

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2023

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SENATE BILL 306

Short Title: Fix Our Democracy. (Public)

Sponsors: Senators Marcus, Mohammed, and Salvador (Primary Sponsors).

Referred to: Rules and Operations of the Senate

March 15, 2023

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

1 AN ACT AMENDING THE NORTH CAROLINA CONSTITUTION TO ESTABLISH A  
2 NONPARTISAN REDISTRICTING PROCESS; REENACTING LEGISLATION THAT  
3 ESTABLISHED A NONPARTISAN METHOD FOR JUDICIAL ELECTIONS;  
4 EXTENDING THE WAITING PERIOD FOR FORMER LEGISLATORS WHO BECOME  
5 LOBBYISTS; ELIMINATING THE REQUIREMENT FOR WET INK REGISTRATION;  
6 PROVIDING FOR ONLINE VOTER REGISTRATION, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS  
7 FOR THAT PURPOSE, AND AUTOMATIC VOTER REGISTRATION; INCREASING  
8 TRANSPARENCY BY REQUIRING ADEQUATE NOTICE OF MEETINGS OF ALL  
9 LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEES AND SESSIONS OCCURRING IN THE LEGISLATIVE  
10 COMPLEX AND REQUIRING LIVE VIDEO AND AUDIO STREAMING OF ALL  
11 LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE AND COMMISSION MEETINGS AND SESSIONS  
12 OCCURRING IN THE LEGISLATIVE COMPLEX; ENSURING VOTING PLACES ON  
13 CERTAIN COLLEGE CAMPUSES; PROHIBITING VOTER ROLL PURGING;  
14 MAKING VARIOUS CHANGES TO THE CAMPAIGN FINANCE LAWS REGARDING  
15 TRANSPARENCY IN SOURCES OF SPENDING, DIGITAL ADVERTISEMENT  
16 CAMPAIGNS, PROTECTIONS AGAINST FOREIGN INTERFERENCE IN  
17 ELECTIONS, AND LIMITING SUPER PAC INFLUENCE; REESTABLISHING PUBLIC  
18 FINANCING FOR JUDICIAL CAMPAIGNS; AND RESTORING CITIZENSHIP RIGHTS  
19 OF CERTAIN OFFENDERS.  
20

21 Whereas, short-term political incentives are currently set against the long-term public  
22 good; and

23 Whereas, the needed reforms are generally well known; and

24 Whereas, the people of North Carolina are demanding free and fair elections and a  
25 true democracy; and

26 Whereas, restoring the people's trust in our work begins with restoring the people's  
27 fundamental role in our elections; Now, therefore,

28 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

29  
30 **PART I. NONPARTISAN REDISTRICTING PROCESS**

31 **SECTION 1.1.(a)** Section 3 of Article II of the North Carolina Constitution reads as  
32 rewritten:

33 **"Sec. 3. Senate districts; apportionment of Senators.**

34 The Senators shall be elected from districts. The General Assembly, at the first regular session  
35 convening after the return of every decennial census of population taken by order of Congress,  
36 shall revise the senate districts and the apportionment of Senators among those districts, subject



1 ~~to the following requirements: Assembly shall establish a nonpartisan process to revise the senate~~  
2 ~~districts and the apportionment of Senators among those districts pursuant to Section 25 of this~~  
3 ~~Article.~~

4 (1) ~~Each Senator shall represent, as nearly as may be, an equal number of inhabitants, the~~  
5 ~~number of inhabitants that each Senator represents being determined for this purpose by dividing~~  
6 ~~the population of the district that he represents by the number of Senators apportioned to that~~  
7 ~~district;~~

8 (2) ~~Each senate district shall at all times consist of contiguous territory;~~

9 (3) ~~No county shall be divided in the formation of a senate district;~~

10 (4) ~~When established, the senate districts and the apportionment of Senators shall remain~~  
11 ~~unaltered until the return of another decennial census of population taken by order of Congress."~~

12 **SECTION 1.1.(b)** Section 5 of Article II of the North Carolina Constitution reads as  
13 rewritten:

14 **"Sec. 5. Representative districts; apportionment of Representatives.**

15 The Representatives shall be elected from districts. The General Assembly, ~~at the first regular~~  
16 ~~session convening after the return of every decennial census of population taken by order of~~  
17 ~~Congress, shall revise the representative districts and the apportionment of Representatives~~  
18 ~~among those districts, subject to the following requirements: Assembly shall establish a~~  
19 ~~nonpartisan process to revise the representative districts and the apportionment of~~  
20 ~~Representatives among those districts pursuant to Section 25 of this Article.~~

21 (1) ~~Each Representative shall represent, as nearly as may be, an equal number of~~  
22 ~~inhabitants, the number of inhabitants that each Representative represents being determined for~~  
23 ~~this purpose by dividing the population of the district that he represents by the number of~~  
24 ~~Representatives apportioned to that district;~~

25 (2) ~~Each representative district shall at all times consist of contiguous territory;~~

26 (3) ~~No county shall be divided in the formation of a representative district;~~

27 (4) ~~When established, the representative districts and the apportionment of~~  
28 ~~Representatives shall remain unaltered until the return of another decennial census of population~~  
29 ~~taken by order of Congress."~~

30 **SECTION 1.1.(c)** Article II of the North Carolina Constitution is amended by adding  
31 a new section to read:

32 **"Sec. 25. Redistricting.**

33 The General Assembly shall establish by law a nonpartisan process to revise electoral districts  
34 for the General Assembly and the House of Representatives of the United States Congress after  
35 the return of every decennial census of population taken by order of Congress. The process shall  
36 meet at least all of the following requirements:

37 (1) The General Assembly shall have no role in revising electoral districts for the General  
38 Assembly or the House of Representatives of the United States Congress.

39 (2) Each member of the Senate and House of Representatives of the General Assembly  
40 and the House of Representatives of the United States Congress shall represent, as nearly as may  
41 be, an equal number of inhabitants.

42 (3) Each electoral district shall at all times consist of contiguous territory.

43 (4) To the extent practicable and consistent with federal law, no county shall be divided  
44 in the formation of an electoral district for the Senate or House of Representatives of the General  
45 Assembly.

46 (5) When established, the electoral districts for the Senate and House of Representatives  
47 of the General Assembly shall remain unaltered until the return of another decennial census of  
48 population taken by order of Congress.

49 (6) Electoral districts adopted pursuant to the process shall have the force and effect of  
50 acts of the General Assembly."

1 SECTION 1.1.(d) Subsection (5) of Section 22 of Article II of the North Carolina  
2 Constitution reads as rewritten:

3 "(5) ~~Other exceptions. Appointments to office. Every bill:~~

- 4 (a) ~~In bill in which the General Assembly makes an appointment or appointments~~  
5 ~~to public office and which contains no other matter;~~
- 6 (b) ~~Revising the senate districts and the apportionment of Senators among those~~  
7 ~~districts and containing no other matter;~~
- 8 (c) ~~Revising the representative districts and the apportionment of Representatives~~  
9 ~~among those districts and containing no other matter; or~~
- 10 (d) ~~Revising the districts for the election of members of the House of~~  
11 ~~Representatives of the Congress of the United States and the apportionment~~  
12 ~~of Representatives among those districts and containing no other matter;~~  
13 matter shall be read three times in each house before it becomes law and shall  
14 be signed by the presiding officers of both houses."

15 SECTION 1.2.(a) The amendments set out in Section 1.1 of this act shall be  
16 submitted to the qualified voters of the State at the statewide general election to be held in  
17 November 2024, which election shall be conducted under the laws then governing elections in  
18 the State. Ballots, voting systems, or both may be used in accordance with Chapter 163 of the  
19 General Statutes. The question to be used in the voting systems and ballots shall be:

20 "[ ] FOR [ ] AGAINST

21 A constitutional amendment providing for a nonpartisan process to be established in  
22 law to redistrict the State for the purpose of electing members of the General Assembly and the  
23 United States House of Representatives. The General Assembly would establish the nonpartisan  
24 process in law and have no other role in the creation of the districts."

25 SECTION 1.2.(b) If a majority of votes cast on the question are in favor of the  
26 amendments set out in Section 1.1 of this act, the State Board of Elections shall certify the  
27 amendments to the Secretary of State. The Secretary of State shall enroll the amendments so  
28 certified among the permanent records of that office. The amendments are effective upon  
29 certification.

30 SECTION 1.3. Except as otherwise provided, this Part is effective when it becomes  
31 law.

32  
33 **PART II. NONPARTISAN JUDICIAL ELECTIONS**

34 SECTION 2.1. Chapter 163 of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new  
35 Subchapter to read:

36 "**SUBCHAPTER XI. ELECTION OF APPELLATE, SUPERIOR, AND DISTRICT**  
37 **COURT JUDGES.**

38 "Article 26.

39 "Nomination and Election of Appellate, Superior, and District Court Judges.

40 "**§ 163-350. Applicability.**

41 The nomination and election of justices of the Supreme Court, judges of the Court of Appeals,  
42 and superior and district court judges of the General Court of Justice shall be as provided by this  
43 Article.

44 "**§ 163-351. Nonpartisan primary election method.**

45 (a) General. – Except as provided in G.S. 163-358, there shall be a primary to narrow the  
46 field of candidates to two candidates for each position to be filled if, when the filing period closes,  
47 there are more than two candidates for a single office or the number of candidates for a group of  
48 offices exceeds twice the number of positions to be filled. If only one or two candidates file for  
49 a single office, no primary shall be held for that office and the candidates shall be declared  
50 nominated. If the number of candidates for a group of offices does not exceed twice the number

of positions to be filled, no primary shall be held for those offices and the candidates shall be declared nominated.

(b) Determination of Nominees. – In the primary, the two candidates for a single office receiving the highest number of votes and those candidates for a group of offices receiving the highest number of votes equal to twice the number of positions to be filled shall be declared nominated. If two or more candidates receiving the highest number of votes each receive the same number of votes, the State Board shall determine their relative ranking by lot and shall declare the nominees accordingly. The canvass of the primary shall be held on the same date as the primary canvass fixed under G.S. 163-182.5. The canvass shall be conducted in accordance with Article 15A of this Chapter.

(c) Determination of Election Winners. – In the election, the names of those candidates declared nominated without a primary and those candidates nominated in the primary shall be placed on the ballot. The candidate for a single office receiving the highest number of votes shall be elected. Those candidates for a group of offices receiving the highest number of votes equal in number to the number of positions to be filled shall be elected. If two candidates receiving the highest number of votes each received the same number of votes, the State Board shall determine the winner by lot.

