

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2001**

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HOUSE BILL 255*

Short Title: Election Rewrite -- 2. (Public)

Sponsors: Representatives Alexander, Bonner; Barefoot, Insko, Luebke, and Nesbitt.

Referred to: Election Law and Campaign Finance Reform.

February 27, 2001

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
2 AN ACT TO REWRITE ARTICLE 15 AND ARTICLE 16 OF CHAPTER 163, AS
3 RECOMMENDED BY THE ELECTION LAWS REVISION COMMISSION.

4 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

5 SECTION 1. Articles 15 and 16 of Chapter 163 of the General Statutes are
6 repealed.

7 SECTION 2. G.S. 163-22.1 is repealed.

8 SECTION 3. Chapter 163 of the General Statutes is amended by adding a
9 new Article to read:

10 "Article 15A.

11 "Counting Official Ballots, Canvassing Votes, Hearing Protests, and Certifying Results.

12 "§ 163-182. Definitions.

13 As used in this Article, the following definitions apply:

14 (1) 'Abstract' means a document signed by the members of the board of
15 elections showing the votes for each candidate and ballot proposal on
16 the official ballot in the election. The abstract shall show a total
17 number of votes for each candidate in each precinct and a total for
18 each candidate in the county. It shall also show the number of votes for
19 each candidate among the absentee official ballots, among the
20 provisional official ballots, and in any other category of official ballots
21 that is not otherwise reported.

22 (2) 'Composite abstract' means a document signed by the members of the
23 State Board of Elections showing the total number of votes for each
24 candidate and ballot proposal and the number of votes in each county.
25 A composite abstract does not include precinct returns.

- 1 (3) 'Certificate of election' means a document prepared by the official or
2 body with the legal authority to do so, conferring upon a candidate the
3 right to assume an elective office as a result of being elected to it.
4 (4) 'Protest' means a complaint concerning the conduct of an election
5 which, if supported by sufficient evidence, may require remedy by one
6 or more of the following:
7 a. A correction in the returns.
8 b. A discretionary recount as provided in G.S. 163-182.
9 c. A new election as provided in G.S. 163-182.8.

10 In addition to the definitions in this section, the definitions in Article 13A of this
11 Chapter shall also apply to this Article.

12 **"§ 163-182.1. Principles and rules for counting official ballots.**

13 (a) General Principles That Shall Apply. -- The following general principles shall
14 apply in the counting of official ballots, whether the initial count or any recount:

- 15 (1) Only official ballots shall be counted.
16 (2) No official ballot shall be rejected because of technical errors in
17 marking it, unless it is impossible to determine the voter's choice.
18 (3) If it is impossible to determine a voter's choice in a ballot item, the
19 official ballot shall not be counted for that ballot item, but shall be
20 counted in all other ballot items in which the voter's choice can be
21 determined.
22 (4) If an official ballot is marked in a ballot item with more choices than
23 there are offices to be filled or propositions that may prevail, the
24 official ballot shall not be counted for that ballot item, but shall be
25 counted in all other ballot items in which there is no overvote and the
26 voter's choice can be determined.
27 (5) If an official ballot is rejected by a scanner or other counting machine,
28 but human counters can determine the voter's choice, the official ballot
29 shall be counted by hand and eye.
30 (6) Write-in votes shall not be counted in party primaries or in referenda,
31 but shall be counted in general elections if all of the following are true:
32 a. The write-in vote is written by the voter or by a person
33 authorized to assist the voter pursuant to G.S. 163-166.8.
34 b. The write-in vote is not cast for a candidate who has failed to
35 qualify under G.S. 163-123 as a write-in candidate.
36 c. The voter's choice can be determined.
37 (7) Straight-party ticket and split-ticket votes shall be counted in general
38 elections according to the following guidelines:
39 a. If a voter casts a vote for a straight-party ticket, that vote shall
40 be counted for all the candidates of that party, other than
41 President and Vice President, in the partisan ballot items on that
42 official ballot unless the voter also votes in one or more of those
43 ballot items for a candidate not of that party or for fewer than
44 all the candidates of that party.

