot and the written affirmation shall be secured  
22 by election officials at the voting place according to guidelines and procedures  
23 adopted by the State Board. At the close of the polls, election officials shall  
24 transmit the provisional official ballots cast at that voting place to the county  
25 board of ~~elections~~ for prompt verification according to guidelines and  
26 procedures adopted by the State Board. No later than 12:00 P.M. two days  
27 after the close of the polls, the county board of ~~elections~~ shall publish the  
28 number of provisional official ballots cast on election day, cast by early  
29 voting, cast by mail-in absentee ballots received as of election day, and cast  
30 by military and overseas absentee ballots cast under Article 21A of this  
31 Chapter and received as of election day.

32 (b) If a provisional official ballot cast under this section fails to contain the voter's  
33 signature on the affidavit to certify the voter's identity and eligibility to vote, the county board  
34 shall notify the voter of the lack of signature on the provisional official ballot no later than the  
35 close of business on the next business day following review of the ballot and shall provide the  
36 voter an opportunity to cure the lack of signature on the affidavit. The voter shall be notified by  
37 mail and by telephone or email, if the telephone number or email address was provided by the  
38 voter. The notification of voters regarding curing the lack of signature is an administrative task  
39 that may be performed by county board staff and is not required to be performed at a meeting of  
40 the county board. If the lack of signature on the affidavit is cured by at least 12:00 P.M. on the  
41 fifth business day after the election, the county board shall count any portion of the provisional  
42 official ballot that the voter is eligible to vote."

43 **SECTION 1.3.(b)** G.S. 163-166.16, as amended by Section 1.2 of this act, is  
44 amended by adding a new subsection to read:

45 "(e1) If any provisional ballot cast under this section fails to contain the signature of the  
46 registered voter casting a ballot on the affidavit, the county board shall notify the voter of the  
47 lack of signature on the provisional ballot no later than the close of business on the next business  
48 day following review of the ballot and shall provide the voter an opportunity to cure the lack of  
49 signature on the affidavit. The voter shall be notified by mail and by telephone or email, if the  
50 telephone number or email address was provided by the voter. The notification of voters  
51 regarding curing the lack of signature is an administrative task that may be performed by county

1 board staff and is not required to be performed at a meeting of the county board. If the lack of  
2 signature on the affidavit is cured by at least 12:00 P.M. on the fifth business day after the  
3 election, the county board shall count any portion of the provisional official ballot that the voter  
4 is eligible to vote."

5 **SECTION 1.4.** G.S. 163-231 reads as rewritten:

6 "**§ 163-231. Voting absentee ballots and transmitting them to the county board**~~of~~  
7 **elections**board.

8 (a) Procedure for Voting Absentee Ballots. – In the presence of two persons who are at  
9 least 18 years of age, and who are not disqualified by G.S. 163-226.3(a)(4) or G.S. 163-237(c),  
10 the voter shall do all of the following:

- 11 (1) Mark the voter's ballots, or cause them to be marked by that person in the  
12 voter's presence according to the voter's instruction.
- 13 (2) Fold each ballot separately, or cause each of them to be folded in the voter's  
14 presence.
- 15 (3) Place the folded ballots in the container-return envelope and securely seal it,  
16 or have this done in the voter's presence.
- 17 (4) Make the application printed on the container-return envelope according to  
18 the provisions of G.S. 163-229(b) and make the certificate printed on the  
19 container-return envelope according to the provisions of G.S. 163-229(b).
- 20 (5) Require those two persons in whose presence the voter marked that voter's  
21 ballots to sign and print their names on the application and certificate as  
22 witnesses and to indicate those persons' addresses. Failure to list a ZIP code  
23 does not invalidate the application and certificate. Failure to include a printed  
24 witness name does not invalidate the application and certificate if the identity  
25 of an individual can solely be ascertained by the witness's signature.
- 26 (6) Do one of the following:
  - 27 a. Have the application notarized. The notary public may be the person  
28 in whose presence the voter marked that voter's ballot.
  - 29 b. Have the two persons in whose presence the voter marked that voter's  
30 ballots to certify that the voter is the registered voter submitting the  
31 marked ballots.

32 Alternatively to the prior paragraph of this subsection, any requirement for two witnesses  
33 shall be satisfied if witnessed by one notary public, who shall comply with all the other  
34 requirements of that paragraph. The notary shall affix a valid notarial seal to the envelope, and  
35 include the word "Notary Public" below his or her signature.

36 The persons in whose presence the ballot is marked shall at all times respect the secrecy of  
37 the ballot and the privacy of the absentee voter, unless the voter requests assistance and that  
38 person is otherwise authorized by law to give assistance. When thus executed, the sealed  
39 container-return envelope, with the ballots enclosed, shall be transmitted in accordance with the  
40 provisions of subsection (b) of this section to the county board ~~of elections~~ which issued the  
41 ballots.

42 (b) Transmitting Executed Absentee Ballots to County ~~Board of Elections~~Board. – The  
43 sealed container-return envelope in which executed absentee ballots have been placed shall be  
44 transmitted to the county board ~~of elections~~ who issued those ballots as follows:

- 45 (1) All ballots issued under the provisions of this Article and Article 21A of this  
46 Chapter shall be transmitted by one of the following means:
  - 47 a. Mail or commercial courier service, at the voter's expense, and  
48 received by the county board not later than 7:30 P.M. on the day of the  
49 statewide primary or general election or county bond election.
  - 50 b. Delivered in person, by the voter or the voter's near relative or  
51 verifiable legal guardian, to the county board not later than 7:30 P.M.

on the day of the statewide primary or general election or county bond election.

c. Electronically transmitted to the county board, if the ballot was issued under the provisions of Article 21A of this Chapter.

d. Submitted through the accessible absentee portal, if the ballot was issued to a visually impaired voter who requested an accessible ballot.

(2) If ballots are received later than the hour stated in subdivision (1) of this subsection, those ballots shall not be accepted unless required by federal law or the ballots are received in accordance with Article 21A of this Chapter or the State Board or court order extended the closing time of the polls for every poll in the county in accordance with G.S. 163-166.25. If the State Board or court order so extended the closing time of the polls, the ballots shall be received by the closing time as extended by the State Board or court order in order to be counted.

(c) Delivering Executed Absentee Ballots in Person. – For purposes of this section, "Delivered in person" includes shall mean the voter or the voter's near relative or verifiable legal guardian physically handing the voted-executed absentee ballot to an election official at the county board office or at an early voting site under Part 5 of Article 14A of this Chapter during any time that early voting site is open for voting, but does not include depositing the voted-executed absentee ballot in a drop box or other location designated for the return of voted-executed absentee ballots. The voted-If the executed absentee ballot is physically handed to an election official by an individual other than the voter, that individual shall complete an affidavit under penalty of perjury as to how that individual is eligible to return the voter's executed absentee ballot as the voter's near relative or verifiable legal guardian, as defined in G.S. 163-226.

(c1) Custody of Executed Absentee Ballots Delivered to Early Voting Site. – Executed absentee ballots delivered to the-an early voting site under Part 5 of Article 14A of this Chapter shall be kept securely and delivered by the election officials at that early voting site to the county board of elections-office for processing.

(d) State Board Rules. – The State Board shall adopt rules to implement this section, including a form affidavit for delivery in person of executed absentee ballots which shall be used by all county boards.

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

**SECTION 1.5.** G.S. 163-234 reads as rewritten:

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

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

...

(2) The county board shall meet ~~at 5:00 P.M. on election day~~ in the county board office or other public location in the county courthouse at the hour stated in a resolution adopted by the county board at least two weeks prior to the time the voting place opens in accordance with G.S. 163-166.25, provided that the time stated in the resolution is between 9:00 A.M. and 5:00 P.M., for the purpose of counting all absentee ballots except those which have been challenged before 5:00 P.M.-9:00 A.M. on election day and those received pursuant to G.S. 163-231(b)(2). Any elector of the county shall be permitted to attend the meeting and allowed to observe the counting process, so long as the elector does not in any manner interfere with the election officials in the discharge of their duties.-The count of these absentee ballots shall be continuous until completed, and the members shall not separate or leave the counting place except for unavoidable necessity.

1           The county board may begin counting absentee ballots issued under  
 2 Article 21A of this Chapter between the hours of 9:00 A.M. and 5:00 P.M.  
 3 and may begin counting all absentee ballots between the hours of 2:00 P.M.  
 4 and 5:00 P.M. upon the adoption of a resolution at least two weeks prior to the  
 5 election in which the hour and place of counting absentee ballots shall be  
 6 stated. A copy of the resolution shall be published once a week for two weeks  
 7 prior to the election, in a newspaper having general circulation in the county.  
 8 Notice may additionally be made on a radio or television station or both, but  
 9 the notice shall be in addition to the newspaper and other required notice. The  
 10 count shall be continuous until completed and the members shall not separate  
 11 or leave the counting place except for unavoidable necessity, except that if the  
 12 count has been completed prior to the time the polls close, it shall be  
 13 suspended until that time pending receipt of any additional ballots. The county  
 14 board may recess the meeting in accordance with G.S. 143-318.12(b)(1) prior  
 15 to completing the count of absentee ballots but shall not adjourn the meeting  
 16 until the count of the absentee ballots is complete. The State Board shall adopt  
 17 rules as to how county boards reflect any recesses in the full and accurate  
 18 minutes of the meeting such that a person not in attendance would have a  
 19 reasonable understanding of what transpired before and after any recess,  
 20 including the number of outstanding absentee ballots immediately before and  
 21 after any recess.

22           (2a) Nothing in this section prohibits a county board from taking preparatory steps  
 23 for the count earlier than the times specified in this section, as long as the  
 24 preparatory steps do not reveal to any individual not engaged in the actual  
 25 count election results before the times specified in this subdivision for the  
 26 count to begin. By way of illustration and not limitation, a preparatory step  
 27 for the count would be the entry of tally cards from direct record electronic  
 28 voting units into a computer for processing. The county board shall not  
 29 announce the result of the count ~~before 7:30 P.M.~~ prior to the close of polls on  
 30 election day.

31           ...