**§ 163-352. Notice of candidacy.**

(a) Form of Notice. – Each person offering to be a candidate for election shall do so by filing a notice of candidacy with the State Board in the following form, inserting the words in parentheses when appropriate:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

I hereby file notice that I am a candidate for election to the office of \_\_\_\_\_ in the regular election to be held \_\_\_\_\_.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

(Name of Candidate)

Witness: \_\_\_\_\_

The notice of candidacy shall be either signed in the presence of the chairman or secretary of the State Board or signed and acknowledged before an officer authorized to take acknowledgments who shall certify the notice under seal. An acknowledged and certified notice may be mailed to the State Board. In signing a notice of candidacy, the candidate shall use only the candidate's legal name and, in the candidate's discretion, any nickname by which the candidate is commonly known. A candidate may also, in lieu of that candidate's first name and legal middle initial or middle name, if any, sign that candidate's nickname, provided the candidate appends to the notice of candidacy an affidavit that the candidate has been commonly known by that nickname for at least five years prior to the date of making the affidavit. The candidate shall also include with the affidavit the way the candidate's name (as permitted by law) should be listed on the ballot if another candidate with the same last name files a notice of candidacy for that office.

A notice of candidacy signed by an agent or any person other than the candidate himself or herself shall be invalid.

(b) Time for Filing Notice of Candidacy. – Candidates seeking election to the following offices shall file their notice of candidacy with the State Board no earlier than 12:00 noon on the first Monday in December and no later than 12:00 noon on the third Friday in December preceding the election:

- (1) Justices of the Supreme Court.

1           (2) Judges of the Court of Appeals.

2           (3) Judges of the superior courts.

3           (4) Judges of the district courts.

4           (c) Withdrawal of Notice of Candidacy. – Any person who has filed a notice of candidacy  
5 for an office shall have the right to withdraw it at any time prior to the close of business on the  
6 third business day prior to the date on which the right to file for that office expires under the  
7 terms of subsection (b) of this section.

8           (d) Certificate That Candidate is Registered Voter. – Candidates shall file, along with  
9 their notice, a certificate signed by the chairman of the board of elections or the supervisor of  
10 elections of the county in which they are registered to vote stating that the person is registered to  
11 vote in that county. In issuing the certificate, the chairman or supervisor shall check the  
12 registration records of the county to verify the information. During the period commencing 36  
13 hours immediately preceding the filing deadline, the State Board shall accept, on a conditional  
14 basis, the notice of candidacy of a candidate who has failed to secure the verification required by  
15 this subsection subject to receipt of verification no later than three days following the filing  
16 deadline. The State Board shall prescribe the form for the certificate and distribute it to each  
17 county board of elections no later than the last Monday in December of each odd-numbered year.

18           (e) Candidacy for More Than One Office Prohibited. – No person may file a notice of  
19 candidacy for more than one office or group of offices described in subsection (b) of this section,  
20 or for an office or group of offices described in subsection (b) of this section and an office  
21 described in G.S. 163-106.2, for any one election. If a person has filed a notice of candidacy with  
22 a board of elections under this section or under G.S. 163-106.2 for one office or group of offices,  
23 then a notice of candidacy may not later be filed for any other office or group of offices under  
24 this section when the election is on the same date unless the notice of candidacy for the first  
25 office is withdrawn under subsection (c) of this section.

26           (f) Notice of Candidacy for Certain Offices to Indicate Vacancy. – In any election in  
27 which there are two or more vacancies for the office of justice of the Supreme Court, judge of  
28 the Court of Appeals, or district court judge to be filled by nominations, each candidate shall, at  
29 the time of filing notice of candidacy, file with the State Board a written statement designating  
30 the vacancy to which the candidate seeks election. Votes cast for a candidate shall be effective  
31 only for election to the vacancy for which the candidate has given notice of candidacy as provided  
32 in this subsection.

33           A person seeking election for a specialized district judgeship established under G.S. 7A-147  
34 shall, at the time of filing notice of candidacy, file with the State Board a written statement  
35 designating the specialized judgeship to which the person seeks nomination.

36           (g) Notice of Candidacy for Superior Court Judge; Residency. – No person may file a  
37 notice of candidacy for superior court judge unless that person is at the time of filing the notice  
38 of candidacy a resident of the judicial district as it will exist at the time the person would take  
39 office if elected. No person may be nominated as a superior court judge under G.S. 163-114  
40 unless that person is at the time of nomination a resident of the judicial district as it will exist at  
41 the time the person would take office if elected. This subsection implements Section 9(1) of  
42 Article IV of the North Carolina Constitution which requires regular superior court judges to  
43 reside in the district for which elected.

44 **"§ 163-353. Filing fees required of candidates; refunds.**

45           (a) Fee Schedule. – At the time of filing a notice of candidacy under this Article, each  
46 candidate shall pay to the State Board a filing fee for the office the candidate seeks in the amount  
47 of one percent (1%) of the annual salary of the office sought.

48           (b) Refund of Fees. – If any person who has filed a notice of candidacy and paid the filing  
49 fee prescribed in subsection (a) of this section withdraws his or her notice of candidacy within  
50 the period prescribed in G.S. 163-352(c), the candidate shall be entitled to have the fee the

1 candidate paid refunded. The chairman of the State Board shall cause a warrant to be drawn on  
2 the State Treasurer for the refund payment.

3 (c) Refund of Fees Upon Death of Candidate. – If any person who has filed a notice of  
4 candidacy and paid the filing fee prescribed in subsection (a) of this section dies prior to the date  
5 of the election, the personal representative of the estate shall be entitled to have the fee refunded  
6 if application is made to the board of elections to which the fee was paid no later than one year  
7 after the date of death and refund shall be made in the same manner as the withdrawal of notice  
8 of candidacy.

9 **"§ 163-354. Petition in lieu of payment of filing fee.**

10 (a) General. – Any qualified voter who seeks election under this Article may, in lieu of  
11 payment of any filing fee required for the office sought, file a written petition requesting to be a  
12 candidate for a specified office with the State Board.

13 (b) Requirements of Petition; Deadline for Filing. – If the candidate is seeking the office  
14 of justice of the Supreme Court, judge of the Court of Appeals, or superior or district court judge,  
15 that individual shall file a written petition with the State Board no later than 12:00 noon on  
16 Monday preceding the filing deadline before the primary. If the office is justice of the Supreme  
17 Court or judge of the Court of Appeals, the petition shall be signed by 8,000 registered voters in  
18 the State. If the office is superior or district court judge, the petition shall be signed by five percent  
19 (5%) of the registered voters of the election area in which those registered voters will vote for  
20 that office. The board of elections shall verify the names on the petition, and if the petition and  
21 notice of candidacy are found to be sufficient, the candidate's name shall be printed on the  
22 appropriate ballot. Petitions shall be presented to the county board of elections for verification at  
23 least 15 days before the petition is due to be filed with the State Board. The State Board may  
24 adopt rules to implement this section and to provide standard petition forms.

25 **"§ 163-355. Certification of notices of candidacy.**

26 (a) Names of Candidates Sent to Secretary of State. – Within three days after the time for  
27 filing notices of candidacy with the State Board under the provisions of G.S. 163-352(b) has  
28 expired, the chairman or secretary of that Board shall certify to the Secretary of State the name  
29 and address of each person who has filed with the State Board, indicating in each instance the  
30 office sought.

31 (b) Notification of Local Boards. – No later than 10 days after the time for filing notices  
32 of candidacy under the provisions of G.S. 163-352(b) has expired, the chairman of the State  
33 Board shall certify to the chairman of the county board of elections in each county in the  
34 appropriate district the names of candidates for nomination to the offices of justice of the  
35 Supreme Court, judge of the Court of Appeals, and superior and district court judge who have  
36 filed the required notice and paid the required filing fee or presented the required petition to the  
37 State Board so that their names may be printed on the official judicial ballot for justice of the  
38 Supreme Court, judge of the Court of Appeals, and superior and district court judge.

39 (c) Receipt of Notification by County Board. – Within two days after receipt of each of  
40 the letters of certification from the chairman of the State Board required by subsection (b) of this  
41 section, each county board of elections chairman shall acknowledge receipt by letter addressed  
42 to the chairman of the State Board.

43 **"§ 163-356. Rules when vacancies for superior court judge are to be voted on.**

44 If a vacancy occurs in a judicial district for any offices of superior court judge, and on account  
45 of the occurrence of the vacancy there is to be an election for one or more terms in that district  
46 to fill the vacancy or vacancies, at that same election in accordance with G.S. 163-9 and Section  
47 19 of Article IV of the North Carolina Constitution, the nomination and election shall be  
48 determined by the following special rules in addition to any other provisions of law:

- 49 (1) If the vacancy occurs prior to the opening of the filing period under  
50 G.S. 163-352(b), nominations shall be made by primary election as provided  
51 by this Article without designation as to the vacancy.

1           (2)    If the vacancy occurs beginning on the opening of the filing period under  
2           G.S. 163-352(b) and ending on the sixtieth day before the general election,  
3           candidate filing shall be as provided by G.S. 163-358 without designation as  
4           to the vacancy.

5           (3)    The general election ballot shall contain, without designation as to vacancy,  
6           spaces for the election to fill the vacancy where nominations were made or  
7           candidates filed under subdivision (1) or (2) of this section. Except as provided  
8           in G.S. 163-358, the persons receiving the highest numbers of votes equal to  
9           the term or terms to be filled shall be elected to the term or terms.

10    **§ 163-357. Failure of candidates to file; death or other disqualification of a candidate; no**  
11    **withdrawal from candidacy.**

12           (a)    Insufficient Number of Candidates. – If, when the filing period expires, candidates  
13           have not filed for an office to be filled under this Article, the State Board shall extend the filing  
14           period for five days for any such offices.

15           (b)    Death or Disqualification of Candidate Before Primary. – If a candidate for  
16           nomination in a primary dies or becomes disqualified before the primary but after the ballots  
17           have been printed, the State Board shall determine whether or not there is time to reprint the  
18           ballots. If the Board determines that there is not enough time to reprint the ballots, the deceased  
19           or disqualified candidate's name shall remain on the ballots. If that candidate receives enough  
20           votes for nomination, such votes shall be disregarded and the candidate receiving the next highest  
21           number of votes below the number necessary for nomination shall be declared nominated. If the  
22           death or disqualification of the candidate leaves only two candidates for each office to be filled,  
23           the nonpartisan primary shall not be held and all candidates shall be declared nominees.

24           (c)    Earlier Non-Primary Vacancies; Reopening Filing. – If there is no primary because  
25           only one or two candidates have filed for a single office, or the number of candidates filed for a  
26           group of offices does not exceed twice the number of positions to be filled, or if a primary has  
27           occurred and eliminated candidates, and thereafter a remaining candidate dies or otherwise  
28           becomes disqualified before the election and before the ballots are printed, the State Board shall,  
29           upon notification of the death or other disqualification, immediately reopen the filing period for  
30           an additional five days during which time additional candidates shall be permitted to file for  
31           election. If the ballots have been printed at the time the State Board receives notice of the  
32           candidate's death or other disqualification, the State Board shall determine whether there will be  
33           sufficient time to reprint them before the election if the filing period is reopened for three days.  
34           If the State Board determines that there will be sufficient time to reprint the ballots, it shall reopen  
35           the filing period for three days to allow other candidates to file for election and that election shall  
36           be conducted as provided in G.S. 163-358(b).

