

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2023

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SENATE BILL 747  
Redistricting and Elections Committee Substitute Adopted 6/15/23  
Third Edition Engrossed 6/21/23

Short Title: Elections Law Changes.

(Public)

Sponsors:

Referred to:

June 5, 2023

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

4 **SECTION 1.** G.S. 163-22 is amended by adding two new subsections to read:

5 "(s) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the State Board shall ensure voted  
6 ballots, election results tapes, and executed ballot applications are retained and preserved for a  
7 period of 22 months after the corresponding election or as otherwise specified in federal law,  
8 whichever is greater.

9 (t) Nothing in this Chapter shall grant authority to the State Board to accept private  
10 monetary donations or in-kind contributions, directly or indirectly, for conducting elections or  
11 employing individuals on a temporary basis."

12 **SECTION 2.** G.S. 163-33 is amended by adding two new subdivisions to read:

13 "(17) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, to retain and preserve all voted  
14 ballots, election results tapes, and executed ballot applications for a period of  
15 22 months after the corresponding election or as otherwise specified in federal  
16 law, whichever is greater.

17 (18) Nothing in this Chapter shall grant authority to county boards of elections to  
18 accept private monetary donations or in-kind contributions, directly or  
19 indirectly, for conducting elections or employing individuals on a temporary  
20 basis. This subsection does not prohibit the in-kind donation or use of a voting  
21 site, if that voting site is used for the purpose of conducting elections."

22 **SECTION 3.** G.S. 163-37 reads as rewritten:

23 **"§ 163-37. Duty of county board of commissioners.**

24 (a) The respective boards of county commissioners shall appropriate reasonable and  
25 adequate funds necessary for the legal functions of the county board of elections, including  
26 reasonable and just compensation of the director of elections.

27 (b) Nothing in this Chapter shall grant authority to county boards of commissioners to  
28 accept private monetary donations or in-kind contributions, directly or indirectly, for conducting  
29 elections or employing individuals on a temporary basis. This subsection does not prohibit the  
30 in-kind donation or use of a voting site, if that voting site is used for the purpose of conducting  
31 elections."

32 **SECTION 4.** G.S. 163-45(a) reads as rewritten:

33 "(a) The chair of each political party in the county shall have the right to designate two  
34 observers to attend each voting place at each primary and election and such observers may, at the  
35 option of the designating party chair, be relieved during the day of the primary or election after



1 serving no less than four hours and provided the list required by this section to be filed by each  
2 chair contains the names of all persons authorized to represent such chair's political party. An  
3 observer relieved after serving no less than the four hours provided in this subsection may serve  
4 an additional four hours during the same primary or election day at any voting place in that same  
5 county upon designation by the party chair. The chair of each political party in the county shall  
6 have the right to designate 10 additional at-large observers who are residents of that county who  
7 may attend any voting place in that county. The chair of each political party in the State shall  
8 have the right to designate up to 100 additional at-large observers who are residents of the State  
9 who may attend any voting place in the State. The list submitted by the chair of the political party  
10 may be amended between the one-stop period under G.S. 163-227.2, 163-227.5, and 163-227.6  
11 and general election day to substitute one or all at-large observers for election day. Not more than  
12 two observers from the same political party shall be permitted in the voting enclosure at any time,  
13 except that in addition one of the at-large observers from each party may also be in the voting  
14 enclosure. This right shall not extend to the chair of a political party during a primary unless that  
15 party is participating in the primary. In any election in which an unaffiliated candidate is named  
16 on the ballot, the candidate or the candidate's campaign manager shall have the right to appoint  
17 two observers for each voting place consistent with the provisions specified herein. Persons  
18 appointed as observers by the chair of a county political party must be registered voters of the  
19 county for which appointed and must have good moral character. Persons appointed as observers  
20 by the chair of a State political party must be registered voters of the State and must have good  
21 moral character. No person who is a candidate on the ballot in a primary or election may serve  
22 as an observer or runner in that primary or election. Observers shall take no oath of office."

23 **SECTION 5.** G.S. 163-47(a) reads as rewritten:

24 "(a) The chief judges and judges of election shall conduct the primaries and elections  
25 within their respective precincts fairly and impartially, and they shall enforce peace and good  
26 order in and about the place of registration and voting. ~~On the day of each primary and general~~  
27 ~~and special election, the precinct chief judge and judges shall remain at the voting place from the~~  
28 ~~time fixed by law for the commencement of their duties there until they have completed all those~~  
29 ~~duties, and they shall not separate nor shall any one of them leave the voting place except for~~  
30 ~~unavoidable necessity.~~ The county boards of elections shall ensure that the position of chief judge  
31 and judges of election shall be filled at the voting place for the duration of their duties on the day  
32 of each primary and general and special election."

33 **SECTION 6.** Article 7A of Chapter 163 of the General Statutes is amended by  
34 adding a new section to read:

35 **"§ 163-82.6B. Same-day registration; when provisional ballot required.**

36 (a) Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, an individual who is qualified  
37 to register to vote may register in person and then vote at a one-stop voting site in the individual's  
38 county of residence during the period for one-stop voting provided under G.S. 163-227.2.

39 (b) An individual registering and voting under subsection (a) of this section shall vote by  
40 provisional ballot unless one of the following applies:

41 (1) The address on the individual's photo identification required under  
42 G.S. 163-166.16 is the same as the address listed on a copy of a HAVA  
43 document.

44 (2) The individual's photo identification required under G.S. 163-166.16 lacks an  
45 address and the individual provides a document from the institution issuing  
46 the photo identification showing the name and address of the individual and a  
47 copy of a HAVA document showing the same name and address for that  
48 individual.

49 (c) A provisional ballot cast in accordance with this section shall be counted under one  
50 of the following circumstances only:

1           (1) Prior to the close of business on the business day before the canvass conducted  
 2 by the county board of elections pursuant to G.S. 163-182.5, the individual  
 3 returns to the county board of elections and presents a photo identification  
 4 required under G.S. 163-166.16 and a copy of a HAVA document, and the  
 5 address on both forms of identification is the same.

6           (2) Prior to the close of business on the business day before the canvass conducted  
 7 by the county board of elections pursuant to G.S. 163-182.5, the individual  
 8 returns to the county board of elections and presents a copy of two different  
 9 HAVA documents, and the name and address on both documents is the same.

10       (d) For purposes of this section, a "HAVA document" is any of the following that shows  
 11 the name and address of the voter:

12           (1) A current utility bill.

13           (2) A current bank statement.

14           (3) A current government check.

15           (4) A current paycheck.

16           (5) Another government document showing the name and address of the voter.

17           (6) A document from the institution issuing the photo identification showing the  
 18 name and address of the individual."

19       **SECTION 7.** G.S. 163-88.1(c) reads as rewritten:

20       "(c) The chairman of the county board of elections shall preserve ~~such challenged~~ ballots  
 21 in the sealed envelopes for a period of ~~six~~ 22 months after the ~~election~~ corresponding election  
 22 or as otherwise specified in federal law, whichever is greater. However, in the case of a contested  
 23 election, either party to such action may request the court to order that the sealed envelopes  
 24 containing challenged ballots be delivered to the board of elections by the chairman. If so  
 25 ordered, the board of elections shall then convene and consider each challenged ballot and rule  
 26 as to which ballots shall be counted. In such consideration, the board may take such further  
 27 evidence as it deems necessary, and shall have the power of subpoena. If any ballots are ordered  
 28 to be counted, they shall be added to the vote totals."

29       **SECTION 8.** G.S. 163-89 reads as rewritten:

30       "**§ 163-89. Procedures for challenging absentee ballots.**

31       (a) Time for Challenge. – The absentee ballot of any voter ~~may be challenged~~ received  
 32 by the county board of elections by 7:30 p.m. on the day of any statewide primary or general  
 33 election or county bond election may be challenged beginning no earlier than noon and ending  
 34 no later than 5:00 P.M., or 7:30 p.m. on the day of the primary or election. The absentee ballot  
 35 of any voter received by the county board of elections may also be challenged by the chief judge  
 36 at the time of closing of the polls as provided in G.S. 163-232 and G.S. 163-258.26(b). The  
 37 absentee ballot of any voter received by the county board of elections pursuant to  
 38 ~~G.S. 163-231(b)(ii) or (iii)~~ G.S. 163-231(b)(2) may be challenged no earlier than noon on the day  
 39 following the election and no later than 5:00 p.m. on the next business day following the deadline  
 40 for receipt of such absentee ballots.

41       (b) Who May Challenge. – Any registered voter of the same ~~precinct~~ county as the  
 42 absentee voter may challenge that voter's absentee ballot.

43       ...."

44       **SECTION 9.** G.S. 163-90.2(c) reads as rewritten:

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

51       **SECTION 10.** G.S. 163-123(h) reads as rewritten:

1 "(h) ~~Municipal Certain~~ Elections Excluded. – This section does not apply to ~~municipal~~ the  
2 following elections:

3 (1) Municipal elections or special district elections conducted under Subchapter  
4 IX of this Chapter.

5 (2) Nonpartisan board of education elections conducted under G.S. 115C-37."