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

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

41           **SECTION 1.6.** G.S. 163-275 is amended by adding a new subdivision to read:

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

45           **SECTION 1.7.** Section 1.4 of this Part becomes effective January 1, 2027, and  
 46 applies to elections conducted on or after that date. Section 1.6 of this Part is effective when it  
 47 becomes law and applies to offenses committed on or after that date. The remainder of this Part  
 48 is effective when it becomes law and applies to elections held on or after that date.

49

50 **PART II. VARIOUS ELECTION ADMINISTRATION CHANGES**

51

**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, 2027, and applies to elections held on or after that date.

**SUSPENSION 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. Suspension or 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. Suspension or removal of precinct officials; vacancies.**

(a) Any precinct official may be suspended or removed, including on the day of the election or primary, for incompetency or failure to discharge the duties of office by the county

1 board in accordance with G.S. 163-33. The county board may prohibit a precinct official who  
2 has been suspended or removed from serving as a precinct official in any subsequent election.

3 (b)

4 ...."

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

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

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

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

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

34 **"§ 163-82.24. Statewide training and certification for election officials.**

35 (a) ~~Training.~~—The State Board ~~of Elections~~ shall conduct training programs in election  
36 law and procedures.

37 (a1) Every county elections director shall receive training conducted by the State Board at  
38 least as often as required in the following schedule:

- 39 (1) Once during each odd-numbered year before the municipal election held in  
40 the ~~county;~~county.
- 41 (2) Once during each even-numbered year before the first partisan ~~primary;~~  
42 ~~and~~primary.
- 43 (3) Once during each even-numbered year after the partisan primaries but before  
44 the general election.

45 (a2) Every member of a county board ~~of elections~~ shall receive training conducted by the  
46 State Board at least once during the six months after the member's initial appointment and at least  
47 once again during the first two years of the member's service. If an election occurs prior to the  
48 county board member's training, the State Board shall make available training materials for use  
49 by that county board member until the training required by this subsection is completed.

1 (a3) The State Board of Elections shall ~~promulgate~~ adopt rules for the training of precinct  
2 officials, which shall be followed by the county ~~boards of elections~~ boards. At a minimum, the  
3 training for all precinct officials shall include information regarding all of the following:

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

15 (b) ~~Certification.~~—The State Board of Elections shall conduct a program for certification  
16 of election officials. The program shall include training in election law and procedures. Before  
17 issuing certification to an election official, the State Board shall administer an examination  
18 designed to determine the proficiency of the official in election law and procedures. The State  
19 Board shall set adequate standards for the passage of the examination."

20 **SECTION 2.2.(h)** This section becomes effective January 1, 2027, and applies to  
21 elections held on or after that date.  
22

## 23 **DISORDERLY CONDUCT AT VOTING PLACE**

24 **SECTION 2.3.(a)** G.S. 14-132 reads as rewritten:

25 "**§ 14-132. Disorderly conduct in and injuries to public buildings and facilities.**

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

- 27 (1) Make any rude or riotous noise, or ~~be guilty of engage in~~ any disorderly  
28 conduct, in or near any public building or ~~facility; or facility.~~
- 29 (2) Unlawfully write or scribble on, mark, deface, besmear, or injure the walls of  
30 any public building or facility, or any statue or monument situated in any  
31 public ~~place; or place.~~
- 32 (3) Commit any nuisance in or near any public building or facility.

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

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

- 39 (1) One to which the public or a portion of the public has access and is owned or  
40 controlled by the State, any subdivision of the State, any other public agency,  
41 or any private institution or agency of a charitable, educational, or  
42 ~~eleemosynary nature; or philanthropic nature.~~
- 43 (2) Dedicated to the use of the general public for a purpose which is primarily  
44 concerned with public recreation, cultural activities, and other events of a  
45 public nature or character.
- 46 (3) Designated by the Director of the State Bureau of Investigation in accordance  
47 with G.S. 143B-987.
- 48 (4) One temporarily in use as a voting place under Chapter 163 of the General  
49 Statutes throughout each calendar day that the public building or facility is  
50 either used as a voting place or is being prepared for use as a voting place.

1 The term "building or facility" as used in this section also includes the surrounding grounds and  
 2 premises of any building or facility used in connection with the operation or functioning of such  
 3 building or facility.

4 (c1) Evidence of making or causing noise outside of a public building or facility that is  
 5 described in subdivision (4) of subsection (c) of this section with the intent to disrupt or disturb  
 6 voting or other election-related activities occurring at the voting place, other than noise made for  
 7 emergency purposes or noise made in the normal operations for that public building or facility,  
 8 may be used to prove a violation of this section.

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

12 **SECTION 2.3.(b)** G.S. 163-166.4(b) reads as rewritten:

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

19 **SECTION 2.3.(c)** This section becomes effective October 1, 2026, and applies to  
 20 offenses committed on or after that date.

## 21 CHANGES TO ADDRESS VERIFICATION PROCESS

22 **SECTION 2.4.(a)** G.S. 163-82.7 reads as rewritten:

23 **"§ 163-82.7. Verification of qualifications and address of applicant; denial or approval of**  
 24 **application.**

25 (a) Tentative Determination of Qualification. – ~~When a county board of elections~~  
 26 ~~receives~~ Within a reasonable time after receiving an application for registration submitted  
 27 pursuant to G.S. 163-82.6, the county board either shall do one of the following:

28 (1) ~~Shall make~~ Make a determination that the applicant is not qualified to vote at  
 29 the address ~~given, or~~ given.

30 (2) ~~Shall make~~ Make a tentative determination that the applicant is qualified to  
 31 vote at the address given, subject to the mail verification notice procedure  
 32 outlined in ~~subsection~~ subsections (c) and (e) of this section.

33 ~~within a reasonable time after receiving the application.~~

34 (a1) Distribution to County Boards. – If the State Board receives a voter registration  
 35 application, the State Board shall forward the application to the appropriate county board in a  
 36 timely manner. If the application is received by the State Board within the 100 days prior to an  
 37 election, the State Board shall forward the application to the appropriate county board within two  
 38 business days of receipt.

39 (b) Denial of Registration. – If the county board of elections makes a determination  
 40 pursuant to subsection (a) of this section that the applicant is not qualified to vote at the address  
 41 given, the county board shall send, by certified mail, a notice of denial of registration. The notice  
 42 of denial shall contain the date on which registration was denied, and shall be mailed within two  
 43 business days after denial. The notice of denial shall inform the applicant of alternatives that the  
 44 applicant may pursue to exercise the franchise. If the applicant disagrees with the denial, the  
 45 applicant may appeal the decision under G.S. 163-82.18.

46 (c) Verification of Address by Mail. – ~~If~~ Except as otherwise provided by this subsection,  
 47 if the county board of elections tentatively determines that the applicant is qualified to vote at the  
 48 address given, then the county board shall send a notice to the applicant, by nonforwardable mail,  
 49 at the address the applicant provides on the application form. The notice shall state that the county  
 50 board will register the applicant to vote if the Postal Service does not return the notice as  
 51

1 undeliverable to the county board. The notice shall also inform the applicant of the precinct and  
 2 voting place to which the applicant will be assigned if registered. If the application is received  
 3 by the county board within the 100 days prior to an election, the county board shall mail the  
 4 notice required by this subsection within two business days of processing the application.

5 (d) Approval of Application. – If the Postal Service does not return the notice as  
 6 undeliverable, the county board shall register the applicant to vote.

7 (e) Second Notice if First Notice Is Returned as Undeliverable. – If the Postal Service  
 8 returns the notice as undeliverable, the county board shall send a second notice by  
 9 nonforwardable mail to the same address to which the first was sent. If the second notice is not  
 10 returned as undeliverable, the county board shall register the applicant to vote. If the county board  
 11 receives a notice returned as undeliverable within the 100 days prior to an election, the county  
 12 board shall mail the notice required by this subsection within one business day of receipt of the  
 13 return notice.

14 (f) Denial of Application Based on Lack of Verification of Address. – If the Postal  
 15 Service returns as undeliverable the notice sent by nonforwardable mail pursuant to subsection  
 16 (e) of this section, the county board shall deny the application. The county board need not try to  
 17 notify the applicant further.

18 (g) Voting When Verification Process Is Incomplete. – In cases where an election occurs  
 19 before the process of verification outlined in this section has had time to be completed, the county  
 20 board of elections shall be guided by the following rules:

21 (1) If the county board has made a tentative determination that an applicant is  
 22 qualified to vote under subsection (a) of this section, then that person shall not  
 23 be denied the right to vote in person in an election unless the Postal Service  
 24 has returned as undeliverable two notices to the applicant: one mailed pursuant  
 25 to subsection (c) of this section and one mailed pursuant to subsection (e) of  
 26 this section. This subdivision does not preclude a challenge to the voter's  
 27 qualifications under Article 8 of this Chapter.

28 (2) If the Postal Service has returned as undeliverable a notice sent within 25 days  
 29 before the election to the applicant under subsection (c) or subsection (e) of  
 30 this section, then the applicant may vote only in person in accordance with  
 31 Article 14A of this Chapter in that first election and may not vote by absentee  
 32 ballot. The county board of elections shall establish a procedure at the voting  
 33 site for doing both of the following:

- 34 a. Obtaining the correct address of any person described in this
- 35 subdivision who appears to vote in person.
- 36 b. Assuring that the person votes in the proper place and in the proper
- 37 contests.

38 If a notice mailed under subsection (c) or subsection (e) of this section is  
 39 returned as undeliverable after a person has already voted by absentee ballot,  
 40 then that person's ballot may be challenged in accordance with G.S. 163-89.

41 (3) If a notice ~~sent pursuant to~~ mailed under subsection (c) or subsection (e) of  
 42 this section is returned by the Postal Service as undeliverable after a person  
 43 has already voted in an election, then the county board shall treat the person  
 44 as a registered voter but shall send a confirmation mailing pursuant to  
 45 G.S. 163-82.14(d)(2) and remove or retain the person on the registration  
 46 records in accordance with that subdivision."