37           (d)    Later Vacancies; Ballots Not Reprinted. – If the ballots have been printed at the time  
38           the State Board receives notice of a candidate's death or other disqualification, and if the Board  
39           determines that there is not enough time to reprint the ballots before the election if the filing  
40           period is reopened for three days, then regardless of the number of candidates remaining for the  
41           office or group of offices, the ballots shall not be reprinted and the name of the vacated candidate  
42           shall remain on the ballots. If a vacated candidate should poll the highest number of votes in the  
43           election for a single office or enough votes to be elected to one of a group of offices, the State  
44           Board shall declare the office vacant and it shall be filled in the manner provided by law.

45           (e)    No Withdrawal Permitted of Living, Qualified Candidate After Close of Filing. –  
46           After the close of the candidate filing period, a candidate who has filed a notice of candidacy for  
47           the office, who has not withdrawn notice before the close of filing as permitted by  
48           G.S. 163-352(b), who remains alive, and has not become disqualified for the office may not  
49           withdraw his or her candidacy. That candidate's name shall remain on the ballot, any votes cast  
50           for the candidate shall be counted in the primary or election, and if the candidate wins, the  
51           candidate may fail to qualify by refusing to take the oath of office.

1       (f) Death, Disqualification, or Failure to Qualify After Election. – If a person elected to  
2 the office of justice of the Supreme Court, judge of the Court of Appeals, or superior or district  
3 court judge dies or becomes disqualified on or after election day and before the person has  
4 qualified by taking the oath of office, or fails to qualify by refusing to take the oath of office, the  
5 office shall be deemed vacant and shall be filled as provided by law.

6 **"§ 163-358. Elections to fill vacancy in office created after primary filing period opens.**

7       (a) General. – If a vacancy is created in the office of justice of the Supreme Court, judge  
8 of the Court of Appeals, or judge of superior court after the filing period for the primary opens  
9 but more than 60 days before the general election, and under the North Carolina Constitution an  
10 election is to be held for that position, such that the office shall be filled in the general election  
11 as provided in G.S. 163-9, the election to fill the office for the remainder of the term shall be  
12 conducted without a primary using the method provided in subsection (b) of this section. If a  
13 vacancy is created in the office of justice of the Supreme Court, judge of the Court of Appeals,  
14 or judge of superior court before the filing period for the primary opens, and under the North  
15 Carolina Constitution an election is to be held for that position, such that the office shall be filled  
16 in the general election as provided in G.S. 163-9, the election to fill the office for the remainder  
17 of the term shall be conducted in accordance with G.S. 163-351.

18       (b) Method for Vacancy Election. – If a vacancy for the office of justice of the Supreme  
19 Court, judge of the Court of Appeals, or judge of superior court occurs more than 60 days before  
20 the general election and after the opening of the filing period for the primary, then the State Board  
21 shall designate a special filing period of one week for candidates for the office. If more than two  
22 candidates file and qualify for the office in accordance with G.S. 163-352, then the Board shall  
23 conduct the election for the office as follows:

24           (1) When the vacancy described in this section occurs more than 63 days before  
25 the date of the second primary for members of the General Assembly, a special  
26 primary shall be held on the same day as the second primary. The two  
27 candidates with the most votes in the special primary shall have their names  
28 placed on the ballot for the general election held on the same day as the general  
29 election for members of the General Assembly.

30           (2) When the vacancy described in this section occurs less than 64 days before  
31 the date of the second primary, a general election for all the candidates shall  
32 be held on the same day as the general election for members of the General  
33 Assembly and the results shall be determined on a plurality basis as provided  
34 by G.S. 163-292.

35       (c) Applicable Provisions. – Except as provided in this section, the provisions of this  
36 Article apply to elections conducted under this section.

37 **"§ 163-359. Voting in primary.**

38 Any person who will become qualified by age or residence to register and vote in the general  
39 election for which the primary is held, even though not so qualified by the date of the primary,  
40 shall be entitled to register for the primary and general election prior to the primary and then to  
41 vote in the primary after being registered. The person may register not earlier than 60 days nor  
42 later than the last day for making application to register under G.S. 163-82.6(d) prior to the  
43 primary.

44 **"§ 163-360. Date of primary.**

45 The primary shall be held on the same date as established for primary elections under  
46 G.S. 163-1(b).

47 **"§ 163-361. Ballots.**

48       (a) General. – In elections there shall be official ballots. The ballots shall be printed to  
49 conform to the requirement of G.S. 163-165.6(c) and to show the name of each person who has  
50 filed notice of candidacy and the office for which each aspirant is a candidate.



1 Only those who have filed the required notice of candidacy with the proper board of elections  
2 and who have paid the required filing fee or qualified by petition shall have their names printed  
3 on the official primary ballots. Only those candidates properly nominated shall have their names  
4 appear on the official general election ballots.

5 (b) Ballots to Be Furnished by County Board of Elections. – It shall be the duty of the  
6 county board of elections to print official ballots for the following offices to be voted for in the  
7 primary:

- 8 (1) Justice of the Supreme Court.
- 9 (2) Judge of the Court of Appeals.
- 10 (3) Superior court judge.
- 11 (4) District court judge.

12 In printing ballots, the county board of elections shall be governed by instructions of the State  
13 Board with regard to width, color, kind of paper, form, and size of type.

14 Three days before the election, the chairman of the county board of elections shall distribute  
15 official ballots to the chief judge of each precinct in the chairman's county, and the chief judge  
16 shall give a receipt for the ballots received. On the day of the primary, it shall be the chief judge's  
17 duty to have all the ballots so delivered available for use at the precinct voting place.

18 **"§ 163-362. Counting of ballots.**

19 Counting of ballots in primaries and elections held under this Article shall be under the same  
20 rules as for counting of ballots in nonpartisan municipal elections under Article 24 of this  
21 Chapter.

22 **"§ 163-363. Other rules.**

23 Except as provided by this Article, the conduct of elections shall be governed by Subchapter  
24 VI of this Chapter."

25 **SECTION 2.2.** G.S. 18C-112(e)(1) reads as rewritten:

- 26 "(1) Files a notice of candidacy under G.S. 163-106 through 163-106.6 or  
27 G.S. 163-352 or a petition under ~~G.S. 163-107.1~~G.S. 163-107.1  
28 G.S. 163-354."

29 **SECTION 2.3.** G.S. 163-1(b) reads as rewritten:

30 "(b) On Tuesday next after the first Monday in March preceding each general election to  
31 be held in November for the officers referred to in subsection (a) of this section, there shall be  
32 held in all election precincts within the territory for which the officers are to be elected a primary  
33 election for the purpose of nominating candidates for each political party in the State for those  
34 ~~offices~~-offices and nonpartisan candidates as to the offices elected under the provisions of Article  
35 26 of this Chapter."

36 **SECTION 2.4.** G.S. 163-22.3 reads as rewritten:

37 **"§ 163-22.3. State Board of Elections littering notification.**

38 At the time an individual files with the State Board of Elections a notice of candidacy  
39 pursuant to G.S. 163-106, 163-112, 163-291, ~~or 163-294.2,~~ or 163-352, is certified to the State  
40 Board of Elections by a political party executive committee to fill a nomination vacancy pursuant  
41 to G.S. 163-114, is certified to the State Board of Elections by a new political party as that party's  
42 nominee pursuant to G.S. 163-98, qualifies with the State Board of Elections as an unaffiliated  
43 or write-in candidate pursuant to Article 11 of this Chapter, or formally initiates a candidacy with  
44 the State Board of Elections pursuant to any statute or local act, the State Board of Elections shall  
45 notify the candidate of the provisions concerning campaign signs in G.S. 136-32 and  
46 G.S. 14-156, and the rules adopted by the Department of Transportation pursuant to  
47 G.S. 136-18."

48 **SECTION 2.5.** G.S. 163-82.10B reads as rewritten:

49 **"§ 163-82.10B. Confidentiality of date of birth.**

50 Boards of elections shall keep confidential the date of birth of every voter-registration  
51 applicant and registered voter, except in the following situations:

(1) When a voter has filed notice of candidacy for elective office under G.S. 163-106, 163-122, 163-123, ~~or 163-294.2,~~ or 163-352, has been nominated as a candidate under G.S. 163-98 or G.S. 163-114, or has otherwise formally become a candidate for elective office. The exception of this subdivision does not extend to an individual who meets the definition of "candidate" only by beginning a tentative candidacy by receiving funds or making payments or giving consent to someone else to receive funds or transfer something of value for the purpose of exploring a candidacy.

...."

**SECTION 2.6.** G.S. 163-106.2(a) reads as rewritten:

"(a) Candidates seeking party primary nominations for the following offices shall file their notice of candidacy with the State Board no earlier than 12:00 noon on the first Monday in December and no later than 12:00 noon on the third Friday in December preceding the primary:

Governor

Lieutenant Governor

All State executive officers

~~Justices of the Supreme Court~~

~~Judges of the Court of Appeals~~

~~Judges of the superior court~~

~~Judges of the district court~~

United States Senators

Members of the House of Representatives of the United States

District ~~attorneys~~attorneys."

**SECTION 2.7.** G.S. 163-106.3 reads as rewritten:

**"§ 163-106.3. Notice of candidacy for certain offices to indicate vacancy.**

In any primary in which there are ~~two or more vacancies for associate justices for the Supreme Court, two or more vacancies for the Court of Appeals, two or more vacancies for superior or district court judge, or two vacancies for United States Senator from North Carolina,~~ each candidate shall, at the time of filing notice of candidacy, file with the State Board of Elections a written statement designating the vacancy to which the candidate seeks nomination. The designation shall not be the name or names of any incumbent or other individual but shall be designated as determined by the State Board of Elections. ~~A person seeking election for a specialized district judgeship established under G.S. 7A-147 shall, at the time of filing notice of candidacy, file with the State Board of Elections a written statement designating the specialized judgeship to which the person seeks nomination. Votes cast for a candidate shall be effective only for nomination to the vacancy for which the candidate has given notice of candidacy as provided in this section.~~"

**SECTION 2.8.** G.S. 163-106.5 reads as rewritten:

**"§ 163-106.5. Certificate of registration to vote in county and party affiliation; cancellation of candidacy; residency requirements for judges.candidacy.**

(a) Candidates required to file their notice of candidacy with the State Board of Elections under G.S. 163-106.2 shall file along with their notice a certificate signed by the chairman of the board of elections or the director of elections of the county in which they are registered to vote, stating that the person is registered to vote in that county, ~~if the candidacy is for superior court judge and the county contains more than one superior court district, stating the superior court district of which the person is a resident,~~ stating the party with which the person is affiliated, and that the person has not changed his the person's affiliation from another party or from unaffiliated within three months prior to the filing deadline under G.S. 163-106.2. In issuing such certificate, the chairman or director shall check the registration records of the county to verify such information. During the period commencing 36 hours immediately preceding the filing deadline the State Board of Elections shall accept, on a conditional basis, the notice of candidacy of a

1 candidate who has failed to secure the verification ordered herein subject to receipt of verification  
 2 no later than three days following the filing deadline. The State Board of Elections shall prescribe  
 3 the form for such certificate, and distribute it to each county board of elections no later than the  
 4 last Monday in December of each odd-numbered year.