- 1 **b.** If a voter casts a vote for a straight-party ticket and also votes in
2 a partisan ballot item for a candidate of another party, the
3 official ballot shall be counted in that ballot item only for the
4 individually marked candidate. In partisan ballot items where
5 no mark is made for an individual candidate, the official ballot
6 shall be counted for the candidates of the party whose straight
7 ticket the voter voted.
- 8 **c.** If a voter casts a vote for a straight-party ticket and also votes in
9 a partisan multiseat ballot item for fewer than all the candidates
10 of that party, the official ballot shall be counted only for the
11 candidates individually marked in that ballot item. In partisan
12 ballot items where no mark is made for an individual candidate,
13 the official ballot shall be counted for all the candidates of the
14 party whose straight ticket the voter voted.
- 15 **d.** If a voter casts a vote for a straight-party ticket and also casts a
16 write-in vote in any partisan ballot item, the straight-party ticket
17 vote shall not control the way the official ballot is counted in
18 that ballot item. The following principles shall apply:
- 19 1. If the write-in vote is proper under subdivision (6) of this
20 2. subsection, that write-in candidate shall receive a vote.
21 2. If the write-in vote is not proper under subdivision (6) of
22 3. this subsection and no other candidate is individually
23 4. marked in that ballot item, then no vote shall be counted
24 5. in that ballot item.
25 3. If the straight-ticket voter casts both write-in votes and
26 6. individually marked votes for ballot candidates in a
27 7. ballot item, then the write-in and individually marked
28 8. votes shall be counted unless the write-in is not proper
29 9. under subdivision (6) of this subsection or an overvote
30 10. results. In any ballot item where a voter individually
31 11. marks as many ballot candidates as there are offices to
32 12. be filled and also writes in the name of an individual for
33 13. whom votes are not proper under subdivision (6) of this
34 14. subsection, there is an overvote and no votes in that
35 15. ballot item shall be counted.

36 **(b)** Rules and Directions by State Board of Elections. -- The State Board of
37 Elections shall promulgate rules where necessary to apply the principles in subsection
38 (a) of this section to each voting system in use in the State. The rules shall prescribe
39 procedures and standards for each type of voting system. Those procedures and
40 standards shall be followed uniformly throughout the State in all places where that type
41 of voting system is used. The State Board shall direct the county boards of elections in
42 the application of the principles and rules in individual circumstances.

43 **§ 163-182.2. Initial counting of official ballots.**

1 (a) The initial counting of official ballots shall be conducted according to the
2 following principles:

- 3 (1) Vote counting at the precinct shall occur immediately after the polls
4 close and shall be continuous until completed.
5 (2) Vote counting at the precinct shall be conducted with the participation
6 of precinct officials of more than one political party. Vote counting at
7 the county board of elections shall be conducted in the presence or
8 under the supervision of board members of more than one party.
9 (3) Any member of the public wishing to witness the vote count at any
10 level shall be allowed to do so. No witness shall interfere with the
11 orderly counting of the official ballots. Witnesses shall not participate
12 in the official counting of official ballots.
13 (4) Provisional official ballots shall be counted by the county board of
14 elections before the canvass. If the county board finds that an
15 individual voting a provisional official ballot is not eligible to vote in
16 one or more ballot items on the official ballot, the board shall not
17 count the official ballot in those ballot items, but shall count the
18 official ballot in any ballot items for which the individual is eligible to
19 vote.

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

- 23 (1) For each voting system used, the rules shall specify the role of precinct
24 officials and of the county board of elections in the initial counting of
25 official ballots.
26 (2) The rules shall provide for accurate unofficial reporting of the results
27 from the precinct to the county board of elections with reasonable
28 speed on the night of the election.
29 (3) The rules shall provide for the prompt and secure transmission of
30 official ballots from the voting place to the county board of elections.

31 The State Board shall direct the county boards of elections in the application of the
32 principles and rules in individual circumstances.

33 **"§ 163-182.3. Responsibility of chief judge.**

34 The chief judge of each precinct shall be responsible for the adherence of the
35 precinct officials to the State Board rules for counting official ballots.

36 **"§ 163-182.4. Jurisdiction for certain ballot items.**

37 (a) Jurisdiction of County Board of Elections. -- As used in this Article, the
38 county board of elections shall have jurisdiction over the following:

- 39 (1) Offices of that county, including clerk of superior court and register of
40 deeds.
41 (2) Membership in either house of the General Assembly from a district
42 lying entirely within that county.
43 (3) Offices of municipalities located in two or more counties.
44 (4) Referenda in which only residents of that county are eligible to vote.

1 (b) Jurisdiction of State Board of Elections. -- As used in this Article, the State
2 Board of Elections shall have jurisdiction over the following:

3 (1) National offices.

4 (2) State offices.

5 (3) District offices (including General Assembly seats) in which the
6 district lies in more than one county.

7 (4) Superior court judge, district court judge, and district attorney,
8 regardless of whether the district lies entirely in one county or in more
9 than one county.

10 (5) Referenda in which residents of more than one county are eligible to
11 vote.