47 **SECTION 2.4.(b)** This section becomes effective January 1, 2027, and applies to  
 48 verification notices sent or received by a county board of elections on or after that date.

## 50 CLOSING OF EQUIPMENT FOLLOWING EARLY VOTING

51 **SECTION 2.5.(a)** G.S. 163-166.40 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

1       "(j) At the conclusion of the early voting period provided for in subsection (b) of this  
2 section, each county board shall comply with all of the following:

- 3           (1) All voting equipment used during the early voting period is rendered unable  
4 to receive additional votes associated with the early voting period.
- 5           (2) All voting equipment used during the early voting period is maintained so that  
6 the tally of the initial counting of early voting ballots is conducted in  
7 accordance with G.S. 163-182.2(a1).
- 8           (3) The storage of any paper ballots cast during the early voting period are  
9 preserved in a locked and secured space, access to which is controlled and the  
10 chain of custody is limited and maintained, prior to the initial counting of early  
11 voting ballots in accordance with G.S. 163-182.2(a1), which storage shall be  
12 separate and apart from the storage of any electronic record of the votes cast  
13 during the early voting period in accordance with subdivision (4) of this  
14 subsection.
- 15           (4) Any electronic record of votes cast during the early voting period shall be  
16 secured and preserved in a locked and secured space, access to which is  
17 controlled and the chain of custody is limited and maintained, prior to the  
18 initial counting of early voting ballots in accordance with G.S. 163-182.2(a1).  
19 The electronic record of votes cast during the early voting period may be  
20 detached from the voting equipment for purposes of storage under this  
21 subdivision."

22       **SECTION 2.5.(b)** This section is effective when it becomes law and applies to  
23 elections held on or after that date.

## 24

### 25 **APPOINTMENT OF OBSERVERS IN NONPARTISAN ELECTIONS**

26       **SECTION 2.6.(a)** G.S. 163-45.1(b) reads as rewritten:

27       "(b) Observers may be appointed in accordance with the following:

- 28           (1) The chair of each political party in the county may designate two registered  
29 voters of the county to serve as observers at each voting place in that county  
30 in which the political party has a candidate appearing on the ballot.
- 31           (2) The chair of each political party in the county may designate up to 10  
32 registered voters of the county to serve as observers at any voting place in the  
33 county in which the political party has a candidate appearing on the ballot.
- 34           (3) The chair of each political party in the State may designate up to 100 registered  
35 voters of the State to serve as observers at any voting place in the State in  
36 which the political party has a candidate appearing on the ballot.
- 37           (4) An unaffiliated candidate or the unaffiliated candidate's campaign manager  
38 may designate up to two ~~observers~~ registered voters to serve as observers at  
39 each voting place in which that unaffiliated candidate appears on the ballot.
- 40           (5) A nonpartisan candidate in a municipal election, special district election, or  
41 board of education election or the nonpartisan candidate's campaign manager  
42 may designate up to one registered voter to serve as an observer at each voting  
43 place in which that nonpartisan candidate appears on the ballot."

44       **SECTION 2.6.(b)** This section becomes effective January 1, 2027, and applies to  
45 elections held on or after that date.

### 46

### 47 **REVISIONS TO LIST MAINTENANCE**

48       **SECTION 2.7.(a)** G.S. 163-82.14 reads as rewritten:

49       "**§ 163-82.14. List maintenance.**

50       ...

1 (a1) Methods of List Maintenance; Cross State Checks. – List maintenance efforts under  
 2 this section shall be nondiscriminatory and shall comply with the provisions of the Voting Rights  
 3 Act of 1965, as amended, and with the provisions of the National Voter Registration Act. The  
 4 State Board, in addition to the methods set forth in this section, may use other methods toward  
 5 the ends set forth in subsection (a) of this section, including address-updating services provided  
 6 by the Postal Service and entering into data sharing agreements with other states to cross-check  
 7 information on voter registration and voting records. Any data sharing agreement shall require  
 8 the other state or states to comply with G.S. 163-82.10 and ~~G.S. 163-82.10B~~ G.S. 163-82.10B  
 9 with respect to voter registration data of this State. Notwithstanding G.S. 163-82.10, disclosure  
 10 of any voter registration data received from other states pursuant to a data sharing agreement  
 11 with that state shall be controlled by the data sharing agreement, provided that the data sharing  
 12 agreement is not more restrictive than the other states' public record laws.

13 (b) Death. – In order to remove the names of deceased persons from the list of eligible  
 14 voters in this State, the following shall occur:

- 15 (1) At a minimum of once per week, the Department of Health and Human  
 16 Services shall furnish free of charge to the Executive Director, in a format  
 17 prescribed by the State Board, the names of deceased persons who were  
 18 residents of the State. ~~Upon receipt of the list from the Department of Health~~  
 19 ~~and Human Services, the~~ On a weekly basis, the Executive Director shall  
 20 distribute to each county board of elections the names on that the list received  
 21 from the Department of Health and Human Services of deceased persons who  
 22 were residents of that county. Upon the receipt of those names, each county  
 23 board of elections shall remove from its voter registration records any person  
 24 the list shows to be deceased each week. The State Board shall confirm that  
 25 each county board has removed the names of deceased persons from the list  
 26 of eligible voters in this State.
- 27 (2) Upon receipt of a signed statement of a near relative or personal representative  
 28 of the estate of a deceased voter indicating that the person has died, a county  
 29 board ~~of elections~~ shall remove the person identified as deceased from its  
 30 voter registration records within one week of receipt of the signed statement.  
 31 The county board does not need to send any notice to the address of the person  
 32 before removing the person from its voter registration records.
- 33 (3) If the State Board requests and receives any information from a federal agency  
 34 pertaining to death records of registered voters in this State, the Executive  
 35 Director shall determine whether any person identified in the information as  
 36 deceased is a registered voter in this State. Within one week of receipt of the  
 37 information, the Executive Director shall distribute to each county board the  
 38 names of those registered voters who were residents of that county. Upon  
 39 receipt of those names, the chair of each county board shall initiate a challenge  
 40 proceeding under G.S. 163-85, with the burden of proof remaining on the  
 41 challenger pursuant to G.S. 163-90.1. Any hearing on a challenge under this  
 42 subdivision shall be conducted pursuant to G.S. 163-86.

43 ...."

44 **SECTION 2.7.(b)** G.S. 20-7(b2) is amended by adding a new subdivision to read:

45 "(9) To the State Board of Elections for the purpose of voter registration and list  
 46 maintenance. The Division shall furnish the State Board of Elections with  
 47 each month's data on a routine schedule of no later than the fifteenth day of  
 48 each month."

49 **SECTION 2.7.(c)** If the State Board of Elections received information regarding  
 50 potential ineligible voters appearing on the State's voter registration records from a federal  
 51 database on or after January 1, 2026, and a challenge has not been entered against a voter

1 appearing on the information from the federal database and the voter has not otherwise been  
2 removed from the list of eligible voters in the State, then the State Board shall create a process  
3 for removing such voters from the State's voter registration records by August 1, 2026. The  
4 process created by the State Board pursuant to this subsection for removing any potential  
5 ineligible voters from the State's voter registration records shall comply with the following:

- 6 (1) The Executive Director of the State Board shall distribute to each county  
7 board the names of the individuals registered to vote in that county whose  
8 name appears on the information received from a federal database as a  
9 potential ineligible voter.
- 10 (2) Upon receipt of the names from the Executive Director of the State Board, the  
11 chair of the county board shall initiate a challenge proceeding under  
12 G.S. 163-85, with the burden of proof remaining on the challenger pursuant  
13 to G.S. 163-90.1.
- 14 (3) The registered voter shall be sent notice that the chair of the county board  
15 initiated a challenge proceeding on the registered voter's eligibility due to the  
16 fact that the State Board of Elections received information from a federal  
17 database calling into question the eligibility of the registered voter.
- 18 (4) Any hearing on the challenge shall be conducted pursuant to G.S. 163-86.

19 **SECTION 2.7.(d)** Subsection (a) of this section becomes effective January 1, 2027.  
20 The remainder of this section is effective when it becomes law.

## 21 **CHANGES TO VOTER AND BALLOT CHALLENGES**

22 **SECTION 2.8.(a)** Article 8 of Chapter 163 of the General Statutes is amended by  
23 adding a new section to read:

### 24 **"§ 163-90.4. Audit and challenge of ineligible votes cast.**

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

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

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

40 **SECTION 2.8.(b)** G.S. 163-89 reads as rewritten:

### 41 **"§ 163-89. Procedures for challenging ballots cast during early voting and absentee ballots.**

42 (a) Time for Challenge. – ~~The absentee ballot of any voter~~ Ballots cast under Part 5 of  
43 Article 14A of this Chapter may be challenged no later than the close of polls on the day of the  
44 primary or general election or county bond election. Ballots cast under Article 20 and Article  
45 21A of this Chapter that are received by the county board of elections pursuant to  
46 G.S. 163-231(b)(1) may be challenged no later than 5:00 P.M. on the fifth business day after the  
47 primary or general election or county bond election. ~~The absentee ballot of any voter~~ Ballots cast  
48 under Article 20 and Article 21A of this Chapter that are received by the county board of elections  
49 pursuant to G.S. 163-231(b)(2) may be challenged no later than 5:00 P.M. on the next business  
50 day following the deadline for receipt 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 it 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 2.8.(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 mark the word "sustained" after the word "challenged" in the registration records of  
 15 the voter challenged as required by G.S. 163-85(b) and indicate the reason for the sustained  
 16 challenge. The county board shall cancel or correct the voter registration of the voter. The county  
 17 board shall maintain such record for at least six months and during the pendency of any appeal.  
 18 The challenged ballot shall be counted for any ballot items for which the challenged voter is  
 19 eligible to vote, as if it were a provisional official ballot under the provisions of  
 20 G.S. 163-166.11(4). For any challenge sustained for death of the voter under G.S. 163-85(c)(6),  
 21 the challenged ballot shall not be counted if the voter died between the time the challenged ballot  
 22 was cast and 11:59 P.M. on the day before the election.

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

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

31           **SECTION 2.8.(d)** This section becomes effective January 1, 2027, and applies to  
 32 challenges filed on or after that date.