5 (b) When any candidate files a notice of candidacy with a board of elections under  
 6 G.S. 163-106.2 or under G.S. 163-291(2), the board of elections shall, immediately upon receipt  
 7 of the notice of candidacy, inspect the registration records of the county, and cancel the notice of  
 8 candidacy of any person who does not meet the constitutional or statutory qualifications for the  
 9 office, including residency.

10 The board shall give notice of cancellation to any candidate whose notice of candidacy has  
 11 been cancelled under this section by mail or by having the notice served on ~~him~~ the candidate by  
 12 the sheriff, and to any other candidate filing for the same office. A candidate who has been  
 13 adversely affected by a cancellation or another candidate for the same office affected by a  
 14 substantiation under this section may request a hearing on the cancellation. If the candidate  
 15 requests a hearing, the hearing shall be conducted in accordance with Article 11B of this Chapter.

16 (c) ~~No person may file a notice of candidacy for superior court judge, unless that person  
 17 is, at the time of filing the notice of candidacy, a resident of the judicial district as it will exist at  
 18 the time the person would take office if elected. No person may be nominated as a superior court  
 19 judge under G.S. 163-114, unless that person is, at the time of nomination, a resident of the  
 20 judicial district as it will exist at the time the person would take office if elected. This subsection  
 21 implements Section 9(1) of Article IV of the North Carolina Constitution, which requires regular  
 22 superior court judges to reside in the district for which elected."~~

23 **SECTION 2.9.** G.S. 163-107(a) reads as rewritten:

24 "(a) Fee Schedule. – At the time of filing a notice of candidacy, each candidate shall pay  
 25 to the board of elections with which the candidate files under the provisions of G.S. 163-106,  
 26 163-106.1, 163-106.2, 163-106.3, 163-106.4, 163-106.5, and 163-106.6, a filing fee for the office  
 27 sought in the amount specified in the following tabulation:

| <b>Office Sought</b>   | <b>Amount of Filing Fee</b>  |
|--|--|
| 29 Governor  | One percent (1%) of the annual salary of the office sought                     |
| 30   |  |
| 31 Lieutenant Governor   | One percent (1%) of the annual salary of the office sought                     |
| 32   |  |
| 33 All State executive offices   | One percent (1%) of the annual salary of the office sought                     |
| 34   |  |
| 35 <del>All Justices, Judges, and District At-</del><br>36 <del>torneys of the General Court of</del><br>37 <del>Justice</del> | One percent (1%) of the annual salary of the office sought                     |
| 38 United States Senator   | One percent (1%) of the annual salary of the office sought                     |
| 39   |  |
| 40 Members of the United States House<br>41 of Representatives   | One percent (1%) of the annual salary of the office sought                     |
| 42   |  |
| 43 State Senator   | One percent (1%) of the annual salary of the office sought                     |
| 44   |  |
| 45 Member of the State House<br>46 of Representatives  | One percent (1%) of the annual salary of the office sought                     |
| 47 All county offices not compensated by<br>48 fees  | One percent (1%) of the annual salary of office sought                         |
| 49 All county offices compensated partly<br>50 by salary and partly by fees  | One percent (1%) of the first annual salary to be received (exclusive of fees) |
| 51   |  |

1 The salary of any office that is the basis for calculating the filing fee is the starting salary for the  
2 office, rather than the salary received by the incumbent, if different. If no starting salary can be  
3 determined for the office, then the salary used for calculation is the salary of the incumbent, as  
4 of January 1 of the election year."

5 **SECTION 2.10.** G.S. 163-107.1 reads as rewritten:

6 "**§ 163-107.1. Petition in lieu of payment of filing fee.**

7 (a) Any qualified voter who seeks nomination in the party primary of the political party  
8 with which ~~he~~ the qualified voter affiliates may, in lieu of payment of any filing fee required for  
9 the office ~~he seeks, sought,~~ file a written petition requesting ~~him~~ to be a candidate for a specified  
10 office with the appropriate board of elections, State, county or municipal.

11 (b) If the candidate is seeking the office of United States Senator, Governor, Lieutenant  
12 Governor, or any State executive officer, ~~Justice of the Supreme Court, or Judge of the Court of~~  
13 ~~Appeals, officer,~~ the petition must be signed by 10,000 registered voters who are members of the  
14 political party in whose primary the candidate desires to run, except that in the case of a political  
15 party as defined by G.S. 163-96(a)(2) which will be making nominations by primary election,  
16 the petition must be signed by five percent (5%) of the registered voters of the State who are  
17 affiliated with the same political party in whose primary the candidate desires to run, or in the  
18 alternative, the petition shall be signed by no less than 8,000 registered voters regardless of the  
19 voter's political party affiliation, whichever requirement is greater. The petition must be filed  
20 with the State Board of Elections not later than 12:00 noon on Monday preceding the filing  
21 deadline before the primary in which he seeks to run. The names on the petition shall be verified  
22 by the board of elections of the county where the signer is registered, and the petition must be  
23 presented to the county board of elections at least 15 days before the petition is due to be filed  
24 with the State Board of Elections. When a proper petition has been filed, the candidate's name  
25 shall be printed on the primary ballot.

26 (c) County, Municipal and District Primaries. – If the candidate is seeking one of the  
27 offices set forth in G.S. 163-106.2 but which is not listed in subsection (b) of this section, or a  
28 municipal or any other office requiring a partisan primary which is not set forth in G.S. 163-106.2  
29 or G.S. 163-106.3, the candidate shall file a written petition with the appropriate board of  
30 elections no later than 12:00 noon on Monday preceding the filing deadline before the primary.  
31 The petition shall be signed by five percent (5%) of the registered voters of the election area in  
32 which the office will be voted for, who are affiliated with the same political party in whose  
33 primary the candidate desires to run, or in the alternative, the petition shall be signed by no less  
34 than 200 registered voters regardless of said voter's political party affiliation, whichever  
35 requirement is greater. The board of elections shall verify the names on the petition, and if the  
36 petition is found to be sufficient, the candidate's name shall be printed on the appropriate primary  
37 ballot. Petitions for candidates for member of the U.S. House of Representatives, District  
38 Attorney, ~~judge of the superior court, judge of the district court,~~ and members of the State House  
39 of Representatives from multi-county districts or members of the State Senate from multi-county  
40 districts must be presented to the county board of elections for verification at least 15 days before  
41 the petition is due to be filed with the State Board of Elections, and such petition must be filed  
42 with the State Board no later than 12:00 noon on Monday preceding the filing deadline. The State  
43 Board of Elections may adopt rules to implement this section and to provide standard petition  
44 forms.

45 ...."

46 **SECTION 2.11.** G.S. 163-108(b) reads as rewritten:

47 "(b) No later than 10 days after the time for filing notices of candidacy under the  
48 provisions of G.S. 163-106.2 has expired, the chairman of the State Board of Elections shall  
49 certify to the chairman of the county board of elections in each county in the appropriate district  
50 the names of candidates for nomination to the ~~following offices~~ office of district attorney who  
51 have filed the required notice and pledge and paid the required filing fee to the State Board of

1 Elections, so that their names may be printed on the official county ballots: Superior court judge,  
 2 district court judge, and district attorney ballots."

3 **SECTION 2.12.** G.S. 163-111(c)(1) reads as rewritten:

4 "(1) A candidate who is apparently entitled to demand a second primary, according  
 5 to the unofficial results, for one of the offices listed below, and desiring to do  
 6 so, shall file a request for a second primary in writing with the Executive  
 7 Director of the State Board of Elections no later than 12:00 noon on the ninth  
 8 day (including Saturdays and Sundays) following the date on which the  
 9 primary was conducted, and such request shall be subject to the certification  
 10 of the official results by the State Board of Elections. If the vote certification  
 11 by the State Board of Elections determines that a candidate who was not  
 12 originally thought to be eligible to call for a second primary is in fact eligible  
 13 to call for a second primary, the Executive Director of the State Board of  
 14 Elections shall immediately notify such candidate and permit the candidate to  
 15 exercise any options available to the candidate within a 48-hour period  
 16 following the notification:

- 17 Governor,
- 18 Lieutenant Governor,
- 19 All State executive officers,
- 20 ~~Justices, Judges, or~~ District Attorneys of the General Court of Justice,
- 21 United States Senators,
- 22 Members of the United States House of Representatives,
- 23 State Senators in multi-county senatorial districts, and
- 24 Members of the State House of Representatives in multi-county  
 25 representative districts."

26 **SECTION 2.13.** G.S. 163-114 reads as rewritten:

27 **"§ 163-114. Filling vacancies among party nominees occurring after nomination and before  
 28 election.**

29 (a) If any person nominated as a candidate of a political party for one of the offices listed  
 30 below (either in a primary or convention or by virtue of having no opposition in a primary) dies,  
 31 resigns, or for any reason becomes ineligible or disqualified before the date of the ensuing general  
 32 election, the vacancy shall be filled by appointment according to the following instructions:

|                                       |                                |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 33 Position                           |                                |
| 34 President                          | Vacancy is to be filled by     |
| 35 Vice President                     | appointment of national        |
| 36                                    | executive committee of         |
| 37                                    | political party in which       |
| 38                                    | vacancy occurs                 |
| 39                                    |                                |
| 40 Presidential elector or            | Vacancy is to be filled by ap- |
| 41 alternate elector                  | pointment of State execu-      |
| 42 Any elective State office          | tive committee of political    |
| 43 United States Senator              | party in which vacancy occurs  |
| 44                                    |                                |
| 45 A district office, including:      | Appropriate district executive |
| 46 Member of the United               | committee of political         |
| 47 States House of Repre-             | party in which vacancy occurs  |
| 48 sentatives                         |                                |
| 49 <del>Judge of district court</del> |                                |
| 50 District Attorney                  |                                |
| 51 State Senator in a multi-          |                                |

1 county senatorial district  
 2 Member of State House of  
 3 Representatives in a  
 4 multi-county representative district

5  
 6 State Senator in a single-  
 7 county senatorial district  
 8 Member of State House of  
 9 Representatives in a  
 10 single-county represen-  
 11 tative district  
 12 Any elective county office

County executive committee  
 of political party in which  
 vacancy occurs, provided, in  
 the case of the State Senator  
 or State Representative in a  
 single-county district where  
 not all the county is located  
 in that district, then in  
 voting, only those members of  
 the county executive committee  
 who reside within the district  
 shall ~~vote~~ vote.