12 (c) For the purposes of this Article, having jurisdiction shall mean that the
13 appropriate board shall do all of the following with regard to the ballot item:

14 (1) Canvass for the entire electorate for the ballot item.

15 (2) Prepare abstracts or composite abstracts for the entire electorate for the
16 ballot item.

17 (3) Issue certificates of nomination and election.

18 **"§ 163-182.5. Canvassing votes.**

19 (a) The Canvass. -- As used in this Article, the term `canvass' means the entire
20 process of determining that the votes have been counted and tabulated correctly,
21 culminating in the authentication of the official election results. The board of elections
22 conducting a canvass has authority to send for papers and persons and to examine them
23 and pass upon the legality of disputed ballots.

24 (b) Canvassing by County Board of Elections. -- The county board of elections
25 shall meet at 11:00 A.M. on the third day (Sunday excepted) after every election to
26 complete the canvass of votes cast and to authenticate the count in every ballot item in
27 the county by determining that the votes have been counted and tabulated correctly. If,
28 despite due diligence by election officials, the initial counting of all the votes has not
29 been completed by that time, the county board may hold the canvass meeting a
30 reasonable time thereafter. The canvass meeting shall be at the county board of elections
31 office, unless the county board, by unanimous vote of all its members, designates
32 another site within the county. The county board shall examine the returns from
33 precincts, from absentee official ballots, and from provisional official ballots and shall
34 canvass.

35 (c) Canvassing by State Board of Elections. -- After each general election, the
36 State Board of Elections shall meet at 11:00 A.M. on the Tuesday three weeks after
37 election day to complete the canvass of votes cast in all ballot items within the
38 jurisdiction of the State Board of Elections and to authenticate the count in every ballot
39 item in the county by determining that the votes have been counted and tabulated
40 correctly. After each primary, the State Board shall fix the date of its canvass meeting.
41 If, by the time of its scheduled canvass meeting, the State Board has not received the
42 county canvasses, the State Board may adjourn for not more than 10 days to secure the
43 missing abstracts.

44 **"§ 163-182.6. Abstracts.**

1 (a) Abstracts to Be Prepared by County Board of Elections. – As soon as the
2 county canvass has been completed, the county board of elections shall prepare
3 abstracts of all the ballot items in a form prescribed by the State Board of Elections. The
4 county board shall prepare those abstracts in triplicate originals. The county board shall
5 retain one of the triplicate originals, and shall distribute one each to the clerk of superior
6 court for the county and the State Board of Elections. The State Board of Elections shall
7 forward the original abstract it receives to the Secretary of State.

8 (b) Composite Abstracts to Be Prepared by the State Board of Elections. – As
9 soon as the State canvass has been completed, the State Board shall prepare composite
10 abstracts of all those ballot items. It shall prepare those composite abstracts in duplicate
11 originals. It shall retain one of the originals and shall send the other original to the
12 Secretary of State.

13 (c) Duty of the Secretary of State. -- The Secretary of State shall maintain the
14 certified copies of abstracts received from the county and State boards of elections. The
15 Secretary shall keep the abstracts in a form readily accessible and useful to the public.

16 (d) Forms by State Board of Elections. -- The State Board of Elections shall
17 prescribe forms for all abstracts. Those forms shall be uniform and shall, at a minimum,
18 state the name of each candidate and the office sought and each referendum proposal,
19 the number of votes cast for each candidate and proposal, the candidate or proposal
20 determined to have prevailed, and a statement authenticating the count.

21 **"§ 163-182.7. Ordering recounts.**

22 (a) Discretionary Recounts. -- The county board of elections or the State Board
23 of Elections may order a recount when necessary to complete the canvass in an election.
24 The county board may not order a recount where the State Board of Elections has
25 already denied a recount to the petitioner.

26 (b) Mandatory Recounts for Ballot Items Within the Jurisdiction of the County
27 Board of Elections. -- In a ballot item within the jurisdiction of the county board of
28 elections, a candidate shall have the right to demand a recount of the votes if the
29 difference between the votes for that candidate and the votes for a prevailing candidate
30 is not more than one percent (1%) of the total votes cast in the ballot item, or in the case
31 of a multiseat ballot item not more than one percent (1%) of the votes cast for those two
32 candidates. The demand for a recount must be made in writing and must be received by
33 the county board of elections by noon on the fourth day after the canvass. The recount
34 shall be conducted under the supervision of the county board of elections.