33  
 34 **APPLY TEMPORARY MORATORIUM ON THE EXPIRATION OF CERTAIN CLASS**  
 35 **C DRIVERS LICENSES TO PHOTO IDENTIFICATION PRESENTED FOR VOTING**

36           **SECTION 2.9.(a)** During the time period that a Class C drivers license expiration  
 37 date is extended in accordance with Section 18 of S.L. 2025-47, that Class C drivers license shall  
 38 be deemed valid and unexpired for the purposes of G.S. 163-166.16.

39           **SECTION 2.9.(b)** This section is effective when it becomes law and shall expire  
 40 December 31, 2027.

41  
 42 **VOTER REGISTRATION APPLICATIONS INDICATING LACK OF CITIZENSHIP**

43           **SECTION 2.10.(a)** G.S. 163-82.19(a) reads as rewritten:

44           "(a) Voter Registration at Drivers License Offices. – The Division of Motor Vehicles  
 45 shall, pursuant to the rules adopted by the State ~~Board of Elections, Board,~~ modify its forms so  
 46 that any eligible person who applies for original issuance, renewal or correction of a drivers  
 47 license, or special identification card issued under G.S. 20-37.7 may, on a part of the form,  
 48 complete an application to register to vote, or to update the voter's registration if the voter has  
 49 changed his or her address or moved from one precinct to another or from one county to another.  
 50 The person taking the application shall ask if the applicant is a citizen of the United States. If the  
 51 applicant states that the applicant is not a citizen of the United States, or declines to answer the

1 question, the person taking the application shall inform the applicant that it is a felony for a  
 2 person who is not a citizen of the United States to apply to register to vote. The application shall  
 3 state in clear language the penalty for violation of this section. The person taking an application  
 4 to register to vote or to update the voter's registration shall proceed with the application only if  
 5 the applicant affirmatively states that the applicant is a citizen of the United States. The necessary  
 6 forms shall be prescribed by the State ~~Board of Elections.~~ Board. The form must ask for the  
 7 previous voter registration address of the voter, if any. If a previous address is listed, and it is not  
 8 in the county of residence of the applicant, the appropriate county board ~~of elections~~ shall treat  
 9 the application as an authorization to cancel the previous registration and also process it as such  
 10 under the procedures of G.S. 163-82.9. If a previous address is listed and that address is in the  
 11 county where the voter applies to register, the application shall be processed as if it had been  
 12 submitted under G.S. 163-82.9.

13 (a1) Timely Registration at Drivers License Offices. – Registration shall become effective  
 14 as provided in G.S. 163-82.7. Applications to register to vote accepted at a drivers license office  
 15 under this section until the deadline established in G.S. 163-82.6(d)(2) shall be treated as timely  
 16 made for an election, and no person who completes an application at that drivers license office  
 17 shall be denied the vote in that election for failure to apply earlier than that deadline.

18 (a2) Forwarding Voter Registrations at Drivers License Offices. – All applications shall  
 19 be forwarded by the Department of Transportation to the appropriate county board of elections  
 20 not later than five business days after the date of acceptance, according to rules which shall be  
 21 promulgated by the State ~~Board of Elections.~~ Board. Those rules shall provide for a paperless,  
 22 instant, electronic transfer of applications to the appropriate ~~board of elections.~~ county board."

23 **SECTION 2.10.(b)** G.S. 163-82.20(e) reads as rewritten:

24 "(e) Prohibitions. – Any person providing any service under subsection (b) of this section  
 25 shall ~~not~~ not do any of the following:

- 26 (1) Seek to influence an applicant's political preference or party registration,  
 27 except that this shall not be construed to prevent the notice provided by  
 28 G.S. 163-82.4(d) to be given if the applicant refuses to declare his party  
 29 ~~affiliation;~~ affiliation.
- 30 (2) Display any such political preference or party ~~allegiance;~~ allegiance.
- 31 (3) Make any statement to an applicant or take any action the purpose or effect of  
 32 which is to discourage the applicant from registering to ~~vote;~~ or vote.
- 33 (4) Make any statement to an applicant or take any action the purpose or effect of  
 34 which is to lead the applicant to believe that a decision to register or not to  
 35 register has any bearing on the availability of services or benefits.
- 36 (5) Proceed with any voter registration application if the applicant does not  
 37 affirmatively indicate the applicant is a citizen of the United States."

38 **SECTION 2.10.(c)** Article 7A of Chapter 163 of the General Statutes is amended by  
 39 adding a new section to read:

40 **"§ 163-83. Requirement for citizenship on voter registration applications.**

41 (a) When making the tentative determination of qualification in accordance with  
 42 G.S. 163-82.7(a), the county board shall process the voter registration application in accordance  
 43 with this Article only if the voter registration application affirmatively indicates that the applicant  
 44 is a citizen of the United States.

45 (b) If a county board receives a voter registration application in which no answer is  
 46 indicated as to the question of whether the applicant is a citizen of the United States, then the  
 47 county board shall send a notice to the applicant that the voter registration application must  
 48 indicate whether the applicant is a citizen of the United States in order to be processed, and the  
 49 applicant must provide a statement under penalty of perjury concerning citizenship. The notice  
 50 sent from the county board shall include a form for the applicant to fill out answering the question  
 51 of whether the applicant is a citizen of the United States and shall indicate that the form must be

1 mailed or hand-delivered to the county board within 30 days from the date the notice was sent in  
2 order for the applicant's voter registration application to be processed. If the form is received by  
3 the county board within 30 days from the date the notice was mailed, the county board shall  
4 proceed with the voter registration application accordingly. If the form is not received by the  
5 county board within 30 days from the date the notice was mailed, the county board shall not  
6 approve the voter registration application, shall not add the individual to the list of registered  
7 voters of the State, and shall notify the voter of the denial in accordance with G.S. 163-82.7(b)."

8 **SECTION 2.10.(d)** G.S. 163-82.18(a) reads as rewritten:

9 "(a) Right to Appeal. – Any applicant who receives notice of denial of registration  
10 pursuant to G.S. 163-82.7 or G.S. 163-83 may appeal the denial within five days after receipt of  
11 the notice of denial. The county board of elections shall promptly set a date for a public hearing.  
12 The notice of appeal shall be in writing and shall be signed by the appealing party, shall include  
13 the appealing party's name, date of birth, address, and reasons for the appeal."

14 **SECTION 2.10.(e)** This section becomes effective January 1, 2027, and applies to  
15 voter registration applications processed on or after that date.

## 17 POST-ELECTION AUDITS BY STATE AUDITOR

18 **SECTION 2.11.** Article 5A of Chapter 147 of the General Statutes is amended by  
19 adding a new section to read:

### 20 "**§ 147-64.6Q. Audit of general elections.**

21 (a) In addition to any authority granted in G.S. 147-64.7, after the certification of each  
22 general election under Chapter 163 of the General Statutes, the Auditor shall randomly select  
23 counties of the State in which to conduct post-election audits of election system and controls.  
24 The number of audits to be conducted is at the discretion of the Auditor, but all county boards of  
25 elections must be audited at least once every six years.

26 (b) No county audit under this section shall occur until after the election is certified  
27 pursuant to G.S. 163-182.15. Nothing in this section supersedes, overrides, or replaces any  
28 procedures in Article 15A of Chapter 163 of the General Statutes. No findings in audits under  
29 this section shall be used as grounds to challenge the final result of an election. Audits under this  
30 section are in addition to audits conducted under G.S. 163-182.12A.

31 (c) In conducting audits under this section, the Auditor may examine all of the following  
32 areas:

- 33 (1) The accuracy of voter rolls and compliance with list maintenance  
34 requirements in State and federal law.
- 35 (2) Procedures for testing voting equipment before counting ballots, including the  
36 ballots used for testing the equipment and the storage and maintenance of the  
37 equipment.
- 38 (3) Records of ballots distributed, ballots voted, poll book records, and ballots  
39 tabulated.
- 40 (4) Chain of custody and seal documentation.
- 41 (5) Absentee ballots, absentee ballot applications, and absentee ballot  
42 container-return envelopes to ensure appropriate processing and counting of  
43 absentee ballots.
- 44 (6) Provisional ballots, provisional ballot envelopes, and records regarding  
45 provisional ballots.
- 46 (7) Compliance with all State and federal laws regarding contact with voters and  
47 voter assistance.
- 48 (8) Any areas of concern regarding election accuracy, security, or credibility  
49 uncovered over the course of the audit.

1       (d) Election officials of the county under audit may be present during a county audit under  
 2 this section and shall preserve chain of custody of cast ballots and other documents, when  
 3 applicable.

4       (e) The Auditor shall produce annual reports of the audits conducted under this section  
 5 and make them accessible on the Office of the State Auditor's website in perpetuity. The report  
 6 shall include details of which areas listed in subsection (c) of this section were examined and the  
 7 Auditor's findings related to those areas. The report may include recommendations for best  
 8 practices, additional training, oversight, or changes to election administration. Before submitting  
 9 the report, the Auditor shall allow a board of elections for any county discussed in the report to  
 10 review the report and provide comments to be submitted along with it in accordance with  
 11 G.S. 147-64.6(c)(13). The reports shall not violate any applicable confidentiality laws.

12       (f) If the Auditor receives or collects information during an audit under this section that  
 13 the Auditor believes may be evidence of a violation of State or federal law, the Auditor shall  
 14 refer this evidence in accordance with G.S. 147-64.6B.

15       (g) If an error, inefficiency, or vulnerability in a county's election system or controls is  
 16 uncovered in an audit under this section, the county board of elections shall submit a report to  
 17 the Auditor, the State Board of Elections, and the county board of commissioners outlining its  
 18 plan to fix the error, inefficiency, or vulnerability.

19       (h) The Auditor, in collaboration with the State Board of Elections, shall develop an audit  
 20 manual that details the policies and procedures guiding audits under this section. This manual  
 21 shall not have the force of law. The manual shall not be altered within the 90 days preceding an  
 22 election in which the manual is utilized to conduct an audit under this section."