13  
 14  
 15  
 16  
 17  
 18 Judge of superior court in a  
 19 single-county judicial  
 20 district where the district is  
 21 the whole county or part of the  
 22 county

~~County executive committee of  
 political party in which vacancy  
 occurs; provided, in the case of a  
 superior court judge in a single-  
 county district where not all  
 the county is located in that  
 district, then in voting, only  
 those members of the county  
 executive committee who  
 reside within the district shall  
 vote~~

23  
 24  
 25  
 26  
 27  
 28  
 29 Judge of superior court in a  
 30 multicounty judicial  
 31 district

~~Appropriate district executive  
 committee of political party in  
 which vacancy occurs.~~

32  
 33 The party executive making a nomination in accordance with the provisions of this section shall  
 34 certify the name of its nominee to the chairman of the board of elections, State or county, that  
 35 has jurisdiction over the ballot item under G.S. 163-182.4. If at the time a nomination is made  
 36 under this section the general election ballots have already been printed, the provisions of  
 37 G.S. 163-165.3(c) shall apply. If a vacancy occurs in a nomination of a political party and that  
 38 vacancy arises from a cause other than death and the vacancy in nomination occurs more than  
 39 120 days before the general election, the vacancy in nomination may be filled under this section  
 40 only if the appropriate executive committee certifies the name of the nominee in accordance with  
 41 this paragraph at least 75 days before the general election.

42 (b) ~~In a county which is partly in a multicounty judicial district, in choosing that county's~~  
 43 ~~member or members of the judicial district executive committee for the multicounty district, only~~  
 44 ~~the county convention delegates or county executive committee members who reside within the~~  
 45 ~~area of the county which is within that multicounty district may vote.~~

46 ...."

47 **SECTION 2.14.** G.S. 163-122 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

48 "(c1) This section does not apply to elections under Article 26 of this Chapter."

49 **SECTION 2.15.** G.S. 163-123(h) reads as rewritten:

1 "(h) Municipal and Nonpartisan Elections Excluded. – This section does not apply to  
 2 municipal elections conducted under Subchapter IX of this ~~Chapter~~. Chapter and does not apply  
 3 to nonpartisan elections, except for elections under Subchapter XI of this Chapter."

4 **SECTION 2.16.** G.S. 163-165.5(a)(3) reads as rewritten:

5 "(3) The names of the candidates as they appear on their notice of candidacy filed  
 6 pursuant to G.S. 163-106, 163-106.1, 163-106.2, 163-106.3, 163-106.4,  
 7 163-106.5, ~~and~~ 163-106.6, and 163-352, or on petition forms filed in  
 8 accordance with G.S. 163-122. No title, appendage, or appellation indicating  
 9 rank, status, or position shall be printed on the official ballot in connection  
 10 with the candidate's name. Candidates, however, may use the title Mr., Mrs.,  
 11 Miss, or Ms. Nicknames shall be permitted on an official ballot if used in the  
 12 notice of candidacy or qualifying petition, but the nickname shall appear  
 13 according to standards adopted by the State Board of Elections. Those  
 14 standards shall allow the presentation of legitimate nicknames in ways that do  
 15 not mislead the voter or unduly advertise the candidacy. In the case of  
 16 candidates for presidential elector, the official ballot shall not contain the  
 17 names of the candidates for elector but instead shall contain the nominees for  
 18 President and Vice President which the candidates for elector represent. The  
 19 State Board of Elections shall establish a review procedure that local boards  
 20 of elections shall follow to ensure that candidates' names appear on the official  
 21 ballot in accordance with this subdivision."

22 **SECTION 2.17.** This Part becomes effective with respect to primaries and elections  
 23 held on or after January 1, 2024.

### 24 **PART III. ENHANCE LEGISLATOR TO LOBBYIST REVOLVING DOOR** 25 **RESTRICTIONS**

26 **SECTION 3.1.** G.S. 120C-304 reads as rewritten:

27 "**§ 120C-304. Restrictions.**

28 (a) No legislator or former legislator may register as a lobbyist under this Article:

29 (1) While in office.

30 (2) ~~Before the later of the close of session as set forth in G.S. 120C-100(a)(7)b.1~~  
 31 ~~in which the legislator served or six months~~ For a period of two years after  
 32 leaving office.

33 (b) No public servant or former public servant as defined in G.S. 138A-3(70)a. may  
 34 register as a lobbyist under this Chapter while in office or ~~within six months~~ for a period of two  
 35 years after leaving office.

36 (c) No public servant or former public servant as defined in G.S. 138A-3(70)c. may  
 37 register as a lobbyist under this Chapter ~~within six months~~ for a period of two years after  
 38 separation from employment as a public servant. No other employee of any State agency may  
 39 register as a lobbyist under this Chapter to lobby the State agency that previously employed the  
 40 former employee ~~within six months~~ for a period of two years after voluntary separation or  
 41 separation for cause from that State agency.

42 ...."

43 **SECTION 3.2.** This Part becomes effective October 1, 2023.

### 44 **PART III-A. ELIMINATE WET INK REGISTRATION**

45 **SECTION 3A.1.** G.S. 163-82.6(c) reads as rewritten:

46 "(c) Signature. – The form shall be valid only if signed by the applicant. An ~~electronically~~  
 47 ~~captured signature, including signatures on applications generated by computer programs of~~  
 48 ~~third-party groups, shall not be valid on a voter registration form, except as provided in Article~~  
 49 ~~21A of this Chapter. Notwithstanding the provisions of this subsection, an electronically captured~~  
 50 ~~signature shall be valid on a voter registration form, except as provided in Article~~  
 51 ~~21A of this Chapter.~~

1 image of the signature of a voter on an electronic voter registration form offered by a State agency  
2 shall be considered a valid signature for all purposes for which a signature on a paper voter  
3 registration form is used."  
4

#### 5 **PART IV. ONLINE VOTER REGISTRATION**

6 **SECTION 4.1.** G.S. 163-82.3(a) reads as rewritten:

7 "(a) Form Developed by State Board of Elections. – The State Board of Elections shall  
8 develop an application form for voter ~~registration~~ registration that may be (i) printed out in blank  
9 form or (ii) filled in online as set forth in G.S. 163-82.5A. Any person may use the form to apply  
10 to do any of the following:

- 11 (1) Register to vote.
- 12 (2) Change party affiliation or unaffiliated status.
- 13 (3) Report a change of address within a county.
- 14 (4) Report a change of name.

15 The county board of elections for the county where the applicant resides shall accept the form  
16 as application for any of those purposes if the form is submitted as set out in ~~G.S. 163-82.3~~ this  
17 section."

18 **SECTION 4.2.** Article 7A of Chapter 163 of the General Statutes is amended by  
19 adding a new section to read:

20 **"§ 163-82.5A. Online voter registration.**

21 (a) This section may be cited as the "Online Voter Registration Act."

22 (b) Require Availability of Internet for Voter Registration. – The State Board of Elections  
23 shall ensure that the following services are available to the public at any time on its official public  
24 website:

- 25 (1) Online application for voter registration, the content of which shall be  
26 equivalent to the form provided by designated voter registration agencies.
- 27 (2) Online assistance to those applying to register to vote.
- 28 (3) Online completion and submission by applicants of the voter registration  
29 application, including the signature of the applicant pursuant to subsection (d)  
30 of this section.
- 31 (4) Online receipt of completed voter registration applications.

32 (c) To the extent any State agency described in G.S. 163-82.19 or G.S. 163-82.20 has  
33 signatures of clients, those agencies shall cooperate in sharing those signatures with the State  
34 Board of Elections.

35 (d) An application submitted under this section shall be deemed submitted to the election  
36 authority on the date it is received.

37 (e) An applicant for voter registration under this section provides a signature by doing  
38 any of the following:

- 39 (1) In the case of an applicant who has a signature on file with a State government  
40 agency, authorizing the agency to transmit that signature to election officials.
- 41 (2) Submitting with the application an electronic copy of the applicant's  
42 handwritten signature through electronic means in a manner prescribed by the  
43 State Board of Elections.

44 (f) Upon submission of a completed voter registration application under this section, the  
45 State Board of Elections official website shall generate an immediate electronic confirmation on  
46 the website that the application has been received, with instructions as to how the applicant may  
47 check the status of the application thereafter.

48 (g) The State Board of Elections shall accept an online voter registration application  
49 submitted under this section and ensure that the individual is registered to vote in this State if  
50 each of the following is satisfied:



1           (1)    The individual meets the same voter registration eligibility requirements  
2                   applicable to individuals who register to vote by mail.

3           (2)    The individual provides a signature in accordance with subsection (e) of this  
4                   section.

5           (h)    The State Board of Elections shall inform the applicant for voter registration of the  
6                   disposition of the application by regular mail. Additionally, the State Board shall make available  
7                   to the applicant the option to receive the disposition notification by email.

8           (i)    No legal distinction shall be made between registration under this section and  
9                   registration by written application in accordance with the provisions of this Article.

10          (j)    The State Board of Elections shall ensure that any registered voter may at any time  
11                   update the voter's registration information, including the voter's address, online through the State  
12                   Board's official public website in accordance with maintenance of the computerized statewide  
13                   voter registration list.

14          (k)    Except as provided in G.S. 163-82.6A, the State Board shall revise any information  
15                   on the computerized list to reflect the update made by the voter at any time until the deadlines  
16                   for registration under G.S. 163-82.6(d) for a primary or general election.

17          (l)    Upon receipt of updated registration information under this section, the State Board  
18                   of Elections shall send a notice confirming receipt of the updated information by regular mail,  
19                   and by email, if available."

20           **SECTION 4.3.** G.S. 163-82.6(d) reads as rewritten:

21           "(d)    Registration Deadlines for a Primary or Election. – In order to be valid for a primary  
22                   or election, the ~~form~~ form must comply with one of the following:

23           (1)    If submitted by mail, must be postmarked at least 25 days before the primary  
24                   or election, except that any mailed application on which the postmark is  
25                   missing or unclear is validly submitted if received in the mail not later than 20  
26                   days before the primary or ~~election~~ election.

27           (2)    If submitted in person, by facsimile transmission, ~~or~~ by transmission of a  
28                   scanned document, or by online voter registration pursuant to G.S. 163-82.5A,  
29                   must be received by the county board of elections by a time established by  
30                   that board, but no earlier than 5:00 P.M., on the twenty-fifth day before the  
31                   primary or ~~election~~ election.

32           (3)    If submitted through a delegatee who violates the duty set forth in subsection  
33                   (a) of this section, must be signed by the applicant and given to the delegatee  
34                   not later than 25 days before the primary or election, except as provided in  
35                   subsection (f) of this section."

36           **SECTION 4.4.** G.S. 163-82.10(a1) reads as rewritten:

37           "(a1)   Personal Identifying Information. – Full or partial social security numbers, dates of  
38                   birth, the identity of the public agency at which the voter registered under G.S. 163-82.20, any  
39                   electronic mail address submitted under this Article, Article 20, or Article 21A of this Chapter,  
40                   photocopies of identification for voting, and drivers license numbers, whether held by the State  
41                   Board or a county board of elections, or obtained through online voter registration under  
42                   G.S. 163-82.5A, are confidential and shall not be considered public records and subject to  
43                   disclosure to the general public under Chapter 132 of the General Statutes. Cumulative data based  
44                   on those items of information may be publicly disclosed as long as information about any  
45                   individual cannot be discerned from the disclosed data. Disclosure of information in violation of  
46                   this subsection shall not give rise to a civil cause of action. This limitation of liability does not  
47                   apply to the disclosure of information in violation of this subsection as a result of gross  
48                   negligence, wanton conduct, or intentional wrongdoing that would otherwise be actionable."