35 (c) Mandatory Recounts for Ballot Items Within the Jurisdiction of the State
36 Board of Elections. -- In a ballot item within the jurisdiction of the State Board of
37 Elections, a candidate shall have the right to demand a recount of the votes if the
38 difference between the votes for that candidate and the votes for a prevailing candidate
39 are not more than the following:

40 (1) For a nonstatewide ballot item, one percent (1%) of the total votes cast
41 in the ballot item, or in the case of a multiseat ballot item one percent
42 (1%) of the votes cast for those two candidates.

43 (2) For a statewide ballot item, one half of one percent (0.5%) of the votes
44 cast in the ballot item, or in the case of a multiseat ballot item one half

1 of one percent (0.5%) of the votes cast for those two candidates, or
2 10,000 votes, whichever is less.

3 The demand for a recount must be in writing and must be received by the State Board of
4 Elections by noon on the second Wednesday after the election. If on that Wednesday the
5 available returns show a candidate not entitled to a mandatory recount, but the
6 Executive Secretary-Director determines subsequently that the margin is within the
7 threshold set out in this subsection, the Executive Secretary-Director shall notify the
8 eligible candidate immediately and that candidate shall be entitled to a recount if that
9 candidate so demands within 48 hours of notice. The recount shall be conducted under
10 the supervision of the State Board of Elections.

11 (d) Rules for Conducting Recounts. -- The State Board of Elections shall
12 promulgate rules for conducting recounts. Those rules shall be subject to the following
13 guidelines:

14 (1) The rules shall specify, with respect to each type of voting system,
15 when and to what extent the recount shall consist of machine recounts
16 and hand-to-eye recounts.

17 (2) The rules shall provide guidance in interpretation of the voter's choice.

18 (3) The rules shall specify how the goals of bipartisan participation,
19 opportunity for public observation, and good order shall be balanced.

20 **"§ 163-182.8. Determining result in case of a tie.**

21 If the count, upon completion of canvass by the proper board of elections, shows a
22 tie vote other than in a primary, the tie shall be resolved as follows:

23 (1) If more than 5,000 voters cast official ballots in the ballot item, the
24 State Board of Elections shall order a new election in which only the
25 candidates or positions tied will be on the official ballot. The State
26 Board of Elections shall set the schedule for publication of the notice,
27 preparation of absentee official ballots, and the other actions necessary
28 to conduct the election. Eligibility to vote in the new election shall be
29 determined by the voter's eligibility at the time of the new election.

30 (2) If 5,000 or fewer voters cast official ballots in the ballot item, the
31 board of elections with jurisdiction to certify the election shall break
32 the tie by random selection.

33 **"§ 163-182.9. Filing an election protest.**

34 (a) Who May File a Protest With County Board. -- A protest concerning the
35 conduct of an election may be filed with the county board of elections by any registered
36 voter who was eligible to vote in the election or by any person who was a candidate for
37 nomination or election in the election.

38 (b) How Protest May Be Filed. -- The following principles shall apply to the
39 filing of election protests with the county board of elections:

40 (1) The protest shall be in writing and shall be signed by the protester. It
41 shall include the protester's name, address, and telephone number and
42 a statement that the person is a registered voter in the jurisdiction or a
43 candidate.

- 1 (2) The protest shall state whether the protest concerns the manner in
2 which votes were counted and results tabulated or concerns some other
3 irregularity.
- 4 (3) The protest shall state what remedy the protester is seeking.
- 5 (4) The timing for filing a protest shall be as follows:
- 6 a. If the protest concerns the manner in which votes were counted
7 or results tabulated, the protest shall be filed before the
8 beginning of the county board of election's canvass meeting.
- 9 b. If the protest concerns the manner in which votes were counted
10 or results tabulated and the protest states good cause for delay
11 in filing, the protest may be filed until 6:00 P.M. on the second
12 day after the county board of elections has completed its
13 canvass and declared the results.
- 14 c. If the protest concerns an irregularity other than vote-counting
15 or result-tabulation, the protest shall be filed no later than 6:00
16 P.M. on the second day after the county board has completed its
17 canvass and declared the results.
- 18 (c) State Board to Prescribe Forms. -- The State Board of Elections shall
19 prescribe forms for filing protests.