6 **SECTION 11.** G.S. 163-166.01 reads as rewritten:

7 "**§ 163-166.01. Hours for voting.**

8 (a) In every election, the voting place shall be open at 6:30 ~~A.M.-a.m.~~ and shall be closed  
9 at 7:30 ~~P.M.-p.m.~~ If the polls are delayed in opening for more than 15 minutes, or are interrupted  
10 for more than 15 minutes after opening, the State Board of ~~Elections~~ may extend the closing time  
11 by an equal number of minutes. As authorized by law, the State Board of ~~Elections~~ shall be  
12 available either in person or by teleconference on the day of election to approve any such  
13 extension. If any voter is in line to vote at the time the polls are closed, that voter shall be  
14 permitted to vote. No voter shall be permitted to vote who arrives at the voting place after the  
15 closing of the polls.

16 (b) If the statutory poll closing time of 7:30 p.m. on election day is extended by court  
17 order in one or more counties, the poll closing time shall be extended on election day in all  
18 counties by an equal amount of time.

19 (c) Any voter who votes after the statutory poll closing time of 7:30 ~~P.M.-p.m.~~ by virtue  
20 of a federal or State court order or any other lawful order, including an order of a county board  
21 of elections, shall be allowed to vote, under the provisions of that order, only by using a  
22 provisional official ballot. Any special provisional official ballots cast under this section shall be  
23 separated, counted, and held apart from other provisional ballots cast by other voters not under  
24 the effect of the order extending the closing time of the voting place. If the court order has not  
25 been reversed or stayed by the time of the county canvass, the total for that category of  
26 provisional ballots shall be added to the official canvass."

27 **SECTION 12.** G.S. 163-166.8(b) reads as rewritten:

28 "(b) A qualified voter seeking assistance in an election shall, upon arriving at the voting  
29 place, request permission from the chief judge to have assistance, stating the reasons. If the chief  
30 judge determines that such assistance is appropriate, the chief judge shall ask the voter to point  
31 out and identify the person the voter desires to provide such assistance. If the identified person  
32 meets the criteria in subsection (a) of this section, the chief judge shall request the person  
33 indicated to render the assistance. The chief judge, one of the judges, or one of the assistants may  
34 provide aid to the voter if so requested, if the election official is not prohibited by subdivision (a)  
35 (2) of this section. Under no circumstances shall any precinct official be assigned to assist a voter  
36 qualified for assistance, who was not specified by the voter. Precinct officials shall maintain a  
37 log of any individual who is not a near relative of the voter who goes into the voter booth to  
38 render assistance to a voter in marking that voter's ballot. The log shall include the printed name  
39 and address of the individual assisting the voter in marking that voter's ballot and a space for that  
40 individual's signature."

41 **SECTION 13.** G.S. 163-166.12(c) reads as rewritten:

42 "(c) Notation of Identification Proof. – The county board of elections shall note the type  
43 of identification proof submitted by the voter under the provisions of subsection (a) or (b) of this  
44 section ~~and may dispose of the tendered copy of identification proof as soon as the type of proof~~  
45 ~~is noted in the voter registration records section.~~ The type of identification proof shall be listed  
46 on the voter rolls that are available to the public."

47 **SECTION 14.** G.S. 163-182.4(a)(3) reads as rewritten:

48 "(3) Offices of ~~municipalities, unless the municipality has a valid board of~~  
49 ~~election municipalities.~~ Where voters in more than one county cast ballots for  
50 a municipal office, the State Board shall prepare a composite abstract upon  
51 the completion of the canvass by the county boards and deliver that abstract

1 to all county boards responsible for canvassing votes for the contest, and each  
2 of those county boards shall issue a certificate of nomination or election."

3 **SECTION 15.** G.S. 163-182.15 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

4 "(b1) Report on Revisions to Elections Records After Certification. – The State Board shall  
5 submit an annual report on any revisions made to any voter's voter history records other than  
6 routine updates following each election, including the rationale for and timing of the revisions,  
7 to the Joint Legislative Elections Oversight Committee and the Joint Legislative Oversight  
8 Committee on General Government."

9 **SECTION 16.(a)** G.S. 163-210 reads as rewritten:

10 **"§ 163-210. Governor to proclaim results; casting State's vote for President and**  
11 **Vice-President.**

12 Upon receipt of the certifications prepared by the State Board of Elections and delivered in  
13 accordance with G.S. 163-182.15, the Secretary of State, under seal of the office, shall notify the  
14 Governor of the names of the persons elected to the office of elector for President and  
15 Vice-President of the United States as stated in the abstracts of the State Board of Elections  
16 Board. Thereupon, the Governor shall immediately issue a proclamation setting forth the names  
17 of the electors and instructing them to be present in the old Hall of the House of Representatives  
18 in the State Capitol in the City of Raleigh at noon on the first ~~Monday~~ Tuesday after the second  
19 Wednesday in December next after their election, at which time the electors shall meet and vote  
20 on behalf of the State for President and Vice-President of the United States. The Governor shall  
21 cause this proclamation to be published in the daily newspapers published in the City of Raleigh.  
22 Notice may additionally be made on a radio or television station or both, but such notice shall be  
23 in addition to the newspaper and other required notice. The Secretary of State is responsible for  
24 making the actual arrangements for the meeting, preparing the agenda, and inviting guests.

25 Before the date fixed for the meeting of the electors, the Governor shall send by ~~registered~~  
26 ~~mail~~ the most expeditious method available to the Archivist of the United States, either three  
27 duplicate original certificates, or one original certificate and two authenticated copies of the  
28 Certificates of Ascertainment, under the great seal of the State setting forth the names of the  
29 persons chosen as presidential electors for this State and the number of votes cast for each. These  
30 Certificates of Ascertainment shall contain a security feature for purposes of verifying their  
31 authenticity and should be sent as soon as possible after the election, but must be received before  
32 the Electoral College meeting. At the same time the Governor shall deliver to the electors six  
33 duplicate originals of the same certificate, each bearing the great seal of the State. At any time  
34 prior to receipt of the certificate of the Governor or within 48 hours thereafter, any person elected  
35 to the office of elector may resign by submitting his resignation, written and duly verified, to the  
36 Governor. Failure to so resign shall signify consent to serve and to cast his vote for the candidate  
37 of the political party which nominated such elector.

38 In case of the absence, ineligibility or resignation of any elector chosen, or if the proper  
39 number of electors shall for any cause be deficient, the first and second alternates, respectively,  
40 who were nominated under G.S. 163-1(c), shall fill the first two vacancies. If the alternates are  
41 absent, ineligible, resign, or were not chosen, or if there are more than two vacancies, then the  
42 electors present at the required meeting shall forthwith elect from the citizens of the State a  
43 sufficient number of persons to fill the deficiency, and the persons chosen shall be deemed  
44 qualified electors to vote for President and Vice-President of the United States."

45 **SECTION 16.(b)** G.S. 163-213(d) reads as rewritten:

46 **"(d) Proclamation Before Electors' Meeting Day Controls. – If the proclamation of any**  
47 **Presidential Elector under G.S. 163-210 is made any time before ~~noon on~~ the day set for the**  
48 **meeting of Presidential Electors by 3 U.S.C. § 7, then that proclamation shall control over an**  
49 **appointment made by the General Assembly or the Governor. This section does not preclude**  
50 **litigation otherwise provided by law to challenge the validity of the proclamation or the**  
51 **procedures that resulted in that proclamation."**

1           **SECTION 17.(a)** G.S. 163-227.6 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

2           "(a1) At each one-stop voting site other than the county board of elections office, precinct

3 officials shall be allocated according to all of the following:

4           (1) Chief judges and judges shall be allocated to each voting place in the same

5 manner as allocated to each precinct in the county as provided in G.S. 163-41.

6           (2) Assistants shall be allocated to each voting place in the same manner as

7 allocated to each precinct in the county as provided in G.S. 163-42.

8           (3) The provisions of G.S. 163-41.1 apply."

9           **SECTION 17.(b)** This section becomes effective January 1, 2024, and applies to

10 elections held on or after that date.

11           **SECTION 18.** G.S. 163-227.10 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

12           "(c) At least once per primary or election, each county board of elections and the State

13 Board shall publish on its website or in any mailing sent to voters the date by which absentee

14 ballots are available for voting."

15           **SECTION 19.** G.S. 163-229 reads as rewritten:

16           "**§ 163-229. Absentee ballots, applications on container-return envelopes, and instruction**

17 **sheets.**

18           (a) Absentee Ballot Form. – In accordance with the provisions of G.S. 163-230.1, persons

19 entitled to vote by absentee ballot shall be furnished with official ballots.

20           (b) Application on Container-Return Envelope. – In time for use not later than 60 days

21 before a statewide general election in an even-numbered year, and not later than 50 days before

22 a statewide primary, other general election or county bond election, the county board of elections

23 shall print a sufficient number of envelopes in which persons casting absentee ballots may

24 transmit their marked ballots to the county board of elections. However, in the case of municipal

25 elections, sufficient container-return envelopes shall be made available no later than 30 days

26 before an election. Each container-return envelope shall have printed on it an application which

27 shall be designed and prescribed by the State Board, providing for all of the following:

28           (1) The voter's certification of eligibility to vote the enclosed ballot and of having

29 voted the enclosed ballot in accordance with this Part.

30           (2) A space for identification of the envelope with the voter and the voter's

31 signature.

32           (3) A space for the identification of the two persons witnessing the casting of the

33 absentee ballot in accordance with G.S. 163-231, those persons' signatures,

34 those persons' printed names, and those persons' addresses.