49           **SECTION 4.5.** In establishing online voter registration in accordance with this Part,  
50                   the State Board of Elections shall establish appropriate technological security measures to protect  
51                   against unauthorized access to information. The State Board of Elections shall ensure that online

1 voter registration under this Part is provided in a manner that is accessible to persons with  
2 disabilities so as to provide the same opportunity for access and participation as for other voters.

3 **SECTION 4.6.** There is appropriated from the General Fund to the State Board of  
4 Elections the sum of two hundred fifteen thousand dollars (\$215,000) in recurring funds for each  
5 year of the 2023-2025 fiscal biennium and the sum of ninety thousand dollars (\$90,000) in  
6 nonrecurring funds for the 2023-2024 fiscal year to implement online voter registration pursuant  
7 to this Part.

8 **SECTION 4.7.** Sections 4.1 through 4.5 of this Part become effective December 1,  
9 2023. Section 4.6 of this Part becomes effective July 1, 2023.

## 10 11 **PART V. AUTOMATIC VOTER REGISTRATION**

12 **SECTION 5.1.** G.S. 163-82.3 reads as rewritten:

13 "**§ 163-82.3. Voter registration application ~~forms-forms~~; automatic voter registration at**  
14 **certain agencies.**

15 (a) Form Developed by State Board of Elections. – The State Board of Elections shall  
16 develop an application form for voter registration. Any person may use the form to apply to do  
17 any of the following:

18 ...

19 (c) ~~Agency Application Form.~~ Application. – The county board of elections where an  
20 applicant resides shall accept as application for any of the purposes set out in subsection (a) of  
21 this section ~~a form~~ automatic voter registration developed pursuant to G.S. 163-82.19 or  
22 G.S. 163-82.20."

23 **SECTION 5.2.** G.S. 163-82.6 reads as rewritten:

24 "**§ 163-82.6. Acceptance of application forms.**

25 (a) How the Form May Be Submitted. – The county board of elections shall accept any  
26 form described in G.S. 163-82.3 if the applicant submits the form by mail, facsimile transmission,  
27 transmission of a scanned document, or in ~~person.~~ person or by automatic voter registration  
28 pursuant to G.S. 163-82.19 or G.S. 163-82.20. The applicant may delegate the submission of the  
29 form to another person. Any person who communicates to an applicant acceptance of that  
30 delegation shall deliver that form so that it is received by the appropriate county board of  
31 elections in time to satisfy the registration deadline in subdivision (1) or (2) of subsection (d) of  
32 this section for the next election. It shall be a Class 2 misdemeanor for any person to communicate  
33 to the applicant acceptance of that delegation and then fail to make a good faith effort to deliver  
34 the form so that it is received by the county board of elections in time to satisfy the registration  
35 deadline in subdivision (1) or (2) of subsection (d) of this section for the next election. It shall be  
36 an affirmative defense to a charge of failing to make a good faith effort to deliver a delegated  
37 form by the registration deadline that the delegatee informed the applicant that the form would  
38 not likely be delivered in time for the applicant to vote in the next election. It shall be a Class 2  
39 misdemeanor for any person to sell or attempt to sell a completed voter registration form or to  
40 condition its delivery upon payment.

41 ...

42 (d) Registration Deadlines for a Primary or Election. – In order to be valid for a primary  
43 or election, the ~~form~~ form must comply with one of the following:

44 (1) If submitted by mail, must be postmarked at least 25 days before the primary  
45 or election, except that any mailed application on which the postmark is  
46 missing or unclear is validly submitted if received in the mail not later than 20  
47 days before the primary or ~~election,~~ election.

48 (2) If submitted in person, by facsimile transmission, ~~or~~ by transmission of a  
49 scanned document, or by automatic voter registration, must be received by the  
50 county board of elections by a time established by that board, but no earlier  
51 than 5:00 P.M., on the twenty-fifth day before the primary or ~~election,~~ election.

- 1 (3) If submitted through a delegatee who violates the duty set forth in subsection  
2 (a) of this section, must be signed by the applicant and given to the delegatee  
3 not later than 25 days before the primary or election, except as provided in  
4 subsection (f) of this section.

5 ...."

6 **SECTION 5.3.** G.S. 163-82.19 reads as rewritten:

7 "**§ 163-82.19. ~~Voter Automatic voter~~ registration at drivers license offices; coordination on**  
8 **data interface.**

9 (a) Automatic Voter Registration at Drivers License Offices. – ~~The Beginning January 1,~~  
10 2024, the Division of Motor Vehicles shall, pursuant to the rules adopted by in consultation with  
11 the State Board of Elections, modify its forms so that implement a method by which any eligible  
12 person who applies for original issuance, renewal or correction of a drivers license, or special  
13 identification card issued under G.S. 20-37.7 may, on a part of the form, complete an application  
14 to register shall be automatically registered to vote, or able to update the voter's registration if  
15 the voter has changed his or her address or moved from one precinct to another or from one  
16 county to another. The person taking the application shall ask if the applicant is a citizen of the  
17 United States. If the applicant states that the applicant is not a citizen of the United States, or  
18 declines to answer the question, the person taking the application shall inform the applicant that  
19 it is a felony for a person who is not a citizen of the United States to apply to register to vote. The  
20 application shall state in clear language the penalty for violation of this section. The necessary  
21 forms shall be prescribed by the State Board of Elections. The form must ask for the previous  
22 voter registration address of the voter, if any. If a previous address is listed, and it is not in the  
23 county of residence of the applicant, the appropriate county board of elections shall treat the  
24 application as an authorization to cancel the previous registration and also process it as such  
25 under the procedures of G.S. 163-82.9. If a previous address is listed and that address is in the  
26 county where the voter applies to register, the application shall be processed as if it had been  
27 submitted under G.S. 163-82.9. inform the applicant of the following:

- 28 (1) That the applicant shall be registered to vote or have the applicant's voter  
29 registration record updated, as applicable, unless the applicant declines.  
30 (2) The qualifications to vote under G.S. 163-55.  
31 (3) That the applicant should not register if the applicant does not meet the  
32 qualifications described under subdivision (2) of this subsection.  
33 (4) That any person who willfully and knowingly and with fraudulent intent gives  
34 false information on the application is guilty of a Class I felony.  
35 (5) That if the applicant declines to register to vote, the fact that the applicant has  
36 declined to register will remain confidential and be used for voter registration  
37 purposes only.  
38 (6) Information regarding the address confidentiality program under Chapter 15C  
39 of the General Statutes, including how to register for the program and how  
40 voter registration may impact participation in the program.

41 (a1) Requirements. – If the applicant does not decline voter registration, the person taking  
42 the application shall require the applicant to provide all information requested of the applicant  
43 under G.S. 163-82.4, including declaring a preference to be affiliated with a political party or a  
44 preference to be an unaffiliated voter. If the applicant fails to declare a political party affiliation,  
45 the applicant's political affiliation shall be designated as unaffiliated. The applicant shall provide  
46 an electronic signature as required under G.S. 163-82.6(c), subject to the penalty of perjury, by  
47 which the applicant attests that the information provided by the applicant is true and that the  
48 applicant meets all qualifications to become a registered voter.

49 (a2) When Registration Effective. – Registration shall become effective as provided in  
50 G.S. 163-82.7. Applications to register to vote accepted at a drivers license office under this  
51 section until the deadline established in G.S. 163-82.6(d)(2) shall be treated as timely made for

1 an election, and no person who completes an application at that drivers license office shall be  
2 denied the vote in that election for failure to apply earlier than that deadline.

3 ~~(a3) All applications shall be forwarded by the Transmittal from Department of~~  
4 ~~Transportation to Board of Elections. – The Department of Transportation shall electronically~~  
5 ~~transmit the applications of applicants who have not declined voter registration to the appropriate~~  
6 ~~board of elections not later than five business days after the date of acceptance, according to rules~~  
7 ~~which shall be promulgated by the State Board of Elections. Those rules shall provide for a~~  
8 ~~paperless, instant, electronic transfer of applications to the appropriate board of elections.~~

9 ~~(a4) Confidentiality of Declination to Register. – No information relating to a declination~~  
10 ~~to register to vote in connection with a voter registration application at a Division of Motor~~  
11 ~~Vehicles office may be used for any purpose other than voter registration. The State Board shall~~  
12 ~~ensure that information acquired for purposes of automatic voter registration under this section~~  
13 ~~is kept confidential in accordance with G.S. 163-82.4(c), including compliance with any voter~~  
14 ~~registration requirements under G.S. 163-82.10.~~

15 ~~(b) Any-Ineligible Applications Prohibited. – If a person who is ineligible to vote~~  
16 ~~becomes registered to vote pursuant to this section, the person shall not be eligible to vote but~~  
17 ~~shall not automatically be subject to criminal penalty. However, any person who willfully and~~  
18 ~~knowingly and with fraudulent intent gives false information on the application described under~~  
19 ~~this section is guilty of a Class I felony.~~

20 ...

21 ~~(d) No Requirement to Determine Eligibility. – Nothing in this section shall be construed~~  
22 ~~as requiring the Department of Transportation to determine eligibility for voter registration and~~  
23 ~~voting."~~

24 **SECTION 5.4.** G.S. 163-82.20 reads as rewritten:

25 "**§ 163-82.20. Voter registration at other public agencies;**~~agencies; automatic voter~~  
26 **registration.**

27 (a) Voter Registration Agencies. – Every office in this State which accepts:

28 ...

29 (b) Duties of Voter Registration Agencies.—~~A Agencies; Automatic Voter Registration~~  
30 ~~Information. – Beginning January 1, 2025, a voter registration agency described in subsection~~  
31 ~~(a) of this section shall, unless the applicant declines, in writing, to register to vote; in consultation~~  
32 ~~with the State Board, provide, with each application for service or assistance, and with each~~  
33 ~~recertification, renewal, or change of address relating to such service or assistance, an application~~  
34 ~~process for automatic voter registration. The person taking the application shall inform the~~  
35 ~~applicant of the following:~~

36 (1) ~~Distribute with each application for service or assistance, and with each~~  
37 ~~recertification, renewal, or change of address relating to such service or~~  
38 ~~assistance:~~

39 a. ~~The voter registration application form described in G.S. 163-82.3(a)~~  
40 ~~or (b); or~~

41 b. ~~The voter registration agency's own form, if it is substantially~~  
42 ~~equivalent to the form described in G.S. 163-82.3(a) or (b) and has~~  
43 ~~been approved by the State Board of Elections, provided that the~~  
44 ~~agency's own form may be a detachable part of the agency's paper~~  
45 ~~application or may be a paperless computer process, as long as the~~  
46 ~~applicant is required to sign an attestation as part of the application to~~  
47 ~~register.~~

48 That the applicant shall be registered to vote or have the applicant's voter  
49 registration record updated, as applicable, unless the applicant declines.