20 **"§ 163-182.10. Consideration of protest by county board of elections.**

21 (a) Preliminary Consideration. -- The following principles shall apply to the
22 initial consideration of election protests by the county board of elections:

- 23 (1) The county board shall, as soon as possible after the protest is filed,
24 meet to determine whether the protest substantially complies with G.S.
25 163-182.9 and establishes probable cause to believe that a violation of
26 election law or irregularity or misconduct has occurred. If the board
27 determines that one or both requirements is not met, the board shall
28 dismiss the protest. The board shall notify both the protester and the
29 State Board of Elections. The protester may file an amended protest or
30 may appeal to the State Board. If the board determines that both
31 requirements are met, it shall schedule a hearing.
- 32 (2) If a protest was filed before the canvass and concerns the counting and
33 tabulating of votes, the county board shall resolve the protest before
34 the canvass is completed. If necessary to provide time to resolve the
35 protest, the county board may recess the canvass meeting, but shall not
36 delay the completion of the canvass for more than three days unless
37 approved by the State Board of Elections. Resolution of the protest
38 shall not delay the canvass of ballot items unaffected by the protest.
39 The appeal of a dismissal shall not delay the canvass.
- 40 (3) If a protest concerns an irregularity other than the counting or
41 tabulating of votes, that protest shall not delay the canvass.

42 (b) Notice of Hearing. -- The county board shall give notice of the protest hearing
43 to the protester, any candidate likely to be affected, any election official alleged to have
44 acted improperly, and those persons likely to have a significant interest in the resolution

1 of the protest. Each person given notice shall also be given a copy of the protest or a
2 summary of its allegations. The manner of notice shall be as follows:

3 (1) If the protest concerns the manner in which the votes were counted or
4 the results tabulated, the protester shall be told at the time of filing that
5 the protest will be heard at the time of the canvass. Others shall be
6 notified as far in advance of the canvass as time permits.

7 (2) If the protest concerns a matter other than the manner in which votes
8 were counted or results tabulated, the county board shall comply with
9 rules to be promulgated by the State Board of Elections concerning
10 reasonable notice of the hearing.

11 Failure to comply with the notice requirements in this subsection shall not delay the
12 holding of a hearing nor invalidate the results if it appears reasonably likely that all
13 interested persons were aware of the hearing and had an opportunity to be heard.

14 (c) Conduct of Hearing. -- The following principles shall apply to the conduct of
15 a protest hearing before the county board of elections:

16 (1) The county board may allow evidence to be presented at the hearing in
17 the form of affidavits or it may examine witnesses. The chair or any
18 two members of the board may subpoena witnesses or documents.
19 Each witness must be placed under oath before testifying.

20 (2) The county board may receive evidence at the hearing from any person
21 with information concerning the subject of the protest. The person who
22 made the protest shall be permitted to present allegations and introduce
23 evidence at the hearing. Any other person to whom notice of hearing
24 was given, if present, shall be permitted to present evidence. The board
25 may allow evidence by affidavit. The board may permit evidence to be
26 presented by a person to whom notice was not given, if the person
27 apparently has a significant interest in the resolution of the protest that
28 is not adequately represented by other participants.

29 (3) The hearing shall be recorded by a reporter or by mechanical means,
30 and the full record of the hearing shall be preserved by the county
31 board until directed otherwise by the State Board.

32 (d) Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law by County Board. -- The county
33 board shall make a written decision on each protest which shall state separately each of
34 the following:

35 (1) Findings of Fact. The findings of fact shall be based exclusively on the
36 evidence and on matters officially noticed. Findings of fact, if set forth
37 in statutory language, shall be accompanied by a concise and explicit
38 statement of the underlying facts supporting them.

39 (2) Conclusions of Law. The conclusions the county board may state, and
40 their consequences for the board's order, are as follows:

41 a. 'The protest should be dismissed because it does not
42 substantially comply with G.S. 163-182.9.' If the board makes
43 this conclusion, it shall order the protest dismissed.

- 1 b. 'The protest should be dismissed because there is not substantial
2 evidence of a violation of the election law or other irregularity
3 or misconduct.' If the county board makes this conclusion, it
4 shall order the protest dismissed.
- 5 c. 'The protest should be dismissed because there is not substantial
6 evidence of any violation, irregularity, or misconduct sufficient
7 to cast doubt on the results of the election.' If the county board
8 makes this conclusion, it shall order the protest dismissed.
- 9 d. 'There is substantial evidence to believe that a violation of the
10 election law or other irregularity or misconduct did occur, and
11 might have affected the outcome of the election, but the board
12 is unable to finally determine the effect because the election
13 was a multicounty election.' If the county board makes this
14 conclusion, it shall order that the protest and the county board's
15 decision be sent to the State Board for action by it.
- 16 e. 'There is substantial evidence to believe that a violation of the
17 election law or other irregularity or misconduct did occur and
18 that it was sufficiently serious to cast doubt on the apparent
19 results of the election.' If the county board makes this
20 conclusion, it may order any of the following as appropriate:
- 21 1. That the vote total as stated in the precinct return or
22 result of the canvass be corrected and new results
23 declared.
- 24 2. That votes be recounted.
- 25 3. That the protest and the county board's decision be sent
26 to the State Board for action by it.
- 27 4. Any other action within the authority of the county
28 board.