## 23

### 24 **CHANGE DATE FOR WHEN CERTAIN MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS HELD**

25       **SECTION 2.12.(a)** G.S. 163-279(a) reads as rewritten:

26       "(a) Primaries and elections for offices filled by election of the people in cities, towns,  
 27 incorporated villages, and special districts shall be held in 1973 and every two or four years  
 28 thereafter as provided by municipal charter on the following days:

- 29       (1) If the election is nonpartisan and decided by simple plurality, the election shall  
 30 be held on Tuesday after the first Monday in November.
- 31       (2) If the election is partisan, the election shall be held on Tuesday after the first  
 32 Monday in November, the first primary shall be held on the second Tuesday  
 33 after Labor Day, and the second primary, if required, shall be held on the  
 34 fourth Tuesday before the election.
- 35       (3) If the election is nonpartisan and the nonpartisan primary method of election  
 36 is used, the election shall be held on Tuesday after the first Monday in  
 37 November and the nonpartisan primary shall be held on the ~~fourth Tuesday~~  
 38 ~~before the election.~~ second Tuesday after Labor Day.
- 39       (4) If the election is nonpartisan and the election and runoff election method of  
 40 election is used, the election shall be held on the ~~fourth Tuesday before the~~  
 41 ~~Tuesday after the first Monday in November,~~ second Tuesday after Labor  
 42 Day, and the runoff election, if required, shall be held on Tuesday after the  
 43 first Monday in November."

44       **SECTION 2.12.(b)** This section becomes effective January 1, 2027, and applies to  
 45 elections held on or after that date.

### 46

### 47 **ELIGIBILITY TO FILE AS CANDIDATE IN PARTY PRIMARY**

48       **SECTION 2.13.(a)** G.S. 163-106.1 reads as rewritten:

49       "**§ 163-106.1. Eligibility to file.**

50       (a) No person shall be permitted to file as a candidate in a party primary unless that person  
 51 has been affiliated with that party for at least ~~90~~ 365 days as of the date of that person filing such

1 notice of candidacy. A person registered as "unaffiliated" shall be ineligible to file as a candidate  
2 in a party primary election.

3 (b) Notwithstanding subsection (a) of this section, a person who has been affiliated with  
4 a party for less than 365 days may file as a candidate in that party's primary if the State executive  
5 committee of the political party with which the candidate is affiliated grants the person a waiver.  
6 The State executive committee of the political party may, in its sole discretion, grant or deny a  
7 waiver request. The waiver must be submitted to the board of elections which has jurisdiction  
8 over the ballot item under G.S. 163-182.4 by the close of the filing period for that office.

9 (c) This section shall not apply to any of the following:

10 (1) Candidates selected by party convention or political party caucus.

11 (2) Political parties that have been recognized under Article 9 of this Chapter for  
12 two continuous years or less."

13 **SECTION 2.13.(b)** This section is effective when it becomes law and applies to  
14 candidates filing in a party primary on or after that date.

### 15 16 **PART III. DUTY & STRUCTURE OF THE STATE BOARD OF ELECTIONS &** 17 **COUNTY BOARDS OF ELECTIONS**

#### 18 19 **AUTHORITY IN ELECTION LITIGATION**

20 **SECTION 3.2.(a)** G.S. 163-25 reads as rewritten:

21 "**§ 163-25. Authority of State Board to assist in litigation.**

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

25 (1) The county board of elections in such county petitions, requests, by majority  
26 resolution, for such assistance from the State Board and, provided further, that  
27 the Board.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1           **SECTION 3.2.(b)** This section is effective when it becomes law and applies to  
2 counsel employed on, retained on, or hired or retained after that date.

3  
4 **VENUE FOR JUDICIAL REVIEW OF DECISIONS OF THE STATE BOARD OF**  
5 **ELECTIONS**

6           **SECTION 3.3.(a)** G.S. 163-22(l) reads as rewritten:

7           "(l) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, in order to obtain judicial review of any  
8 decision of the State Board rendered in the performance of its duties or in the exercise of its  
9 powers under this Chapter, the person seeking review must file a petition in either the Superior  
10 Court of Wake County, County or the superior court of the county in which the person seeking  
11 review resides."

12           **SECTION 3.3.(b)** This section is effective when it becomes law and applies to  
13 actions filed on or after that date.

14  
15 **INCREASE COMPENSATION OF MEMBERS OF COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS**

16           **SECTION 3.4.(a)** G.S. 163-32 reads as rewritten:

17 **"§ 163-32. Compensation of members of ~~county boards of elections~~ county boards.**

18           In full compensation of their services, members of the county board of ~~elections~~ (including  
19 the ~~chairman~~ chair) shall be paid by the county ~~twenty-five dollars (\$25.00)~~ one hundred dollars  
20 (\$100.00) per meeting for the time they are actually engaged in the discharge of their duties,  
21 together with reimbursement of expenditures necessary and incidental to the discharge of their  
22 duties; provided that members are not entitled to be compensated for more than one meeting held  
23 in any one 24-hour period. In its discretion, the board of county commissioners of any county  
24 may pay the ~~chairman~~ chair and members of the county board of ~~elections~~ compensation in  
25 addition to the per meeting and expense allowance provided in this paragraph.

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

30           **SECTION 3.4.(b)** This section becomes effective July 1, 2027.

31  
32 **EXEMPT POSITIONS AT THE STATE BOARD OF ELECTIONS**

33           **SECTION 3.5.(a)** Section 2E.3(a) of S.L. 2025-89 reads as rewritten:

34           "**SECTION 2E.3.(a)** There is appropriated from the General Fund to the State Board of  
35 Elections the sum of one million one hundred ninety-three thousand nine hundred seventy-nine  
36 dollars (\$1,193,979) in recurring funds for each fiscal year of the 2025-2027 fiscal biennium to  
37 provide funds for the following ~~seven new exempt~~ positions, including salaries, benefits, and  
38 operating costs:

- 39           (1) Administrative Officer III.  
40           (2) Agency General Counsel II.  
41           (3) Agency HR Director II.  
42           (4) Assistant General Counsel II.  
43           (5) Internal Auditor.  
44           (6) Legislative Affairs Manager.  
45           (7) Public Information Manager."

46           **SECTION 3.5.(b)** G.S. 126-5(c1) is amended by adding the following new  
47 subdivisions to read:

48           "(43) The Executive Director of the State Board of Elections.

49           (44) Employees of the State Board of Elections, that the Executive Director of the  
50 State Board of Elections, at any time, in the Executive Director of the State  
51 Board of Elections' discretion, exempts from the application of this Chapter

1 by means of a letter to the Director of the Office of State Human Resources  
 2 designating these employees. The Executive Director of the State Board of  
 3 Elections may exempt no more than seven employees under the authorization  
 4 set forth in this subdivision. Any exemptions under this subdivision shall not  
 5 affect, or be counted against, the number of exempt positions the Auditor may  
 6 designate in accordance with subdivision (2) of subsection (d) of this section."

7 **SECTION 3.5.(c)** G.S. 126-5(c14) reads as rewritten:

8 "(c14) Notwithstanding any provision of this Chapter to the contrary, each Council of State  
 9 ~~agency, agency and~~ the Office of the State Controller, ~~and the Executive Director of the State~~  
 10 ~~Board of Elections Controller~~ has the sole authority to set the salary of its exempt policymaking  
 11 and exempt managerial positions within the minimum rates, and the maximum rates plus ten  
 12 percent (10%), established by the State Human Resources Commission under G.S. 126-4(2)."

13 **SECTION 3.5.(d)** G.S. 126-5(d)(2) reads as rewritten:

14 "(2) Exempt Positions in Council of State Departments and Offices, the Office of  
 15 the State Controller, and the State Board of Elections. – The Secretary of State,  
 16 the Auditor, the Treasurer, the Attorney General, the Superintendent of Public  
 17 Instruction, the Commissioner of Agriculture, the Commissioner of Insurance,  
 18 the Labor Commissioner, and the State Controller, and the Executive Director  
 19 of the State Board of Elections Controller may designate exempt positions.  
 20 The number of exempt policymaking positions in each department headed by  
 21 an elected department head listed in this subdivision is limited to 25 exempt  
 22 policymaking positions or two percent (2%) of the total number of full-time  
 23 positions in the department, whichever is greater. The total number of  
 24 full-time positions in the Department of the State Auditor shall not include  
 25 employees of the State Board of Elections. The number of exempt managerial  
 26 positions is limited to 25 positions or two percent (2%) of the total number of  
 27 full-time positions in the department, whichever is greater. The number of  
 28 exempt policymaking positions designated by the Superintendent of Public  
 29 Instruction is limited to 70 exempt policymaking positions or two percent  
 30 (2%) of the total number of full-time positions in the department, whichever  
 31 is greater. The number of exempt managerial positions designated by the  
 32 Superintendent of Public Instruction is limited to 70 exempt managerial  
 33 positions or two percent (2%) of the total number of full-time positions in the  
 34 department, whichever is greater. The total number of exempt positions,  
 35 policymaking and managerial, designated by the Office of the State Controller  
 36 is limited to 10. ~~The total number of exempt positions designated by the~~  
 37 ~~Executive Director of the State Board of Elections is limited to the following~~  
 38 ~~seven positions: Agency Human Relations Director II, Agency General~~  
 39 ~~Counsel II, Assistant General Counsel II, Public Information Manager,~~  
 40 ~~Legislative Affairs Manager, Internal Auditor, and Administrative Officer~~  
 41 ~~III."~~

42 **SECTION 3.5.(e)** G.S. 126-5(d)(4) reads as rewritten:

43 "(4) Vacancies. – In the event of a vacancy in the Office of Governor, the office of  
 44 a member of the Council of State, or the Office of the State Controller, or the  
 45 ~~Executive Director of the State Board of Elections,~~ the person who succeeds  
 46 to or is appointed or elected to fill the unexpired term shall make designations  
 47 in a letter to the Director of the Office of State Human Resources, the Speaker  
 48 of the House of Representatives, and the President of the Senate within 180  
 49 days after the oath of office is administered to that person."