35           (4) A space for the name and address of any person who, as permitted under

36 G.S. 163-226.3(a), assisted the voter if the voter is unable to complete and

37 sign the certification and that individual's signature.

38           (5) A space for approval by the county board of elections.

39           (6) A space to allow reporting of a change of name as provided by

40 G.S. 163-82.16.

41           (7) A prominent display of the unlawful acts under G.S. 163-226.3 and

42 G.S. 163-275, except if there is not room on the envelope, the State Board

43 may provide for that disclosure to be made on a separate piece of paper to be

44 included along with the container-return envelope.

45           (8) An area to attach additional documentation necessary to comply with the

46 identification requirements in accordance with State Board rules, as provided

47 in G.S. 163-230.1.

48           (9) A bar code or other unique ~~identifier~~-identifier, affixed by the county board of

49 elections, to allow both the county board of elections and the voter to track the

50 ballot following return of the voted ballot to the county board of elections by

51 the voter.

1 The container-return envelope shall be printed in accordance with the instructions of the State  
2 Board, which shall prohibit the display of the voter's party affiliation on the outside of the  
3 container-return envelope.

4 (c) Instruction Sheets. – In time for use not later than 60 days before a statewide general  
5 election in an even-numbered year, and not later than 50 days before a statewide ~~primary, other~~  
6 primary or general election or county bond election, the county board of elections shall prepare  
7 and print a sufficient number of sheets of instructions on how voters are to prepare absentee  
8 ballots and return them to the county board of ~~elections, elections, including the means by which~~  
9 the voter's marked absentee ballot must be returned to the county board of elections and the date  
10 and time that the ballot must be received by the county board of elections. However, in the case  
11 of municipal elections, instruction sheets shall be made available no later than 30 days before an  
12 election."

13 **SECTION 20.** G.S. 163-230.1 reads as rewritten:

14 "**§ 163-230.1. Simultaneous issuance of absentee ballots with application.**

15 (a) Written Request. – A qualified voter who is eligible to vote by absentee ballot under  
16 G.S. 163-226, or that voter's near relative or verifiable legal guardian, shall complete a request  
17 form for an absentee application and absentee ballots so that the county board of elections  
18 receives that completed request form not later than 5:00 ~~P.M.~~ p.m. on the Tuesday before the  
19 election. That completed written request form shall be in compliance with G.S. 163-230.2. The  
20 county board of elections shall enter in the register of absentee requests, applications, and ballots  
21 issued the information required in G.S. 163-228 as soon as each item of that information becomes  
22 available. Upon receiving the completed request form, the county board of elections shall cause  
23 to be mailed to that voter a single package that includes all of the following:

- 24 (1) The official ballots the voter is entitled to vote.
- 25 (2) A container-return envelope for the ballots, printed in accordance with  
26 G.S. 163-229.
- 27 (3) An instruction sheet.
- 28 (4) A clear statement of the requirement for a photocopy of identification  
29 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) with the returned ballot.

31 (a1) Mailing of Application and Ballots. – The ballots, envelope, and instructions shall be  
32 mailed to the voter by the county board's chair, member, officer, or employee as determined by  
33 the board and entered in the register as provided by this Article.

34 (a2) Publish Deadline for Written Request and Ballot. – At least once per primary or  
35 election, each county board of elections and the State Board shall publish on its website or in any  
36 mailing sent to voters the following information:

- 37 (1) The date by which a completed request form as described in subsection (a) of  
38 this section must be received by a county board of elections.
- 39 (2) The means by which the voter's marked absentee ballot must be returned to  
40 the county board of elections.
- 41 (3) The date and time the voter's completed absentee ballot must be received by  
42 the county board of elections in order to be counted.

43 (b) Absence for Sickness or Physical Disability. – Notwithstanding the provisions of  
44 subsection (a) of this section, if a voter expects to be unable to go to the voting place to vote in  
45 person on election day because of that voter's sickness or other physical disability, that voter or  
46 that voter's near relative or verifiable legal guardian may make the request for absentee ballots in  
47 person to the board of elections of the county in which the voter is registered after 5:00 p.m. on  
48 the Tuesday before the election but not later than 5:00 p.m. on the day before the election. The  
49 county board of elections shall treat that completed request form in the same manner as a request  
50 under subsection (a) of this section but may personally deliver the application and ballots to the  
51 voter or that voter's near relative or verifiable legal guardian, and shall enter in the register of

1 absentee requests, applications, and ballots issued the information required in G.S. 163-228 as  
2 soon as each item of that information becomes available. The county board of elections shall  
3 personally deliver to the requester in a single package:

- 4 (1) The official ballots the voter is entitled to vote.
- 5 (2) A container-return envelope for the ballots, printed in accordance with  
6 G.S. 163-229.
- 7 (3) An instruction sheet.
- 8 (4) A clear statement of the requirement for a photocopy of identification  
9 described in G.S. 163-166.16(a) or an affidavit as described in  
10 G.S. 163-166.16(d)(1), (d)(2), or (d)(3) with the returned application and  
11 voted ballots.

12 (c) Delivery of Absentee Ballots and Container-Return Envelope to Applicant. – When  
13 the county board of elections receives a completed request form for applications and absentee  
14 ballots from the voter, or the near relative or the verifiable legal guardian of that voter, the county  
15 board shall promptly issue and transmit them to the voter in accordance with the following  
16 instructions:

- 17 (1) On the top margin of each ballot the applicant is entitled to vote, the chair, a  
18 member, officer, or employee of the board of elections shall write or type the  
19 words "Absentee Ballot No. \_\_\_\_ " or an abbreviation approved by the State  
20 Board and insert in the blank space the number assigned the applicant's  
21 application in the register of absentee requests, applications, and ballots  
22 issued. That person shall not write, type, or print any other matter upon the  
23 ballots transmitted to the absentee voter. Alternatively, the board of elections  
24 may cause to be barcoded on the ballot the voter's application number, if that  
25 barcoding system is approved by the State Board.
- 26 (2) The chair, member, officer, or employee of the board of elections shall fold  
27 and place the ballots (identified in accordance with the preceding instruction)  
28 in a container-return envelope and write or type in the appropriate blanks  
29 thereon, in accordance with the terms of G.S. 163-229(b), the absentee voter's  
30 name, the absentee voter's application number, and the designation of the  
31 precinct in which the voter is registered. If the ballot is barcoded under this  
32 section, the envelope may be barcoded rather than having the actual number  
33 appear. The person placing the ballots in the envelopes shall leave the  
34 container-return envelope holding the ballots unsealed.
- 35 (3) The chair, member, officer, or employee of the board of elections shall then  
36 place the unsealed container-return envelope holding the ballots together with  
37 printed instructions for voting and returning the ballots, in an envelope  
38 addressed to the voter at the post office address stated in the request, seal the  
39 envelope, and mail it at the expense of the county board of elections: Provided,  
40 that in case of a request received after 5:00 p.m. on the Tuesday before the  
41 election under the provisions of subsection (b) of this section, in lieu of  
42 transmitting the ballots to the voter in person or by mail, the chair, member,  
43 officer, or employee of the board of elections may deliver the sealed envelope  
44 containing the instruction sheet and the container-return envelope holding the  
45 ballots to a near relative or verifiable legal guardian of the voter.

46 The county board of elections may receive completed written request forms for applications  
47 at any time prior to the election but shall not mail applications and ballots to the voter or issue  
48 applications and ballots in person earlier than 60 days prior to the statewide general election in  
49 an even-numbered year, or earlier than 50 days prior to any other election, except as provided in  
50 G.S. 163-227.2, 163-227.5, and 163-227.6. No election official shall issue applications for  
51 absentee ballots except in compliance with this Article.



1 (d) Voter to Complete. – The application shall be completed and signed by the voter  
2 personally, the ballots marked, the ballots sealed in the container-return envelope, and the  
3 certificate completed as provided in G.S. 163-231.

4 (e) Approval of Applications. – At its next official meeting after return of the completed  
5 container-return envelope with the voter's ballots, the county board of elections shall determine  
6 whether the container-return envelope has been properly executed. If the board determines that  
7 the container-return envelope has been properly executed, it shall approve the application and  
8 deposit the container-return envelope with other container-return envelopes for the envelope to  
9 be opened and the ballots counted at the same time as all other container-return envelopes and  
10 absentee ballots.

11 If a container-return envelope contains a curable deficiency, the county board of elections  
12 shall promptly notify the voter of the deficiency and the manner in which the voter may cure the  
13 deficiency. Curable deficiencies are deficiencies that can be cured with supplemental  
14 documentation or attestation provided by the voter, including when any of the following occurs:

- 15 (1) The voter did not sign the voter certification as required by  
16 G.S. 163-231(a)(4).
- 17 (2) The voter signed the application in the wrong place on the application.
- 18 (3) The voter failed to include with the container-return envelope a photocopy of  
19 identification described in G.S. 163-166.16(a) or an affidavit as described in  
20 G.S. 163-166.16(d)(1), (d)(2), or (d)(3), as required by subsection (f1) of this  
21 section.
- 22 (4) The container-return envelope is not witnessed as required by  
23 G.S. 163-231(a).
- 24 (5) Any other requirement in executing the container-return envelope under State  
25 or federal law.

