

Article 1A.

Retention Elections.

§ 7A-4.1. Retention elections.

(a) A Justice of the Supreme Court who was elected to that office by vote of the voters who desires to continue in office shall be subject to approval by the qualified voters of the whole State in a retention election at the general election immediately preceding the expiration of the elected term. Approval shall be by a majority of votes cast on the issue of the justice's retention in accordance with this Article.

(b) If a Justice of the Supreme Court was appointed to fill a vacancy to that office, then the next election for that office shall be by ballot as provided by Article 25 of Chapter 163 of the General Statutes. Following that election, the justice shall be eligible for retention election as provided for in this Article.

(c) A justice seeking retention shall indicate the desire to continue in office by filing a notice to that effect with the State Board of Elections no later than 12:00 noon on the first business day of July in the year prior to the general election immediately preceding the expiration of the elected term. The notice shall be on a form provided by the State Board of Elections. Notice may be withdrawn at any time prior to December 15 of that year. If no retention notice is filed, or if it is filed and timely withdrawn, then an election shall be held the next year to elect a successor in accordance with Article 25 of Chapter 163 of the General Statutes.

(d) At the time of filing the notice under this Article, the justice shall pay to the State Board of Elections a filing fee for the office the candidate seeks in the amount of one percent (1%) of the annual salary of the office sought.

(e) Except as provided for in this Article, retention elections shall be conducted and canvassed in accordance with rules of the State Board of Elections in the same general manner as general elections under Chapter 163 of the General Statutes. The State Board of Elections shall certify the results.

(f) The question on the ballot shall be substantially in the following form, as appropriate: Justices of the Supreme Court.

"[] FOR [] AGAINST

The retention of [name of Justice] on the North Carolina Supreme Court for a new term of eight years."

(g) If a person who has filed a notice of intent for a retention election dies or is removed from office prior to the time that the ballots are printed, the retention election is cancelled and the vacancy shall be filled as provided by law. If a person who has filed a notice calling a retention election dies or is removed from office after the ballots are printed, the State Board of Elections may cancel the retention election if it determines that the ballots can be reprinted without significant expense. If the ballots cannot be reprinted, then the results of the retention election shall be ineffective. (2015-66, s. 1; 2017-6, s. 3; 2018-146, ss. 3.1(a), (b), 6.1.)