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

1           **SECTION 4.1.** G.S. 163-258.2 reads as rewritten:

2    "**§ 163-258.2. Definitions.**

3       As used in this Article:

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

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

27          (2) "Dependent" means an individual recognized as a dependent by a uniformed  
28          service.

29          (3) "Military-overseas ballot" means any of the following:

- 30          a. A federal write-in absentee ballot described in the Uniformed and  
31          Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act, section 103, 42 U.S.C. §  
32          1973ff-2.
- 33          b. A ballot specifically prepared or distributed for use by a covered voter  
34          in accordance with this Article.
- 35          c. A ballot cast by a covered voter in accordance with this Article.

36          (4) "Overseas voter" means a United States citizen who is outside the United  
37          States.

38          (5) "State" means a state of the United States, the District of Columbia, Puerto  
39          Rico, the United States Virgin Islands, or any territory or insular possession  
40          subject to the jurisdiction of the United States.

41          (6) "Uniformed service" means any of the following:

- 42          a. Active and reserve components of the United States Army, Navy, Air  
43          Force, Marine Corps, Space Force, and Coast Guard.
- 44          b. The Merchant Marine, the commissioned corps of the Public Health  
45          Service, and the commissioned corps of the National Oceanic and  
46          Atmospheric Administration of the United States.
- 47          c. The National Guard and state militia units.

48          (7) "Uniformed-service voter" means an individual who is qualified to vote and  
49          is one of the following:

- 1 a. A member of the active or reserve components of the United States  
2 Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Space Force, or Coast Guard  
3 who is on active duty.  
4 b. A member of the Merchant Marine, the commissioned corps of the  
5 Public Health Service, or the commissioned corps of the National  
6 Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration of the United States.  
7 c. A member of the National Guard or State militia unit who is on  
8 activated status.  
9 d. A spouse or dependent of a member referred to in this subdivision.  
10 (8) "United States," used in the territorial sense, means the several states, the  
11 District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the United States Virgin Islands, and any  
12 territory or insular possession subject to the jurisdiction of the United States."

13 **SECTION 4.2.** G.S. 163-258.5 reads as rewritten:

14 **"§ 163-258.5. Overseas voter's registration address.**

15 In registering to vote, an overseas voter who is eligible to vote in this State shall use and shall  
16 be assigned to the precinct of the address of the last place of residence of the voter in this State,  
17 ~~or, in the case of a voter described by G.S. 163-258.2(1)e., the address of the last place of~~  
18 ~~residence in this State of the parent or legal guardian of the voter.~~ State. If that address is no  
19 longer a recognized residential address, the voter shall be assigned an address for voting  
20 ~~purposes.~~ purposes that is in the same precinct or an adjacent precinct to the address of the last  
21 place of residence of the voter."

22 **SECTION 4.3.** G.S. 163-258.10 reads as rewritten:

23 **"§ 163-258.10. ~~Timely casting~~ Casting of ballot.**

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

28 (b) Covered voters shall submit the military-overseas ballot with a photocopy of  
29 identification described in G.S. 163-166.16(a) or an affidavit as described in  
30 G.S. 163-166.16(d)(1), (d)(2), or (d)(3).

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

33 **SECTION 4.4.** Article 21A of Chapter 163 of the General Statutes is amended by  
34 adding a new section to read:

35 **"§ 163-258.21. Curable deficiencies.**

36 (a) If a ballot cast under this Article contains a curable deficiency, the county board shall  
37 notify the voter of the curable deficiency and the manner in which the voter may cure the  
38 deficiency no later than the close of business on the next business day following review of the  
39 ballot. For purposes of this section, a curable deficiency is when the voter fails to include a  
40 photocopy of identification described in G.S. 163-258.10(b).

41 (b) Any ballot cast under this Article with a curable deficiency that is transmitted to the  
42 county board shall be considered timely if cure documentation is received by 11:00 A.M. on the  
43 day of the county canvass. Cure documentation may be transmitted through any of the following  
44 methods:

- 45 (1) Mailing cure documentation to the appropriate county board.  
46 (2) Transmitting cure documentation to the appropriate county board through the  
47 electronic transmission system developed by the State Board.  
48 (3) Transmitting cure documentation via email to the appropriate county board."

49 **SECTION 4.5.** This Part becomes effective January 1, 2027, and applies to elections  
50 held on or after that date.  
51

**PART V. CAMPAIGN FINANCE REVISIONS****INCREASE THRESHOLD FOR REPORTING CERTAIN CONTRIBUTIONS**

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

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

(a) Notwithstanding any other provision of this Chapter, a candidate for a county office, municipal office, local school board office, soil and water conservation district board of supervisors, or sanitary district board shall be exempted from the reports of contributions, loans, and expenditures required in G.S. 163-278.9(a), 163-278.40B, 163-278.40C, 163-278.40D, and 163-278.40E if to further the candidate's campaign that ~~candidate~~ candidate complies with all of the following:

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

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

...."

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

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

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

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

(c) In assuring compliance with subsections (a) and (b) of this section, the State Board ~~of Elections~~ shall require the identification of each person or entity making a donation of more than one ~~hundred dollars (\$100.00)~~ thousand dollars (\$1,000) to the entity filing the report if the donation was made to further the reported independent expenditure or contribution. If the donor is an individual, the statement shall also contain the principal occupation of the donor. The

1 "principal occupation of the donor" shall mean the same as the "principal occupation of the  
2 contributor" in G.S. 163-278.11.

3 (d) Contributions or independent expenditures required to be reported under this section  
4 shall be reported within 30 days after they exceed one ~~hundred dollars (\$100.00)~~ thousand dollars  
5 (\$1,000) or 10 days before an election the contributions or independent expenditures affect,  
6 whichever occurs earlier.

7 ...

8 (h) Statements filed under this section in connection with an independent expenditure or  
9 contribution regarding a referendum shall include a certification by the filer that it has not  
10 knowingly or willfully accepted funds aggregating in excess of ten thousand dollars (\$10,000)  
11 from one or more foreign nationals within the four-year period immediately preceding the date  
12 on which the expenditure or contribution was made and that it will not do so through the date of  
13 the election in which the referendum will appear on the ballot."

14 **SECTION 5.1.(c)** This section becomes effective January 1, 2027.

## 16 48-HOUR REPORT REQUIREMENTS

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

18 "**§ 163-278.9. Statements filed with Board.**

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

22 ...

23 (2) 48-Hour Report. – A political committee, political party or affiliated party  
24 committee that receives a contribution or transfer of funds shall disclose  
25 within 48 hours of receipt a contribution or transfer of ~~one two thousand~~  
26 ~~dollars (\$1,000)–(\$2,000)~~ or more received before an election but after the  
27 period covered by the last report due before that election. The disclosure shall  
28 be by report to the ~~State Board~~ identifying the source and amount of the funds.  
29 The State Board shall specify the form and manner of making the report,  
30 including the reporting of in-kind contributions. The State Board shall  
31 increase the dollar amount of the reporting threshold effective each election  
32 cycle beginning on the period from January 1 of an odd-numbered year  
33 through December 31 of the next even-numbered year based on the Consumer  
34 Price Index as provided in G.S. 163-278.13(b). The State Board shall set the  
35 revised threshold in October of the even-numbered year, publish the revised  
36 threshold in the North Carolina Register, and notify the Revisor of Statutes  
37 who shall adjust the dollar amount in this subdivision.

38 ...

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

42 ...."

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

44 "(3) 48-Hour Report. – A referendum committee that receives a contribution or  
45 transfer of funds shall disclose within 48 hours of receipt a contribution or  
46 transfer of ~~one two thousand dollars (\$1,000)–(\$2,000)~~ or more received before  
47 a referendum but after the period covered by the last report due before that  
48 referendum. The disclosure shall be by report to the ~~State Board of Elections~~  
49 identifying the source and amount of such funds. The State Board ~~of Elections~~  
50 shall specify the form and manner of making the report, including the  
51 reporting of in-kind contributions. The State Board shall increase the dollar

1 amount of the reporting threshold effective each election cycle beginning the  
2 period from January 1 of an odd-numbered year through December 31 of the  
3 next even-numbered year based on the Consumer Price Index as provided in  
4 G.S. 163-278.13(b). The State Board shall set the revised threshold in October  
5 of the even-numbered year, publish the revised threshold in the North Carolina  
6 Register, and notify the Revisor of Statutes who shall adjust the dollar amount  
7 in this subdivision."

8 **SECTION 5.2.(c)** No earlier than October 1, 2026, the State Board of Elections shall  
9 adjust the thresholds imposed by G.S. 163-278.9(a)(2) and G.S. 163-278.9A(a)(3), as enacted by  
10 this section, effective for the election cycle beginning January 1, 2027.

## 11 12 **CONTRIBUTIONS BY FOREIGN NATIONALS**

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

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

- 15 a. An individual who is not a citizen or lawful permanent resident of the  
16 United States.
- 17 b. A government of a foreign country, or any political subdivision  
18 thereof.
- 19 c. A foreign political party.
- 20 d. Any person that is organized under the law of, or has its principal place  
21 of business in, a foreign country.
- 22 e. Any person organized and operating in the United States that is wholly  
23 or majority-owned by a foreign national or combination of foreign  
24 nationals unless both of the following apply:
  - 25 1. Any contribution or expenditure the person lawfully makes  
26 derives entirely from funds generated by operations in the  
27 United States.
  - 28 2. All decisions concerning the contribution or expenditure are  
29 made by individuals who are United States citizens or lawful  
30 permanent residents, except for setting overall budget  
31 amounts."

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

34 **"§ 163-278.9A. Statements filed by referendum committees.**

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

37 ...

38 (1a) Organizational Funding Certification. – The treasurer shall file a signed  
39 statement with the Board no later than the tenth day following the organization  
40 of a referendum committee affirming that no preliminary activity was funded  
41 by one or more foreign nationals and that the committee has not and will not  
42 knowingly or willfully receive, solicit, or accept contributions, directly or  
43 indirectly, from one or more foreign nationals. Preliminary activity includes  
44 conducting a poll, public opinion survey, or focus group; drafting referendum  
45 language; telephone calls; and travel.