26 Any container-return envelope with a curable deficiency that is transmitted to the county  
27 board shall be considered timely if cure documentation is received no later than the end of  
28 business on the business day before the canvass conducted by the county board of elections held  
29 pursuant to G.S. 163-182.5. Cure documentation may be transmitted via e-mail to the county  
30 board of elections if the deficiency is one described in subdivision (3) of this subsection. The  
31 notification of voters regarding curable deficiencies is an administrative task that may be  
32 performed by county board staff and is not required to be performed at an absentee meeting as  
33 provided for in subsection (f) of this section. The notification of the voter regarding curable  
34 deficiencies shall be by mail, and by telephone or e-mail if the telephone number or e-mail  
35 address was provided by the voter on the application on the container-return envelope.

36 (f) Required Meeting of County Board of Elections. – During the period commencing on  
37 the fifth Tuesday before an election, in which absentee ballots are authorized, the county board  
38 of elections shall hold one or more public meetings each Tuesday at 5:00 p.m. for the purpose of  
39 action on applications for absentee ballots. At these meetings, the county board of elections shall  
40 pass upon applications for absentee ~~ballots~~-ballots, provided the county board does so in a way  
41 that allows the public to observe the actual applications for absentee ballots.

42 If the county board of elections changes the time of holding its meetings or provides for  
43 additional meetings in accordance with the terms of this subsection, notice of the change in hour  
44 and notice of the schedule of additional meetings, if any, shall be published in a newspaper  
45 circulated in the county at least 30 days prior to the election.

46 At the time the county board of elections makes its decision on an application for absentee  
47 ballots, the board shall enter in the appropriate column in the register of absentee requests,  
48 applications, and ballots issued opposite the name of the applicant a notation of whether the  
49 applicant's application was "Approved" or "Disapproved".

50 The decision of the board on the validity of an application for absentee ballots shall be final  
51 subject only to such review as may be necessary in the event of an election contest. The county

1 board of elections shall constitute the proper official body to pass upon the validity of all  
2 applications for absentee ballots received in the county; this function shall not be performed by  
3 the chair or any other member of the board individually.

4 (f1) Each container-return envelope returned to the county board with application and  
5 voted ballots under this section shall be accompanied by a photocopy of identification described  
6 in G.S. 163-166.16(a) or an affidavit as described in G.S. 163-166.16(d)(1), (d)(2), or (d)(3).

7 (g) Rules. – The State Board, by rule or by instruction to the county board of elections,  
8 shall establish procedures to provide appropriate safeguards in the implementation of this section.  
9 The State Board shall adopt rules to provide for the forms of identification that shall be included  
10 with returned application and voted ballots. At a minimum, the rules shall include the following:

11 (1) Acceptable photocopies of forms of readable identification, as described in  
12 G.S. 163-166.16(a).

13 (2) A process for a voter without acceptable photocopies of forms of readable  
14 identification under subdivision (1) of this subsection to complete an  
15 alternative affidavit in accordance with G.S. 163-166.16(d)(1), (d)(2), or  
16 (d)(3) that includes inability to attach a physical copy of the voter's  
17 identification with the written request as a reasonable impediment to  
18 compliance with the identification requirement. If a reasonable impediment  
19 under this subdivision states inability to attach a physical copy of the voter's  
20 identification with the written request, the reasonable impediment shall  
21 include one of the following:

22 a. The number of the voter's North Carolina drivers license issued under  
23 Article 2 of Chapter 20 of the General Statutes, including a learner's  
24 permit or a provisional license.

25 b. The number of the voter's special identification card for nonoperators  
26 issued under G.S. 20-37.7.

27 c. The last four digits of the voter's social security number.

28 (h) Recodified as G.S. 163-226(f) by Session Laws 2019-239, s. 1.2(a), effective January  
29 1, 2020, and applicable to elections conducted on or after that date."

30 **SECTION 20.5.** G.S. 163-230.2(a) is amended by adding a new subdivision to read:

31 "(8) The telephone number and e-mail address of the voter, however no request  
32 shall be denied for failure to include this information and the request shall  
33 state this information is optional if the voter desires to be contacted regarding  
34 any deficiencies in the returned executed absentee ballots."

35 **SECTION 21.(a)** G.S. 163-231 reads as rewritten:

36 "**§ 163-231. Voting absentee ballots and transmitting them to the county board of elections.**

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

40 (1) Mark the voter's ballots, or cause them to be marked by that person in the  
41 voter's presence according to the voter's instruction.

42 (2) Fold each ballot separately, or cause each of them to be folded in the voter's  
43 presence.

44 (3) Place the folded ballots in the container-return envelope and securely seal it,  
45 or have this done in the voter's presence.

46 (4) Make the application printed on the container-return envelope according to  
47 the provisions of G.S. 163-229(b) and make the certificate printed on the  
48 container-return envelope according to the provisions of G.S. 163-229(b).

49 (5) Require those two persons in whose presence the voter marked that voter's  
50 ballots to sign and print their names on the application and certificate as  
51 witnesses and to indicate those persons' addresses. Failure to list a ZIP code

1 does not invalidate the application and certificate. Failure to include a printed  
 2 witness name does not invalidate the application and certificate if the identity  
 3 of an individual can solely be identified by the witness's signature.

4 (6) Do one of the following:

- 5 a. Have the application notarized. The notary public may be the person  
 6 in whose presence the voter marked that voter's ballot.  
 7 b. Have the two persons in whose presence the voter marked that voter's  
 8 ballots to certify that the voter is the registered voter submitting the  
 9 marked ballots.

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

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

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

23 (1) All ballots issued under the provisions of this Article and Article 21A of this  
 24 Chapter shall be transmitted ~~by mail~~ by one of the following means:

- 25 a. Mail or by commercial courier service, at the voter's expense, or  
 26 delivered and received by the county board not later than 7:30 p.m. on  
 27 the day of the statewide primary or general election or county bond  
 28 election.  
 29 b. Delivered in person, or by the voter or the voter's near relative or  
 30 verifiable legal guardian and received by guardian, to the county board  
 31 not later than 5:00 p.m. 7:30 p.m. on the day of the statewide primary  
 32 or general election or county bond election.  
 33 c. ~~Ballots Electronically transmitted to the county board, if the ballot was~~  
 34 ~~issued under the provisions of Article 21A of this Chapter may also be~~  
 35 ~~electronically transmitted.~~ Chapter.

36 (2) If ballots are received later than the hour stated in subdivision (1) of this  
 37 subsection, those ballots shall not be accepted unless ~~one of the following~~  
 38 ~~applies:~~ federal law so requires or the ballots are received in accordance with  
 39 Article 21A of this Chapter or the State Board or court order extended the  
 40 closing time of the polls for every poll in the county in accordance with  
 41 G.S. 163-166.01. If the State Board or court order so extended the closing time  
 42 of the polls, the ballots shall be received by the closing time as extended by  
 43 the State Board or court order in order to be counted.

44 a. ~~Federal law so requires.~~

45 b. ~~The ballots issued under this Article are postmarked and that postmark~~  
 46 ~~is dated on or before the day of the statewide primary or general~~  
 47 ~~election or county bond election and are received by the county board~~  
 48 ~~of elections not later than three days after the election by 5:00 p.m.~~

49 e. ~~The ballots issued under Article 21A of this Chapter are received by~~  
 50 ~~the county board of elections not later than the end of business on the~~

~~business day before the canvass conducted by the county board of elections held pursuant to G.S. 163-182.5.~~

(c) Delivering Executed Absentee Ballots in Person. – For purposes of this section, "Delivered in person" includes delivering the ballot to an election official at a one-stop voting site under G.S. 163-227.2, 163-227.5, and 163-227.6 during any time that site is open for voting. The ballots shall be kept securely and delivered by election officials at that site to the county board of elections office for processing."

**SECTION 21.(b)** G.S. 163-231, as amended by subsection (a) of this section, is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

"(d) Signature Verification on Executed Absentee Ballots. – The State Board shall require county boards of elections to use verification software to check the signatures of voters noted on executed absentee ballots before those ballots are accepted by the county boards."

**SECTION 21.(c)** Subsection (b) of this section becomes effective September 1, 2024, and applies to elections held on or after that date.

**SECTION 22.(a)** Article 20 of Chapter 163 of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new section to read:

**"§ 163-231.1. Require two-factor authentication process for absentee ballots cast by mail.**

The State Board shall establish and implement a two-factor authentication process for executed absentee ballots transmitted by mail to a county board of elections. A county board of elections shall use the process established by this section before an executed absentee ballot is opened and counted by elections officials."

**SECTION 22.(b)** This section becomes effective July 1, 2024, and applies to elections held on or after that date.

**SECTION 23.** G.S. 163-232.1 reads as rewritten:

**"§ 163-232.1. Certified list of executed absentee ballots received on or after election day; publication of list.**

(a) The county board of elections shall prepare, or cause to be prepared, a list in at least triplicate, of all absentee ballots issued under ~~Article 20 of this Chapter~~ this Article returned to the county board of elections to be counted, which have been approved by the county board of elections, have not been included on the certified list prepared pursuant to G.S. 163-232, ~~and which have been postmarked by the day of the statewide primary or general election or county bond election and have been received by the county board of elections not later than three days after the election by 5:00 p.m.-7:30 p.m., or the time provided in G.S. 163-231(b), on the day of the statewide primary or general election or county bond election.~~ The list shall be supplemented with new information each business day following the day of the election until the deadline for receipt of such absentee ballots. At the end of the list, the ~~chairman~~-chair shall execute the following certificate under oath:

"State of North Carolina

County of \_\_\_\_\_

I, \_\_\_\_\_, ~~chairman~~-chair of the \_\_\_\_\_ County Board of Elections, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a list of all executed absentee ballots to be voted in the election to be conducted on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, which have been approved by the county board of elections ~~and which have been postmarked by the day of the statewide primary or general election or county bond election and have been received by the county board of elections not later than three days after the election by 5:00 p.m.-7:30 p.m., or the time provided in G.S. 163-231(b), on the day of the statewide primary or general election or county bond election.~~ I certify that the ~~chairman~~-chair, member, officer, or employee of the board of elections has not delivered ballots for absentee voting to any person other than the voter, by mail or by commercial courier service or in person, except as provided by law, and have not mailed or delivered ballots when the request for the ballot was received after the deadline provided by law.