- 29 (3) An Order. Depending on the conclusion reached by the county board,
30 its order shall be as directed in subdivision (c)(2). If the county board
31 is not able to determine what law is applicable to the Findings of Fact,
32 it may send its Findings of Fact to the State Board for it to determine
33 the applicable law.

34 (e) Rules by State Board of Elections. -- The State Board of Elections shall
35 promulgate rules providing for adequate notice to parties, scheduling of hearings, and
36 the timing of deliberations and issuance of decision.

37 **§ 163-182.11. Appeal of a Protest Decision by the County Board to the State**
38 **Board of Elections.**

39 (a) Notice and Perfection of Appeal. -- The decision by the county board of
40 elections on an election protest may be appealed to the State Board of Elections by any
41 of the following:

- 42 (1) The person who filed the protest.
43 (2) A candidate or elected official adversely affected by the county board's
44 decision.

1 (3) Any other person who participated in the hearing and has a significant
2 interest adversely affected by the county board's decision.

3 Written notice of the appeal must be given to the county board within 24 hours after
4 the county board files the written decision at its office. The appeal to the State Board
5 must be in writing. The appeal must be delivered or deposited in the mail, addressed to
6 the State Board, by the appropriate one of the following: (i) the end of the second day
7 after the day the decision was filed by the county board in its office, if the decision
8 concerns a first primary; or (ii) the end of the fifth day after the day the decision was
9 filed in the county board office, if the decision concerns an election other than a first
10 primary.

11 The State Board shall prescribe forms for filing appeals from the county board.

12 (b) Consideration of Appeal by State Board. -- In its consideration of an appeal
13 from a decision of a county board of elections on a protest, the State Board of Elections
14 may do any of the following:

15 (1) Decide the appeal on the basis of the record from the county board, as
16 long as the county board has made part of the record a transcript of the
17 evidentiary hearing.

18 (2) Request the county board or any interested person to supplement the
19 record from the county board, and then decide the appeal on the basis
20 of that supplemented record.

21 (3) Receive additional evidence and then decide the appeal on the basis of
22 the record and that additional evidence.

23 (4) Hold its own hearing on the protest and resolve the protest on the basis
24 of that hearing.

25 (5) Remand the matter to the county board for further proceedings in
26 compliance with an order of the State Board.

27 The State Board shall give notice of its decision as required by G.S. 163-182.14, and
28 may notify the county board and other interested persons in its discretion.

29 **"§ 163-182.12. Authority of State Board of Elections over protests.**

30 The State Board of Elections may consider protests that were not filed in compliance
31 with G.S. 163-182.9, may initiate and consider complaints on its own motion, may
32 intervene and take jurisdiction over protests pending before a county board, and may
33 take any other action necessary to assure that an election is determined without taint of
34 fraud or corruption.

35 **"§ 163-182.13. New Elections.**

36 (a) When State Board May Order New Election. -- The State Board of Elections
37 may order a new election, upon agreement of at least four of its members, in the case of
38 any one or more of the following:

39 (1) Ineligible voters sufficient in number to change the outcome of the
40 election were allowed to vote in the election, and it is not possible
41 from examination of the official ballots to determine how those
42 ineligible voters voted and to correct the totals.

43 (2) Eligible voters sufficient in number to change the outcome of the
44 election were improperly prevented from voting.

1 (3) Other irregularities affected a sufficient number of votes to change the
2 outcome of the election.

3 (4) Irregularities or improprieties occurred to such an extent that, although
4 it is not possible to determine whether those irregularities or
5 improprieties affected the outcome of the election, they taint the results
6 of the entire election and cast doubt on its fairness.

7 (b) State Board to Set Procedures. -- The State Board of Elections shall
8 determine when a new election shall be held and shall set the schedule for publication of
9 the notice, preparation of absentee official ballots, and the other actions necessary to
10 conduct the election.

11 (c) Eligibility to Vote in New Election. -- Eligibility to vote in the new election
12 shall be determined by the voter's eligibility at the time of the new election, except that
13 in a primary, no person who voted in the initial primary of one party shall vote in the
14 new election in the primary of another party. The State Board of Elections shall
15 promulgate rules to effect the provisions of this subsection.