46 ...

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

50 (c) Any report disclosing contributions required by this section shall include an  
51 affirmation by the treasurer that the donor associated with each contribution is not a foreign

1 national and the donor has not knowingly or willfully received, solicited, or accepted  
2 contributions, directly or indirectly, from one or more foreign nationals aggregating in excess of  
3 ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) within the four-year period immediately preceding the date of the  
4 contribution.

5 (d) For purposes of this section, "directly or indirectly" means acting either alone or  
6 jointly with, through, or on behalf of any other referendum committee, political committee,  
7 organization, person, individual, or other entity."

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

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

11 (1) A corporation, foreign or domestic, regardless of whether such corporation  
12 does business in the State of North Carolina, or made by any Carolina.

13 (2) Any business entity, labor union, professional association, or insurance  
14 company.

15 (3) Any foreign national.

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

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

19 "**§ 163-278.19. Violations by foreign nationals, corporations, business entities, labor unions,**  
20 **professional associations and insurance companies.**

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

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

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

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

29 (a1) It shall also be unlawful for any officer, director, stockholder, attorney, agent or  
30 member of any foreign national, corporation, business entity, labor union, professional  
31 association or insurance company to aid, abet, advise or consent to any such contribution, or for  
32 any person or individual to solicit or knowingly receive any such contribution. Supporting or  
33 opposing the election of clearly identified candidates includes supporting or opposing the  
34 candidates of a clearly identified political party. Any officer, director, stockholder, attorney,  
35 agent or member of any foreign national, corporation, business entity, labor union, professional  
36 association or insurance company aiding or abetting in any contribution made in violation of this  
37 section shall be guilty of a Class 2 misdemeanor, and shall in addition be liable to such foreign  
38 national, corporation, business entity, labor union, professional association or insurance company  
39 for the amount of such contribution and the same may be recovered of him upon suit by any  
40 stockholder or member thereof, thereof against the aiding or abetting officer, director,  
41 stockholder, attorney, agent, or member.

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

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

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

3 (1) Communicate with its employees, stockholders or members and their families  
4 on any ~~subject~~; to conduct ~~subject~~.

5 (2) Conduct nonpartisan registration and get-out-the-vote campaigns aimed at  
6 their employees, stockholders, or members and their ~~families~~; or for families.

7 (3) For officials and employees of any corporation, insurance company or  
8 business entity or the officials and members of any labor union or professional  
9 association to establish, administer, contribute to, and to receive and solicit  
10 contributions to a separate segregated fund to be utilized for political  
11 purposes, and those individuals shall be deemed to become and be a political  
12 committee as that term is defined in G.S. 163-278.6(74) or a referendum  
13 committee as defined in G.S. 163-278.6(84); provided, however, that it shall  
14 be unlawful for any such fund to make a contribution or expenditure by  
15 utilizing contributions secured by physical force, job discrimination, financial  
16 reprisals or the threat of force, job discrimination or financial reprisals, or by  
17 dues, fees, or other moneys required as a condition of membership or  
18 employment or as a requirement with respect to any terms or conditions of  
19 employment, including, without limitation, hiring, firing, transferring,  
20 promoting, demoting, or granting seniority or employment-related benefits of  
21 any kind, or by moneys obtained in any commercial transaction whatsoever.

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

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

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

41 The approximate cost of any reasonable administrative support shall be submitted to the  
42 political committee, in writing, and the political committee shall include that cost on the report  
43 required by G.S. 163-278.9(a)(4). Also included in the report shall be the approximate allocable  
44 portion of the compensation of any officer or employee of the corporation, business entity, labor  
45 union, professional association, or insurance company who has devoted more than thirty-five  
46 percent (35%) of ~~his~~ that employee's time during normal business hours of the corporation,  
47 business entity, labor union, professional association, or insurance company during the period  
48 covered by the required report. The approximate cost submitted by the parent corporation,  
49 business entity, labor union, professional association, or insurance company shall be entered on  
50 the political committee's report as the final entry on its list of "contributions" and a copy of the  
51 written approximate cost received by it shall be attached.

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

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

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

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

11 (3) Was not established by a business corporation, by an insurance company, by  
12 a business entity, including, but not limited to, those chartered under Chapter  
13 55, Chapter 55A, Chapter 55B, or Chapter 58 of the General Statutes, by a  
14 professional association, or by a labor union and does not receive substantial  
15 revenue from such entities. Substantial revenue is rebuttably presumed to be  
16 more than ten percent (10%) of total revenues in a calendar year.

17 (4) Is not a foreign national.

18 (i) If a political committee has as its only purpose accepting contributions and making  
19 expenditures to influence elections, and that political committee incorporates as a nonprofit  
20 corporation to shield its participants from liability created outside this Subchapter, that political  
21 committee is not considered to be a corporation for purposes of this section. Incorporation of a  
22 political committee does not relieve any individual, person, or other entity of any liability, duty,  
23 or obligation created pursuant to any provision of this Subchapter. To obtain the benefits of this  
24 subsection, an incorporating political committee must state exactly the following language as the  
25 only purpose for which the corporation can be organized: "to accept contributions and make  
26 expenditures to influence elections as a political committee pursuant to G.S. 163-278.6(74)  
27 only." No political committee shall do business as a political committee after incorporation unless  
28 it has been certified by the State Board as being in compliance with this subsection.

29 (j) For purposes of this section, "directly or indirectly" means acting either alone or  
30 jointly with, through, or on behalf of any other referendum committee, political committee,  
31 organization, person, individual, or other entity."

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

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

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

41 **"§ 163-278.19C. Contributions by foreign nationals.**

42 (a) A foreign national shall not direct, dictate, control, or directly or indirectly participate  
43 in the decision-making process of any individual's, person's, or referendum committee's activities  
44 to influence a referendum, including the making of contributions or independent expenditures. A  
45 foreign national shall not coordinate with any individual, person, or referendum committee to  
46 influence a referendum.

47 (b) A foreign national may not solicit, directly or indirectly, the making of a contribution,  
48 expenditure, or other monetary or in-kind donation by another individual or person to influence  
49 a referendum.

50 (c) A referendum committee shall not knowingly receive, solicit, or accept any  
51 contribution from a foreign national, whether directly or indirectly.

1       (d) Upon a referendum committee receiving a contribution, the treasurer of such  
2 committee shall obtain from the donor an affirmation that the donor is not a foreign national and  
3 the donor has not knowingly or willfully accepted funds aggregating in excess of ten thousand  
4 dollars (\$10,000) from one or more foreign national within the four-year period immediately  
5 preceding the date the contribution is made. The treasurer of a referendum committee shall  
6 include records of such donor affirmations in the detailed account records required by  
7 G.S. 163-278.8.

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

11       (f) Nothing in this section shall create or eliminate any donor disclosure rights or duties  
12 except as provided in this Chapter.

13       (g) Any individual or person who makes an intentional disclosure of confidential  
14 materials or information related to any investigation or enforcement action under this section  
15 when such disclosure is not authorized by this Chapter shall be guilty of a Class 2 misdemeanor.  
16 The statute of limitations, as stated in G.S. 15-1, for a violation of this subsection shall run from  
17 the date that the unauthorized disclosure first occurred.

18       (h) For purposes of this section, "directly or indirectly" means acting either alone or  
19 jointly with, through, or on behalf of any other referendum committee, political committee,  
20 organization, person, individual, or other entity."

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

22 **"§ 163-278.19A. Contributions allowed.**

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

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

27       "(a) Any individual, candidate, political committee, referendum committee, treasurer,  
28 person or media who intentionally violates the applicable provisions of G.S. 163-278.7,  
29 163-278.8, 163-278.9, 163-278.10, 163-278.11, 163-278.12, 163-278.13, 163-278.13B,  
30 163-278.14, 163-278.16, 163-278.16B, 163-278.17, 163-278.18, 163-278.19, 163-278.19C,  
31 163-278.20, 163-278.39, 163-278.40A, 163-278.40B, 163-278.40C, 163-278.40D, 163-278.40E,  
32 or 163-278.40J is guilty of a Class 2 misdemeanor. The statute of limitations as stated in  
33 G.S. 15-1 shall run from the day the last report is due to be filed with the appropriate board of  
34 elections for the election cycle for which the violation occurred."

35       **SECTION 5.3.(i)** Subsection (f) of this section becomes effective December 1, 2026,  
36 and applies to offenses committed on or after that date. The remainder of this section becomes  
37 effective January 1, 2027.

## 39 **EXEMPT POLITICAL PARTY COMMITTEES FROM CAMPAIGN SALES** 40 **REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

41       **SECTION 5.4.(a)** G.S. 163-278.8A reads as rewritten:

42 **"§ 163-278.8A. Campaign sales by political party executive ~~committees,~~committees, and**  
43 **affiliated party committees, and other political party committees.**

44       (a) Exempt Purchase Price Not Treated as "Contribution." – Notwithstanding the  
45 provisions of G.S. 163-278.6(13), the purchase price of goods or services sold by a political party  
46 executive ~~committee or affiliated party committee~~committee, an affiliated party committee, or  
47 other political party committees as provided in subsection (b) of this section shall not be treated  
48 as a "contribution" for purposes of account-keeping under G.S. 163-278.8, for purposes of the  
49 reporting of contributions under G.S. 163-278.11, or for the purpose of the limit on contributions  
50 under G.S. 163-278.13. The treasurer is not required to obtain, maintain, or report the name or  
51 other identifying information of the purchaser of the goods or services, as long as the

1 requirements of subsection (b) of this section are satisfied. However, the proceeds from the sales  
 2 of those goods and services shall be treated as contributions for other purposes, and expenditures  
 3 of those proceeds shall be reported as expenditures under this Article. For purposes of this  
 4 section, "political party committees" includes, but is not limited to, men, women, college, teen,  
 5 senior, young, African American, or Hispanic clubs or organizations.