1           (2) ~~Provide a form that contains the elements required by section 7(a)(6)(B) of~~  
2 ~~the National Voter Registration Act; and~~The qualifications to vote under  
3 G.S. 163-55.

4           (3) ~~Provide to each applicant who does not decline to register to vote the same~~  
5 ~~degree of assistance with regard to the completion of the registration~~  
6 ~~application as is provided by the office with regard to the completion of its~~  
7 ~~own forms.~~That the applicant should not register if the applicant does not meet  
8 the qualifications described under subdivision (2) of this subsection.

9           (4) That any person who willfully and knowingly and with fraudulent intent gives  
10 false information on the application is guilty of a Class I felony.

11           (5) That if the applicant declines to register to vote, the fact that the applicant has  
12 declined to register will remain confidential and be used for voter registration  
13 purposes only.

14           (6) Information regarding the address confidentiality program under Chapter 15C  
15 of the General Statutes, including how to register for the program and how  
16 voter registration may impact participation in the program.

17           (b1) Requirements. – If the applicant does not decline voter registration, the person taking  
18 the application shall require the applicant to provide all information requested of the applicant  
19 under G.S. 163-82.4, including declaring a preference to be affiliated with a political party or a  
20 preference to be an unaffiliated voter. If the applicant fails to declare a political party affiliation,  
21 the applicant's political affiliation shall be designated as unaffiliated. The applicant shall provide  
22 an electronic signature as required under G.S. 163-82.6(c), subject to the penalty of perjury, by  
23 which the applicant attests that the information provided by the applicant is true and that the  
24 applicant meets all qualifications to become a registered voter.

25           (c) Employment Security Law Applicants. – Provided that voter registration agencies  
26 designated under subdivision (a)(3) of this section shall only be required to provide the services  
27 set out in this subsection to applicants for new claims, reopened claims, and changes of address  
28 under Chapter 96 of the General Statutes, the Employment Security Law.

29           ...  
30           (f) Confidentiality of Declination to Register. – No information relating to a declination  
31 to register to vote in connection with an application made at a voter registration agency may be  
32 used for any purpose other than voter registration. The State Board shall ensure that information  
33 acquired for purposes of automatic voter registration under this section is kept confidential in  
34 accordance with G.S. 163-82.4(c), including compliance with any voter registration requirements  
35 under G.S. 163-82.10.

36           (g) Transmittal From Agency to Board of Elections. – Any voter registration application  
37 completed at a voter registration agency shall be accepted by that agency in lieu of the applicant's  
38 mailing the application. Any such application so received shall be transmitted. The agency shall  
39 electronically transmit the applications of applicants who did not decline voter registration to the  
40 appropriate board of elections not later than five business days after acceptance, according to  
41 rules which shall be promulgated by the State Board of Elections.

42           ...  
43           (i) Ineligible Applications Prohibited. – No person shall make application to register to  
44 vote under this section if that person is ineligible on account of age, citizenship, lack of residence  
45 for the period of time provided by law, or because of conviction of a felony. If a person who is  
46 ineligible to vote becomes registered to vote pursuant to this section, the person shall not be  
47 eligible to vote but shall not automatically be subject to criminal penalty. However, any person  
48 who willfully and knowingly and with fraudulent intent gives false information on the application  
49 described under this section is guilty of a Class I felony.

50           (j) No Requirement to Determine Eligibility. – Nothing in this section shall be construed  
51 as requiring agencies to determine eligibility for voter registration and voting."

1           **SECTION 5.5.** G.S. 163-82.20A reads as rewritten:

2   "**§ 163-82.20A. Voter registration upon restoration of citizenship.**

3       The State Board of Elections, the Division of Prisons of the Department of Adult Correction,  
4       and the Administrative Office of the Courts shall jointly develop and implement educational  
5       programs and procedures for persons to apply to register to vote at the time they are restored to  
6       citizenship and all filings required have been completed under Chapter 13 of the General Statutes.  
7       Those procedures shall be designed to do both of the following:

8           (1)    Inform the person that the restoration of rights removes the person's  
9                 disqualification from voting, but that in order to vote the person must register  
10                to ~~vote~~-vote, including informing the person of automatic voter registration in  
11                accordance with G.S. 163-82.19 or G.S. 163-82.20.

12          (2)    Provide an opportunity to that person to register to vote.

13       At a minimum, the program shall include a written notice to the person whose citizenship has  
14       been restored, informing that person that the person may now register to vote, with a voter  
15       registration form enclosed with the notice."

16           **SECTION 5.6.** Sections 5.1 through 5.3 and Section 5.5 of this Part become effective  
17       January 1, 2024. Section 5.4 of this Part becomes effective January 1, 2025. The remainder of  
18       this Part is effective when it becomes law.

19  
20   **PART VI. OPEN MEETINGS LAW REFORM/LIVE VIDEO AND AUDIO**  
21   **STREAMING IN LEGISLATIVE COMPLEX**

22           **SECTION 6.1.** G.S. 143-318.14A reads as rewritten:

23   "**§ 143-318.14A. Legislative commissions, committees, and standing subcommittees.**

24       ...

25       (b)    Reasonable public notice of all meetings of commissions, committees, and standing  
26       subcommittees of the General Assembly shall be ~~given~~-given to all members of the General  
27       Assembly; to all members of the commissions, committees, and standing subcommittees; and to  
28       the Legislative Services Office, which shall post the notice on the General Assembly website.  
29       For purposes of this subsection, "~~reasonable public notice~~" ~~includes, but is not limited~~  
30       ~~to:~~ "adequate public notice" means written or electronic notice that is posted and emailed to those  
31       who have requested notice at least 48 hours before the time of the meeting. The notice shall  
32       include the time, date, location, and, to the extent known, the agenda of the meeting.

33           (1)    ~~Notice given openly at a session of the Senate or of the House; or~~

34           (2)    ~~Notice mailed or sent by electronic mail to those who have requested notice,~~  
35                 ~~and to the Legislative Services Office, which shall post the notice on the~~  
36                 ~~General Assembly web site.~~

37       (b1)   The chair of the commission, committee, or standing subcommittee shall make the  
38       agenda for a meeting noticed under subsection (b) of this section readily available for public  
39       inspection no less than 24 hours in advance of the time of the meeting. Except for items of an  
40       emergency nature, the agenda shall not be altered after the notice has been made available to the  
41       public. The commission, committee, or standing subcommittee may modify the agenda to include  
42       items of an emergency nature only during the meeting. As used in this subsection, items of an  
43       emergency nature are matters that involve unexpected circumstances that require immediate  
44       consideration by the commission, committee, or standing subcommittee.

45       (b2)   No later than 24 hours in advance of the time of the meeting, the chair of the  
46       commission, committee, or standing subcommittee shall make available to the members of the  
47       same the text of all bills, proposed committee substitutes, and amendments that will be considered  
48       during the scheduled meeting. No commission, committee, or standing subcommittee shall  
49       consider or act on a bill, proposed committee substitute, or amendment that has not been made  
50       available to the members in accordance with this subsection.

1       **(b3)** G.S. 143-318.12 shall not apply to meetings of commissions, committees, and  
2 standing subcommittees of the General Assembly.

3       ...."

4               **SECTION 6.2.** The Legislative Services Officer (LSO) shall ensure live audiovisual  
5 streaming of all floor proceedings and all committee meetings held in the Legislative Complex.  
6 Live audiovisual streaming shall include (i) public participation and comment to the extent  
7 allowed by the streaming technology and (ii) access to the recorded live stream on a centralized  
8 website within 48 hours after all floor proceedings or committee meetings.

9               **SECTION 6.3.** This Part is effective when it becomes law.

## 10 11 **PART VII. ABSENTEE BALLOTS**

12               **SECTION 7.1.(a)** G.S. 163-229(b)(3) reads as rewritten:

13               "(3) A space for the identification of the ~~two persons~~ person witnessing the casting  
14 of the absentee ballot in accordance with G.S. 163-231, ~~those persons'~~  
15 ~~signatures, and those persons' addresses.~~ that person's signature, and that  
16 person's address."

17               **SECTION 7.1.(b)** G.S. 163-231(a) reads as rewritten:

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

21               ...

22               (5) Require ~~those two persons~~ the person in whose presence the voter marked that  
23 voter's ballots to sign the application and certificate as ~~witnesses~~ a witness and  
24 to indicate ~~those persons' addresses.~~ the person's address. Failure to list a ZIP  
25 code does not invalidate the application and certificate.

26               (6) ~~Do one of the following:~~ Have the witness in whose presence the voter marked  
27 that voter's ballots certify that the voter is the person submitting the marked  
28 ballots.

29               a. ~~Have the application notarized. The notary public may be the person~~  
30 ~~in whose presence the voter marked that voter's ballot.~~

31               b. ~~Have the two persons in whose presence the voter marked that voter's~~  
32 ~~ballots to certify that the voter is the registered voter submitting the~~  
33 ~~marked ballots.~~

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

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

44               **SECTION 7.2.** G.S. 163-230.2(c) reads as rewritten:

45               "(c) Return of Request. – The completed request form for absentee ballots shall be  
46 delivered either in person or by mail, email, or fax to the county board of elections only by any  
47 of the following:

48               (1) The voter.

49               (2) The voter's near relative or verifiable legal guardian.

50               (3) A member of a bipartisan team trained and authorized by the county board  
51 of elections pursuant to G.S. 163-226.3."

1           **SECTION 7.3.** This Part is effective when it becomes law and applies to elections  
2 held on or after that date.

3  
4 **PART VIII. USE OF CERTAIN CAMPUSES/VOTING PLACES**

5           **SECTION 8.1.** G.S. 163-129(a) reads as rewritten:

6           "(a) At the voting place in each precinct established under the provisions of G.S. 163-128,  
7 the county board of elections shall provide or procure by lease or otherwise a suitable structure  
8 or part of a structure in which registration and voting may be conducted. To this end, the county  
9 board of elections shall be entitled to demand and use any school or other State, county, or  
10 municipal building, or a part thereof, or any other building, or a part thereof, which is supported  
11 or maintained, in whole or in part by or through tax revenues provided, however, that revenues,  
12 including ensuring the use of voting places on college campuses. The State Board of Elections  
13 shall also make reasonable efforts to provide means for other college campuses to be used as  
14 voting places. However, this section shall not be construed to permit any board of elections to  
15 demand and use any tax exempt church property for such purposes without the express consent  
16 of the individual church involved, for the purpose of conducting registration and voting for any  
17 primary or election, and it may require that the requisitioned premises, or a part thereof, be  
18 vacated for these purposes."

19  
20 **PART IX. VOTER LIST MAINTENANCE**

21           **SECTION 9.1.** G.S. 163-82.14 reads as rewritten:

22 **"§ 163-82.14. List maintenance.**

23 ...