16 (d) Jurisdiction in Which New Election Held. -- The new election shall be held in
17 the entire jurisdiction in which the original election was held.

18 (e) Which Candidates to Be on Official Ballot. -- All the candidates who were
19 listed on the official ballot in the original election shall be listed in the same order on
20 the official ballot for the new election, except in either of the following:

21 (1) If a candidate dies or otherwise becomes ineligible between the time of
22 the original election and the new election, that candidate may be
23 replaced in the same manner as if the vacancy occurred before the
24 original election.

25 (2) If the election is for a multiseat office, and the irregularities could not
26 have affected the election of one or more of the leading vote getters,
27 the new election, upon agreement of at least four members of the State
28 Board, may be held among only those remaining candidates whose
29 election could have been affected by the irregularities.

30 (f) Tie Votes. -- The State Board of Elections shall order a new election if
31 ineligible voters voted in an election and it is possible to determine from the official
32 ballots the way in which those votes were cast and to correct the results, and
33 consequently the election ends in a tie, the provisions of G.S. 163-182.8 concerning tie
34 votes shall apply.

35 **"§ 163-182.14. Appeal of a final decision to superior court.**

36 A copy of the final decision of the State Board of Elections on an election protest
37 shall be served on the parties personally or by certified mail. A decision to order a new
38 election is considered a final decision for purposes of seeking review of the decision.
39 An aggrieved party has the right to appeal the final decision to Wake County Superior
40 Court within 10 days of the date of service.

41 After the decision by the State Board of Elections has been served on the parties, the
42 certification of nomination or election or the results of the referendum shall issue
43 pursuant to G.S. 163-182.15 unless an appealing party obtains a stay of the certification
44 from the Superior Court of Wake County within 10 days after the date of service. The

1 court shall not issue a stay of certification unless the petitioner shows the court that the
2 petitioner has appealed the decision of the State Board of Elections, that the petitioner is
3 an aggrieved party, that the petitioner is likely to prevail, and that the results of the
4 election would be changed in the petitioner's favor. Mere irregularities in the election
5 which would not change the results of the election shall not be sufficient for the court to
6 issue a stay of certification.

7 **"§ 163-182.15. Certificate of nomination or election, or certificate of the results of a**
8 **referendum.**

9 (a) Issued by County Board of Elections. – In ballot items within the jurisdiction
10 of the county board of elections, the county board shall issue a certificate of nomination
11 or election, or a certificate of the results of the referendum, as appropriate. The
12 certificate shall be issued by the county board five days after the completion of the
13 canvass pursuant to G.S. 163-182.5, unless there is an election protest pending. If there
14 is an election protest, the certificate of nomination or election or the certificate of the
15 result of the referendum shall be issued in one of the following ways, as appropriate:

16 (1) The certificate shall be issued five days after the protest is dismissed or
17 denied by the county board of elections, unless that decision has been
18 appealed to the State Board of Elections.

19 (2) The certificate shall be issued 10 days after the final decision of the
20 State Board, unless the State Board has ordered a new election or the
21 issuance of the certificate is stayed by the Wake County Superior
22 Court pursuant to G.S. 163-182.14.

23 (3) If the decision of the State Board has been appealed to the Wake
24 County Superior Court and the court has stayed the certification, the
25 certificate shall be issued five days after the entry of a final order in
26 the case in the Wake County Superior Court, unless that court or an
27 appellate court orders otherwise.

28 (b) Issued by State Board of Elections. – In ballot items within the jurisdiction of
29 the State Board of Elections, the State Board of Elections shall issue a certificate of
30 nomination or election, or a certificate of the results of the referendum, as appropriate.
31 The certificate shall be issued by the State Board five days after the completion of the
32 canvass pursuant to G.S. 163-182.5, unless there is an election protest pending. If there
33 is an election protest, the certificate of nomination or election or the certificate of the
34 result of the referendum shall be issued in one of the following ways, as appropriate:

35 (1) The certificate shall be issued 10 days after the final decision of the
36 State Board on the election protest, unless the State Board has ordered
37 a new election or the issuance of the certificate is stayed by the Wake
38 County Superior Court pursuant to G.S. 163-14.

39 (2) If the decision of the State Board has been appealed to Wake County
40 Superior Court and the court has stayed the certification, the certificate
41 shall be issued five days after the entry of a final order in the case in
42 Wake County Superior Court, unless that court or an appellate court
43 orders otherwise.

1 (c) Copy to Secretary of State. – The State Board of Elections shall provide to
2 the Secretary of State a copy of each certificate of nomination or election, or certificate
3 of the results of a referendum, issued by it.