This the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_

1 \_\_\_\_\_  
2 (Signature of ~~chairman~~ chair of  
3 county board of elections)

4 Sworn to and subscribed before me this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_.  
5 Witness my hand and official seal.

6 \_\_\_\_\_  
7 (Signature of officer  
8 administering oath)

9 \_\_\_\_\_  
10 (Title of officer)"

11 (b) The county board of elections shall prepare, or cause to be prepared, a list in at least  
12 triplicate, of all military-overseas ballots issued under Article 21A of this Chapter and returned  
13 to the county board of elections to be counted, which have been approved by the county board of  
14 elections, have not been included on the certified list prepared pursuant to G.S. 163-232, and  
15 which have been received by the county board of elections not later than ~~three days after the~~  
16 ~~election by 5:00 p.m.-7:30 p.m., or the time provided in G.S. 163-231(b), on the day of the~~  
17 statewide primary or general election or county bond election. The list shall be supplemented  
18 with new information each business day following the day of the statewide primary or general  
19 election or county bond election until the deadline for receipt of such absentee ballots. At the end  
20 of the list, the chair shall execute the following certificate under oath:

21 "State of North Carolina  
22 County of \_\_\_\_\_

23 I, \_\_\_\_, chair of the \_\_\_\_ County Board of Elections, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a list  
24 of all executed military-overseas ballots to be voted in the election to be conducted on the \_\_\_\_  
25 day of \_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_, which have been approved by the county board of elections, and which have  
26 been ~~postmarked by the day of the statewide primary or general election or county bond election~~  
27 ~~and received by the county board of elections not later than three days after the election by 5:00~~  
28 ~~p.m.-7:30 p.m., or the time provided in G.S. 163-231(b), on the day of the statewide primary or~~  
29 general election or county bond election. I further certify that I have issued ballots to no other  
30 persons than those listed herein and further that I have not delivered military-overseas ballots to  
31 persons other than those listed herein; that this list constitutes the only precinct registration of  
32 covered voters whose names have not heretofore been entered on the regular registration of the  
33 appropriate precinct.

34 This the \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_

35 \_\_\_\_\_  
36 (Signature of chair of  
37 county board of elections)

38 Sworn to and subscribed before me this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_.  
39 Witness my hand and official seal.

40 \_\_\_\_\_  
41 (Signature of officer  
42 administering oath)

43 \_\_\_\_\_  
44 (Title of officer)"

45 ...."

46 **SECTION 24.(a)** Article 20 of Chapter 163 of the General Statutes is amended by  
47 adding a new section to read:

48 **"§ 163-232.2. Ballot reporting.**

49 (a) Each county board of elections shall report the following to the State Board during  
50 each day of the one-stop early voting period:

- 1           (1)    The number of mail-in absentee ballots that have been spoiled due to the voter  
2           voting in person at a one-stop voting site after requesting a mail-in absentee  
3           ballot.
- 4           (2)    The number of outstanding mail-in absentee ballots, including the total  
5           number of mail-in absentee ballots sent to date and the total number of mail-in  
6           absentee ballots received to date.
- 7       (b)    Each county board of elections shall report the following to the State Board on the  
8       day after the day of the election:
- 9           (1)    The number of mail-in absentee ballots that have been counted.
- 10          (2)    The number of outstanding mail-in absentee ballots, including the total  
11          number of mail-in absentee ballots sent to date and the total number of mail-in  
12          absentee ballots received to date.
- 13          (3)    The number of provisional ballots cast.
- 14       (c)    The reports required by this section shall be completed in the manner specified by the  
15       State Board. The State Board shall publish each report received by a county board of elections  
16       pursuant to this section on its website each day. Each list shall be made publicly available and  
17       published in a readable and usable format."

18           **SECTION 24.(b)** This section becomes effective January 1, 2024, and applies to  
19       elections held on or after that date.

20           **SECTION 25.** G.S. 163-233(c) reads as rewritten:

21       "(c)    All applications for absentee ballots shall be retained by the county board of elections  
22       for a period of ~~one year after which those applications may be destroyed.~~ 22 months after the  
23       corresponding election or as otherwise specified in federal law, whichever is greater."

24           **SECTION 26.** G.S. 163-234 reads as rewritten:

25       "**§ 163-234. Counting absentee ballots by county board of elections.**

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

- 29           (1)    Only those absentee ballots returned to the county board of elections ~~no later~~  
30           ~~than 5:00 p.m. on the day before election day~~ in a properly executed  
31           container-return envelope or absentee ballots and received pursuant to  
32           G.S. 163-231(b)(2)b. or c. G.S. 163-231(b) shall be counted, except to the  
33           extent federal law requires otherwise counted. Absentee ballots received prior  
34           to election day shall be counted on election day. An absentee ballot returned  
35           in an executed container-return envelope containing a deficiency listed in  
36           G.S. 163-230.1(e) shall be counted if documentation curing the deficiency is  
37           timely received by the county board of elections in accordance with the  
38           requirements of G.S. 163-230.1(e).
- 39           (2)    The county board of elections shall meet at 5:00 p.m. on election day in the  
40           board office or other public location in the county courthouse for the purpose  
41           of counting all absentee ballots except those which have been challenged  
42           before 5:00 p.m. on election ~~day and day,~~ those received on election day, and  
43           those received pursuant to G.S. 163-231(b)(2)b. or c. G.S. 163-231(b)(2). Any  
44           elector of the county shall be permitted to attend the meeting and allowed to  
45           observe the counting process, so long as the elector does not in any manner  
46           interfere with the election officials in the discharge of their duties.

47           The county board of elections may begin counting absentee ballots issued  
48           under Article 21A of this Chapter between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 5:00  
49           p.m. and may begin counting all absentee ballots between the hours of 2:00  
50           p.m. and 5:00 p.m. upon the adoption of a resolution at least two weeks prior  
51           to the election in which the hour and place of counting absentee ballots shall

1 be stated. The resolution also may provide for an additional meeting following  
2 the day of the election and prior to the day of canvass to count absentee ballots  
3 received pursuant to ~~G.S. 163-231(b)(2)b. or c.~~ on election day as provided in  
4 subdivision (11) of this section. A copy of the resolution shall be published  
5 once a week for two weeks prior to the election, in a newspaper having general  
6 circulation in the county. Notice may additionally be made on a radio or  
7 television station or both, but the notice shall be in addition to the newspaper  
8 and other required notice. The count shall be continuous until completed and  
9 the members shall not separate or leave the counting place except for  
10 unavoidable necessity, except that if the count has been completed prior to the  
11 time the polls close, it shall be suspended until that time pending receipt of  
12 any additional ballots. Nothing in this section prohibits a county board of  
13 elections from taking preparatory steps for the count earlier than the times  
14 specified in this section, as long as the preparatory steps do not reveal to any  
15 individual not engaged in the actual count election results before the times  
16 specified in this subdivision for the count to begin. By way of illustration and  
17 not limitation, a preparatory step for the count would be the entry of tally cards  
18 from direct record electronic voting units into a computer for processing. The  
19 board shall not announce the result of the count before 7:30 p.m.

20 (3) Notwithstanding subdivision (2) of this section, a county board of elections  
21 may, at each meeting at which it approves absentee ballot applications  
22 pursuant to G.S. 163-230.1(e) and (f), remove those ballots from their  
23 envelopes and have them read by an optical scanning machine, without  
24 printing the totals on the scanner. The board shall complete the counting of  
25 these ballots at the times provided in subdivision (2) of this section. The State  
26 Board of Elections shall provide instructions to county boards of elections for  
27 executing this procedure, and the instructions shall be designed to ensure the  
28 accuracy of the count, the participation of board members of both parties, and  
29 the secrecy of the results before election day. This subdivision applies only in  
30 counties that use optical scan devices to count absentee ballots.

31 (4) The counting of absentee ballots shall not commence until a majority and at  
32 least one board member of each political party represented on the board is  
33 present and that fact is publicly declared and entered in the official minutes of  
34 the county board.

35 (5) The county board of elections may employ such assistants as deemed  
36 necessary to count the absentee ballots, but each board member present shall  
37 be responsible for and observe and supervise the opening and tallying of the  
38 ballots.

39 (6) As each ballot envelope is opened, the board shall cause to be entered into a  
40 pollbook designated "Pollbook of Absentee Voters" the name of the absentee  
41 voter, or if the pollbook is computer-generated, the board shall check off the  
42 name. Preserving secrecy, the ballots shall be placed in the appropriate ballot  
43 boxes, at least one of which shall be provided for each type of ballot. The  
44 "Pollbook of Absentee Voters" shall also contain the names of all persons who  
45 voted under G.S. 163-227.2, 163-227.5, and 163-227.6, but those names may  
46 be printed by computer for inclusion in the pollbook.

