

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA

SESSION 1995

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HOUSE BILL 1162\*  
Committee Substitute Favorable 5/30/96

Short Title: Voter's Testimony.

(Public)

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Sponsors:

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Referred to:

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May 15, 1996

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT TO PROHIBIT THE USE OF INELIGIBLE VOTER'S TESTIMONY ABOUT HOW THE VOTE WAS CAST; TO GIVE THE PERSON PROTESTING THE ELECTION THE RIGHT TO CALL FOR A NEW ELECTION WHEN THE NUMBER OF INELIGIBLE VOTERS EXCEEDS THE MARGIN OF VICTORY; AND TO MAKE RELATED CHANGES.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

Section 1. G.S. 163-33 reads as rewritten:

**"§ 163-33. Powers and duties of county boards of elections.**

The county boards of elections within their respective jurisdictions shall exercise all powers granted to such boards in this Chapter, and they shall perform all the duties imposed upon them by law, which shall include the following:

- (1) To make and issue such rules, regulations, and instructions, not inconsistent with law or the rules established by the State Board of Elections, as it may deem necessary for the guidance of election officers and voters.
- (2) To appoint all chief judges, judges, assistants, and other officers of elections, and designate the precinct in which each shall serve; and, after notice and hearing, to remove any chief judge, judge of elections,

1 assistant, or other officer of election appointed by it for incompetency,  
2 failure to discharge the duties of office, failure to qualify within the time  
3 prescribed by law, fraud, or for any other satisfactory cause. In  
4 exercising the powers and duties of this subdivision, the board may act  
5 only when a majority of its members are present at any meeting at  
6 which such powers or duties are exercised.

7 (3) To investigate irregularities, nonperformance of duties, and violations of  
8 laws by election officers and other persons, and to report violations to  
9 the State Board of Elections. In exercising the powers and duties of this  
10 subdivision, the board may act only when a majority of its members are  
11 present at any meeting at which such powers or duties are exercised.  
12 Provided that in any hearing on an irregularity no board of elections  
13 shall consider as evidence the testimony of a voter who cast a ballot,  
14 which ballot that voter was not eligible to cast, as to how that voter  
15 voted on that ballot.

16 (4) As provided in G.S. 163-128, to establish, define, provide, rearrange,  
17 discontinue, and combine election precincts as it may deem expedient,  
18 and to fix and provide for places of registration and for holding  
19 primaries and elections.

20 (5) To review, examine, and certify the sufficiency and validity of petitions  
21 and nomination papers.

22 (6) To advertise and contract for the printing of ballots and other supplies  
23 used in registration and elections; and to provide for the delivery of  
24 ballots, pollbooks, and other required papers and materials to the voting  
25 places.

26 (7) To provide for the purchase, preservation, and maintenance of voting  
27 booths, ballot boxes, registration and pollbooks, maps, flags, cards of  
28 instruction, and other forms, papers, and equipment used in registration,  
29 nominations, and elections; and to cause the voting places to be suitably  
30 provided with voting booths and other supplies required by law.

31 (8) To provide for the issuance of all notices, advertisements, and  
32 publications concerning elections required by law. In addition, the  
33 county board of elections shall give notice at least 20 days prior to the  
34 date on which the registration books or records are closed that there will  
35 be a primary, general or special election, the date on which it will be  
36 held, and the hours the voting places will be open for voting in that  
37 election. The notice also shall describe the nature and type of election,  
38 and the issues, if any, to be submitted to the voters at that election.  
39 Notice shall be given by advertisement at least once weekly during the  
40 20-day period in a newspaper having general circulation in the county  
41 and by posting a copy of the notice at the courthouse door. Notice may  
42 additionally be made on a radio or television station or both, but such  
43 notice shall be in addition to the newspaper and other required notice.

1 This subdivision shall not apply in the case of bond elections called  
2 under the provisions of Chapter 159.

3 (9) To receive the returns of primaries and elections, canvass the returns,  
4 make abstracts thereof, transmit such abstracts to the proper authorities,  
5 and to issue certificates of election to county officers and members of  
6 the General Assembly except those elected in districts composed of  
7 more than one county.

8 (10) To appoint and remove the board's clerk, assistant clerks, and other  
9 employees; and to appoint and remove precinct transfer assistants as  
10 provided in G.S. 163-72.3.

11 (11) To prepare and submit to the proper appropriating officers a budget  
12 estimating the cost of elections for the ensuing fiscal year.

13 (12) To perform such other duties as may be prescribed by this Chapter or  
14 the rules of the State Board of Elections.

15 (13) Notwithstanding the provisions of any other section of this Chapter, to  
16 have access to any ballot boxes and their contents, any voting machines  
17 and their contents, any registration records, pollbooks, voter  
18 authorization cards or voter lists, any lists of absentee voters, any lists of  
19 presidential registrants under the Voting Rights Act of 1965 as  
20 amended, and any other voting equipment or similar records, books or  
21 lists in any precinct or municipality over whose elections it has  
22 jurisdiction or for whose elections it has responsibility."

23 Sec. 2. G.S. 163-22.1 reads as rewritten:

24 **"§ 163-22.1. Power of State Board to order new elections.**

25 (a) State Board's Authority. – If the State Board of Elections, acting upon the  
26 agreement of at least four of its members, and after holding public hearings on election  
27 contests, alleged election irregularities or fraud, or violations of elections laws,  
28 determines that a new primary, general or special election should be held, the Board may  
29 order that a new primary, general or special election be held, either statewide, or in any  
30 counties, electoral districts, special districts, or municipalities over whose elections it has  
31 jurisdiction. The State Board shall be authorized to order a new election without  
32 conducting a public hearing provided a public hearing on the allegations was held by the  
33 county or municipal board of elections and the State Board is satisfied that such hearing  
34 gave sufficient opportunity for presentation of evidence and provided further that the  
35 State Board adopts the findings of the county or municipal board of elections.

36 Any new primary, general or special election so ordered shall be conducted under  
37 applicable constitutional and statutory authority and shall be supervised by the State  
38 Board of Elections and conducted by the appropriate elections officials.

39 The State Board of Elections has authority to adopt rules and regulations and to issue  
40 orders to carry out its authority under this section.

41 (b) Special Circumstances in Which New Election Shall Be Called. –  
42 Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (a) of this section, if

- 1           (1) The number of ineligible voters who voted in the election was sufficient  
2           to change the result of the election; and  
3           (2) The way those votes were cast cannot be determined by examining the  
4           ballots.

5 then the person protesting the election shall have the right to a new election.

6       (c) Special Circumstances in Which Tie Shall Be Declared. – Notwithstanding the  
7 provisions of subsection (a) of this section, if the circumstances described in subsection  
8 (b) of this section obtain except that the number of ineligible voters was sufficient to  
9 change the result to a tie but not result in a different winner, then the person protesting  
10 the election shall have the right to have a tie declared by the State Board. If a tie is  
11 declared, the provisions of law governing tied elections shall apply."

12           Sec. 3. This act is effective upon ratification and applies to all votes cast on or  
13 after that date.