4 **"§ 163-182.16. Governor to issue commissions for certain offices.**

5 Upon receiving from the Secretary of State notice that a certificate of election has
6 been issued for any of the following offices, the Governor shall provide to each such
7 elected official a commission attesting to that person's election:

8 (1) Members of the United States House of Representatives.

9 (2) Justices, judges, and district attorneys of the General Court of Justice.

10 **"§ 163-182.17. Summary of officials' duties under this Article.**

11 (a) This Section a Summary. -- The provisions of this section provide a
12 nonexclusive summary of the duties given to officials under this Article. The legal duty
13 is contained, not in this section, but in the other sections of this Article.

14 (b) Duties of the Precinct Officials. -- Precinct officials, in accordance with rules
15 of the State Board of Elections and under the supervision of the county board of
16 elections, shall perform all of the following:

17 (1) Count votes when votes are required to be counted at the voting place.
18 G.S. 163-182.2.

19 (2) Make an unofficial report of returns to the county board of elections.
20 G.S. 163-182.2.

21 (3) Certify the integrity of the vote and the security of the official ballots
22 at the voting place. G.S. 163-182.2.

23 (4) Return official ballots and equipment to the county board of elections.
24 G.S. 163-182.2.

25 (c) Duties of the County Board of Elections. -- The county board of elections, in
26 accordance with rules of the State Board of Elections, shall perform all of the following:

27 (1) Count absentee and provisional official ballots and other official
28 ballots required to be initially counted by the county board of
29 elections. G.S. 163-182.2.

30 (2) Canvass results in all ballot items on the official ballot in the county.
31 G.S. 163-182.5.

32 (3) Order a recount in any ballot item on the official ballot in the county,
33 where necessary to complete the canvass, and where not prohibited
34 from doing so. G.S. 163-182.7.

35 (4) Conduct any recount that has been ordered by the county board of
36 elections or the State Board of Elections or that has been properly
37 demanding in accordance with G.S. 163-182.7(b).

38 (5) Conduct hearings in election protests as provided in G.S. 163-182.10.

39 (6) Prepare abstracts of returns in all the ballot items in the county. G.S.
40 163-182.6.

41 (7) Retain one original abstract and distribute the other two originals as
42 follows:

43 a. One to the clerk of superior court in the county.

44 b. One to the State Board of Elections. G.S. 163-182.6.

- 1 (8) Issue a certificate of nomination or election or a certificate of the
2 results of a referendum in each ballot item within the jurisdiction of
3 the county board of elections. Provide a copy of the certificate to the
4 clerk of court. G.S. 163-182.15.
- 5 (d) Duties of the State Board of Elections. -- The State Board of Elections shall
6 perform all the following:
- 7 (1) Promulgate rules as directed in this Article. G.S. 163-182.1,
8 163-182.2, 163-182.7, 163-182.10, and 163-182.13.
- 9 (2) Provide supervisory direction to the county boards of elections as
10 provided in this Article. G.S. 163-182.1 and 163-182.2.
- 11 (3) Canvass the results in ballot items within the jurisdiction of the State
12 Board of Elections. G.S. 163-182.5.
- 13 (4) Order and supervise a recount in any ballot item within the jurisdiction
14 of the State Board of Elections, where necessary to complete the
15 canvass. G.S. 163-182.7.
- 16 (5) Hear and decide appeals from decisions of county boards of elections
17 in election protests. G.S. 163-182.11
- 18 (6) Order new elections in accordance with G.S. 163-182.15.
- 19 (7) Prepare, in duplicate originals, composite abstracts of ballot items
20 within the jurisdiction of the State Board of Elections. G.S. 163-182.6.
- 21 (8) Retain one original of the composite abstract and deliver to the
22 Secretary of State the other original composite abstract of the results of
23 ballot items within the jurisdiction of the State Board of Elections.
24 G.S. 163-182.6.
- 25 (9) Certify the results of any election within the jurisdiction of the State
26 Board of Elections and provide a copy to the Secretary of State. G.S.
27 163-182.15.
- 28 (e) Duties of the Secretary of State. -- The Secretary of State retain and compile
29 in a useful form all the abstracts and returns provided by the county boards of elections
30 and the State Board of Elections. G.S. 163-182.6.
- 31 (f) Duty of the Governor. -- The Governor shall issue a commission to any
32 person elected to an office listed in G.S. 163-182.17 upon notification from the
33 Secretary of State that a certificate of election has been issued to the person. G.S. 163-
34 182.17.

35 **SECTION 4.** This act becomes effective January 1, 2002.