47 After all ballots have been placed in the boxes, the counting process shall  
48 begin.

49 If one-stop ballots under G.S. 163-227.2, 163-227.5, and 163-227.6 are  
50 counted electronically, that count shall commence at the time the polls close.

1 If one-stop ballots are paper ballots counted manually, that count shall  
2 commence at the same time as other absentee ballots are counted.

3 If a challenge transmitted to the board on canvass day by a chief judge is  
4 sustained, the ballots challenged and sustained shall be withdrawn from the  
5 appropriate boxes, as provided in G.S. 163-89(e).

6 As soon as the absentee ballots have been counted and the names of the  
7 absentee voters entered in the pollbook as required in this subdivision, the  
8 board members and assistants employed to count the absentee ballots shall  
9 each sign the pollbook immediately beneath the last absentee voter's name  
10 entered in the pollbook. The county board of elections is responsible for the  
11 safekeeping of the pollbook of absentee voters.

12 (7) Upon completion of the counting process the board members shall cause the  
13 results of the tally to be entered on the absentee abstract prescribed by the  
14 State Board of Elections. The abstract shall be signed by the members of the  
15 board in attendance and the original mailed immediately to the State Board of  
16 Elections. The county board of elections may have a separate count on the  
17 abstract for one-stop absentee ballots under G.S. 163-227.2, 163-227.5, and  
18 163-227.6.

19 (8) One copy of the absentee abstract shall be retained by the county board of  
20 elections and the totals appearing on the absentee abstract shall be added to  
21 the final totals of all votes cast in the county for each office as determined on  
22 the official canvass.

23 (9) In the event a political party does not have a member of the county board of  
24 elections present at the meeting to count absentee ballots due to illness or other  
25 cause of the member, the counting shall not commence until the county party  
26 ~~chairman~~-chair of the absent member, or a member of the party's county  
27 executive committee, is in attendance. The person shall act as an official  
28 witness to the counting and shall sign the absentee ballot abstract as an  
29 "observer".

30 (10) The county board of elections shall retain all container-return envelopes and  
31 absentee ballots, in a safe place, for at least ~~four~~ 22 months, and longer if any  
32 contest is pending concerning the validity of any ballot.

33 (11) The county board of elections shall meet after election day and prior to the  
34 date of canvass to determine whether the container-return envelopes for  
35 absentee ballots received on election day pursuant to ~~G.S. 163-231(b)(2)b. or~~  
36 ~~e. G.S. 163-231(b)~~ have been properly executed. The county board of  
37 elections shall comply with the requirements of G.S. 163-230.1 for approval  
38 of applications. Any absentee ballots received pursuant to  
39 ~~G.S. 163-231(b)(2)b. or e. G.S. 163-231(b)(2)~~ shall be counted by the county  
40 board of elections on the day of canvass. The county board of elections may  
41 also meet following the day of the election and prior to the day of canvass to  
42 count absentee ballots received pursuant to ~~G.S. 163-231(b)(2)b. or e.~~  
43 G.S. 163-231(b)(2) upon the adoption of a resolution pursuant to subdivision  
44 (2) of this section. The county board of elections shall comply with all other  
45 requirements of this section and G.S. 163-230.1 for the counting of these  
46 absentee ballots."

47 **SECTION 27.(a)** G.S. 163-274(b) reads as rewritten:

48 "(b) Class 1 Misdemeanor. – Any person who shall, in connection with any primary or  
49 election in this State, do any of the acts and things declared in this subsection to be unlawful shall  
50 be guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor. It shall be unlawful ~~for~~ to do any of the following:



(1) For any person who has access to an official voted ballot or record to knowingly disclose in violation of G.S. 163-165.1(e) how an individual has voted that ballot.

(2) For any person to impersonate a chief judge, judge of election, or other precinct official while in the discharge of duties in the registration of voters or in conducting any primary or election.

(3) For any person other than the State Board or a county board of elections, or any employee of the State Board or a county board of elections, to affix or print a barcode on any absentee ballot request form."

**SECTION 27.(b)** This section becomes effective December 1, 2023, and applies to offenses committed on or after that date.

**SECTION 28.(a)** G.S. 163-275 reads as rewritten:

**"§ 163-275. Certain acts declared felonies.**

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

...

(b) Any violations of this section shall be investigated by the State Bureau of Investigation."

**SECTION 28.(b)** G.S. 163-22(d) reads as rewritten:

"(d) ~~The State Board of Elections shall investigate when necessary or advisable, the administration of election laws, frauds and irregularities in elections in any county and municipality and special district, and shall report violations of the election laws to the Attorney General or district attorney or prosecutor of the district~~ State Bureau of Investigation for further investigation and prosecution."

**SECTION 28.(c)** G.S. 143B-919 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

"(b2) The State Bureau of Investigation shall be involved in any investigation involving the commission or attempted commission of a crime under Chapter 163 of the General Statutes."

**SECTION 28.(d)** This section becomes effective December 1, 2023.

**SECTION 29.** G.S. 163-275(a)(5), as amended by this act, reads as rewritten:

"(5) For any person convicted of a crime which excludes the person from the right of suffrage, to vote ~~at in~~ any primary or election ~~without having been restored to knowing~~ the right of citizenship has not been restored in due course and by the method provided by law."

**SECTION 30.(a)** G.S. 9-3 reads as rewritten:

**"§ 9-3. Qualifications of prospective jurors.**

(a) ~~All persons are~~ A person is qualified to serve as jurors a juror and is to be included on the master jury list who if the person meets all of the following:

(1) ~~are citizens of the State~~ Is a citizen of the United States.

(2) Is a resident of the State.

(3) ~~and residents~~ Is a resident of the county, county.

(4) ~~who have~~ Has not served as jurors a juror during the preceding two years years.

(5) ~~or who have~~ Has not served a full term of service as a grand jurors juror during the preceding six years, years.

(6) ~~who are~~ Is 18 years of age or over, over.

(7) ~~who are~~ Is physically and mentally competent, competent.

(8) ~~who can~~ Can understand the English language, language.

(9) ~~who have~~ Has not been convicted of a felony or pleaded guilty or nolo contendere to an indictment charging a felony (or felony, or if convicted of a felony or having pleaded plead guilty or nolo contendere to an indictment

1 charging a ~~felony have~~ felony, has had ~~their~~ that person's citizenship restored  
 2 pursuant to ~~law~~, law.

3 (10) ~~and who have~~ Has not been adjudged non compos mentis.

4 (b) ~~Persons~~ A person not qualified under this section ~~are~~ is subject to challenge for cause."

5 SECTION 30.(b) G.S. 9-6 reads as rewritten:

6 "**§ 9-6. Jury service a public duty; excuses to be allowed in exceptional cases; procedure.**

7 ...

8 (a1) All applications for excuses from jury duty, including applications based on  
 9 disqualification under G.S. 9-3, shall be made on a form developed and furnished by the  
 10 Administrative Office of the Courts. Applications shall allow prospective jurors to specify the  
 11 reason for excusal based on disqualification, including lack of United States citizenship.

12 (b) Pursuant to the foregoing policy, each chief district court judge shall promulgate  
 13 procedures whereby the chief district court judge or any district court judge of the chief district  
 14 court judge's district court district designated by the chief district court judge, prior to the date  
 15 that a jury session (or sessions) of superior or district court convenes, shall receive, hear, and  
 16 pass on applications for excuses from jury duty. The procedures shall provide for the time and  
 17 place, publicly announced, at which applications for excuses will be heard, and prospective jurors  
 18 who have been summoned for service shall be so informed. The chief district court judge, after  
 19 consultation with and with the consent of the clerk of superior court, may delegate the authority  
 20 to receive, hear, and pass on applications for excuses from jury duty to the clerk of superior court.  
 21 The chief district judge may also assign the duty of passing on applications for excuses from jury  
 22 service to judicial support staff. In all cases concerning excuses, the clerk of superior court or  
 23 judicial support staff shall notify prospective jurors of the disposition of their excuses.

24 ...

25 (e) The judge shall inform the clerk of superior court of persons excused under this  
 26 section, and the clerk of superior court shall keep a record of excuses separate from the master  
 27 jury ~~list~~ list in accordance with G.S. 9-6.2.

28 ...."

29 SECTION 30.(c) G.S. 9-6.1 reads as rewritten:

30 "**§ 9-6.1. Requests to be excused.**

31 (a) Any person summoned as a juror who is a full-time student and who wishes to be  
 32 excused pursuant to G.S. 9-6(b1) or who is 72 years or older and who wishes to be excused,  
 33 deferred, or exempted, may make the request without appearing in person by filing a signed  
 34 statement of the ~~ground of~~ grounds for the request with the chief district court judge of that  
 35 district, or the district court ~~judge~~ judge, clerk of superior court, or judicial support staff ~~member~~  
 36 member, if so designated by the chief district court judge pursuant to G.S. 9-6(b), at any time  
 37 five business days before the date ~~upon which~~ the person is summoned to appear.