6 (b) Exempt Purchase Price. – A purchase price for goods or services sold by a political  
 7 party executive ~~committee or affiliated party committee~~ committee, an affiliated party  
 8 committee, or other political party committees qualifies for the exemption provided in subsection  
 9 (a) of this section as long as the sale of the goods or services adheres to a plan that the treasurer  
 10 has submitted to and that has been approved in writing by the Executive Director of the State  
 11 Board of Elections. The Executive Director shall approve the treasurer's plan upon and only upon  
 12 finding that all the following requirements are satisfied:

- 13 (1) That the price to be charged for the goods or services is reasonably close to  
 14 the market price for the goods or services.
- 15 (2) That the total amount to be raised from sales under all plans by the committee  
 16 does not exceed twenty thousand dollars (\$20,000) per election cycle.
- 17 (3) That no purchaser makes total purchases under the plan that exceed fifty  
 18 dollars (\$50.00).
- 19 (4) That the treasurer include in the report under G.S. 163-278.11, covering the  
 20 relevant time period, all of the following:
  - 21 a. A description of the plan.
  - 22 b. The amount raised from sales under the plan.
  - 23 c. The number of purchases made.
- 24 (5) That the treasurer shall include in the appropriate report under  
 25 G.S. 163-278.11 any in-kind contribution made to the political party in  
 26 providing the goods or services sold under the plan and that no in-kind  
 27 contribution accepted as part of the plan violates any provision of this Article.

28 The Executive Director may require a format for submission of a plan, but that format shall  
 29 not place undue paperwork burdens upon the treasurer. As used in this subdivision, the term  
 30 "election cycle" has the same meaning as in G.S. 163-278.6(32)."

31 **SECTION 5.4.(b)** This section becomes effective January 1, 2027.

### 32 **INCREASE THRESHOLD FOR NONCASH REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

33 **SECTION 5.5.(a)** G.S. 163-278.8(d) reads as rewritten:

34 "(d) All expenditures for nonmedia expenses (except postage) of more than ~~fifty dollars~~  
 35 ~~(\$50.00)~~ one hundred dollars (\$100.00) shall be made by a verifiable form of payment. The State  
 36 Board of Elections shall prescribe methods to ensure an audit trail for every expenditure so that  
 37 the identity of each payee can be determined. All expenditures for nonmedia expenses of ~~fifty~~  
 38 ~~dollars (\$50.00)~~ one hundred dollars (\$100.00) or less may be made by check or by cash payment.  
 39 All nonmedia expenditures of more than ~~fifty dollars (\$50.00)~~ one hundred dollars (\$100.00)  
 40 shall be accounted for and reported individually and separately with a specific description to  
 41 provide a reasonable understanding of the expenditure, but expenditures of ~~fifty dollars (\$50.00)~~  
 42 one hundred dollars (\$100.00) or less may be accounted for and reported in an aggregated  
 43 amount, but in that case the treasurer shall account for and report that the treasurer made  
 44 expenditures of ~~fifty dollars (\$50.00)~~ one hundred dollars (\$100.00) or less each, the amounts,  
 45 dates, and the purposes for which made. In the case of a nonmedia expenditure required to be  
 46 accounted for individually and separately with a specific description to provide a reasonable  
 47 understanding of the expenditure by this subsection, if the expenditure was to an individual, the  
 48 report shall list the name and address of the individual."

49 **SECTION 5.5.(b)** G.S. 163-278.11(b) reads as rewritten:  
 50

1       "(b) Threshold for Reporting Identity of Contributor. – A treasurer shall not be required  
2 to report the name, address, or principal occupation of any individual who contributes ~~fifty dollars~~  
3 ~~(\$50.00)~~ one hundred dollars (\$100.00) or less to the treasurer's committee during an election as  
4 defined in G.S. 163-278.13. The State Board of Elections shall provide on its reporting forms for  
5 the reporting of contributions below that threshold. On those reporting forms, the State Board  
6 may require date and amount of contributions below the threshold, but may treat differently for  
7 reporting purposes contributions below the threshold that are made in different modes and in  
8 different settings."

9           **SECTION 5.5.(c)** G.S. 163-278.14(b) reads as rewritten:

10       "(b) No entity shall make, and no candidate, committee or treasurer shall accept, any  
11 monetary contribution in excess of ~~fifty dollars (\$50.00)~~ one hundred dollars (\$100.00) unless  
12 such contribution is in the form of a check, draft, money order, credit card charge, debit, or other  
13 noncash method that can be subject to written verification. No contribution in the form of check,  
14 draft, money order, credit card charge, debits, or other noncash method may be made or accepted  
15 unless it contains a specific designation of the intended contributee chosen by the contributor.  
16 The State Board may prescribe guidelines as to the reporting and verification of any method of  
17 contribution payment allowed under this Article. For contributions by money order, the State  
18 Board of Elections shall prescribe methods to ensure an audit trail for every contribution so that  
19 the identity of the contributor can be determined. For a contribution made by credit card, the  
20 credit card account number of a contributor is not a public record."

21           **SECTION 5.5.(d)** This section becomes effective January 1, 2027, and applies to  
22 monetary contributions and expenditures made, reported, or accepted on or after that date.  
23

## 24 **PART VI. REQUIRE USE OF FEDERAL DECENNIAL CENSUS DATA WHEN** 25 **ESTABLISHING DISTRICT BOUNDARIES**

26           **SECTION 6.(a)** G.S. 153A-22 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

27       "(h) In establishing district boundaries, the board of commissioners shall use data derived  
28 from the most recent federal decennial census and shall not use any other population estimates."

29           **SECTION 6.(b)** G.S. 160A-23 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

### 30 **"§ 160A-23. District map; reapportionment.**

31       (a) If the city is divided into electoral districts for the purpose of electing the members of  
32 the council, the map or description required by G.S. 160A-22 shall also show the boundaries of  
33 the several districts.

34       (b) The council shall have authority to revise electoral district boundaries from time to  
35 time. If district boundaries are set out in the city charter and the charter does not provide a method  
36 for revising them, the council may revise them only for the purpose of (i) accounting for territory  
37 annexed to or excluded from the city, and (ii) correcting population imbalances among the  
38 districts shown by a new federal decennial census or caused by exclusions or annexations. When  
39 district boundaries have been established in conformity with the federal Constitution, the council  
40 shall not be required to revise them again until a new federal decennial census ~~of population~~  
41 is taken or territory is annexed to or excluded from the city, whichever event first occurs.

42       (c) In establishing district boundaries, the council ~~may shall~~ use data derived from the  
43 most recent federal decennial census and shall not ~~be required to~~ use any other population  
44 estimates."

45           **SECTION 6.(c)** G.S. 115C-37(i) reads as rewritten:

46       "(i) The local board of education shall revise electoral district boundaries from time to  
47 time as provided by this subsection. If district boundaries are set by local act or court order and  
48 the act or order does not provide a method for revising them, the local board of education shall  
49 revise them only for the purpose of (i) accounting for territory annexed to or excluded from the  
50 school administrative unit, and (ii) correcting population imbalances among the districts shown  
51 by a new federal decennial census or caused by exclusions or annexations. After the General

1 Assembly has ratified an act establishing district boundaries, the local board of education shall  
2 not revise them again until a new federal decennial census of population is taken or territory is  
3 annexed to or excluded from the school administrative unit, whichever event first occurs. After  
4 the local board of education has revised district boundaries in conformity with this act,  
5 subsection, the local board of education shall not revise them again until a new federal decennial  
6 census of population is taken or territory is annexed to or excluded from the school administrative  
7 unit, whichever event occurs first, except that the board may make an earlier revision of district  
8 boundaries it has drawn if it must do so to comply with a court order or to gain approval of a  
9 district-revision plan by the U.S. Justice Department under Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act.  
10 In establishing district boundaries, the local board of education shall use data derived from the  
11 most recent federal ~~census~~ decennial census and shall not use any other population estimates."

12 **SECTION 6.(d)** This section is effective when it becomes law and applies to the  
13 establishment of district boundaries by a county, city, or local board of education on or after that  
14 date.

## 15 **PART VII. SIGNATURE VERIFICATION STUDY**

16 **SECTION 7.(a)** The State Board of Elections shall study and report on the  
17 feasibility, costs, and technical considerations of using signature verification technology. The  
18 State Board of Elections may seek feedback from other stakeholders, including the county boards  
19 of elections, and the study shall evaluate all of the following:

- 20 (1) The use of signature verification software in other states for the purposes of  
21 voter registration, absentee ballot signatures, and other uses in elections  
22 administration. This may include information about error rates in other states  
23 across potential vendors, any discontinuation of vendor contracts in other  
24 states, and any cost-saving measures implemented by other states.
- 25 (2) The cost and logistics of implementing a signature verification component for  
26 absentee ballot verification, including any training requirements, equipment  
27 needs, or costs incurred by county boards of elections.
- 28 (3) Any foreseen challenges related to voter signature retention under the current  
29 elections management infrastructure and possible technology solutions to  
30 minimize error rates under a statewide signature verification program.

31 **SECTION 7.(b)** The State Board of Elections shall report its findings, including any  
32 recommendations or proposed legislation, to the Joint Legislative Elections Oversight Committee  
33 on or before May 1, 2027.

## 34 **PART VIII. TRAINING FOR COUNTY BOARDS OF ELECTIONS**

35 **SECTION 8.1.** The School of Government at the University of North Carolina at  
36 Chapel Hill shall work jointly with the State Board of Elections to develop a uniform curriculum  
37 to provide trainings for county directors of elections and employees of county boards of elections  
38 on the election laws and procedures as provided for in Chapter 163 of the General Statutes.

39 **SECTION 8.2.** The State Board of Elections shall partner with local community  
40 colleges to provide a location in which any training conducted by the State Board of Elections or  
41 a county board of elections may be held.

## 42 **PART IX. SEVERABILITY CLAUSE**

43 **SECTION 9.** If any provision of this act or its application to any person, group of  
44 persons, or circumstances is held invalid, the invalidity does not affect other provisions or  
45 applications of this act that can be given effect without the invalid provisions or application and,  
46 to this end, the provisions of this act are severable.

## 47 **PART X. EFFECTIVE DATE**

1                   **SECTION 10.** Except as otherwise provided, this act is effective when it becomes  
2 law.