38 (b) Any person summoned as a juror who has a disability that could interfere with the  
 39 person's ability to serve as a juror and who wishes to be excused, deferred, or exempted may  
 40 make the request without appearing in person by filing a signed statement of the ground of the  
 41 request, including a brief explanation of the disability that interferes with the person's ability to  
 42 serve as a juror, with the chief district court judge of that district, or the district court ~~judge~~ judge,  
 43 clerk of superior court, or judicial support staff ~~member~~ member, if so designated by the chief  
 44 district court judge pursuant to G.S. 9-6(b), at any time five business days before the date ~~upon~~  
 45 ~~which~~ the person is summoned to appear. ~~Upon~~ At the request of the court, medical  
 46 documentation of any disability may be submitted. Any privileged medical information or  
 47 protected health information described in this section ~~shall be~~ is confidential and ~~shall be~~ is  
 48 exempt from the provisions of Chapter 132 of the General Statutes or any other provision  
 49 requiring information and records held by State agencies to be made public or accessible to the  
 50 public.

1 (c) A person may request either a temporary or permanent exemption under this section,  
2 and the ~~judge-judge, clerk of superior court,~~ or judicial support staff member may accept or reject  
3 either in the exercise of discretion conferred by G.S. 9-6(b), including the substitution of a  
4 temporary exemption for a requested permanent exemption. In the case of supplemental jurors  
5 summoned under G.S. 9-11, notice may be given when summoned. In case the chief district court  
6 judge, or the ~~judge-judge, clerk of superior court,~~ or judicial support staff member designated by  
7 the chief district court judge pursuant to G.S. 9-6(b), rejects the request for exemption, the  
8 prospective juror shall be immediately notified by the judicial support staff member or the clerk  
9 of court by telephone, letter, or personally."

10 **SECTION 30.(d)** Article 1 of Chapter 9 of the General Statutes is amended by  
11 adding a new section to read:

12 **"§ 9-6.2. Reports of excusals from jury duty based on disqualification.**

13 (a) The name and address provided by each person who requests to be excused from jury  
14 duty on the basis that the person is not qualified to serve as a juror, along with the reason for that  
15 request, shall be retained by the clerk of superior court for the remainder of the biennium as  
16 described in G.S. 9-2. The records retained by the clerk are not public records under G.S. 132-1.  
17 The clerk of superior court may destroy the records at the end of each biennium as described in  
18 G.S. 9-2.

19 (b) If a person is disqualified from jury duty because the person is not a citizen of the  
20 United States, the clerk of superior court shall, at least on a semi-annually basis, communicate  
21 this information to the State Board of Elections, including the person's name, address, date of  
22 birth, and other personal information from the master jury list, along with the reasons for the  
23 person's disqualification and the date of disqualification. The State Board of Elections shall use  
24 this information to conduct list maintenance efforts in accordance with G.S. 163-82.14. This  
25 communication shall not be a public record.

26 (c) Nothing in this section should be construed to restrict the authority of a local board  
27 of elections or the State Board of Elections to determine a person's eligibility to vote."

28 **SECTION 30.(e)** G.S. 163-82.14 reads as rewritten:

29 **"§ 163-82.14. List maintenance.**

30 (a) ~~Uniform Program-Requirement for List Maintenance. – The~~ In accordance with this  
31 section, the State Board of Elections shall adopt a uniform program that makes a diligent effort  
32 not less than twice each year; and county boards of elections shall maintain the list of eligible  
33 voters in the State by providing for the following:

34 (1) ~~To remove~~ The removal of the names of ineligible voters from the official lists  
35 of eligible voters, and voters.

36 (2) ~~To update~~ Updates to the addresses and other necessary data of persons who  
37 remain on the official lists of eligible voters.

38 (a1) ~~That program-Methods of List Maintenance; Cross State Checks. – List maintenance~~  
39 efforts under this section shall be nondiscriminatory and shall comply with the provisions of the  
40 Voting Rights Act of 1965, as amended, and with the provisions of the National Voter  
41 Registration Act. The State Board of Elections, Board, in addition to the methods set forth in this  
42 section, may use other methods toward the ends set forth in subdivisions (1) and (2) of this  
43 subsection, subsection (a) of this section, including address-updating services provided by the  
44 Postal Service, Service and entering into data sharing agreements with other states to cross-check  
45 information on voter registration and voting records. Any data sharing agreement shall require  
46 the other state or states to comply with G.S. 163-82.10 and G.S. 163-82.10B. Each county board  
47 of elections shall conduct systematic efforts to remove names from its list of registered voters in  
48 accordance with this section and with the program adopted by the State Board. The county boards  
49 of elections shall complete their list maintenance mailing program by April 15 of every  
50 odd-numbered year, unless the State Board of Elections approves a different date for the county.

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

3 (1) At a minimum of once per week, the Department of Health and Human  
4 Services shall furnish free of charge to the State Board of Elections every  
5 month, Executive Director, in a format prescribed by the State Board of  
6 Elections, Board, the names of deceased persons who were residents of the  
7 State. The State Board of Elections Upon receipt of the list from the  
8 Department of Health and Human Services, the Executive Director shall  
9 distribute every month to each county board of elections the names on that list  
10 of deceased persons who were residents of that county. The Department of  
11 Health and Human Services shall base each list upon information supplied by  
12 death certifications it received during the preceding month. Upon the receipt  
13 of those names, each county board of elections shall remove from its voter  
14 registration records any person the list shows to be dead, dead each week.

15 (2) Each county board of elections shall also remove from its voter registration  
16 records a person identified as deceased by Upon receipt of a signed statement  
17 of a near relative or personal representative of the estate of the a deceased  
18 voter. voter indicating that the person has deceased, a county board of  
19 elections shall remove the person identified as deceased from its voter  
20 registration records within one week of receipt of the signed statement. The  
21 county board need not does not need to send any notice to the address of the  
22 person so removed, person before removing the person from its voter  
23 registration records.

24 (c) Conviction of a Felony. In order to remove the names of ineligible individuals from  
25 the list of eligible voters in this State, the following shall occur:

26 (1) Report of Conviction Within the State. The State Board of Elections, on or  
27 before the fifteenth day of every month, At a minimum of once per week, the  
28 Executive Director shall report to the county board of elections of that county  
29 the name, county of residence, and residence address if available, of each  
30 individual compile a list of individuals against whom a final judgment of  
31 conviction of a felony within this State has been entered in that county in the  
32 preceding calendar month, entered. The Executive Director shall report to each  
33 appropriate county board of elections the names of individuals from that  
34 county appearing on such list each week.

35 (2) Report of Federal Conviction. The At a minimum of once per week, the  
36 Executive Director of the State Board of Elections, upon receipt of shall  
37 compile a list of individuals against whom a federal conviction has been  
38 reported, based on a notice of conviction sent by a United States Attorney  
39 pursuant to section 8(g) of the National Voter Registration Act, Act. The  
40 Executive Director shall notify the report to each appropriate county boards  
41 of elections of the conviction, names of individuals from that county appearing  
42 on such list each week.

43 (3) County Board's Duty Upon Receiving Report of Conviction. When a county  
44 board of elections receives a notice pursuant to subdivision (1) or (2) of this  
45 subsection relating to a resident of that county and that person is registered to  
46 vote in that county, the county board of elections shall, after giving 30 days'  
47 written notice to the voter at his registration address, the address associated  
48 with that voter registration, and if the voter makes no objection, remove the  
49 person's name from its registration records. If the voter notifies the county  
50 board of elections of his objection to the removal within 30 days of the notice,  
51 the chairman chair of the county board of elections shall enter a challenge

1 under G.S. 163-85(c)(5), and the notice the county board of elections received  
2 pursuant to this subsection shall be prima facie evidence for the preliminary  
3 hearing that the registrant was convicted of a felony.

4 (c1) Noncitizens. –

5 (1) Within 30 days of receipt of the communication in accordance with  
6 G.S. 9-6.2, the State Board shall do each of the following:

7 a. Review the voter registration and citizenship status of each person  
8 identified, including matching of available information in State and  
9 federal databases.

10 b. Distribute to each county board of elections a report of the persons  
11 identified who are registered to vote in that county. The report shall  
12 include the information provided by the clerk of superior court under  
13 G.S. 9-6.2, the voter registration number of the person, and the results  
14 of the State Board review of the person's voter registration and  
15 citizenship status. The State Board shall not include a person's name  
16 in the report if the State Board review determines that the individual  
17 became a citizen of the United States after the date of that person's jury  
18 disqualification.

19 c. In the event that the prospective juror voted prior to becoming a United  
20 States citizen, the State Board shall furnish the State Bureau of  
21 Investigation and the district attorney a copy of its investigation for  
22 prosecution of the violation as provided in G.S. 163-278.

23 (2) Within 30 days of receipt by a county board of elections of a report pursuant  
24 to this subsection relating to a person registered to vote in that county, the  
25 following shall occur:

26 a. The county board of elections shall give 30 days' written notice to the  
27 voter by sending notice to the voter's residential address and, if  
28 different from the voter's residential address, the voter's registration  
29 address and mailing address. If the voter makes no objection, the  
30 county board of elections shall remove the person's name from its  
31 registration records and shall provide written notice of the removal to  
32 the voter in the same manner as notice was previously provided under  
33 this sub-subdivision. The county board of elections shall indicate  
34 within the statewide computerized voter registration system any  
35 individual removed from the voter registration records on the basis of  
36 noncitizenship status.

37 b. If, within 30 days of the date on which notice was sent of the removal  
38 of a voter's name from registration records pursuant to sub-subdivision  
39 a. of this subdivision, the voter notifies the county board of elections  
40 of the voter's objection to the removal, the chair of the county board  
41 of elections shall enter a challenge under G.S. 163-85(c)(7), and the  
42 notice provided to the county board of elections by the receipt of the  
43 report from the State Board pursuant to this subdivision shall establish  
44 a rebuttable presumption in the preliminary hearing heard pursuant to  
45 G.S. 163-85(d) that the person is not a citizen of the United States. The  
46 voter may appear with evidence to rebut the presumption, including  
47 any of the following: (i) birth certificate, (ii) citizenship naturalization,  
48 or (iii) other federal documentation of citizenship.

49 (3) Except as provided by State and federal law, the records retained pursuant to  
50 this subsection are public records under G.S. 132-1, notwithstanding the  
51 requirements of G.S. 20-43.4(c). The State Board and county board of

1 elections shall retain the electronic records for four years and may destroy the  
 2 records thereafter.

3 (d) ~~Change of Address. – A county board of elections shall conduct a systematic program~~  
 4 In order to remove from its list of registered voters those the names of individuals who have  
 5 moved out of the county, and to update the registration records of persons who have moved  
 6 within the county. The county board shall remove a person from its list if the registrant:the  
 7 following shall occur:

8 (1) ~~Gives~~ At a minimum of once per week, a county board of elections shall  
 9 remove from its voter registration records the names of individuals who give  
 10 confirmation in writing of a change of address for voting purposes out of the  
 11 county. "Confirmation in writing" for purposes of this subdivision shall  
 12 include:include any of the following:

13 a. A report to the county board from the Department of Transportation  
 14 or from a voter registration agency listed in G.S. 163-82.20 that the  
 15 voter has reported a change of address for voting purposes outside the  
 16 county;county.

17 b. A notice of cancellation received under ~~G.S. 163-82.9;~~  
 18 ~~or~~G.S. 163-82.9.

19 c. A notice of cancellation received from an election jurisdiction outside  
 20 the State.

21 (2) ~~Fails~~ Following each congressional election, the county board of elections  
 22 shall send to each registered voter who has not voted or confirmed the voter's  
 23 address by another means a confirmation mailing. The county board of  
 24 elections shall remove from its voter registration records the names of  
 25 individuals who fail to respond to a—the confirmation mailing sent by the  
 26 county board in accordance with this subdivision and does who do not vote or  
 27 appear to vote in an election beginning on the date of the notice and ending  
 28 on the day after the date of the second general election for the United States  
 29 House of Representatives that occurs after the date of the notice. A county  
 30 board of elections sends a confirmation notice in accordance with this  
 31 subdivision if the notice:notice complies with all of the following:

32 a. Is a postage prepaid and preaddressed return card, sent by forwardable  
 33 mail, on which the registrant may state current ~~address;address.~~

34 b. Contains or is accompanied by a notice to the effect that if the  
 35 registrant did not change residence but remained in the county, the  
 36 registrant should return the card not later than the deadline for  
 37 registration by mail in ~~G.S. 163-82.6(d)(1); and~~G.S. 163-82.6(d)(1).

38 c. Contains or is accompanied by information as to how the registrant  
 39 may continue to be eligible to vote if the registrant has moved outside  
 40 the county.

41 ~~A county board shall send a confirmation mailing in accordance with this~~  
 42 ~~subdivision to every registrant after every congressional election if the county~~  
 43 ~~board has not confirmed the registrant's address by another means.~~

44 (3) ~~Any registrant~~ registered voter who is removed from the list of registered  
 45 voters pursuant to this subsection shall be reinstated if the voter appears to  
 46 vote and gives oral or written affirmation that the voter has not moved out of  
 47 the county but has maintained residence continuously within the county. That  
 48 person shall be allowed to vote as provided in G.S. 163-82.15(f).

49 (e) ~~Cooperation on List Maintenance Efforts. – The State Board of Elections has the~~  
 50 authority to perform list maintenance under this section with the same authority as a county  
 51 board.

1 (f) Annual Report on List Maintenance Efforts. – County board of elections shall submit  
2 to the State Board of Elections an annual report, on or before September 1 of each year, of its list  
3 maintenance under this section. The State Board of Elections shall compile annual reports  
4 received from the county board of elections and submit the reports to the Joint Legislative  
5 Elections Oversight Committee on or before October 1 of each year."

6 **SECTION 30.(f)** This section becomes effective July 1, 2024.

7 **SECTION 30.5.** If any provision of this act or its application to any person, group  
8 of persons, or circumstances is held invalid, the invalidity does not affect other provisions or  
9 applications of this act that can be given effect without the invalid provisions or application and,  
10 to this end, the provisions of this act are severable.

11 **SECTION 31.(a)** In any notice given to a voter prior to an election regarding the  
12 requirement to show photo identification to vote in person, whether by mail or posted on a  
13 website, the State Board of Elections and a county board of elections shall clearly and initially  
14 state in the notice the following: "Voters will now be asked to present a valid photo identification  
15 when voting in person. If you do not have a valid photo ID card, you may obtain one from your  
16 county board of elections prior to the election, through the end of the early voting period. If you  
17 do not have a valid photo ID card on election day, you may still vote and have your vote counted  
18 by signing an affidavit of reasonable impediment as to why you have not presented a valid photo  
19 ID."

20 **SECTION 31.(b)** The State Board of Elections shall educate the public on the  
21 changes to the deadline for returning completed applications and marked mail-in absentee ballots  
22 to the county boards of elections contained in this legislation by mailing information regarding  
23 the deadline to North Carolina residential addresses of registered voters, in the same manner as  
24 the Judicial Voter Guide, prior to the municipal election in 2023, prior to the primary in 2024,  
25 and prior to the general election in 2024.

26 **SECTION 32.** The Department of Information Technology shall study and report to  
27 the General Assembly, on or before December 1, 2023, as to the feasibility of replacing the  
28 statewide voter registration system, including the timetable for replacement and the possibility  
29 of establishing periodic communications, up to and including daily, between the State Board of  
30 Elections and the Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Vital Records; the  
31 Division of Motor Vehicles, Division of Prisons of the Department of Adult Corrections, and the  
32 Administrative Office of the Courts for the purposes of list maintenance and voter registration.  
33 The report shall be delivered to the Joint Legislative Commission on Governmental Operations.

34 **SECTION 33.(a)** The State Board of Elections shall select ten counties in the State  
35 in which to conduct a pilot program during the primary held in 2024 for signature verification on  
36 executed mail-in absentee ballots. In selecting the ten counties for the pilot, the State Board of  
37 Elections shall seek diversity of population size, regional location, and demographic  
38 composition. The pilot program shall consist of county boards of elections using signature  
39 verification software to check the signatures of voters noted on all executed mail-in absentee  
40 ballots received by the county boards of elections in the 2024 primary. The State Board of  
41 Elections shall select the signature verification software and ensure that the software is available  
42 for all ten counties to use in the 2024 primary. The State Board shall assist the selected county  
43 boards of elections in implementing the signature verification software, including assisting the  
44 selected county boards of elections in any training needed on how the software is to be used for  
45 signature matching on executed mail-in absentee ballots.

46 **SECTION 33.(b)** The State Board of Elections shall closely monitor the pilot  
47 program established in this section. The selected county boards of elections shall report to the  
48 State Board of Elections its findings on the use of the signature verification software during the  
49 2024 primary, including all of the following:

- 1 (1) Whether the signature matching software was used for all returned mail-in  
2 absentee ballots, and what the voter signature on the executed mail-in absentee  
3 ballot was matched against.
- 4 (2) How many executed mail-in absentee ballots were counted by the county  
5 board of elections in the 2024 primary.
- 6 (3) How many executed mail-in absentee ballots were flagged by the signature  
7 matching software, and any information known on how close of a match the  
8 signatures must be for the signature match software to not flag the voter's  
9 signature.
- 10 (4) Information on how the signature matching software worked to flag an  
11 executed mail-in absentee ballot with a signature that did not match the  
12 signature on file for the voter, including any known information on the rate of  
13 error in the software.

14 **SECTION 33.(c)** In implementing the pilot program established in this section, no  
15 executed mail-in absentee ballot shall be rejected by the county board of elections for failing any  
16 signature verification. All executed mail-in absentee ballots that are otherwise eligible to be  
17 counted in accordance with Chapter 163 of the General Statutes shall be counted.

18 **SECTION 33.(d)** The State Board of Elections shall report its findings, along with  
19 any recommendations, to the General Assembly on or before May 1, 2024. The report shall be  
20 delivered to the Joint Legislative Elections Oversight Committee and shall also include the  
21 following:

- 22 (1) A compilation of the information reported from the selected county boards of  
23 elections as required by subsection (b) of this section.
- 24 (2) The estimated cost to implement signature verification for mail-in absentee  
25 ballots statewide.
- 26 (3) Any suggested law changes to fully implement signature verification  
27 statewide for mail-in absentee ballots, including suggestions on a process for  
28 how a voter can cure a deficiency related to signature verification of mail-in  
29 absentee ballots.
- 30 (4) Any other information relevant to signature verification of mail-in absentee  
31 ballots.

32 **SECTION 34.** Except as otherwise provided, this act is effective when it becomes  
33 law and applies to elections held on or after that date.