24           (b) Death. – The Department of Health and Human Services shall furnish free of charge  
25 to the State Board of Elections every month, in a format prescribed by the State Board of  
26 Elections, the names of deceased persons who were residents of the State. The State Board of  
27 Elections shall distribute every month to each county board of elections the names on that list of  
28 deceased persons who were residents of that county. The Department of Health and Human  
29 Services shall base each list upon information supplied by death certifications it received during  
30 the preceding month. Upon the receipt of those names, each county board of elections shall  
31 remove from its voter registration records any person the list shows to be ~~dead.~~ dead upon  
32 confirming that the complete date of birth of the deceased person and the last four digits of the  
33 social security number are identical to the person to be removed from the voter registration  
34 records. If the last four digits of the social security number are not available from voter  
35 registration records, then the county board of elections shall not remove the voter unless it has  
36 matched the complete date of birth and other identification information from the deceased records  
37 received from the Department of Health and Human Services or a near relative. Each county  
38 board of elections shall also remove from its voter registration records a person identified as  
39 deceased by a signed statement of a near relative or personal representative of the estate of the  
40 deceased voter. The county board need not send any notice to the address of the person so  
41 removed.

42 ...

43           (d) Change of Address. – A county board of elections shall conduct a systematic program  
44 to remove from its list of registered voters those who have moved out of the county, and to update  
45 the registration records of persons who have moved within the county. The county board shall  
46 remove a person from its list if the registrant:

47           (1) Gives confirmation in writing of a change of address for voting purposes out  
48 of the county. "Confirmation in writing" for purposes of this subdivision shall  
49 ~~include:~~ include any of the following:

50           a. A report to the county board from the Department of Transportation  
51 or from a voter registration agency listed in G.S. 163-82.20 that the



1 voter has reported a change of address for voting purposes outside the  
2 ~~county;~~county.

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

5 c. A notice of cancellation received from an election jurisdiction outside  
6 the State.

7 (2) Fails to respond after no less than 60 days to a confirmation mailing sent by  
8 the county board in accordance with this subdivision and does not vote or  
9 appear to vote in an election beginning on the date of the notice and ending  
10 on the day after the date of the second general election for the United States  
11 House of Representatives that occurs after the date of the notice. A county  
12 board sends a confirmation notice in accordance with this subdivision if the  
13 ~~notice;~~notice complies with each of the following:

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

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

20 c. Contains or is accompanied by information as to how the registrant  
21 may continue to be eligible to vote if the registrant has moved outside  
22 the county.

23 d. If a voter has provided the county board of elections with an email  
24 address, is an email that (i) provides the confirmation mailing has been  
25 sent, (ii) contains information on how the registrant may confirm the  
26 registrant's current address online, and (iii) contains information on  
27 how the voter may continue to be eligible to vote if the registrant has  
28 moved outside the county. If the voter has not provided an email  
29 address to the county board but has provided a phone number, the  
30 county board shall contact the voter by phone to provide this  
31 information.

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

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

40 (d1) Notwithstanding subsection (d) of this section, a county board of elections shall not  
41 remove a registrant from its list of registered voters solely based on the county board receiving a  
42 return mailing as "undeliverable" without taking steps to confirm the registrant's current address  
43 by other means.

44 ...."

## 45 PART X. TRUE SOURCE OF SPENDING

46 **SECTION 10.1.** G.S. 163-278.12 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

47 "(h) Except for political committees that do not receive more than six thousand four  
48 hundred dollars (\$6,400), or the amount set by G.S. 163-278.13, from any one person in an  
49 election, a filer, when reporting donations of one thousand dollars (\$1,000) or more in the  
50 aggregate under this subsection, shall disclose the identity of the original source of the funds, the  
51

1 amounts of those donations, and any intermediaries who transferred the funds before they were  
 2 contributed to the filer. For purposes of this subsection, "original source" means an individual  
 3 who contributes wages, investment income, or bequests or a person that contributes money  
 4 received through ordinary commercial transactions. Any person or entity making a donation of  
 5 one thousand dollars (\$1,000) or more, in the aggregate, in an election to a person or entity  
 6 required to report donations under this subsection shall inform that person or entity of the identity  
 7 of the original sources of funds being transferred, the amounts of the persons' original funds being  
 8 transferred, and the identity of any persons who previously transferred the original funds."

9 **SECTION 10.2.** G.S. 163-278.12C is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

10 "(e) Except for political committees that do not receive more than six thousand four  
 11 hundred dollars (\$6,400), or the amount set by G.S. 163-287.13, from any one person in an  
 12 election, a filer, when reporting donations of one thousand dollars (\$1,000) or more in the  
 13 aggregate under this subsection, shall disclose the identity of the original source of the funds, the  
 14 amounts of those donations, and any intermediaries who transferred the funds before they were  
 15 contributed to the filer. "Original source" has the same meaning as in G.S. 163-278.12(h). Any  
 16 person or entity making a donation of one thousand dollars (\$1,000) or more, in the aggregate,  
 17 in an election to a person or entity required to report donations under this subsection shall inform  
 18 that person or entity of the identity of the original sources of funds being transferred, the amounts  
 19 of the persons' original funds being transferred, and the identity of any persons who previously  
 20 transferred the original funds."

21 **SECTION 10.3.** G.S. 163-278.39(a) is amended by adding a new subdivision to  
 22 read:

23 "(5) In an advertisement made by a sponsor other than a candidate, political party  
 24 organization, an individual solely spending the individual's own personal  
 25 funds received through wages, investment income, or bequests or a person  
 26 solely spending money received through ordinary commercial transactions,  
 27 the advertisement bears the legend or includes the statement: "[Names of top  
 28 three donors] are the top donors who helped pay for this message." In a  
 29 television advertisement or digital communication, this disclosure shall be  
 30 made by visual legend. In advertisements made by a sponsor that reports  
 31 original sources under G.S. 163-278.12 or G.S. 163-278.12C, the top three  
 32 donors shall be the three original sources who have donated the highest  
 33 aggregate amounts to the sponsor in the election cycle."

34  
 35 **PART XI. TRANSPARENCY FOR DIGITAL CAMPAIGN ADS**

36 **SECTION 11.1.** G.S. 163-278.6 reads as rewritten:

37 **"§ 163-278.6. Definitions.**

38 When used in this Article:

39 ...  
 40 (28a) The term "digital communication" means any communication, for a fee,  
 41 placed or promoted on a public-facing website, web application, or digital  
 42 application, including a social network, advertising network, or search engine.

43 ...  
 44 (41) The term "electioneering communication" means any broadcast, cable, or  
 45 satellite communication, or mass mailing, or telephone ~~bank-bank~~, or digital  
 46 communication that has all the following characteristics:

- 47 a. Refers to a clearly identified candidate for elected office.
- 48 b. In the case of the general election in November of the even-numbered
- 49 year is aired or transmitted within 60 days of the election for that
- 50 office.
- 51 c. May be received by either:

1. 50,000 or more individuals in the State in an election for statewide office or 7,500 or more individuals in any other election if in the form of broadcast, cable, or satellite communication.
2. 20,000 or more households, cumulative per election, in a statewide election or 2,500 households, cumulative per election, in any other election if in the form of mass mailing or telephone bank.

...."

**SECTION 11.2.** G.S. 163-278.38Z(1) reads as rewritten:

"(1) "Advertisement" means any message appearing in the print media, on ~~television, or on radio~~ television or radio, or through digital communication that constitutes a contribution or expenditure under this Article."

**SECTION 11.3.** G.S. 163-278.39 reads as rewritten:

**"§ 163-278.39. Basic disclosure requirements for all political advertisements.**

(a) Basic Requirements. – It shall be unlawful for any sponsor to sponsor an advertisement in the print ~~media or media,~~ on radio or television ~~television, or through digital communication~~ that constitutes an expenditure, independent expenditure, electioneering communication, or contribution required to be disclosed under this Article unless all the following conditions are met:

- (1) It bears the legend or includes the statement: "Paid for by \_\_\_\_ [Name of candidate, candidate campaign committee, political party organization, political action committee, referendum committee, individual, or other sponsor]." In television or digital communication advertisements, this disclosure shall be made by visual legend.

...

If an advertisement described in this section is jointly sponsored, the disclosure statement shall name all the sponsors.

(b) Size Requirements. – The following shall apply to the various forms of advertisement:

- (1) In a print media advertisement covered by subsection (a) of this section, the height of all disclosure statements required by that subsection shall constitute at least five percent (5%) of the height of the printed space of the advertisement, provided that the type shall in no event be less than 12 points in size. In an advertisement in a newspaper or a newspaper insert, the total height of the disclosure statement need not constitute five percent of the printed space of the advertisement if the type of the disclosure statement is at least 28 points in size. If a single advertisement consists of multiple pages, folds, or faces, the disclosure requirement of this section applies only to one page, fold, or face.
- (2) In a television advertisement covered by subsection (a) of this section, the visual disclosure legend shall constitute four percent (4%) of vertical picture height in size, and where the television advertisement that appears is paid for by a candidate or candidate campaign committee, the visual disclosure legend shall appear simultaneously with an easily identifiable photograph of the candidate for at least two seconds.
- (3) In a radio advertisement covered by subsection (a) of this section, the disclosure statement shall last at least two seconds, provided the statement is spoken so that its contents may be easily understood.
- (4) In a digital communication advertisement covered by subsection (a) of this section, the disclosure statement shall appear (i) in letters at least as large as the smallest text in the digital communication or (ii) in a heading or similar

1 section of text displayed above or within the digital communication that is  
 2 visually distinct from the text of the digital communication and shall have a  
 3 reasonable degree of color contrast between the background and the disclosure  
 4 statement. If the digital communication is disseminated through a medium in  
 5 which the provision of the disclosure statement is not possible, the digital  
 6 communication shall, in a clear and conspicuous manner, include the  
 7 following:

- 8 a. The name of the person who paid for the digital communication.  
 9 b. A means for the recipient of the digital communication to obtain the  
 10 remainder of the information required by this section with minimal  
 11 effort and without receiving or viewing any additional material other  
 12 than the disclosure statement.

13 (c) Misrepresentation of Authorization. – Notwithstanding G.S. 163-278.27(a), any  
 14 candidate, candidate campaign committee, political party organization, political action  
 15 committee, referendum committee, individual, or other sponsor making an advertisement in the  
 16 print ~~media or media~~, on radio or ~~television-television~~, or through digital communication bearing  
 17 any legend required by subsection (a) of this section that misrepresents the sponsorship or  
 18 authorization of the advertisement is guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor."

19 **SECTION 11.4.** G.S. 163-278.39C reads as rewritten:

20 "**§ 163-278.39C. Scope of disclosure requirements.**

21 The disclosure requirements of this Part apply to any sponsor of an advertisement in the print  
 22 ~~media or media~~, on radio or ~~television-television~~, or through digital communication the cost or  
 23 value of which constitutes an expenditure or contribution required to be disclosed under this  
 24 Article, except that the disclosure requirements of this Part:

- 25 (1) Do not apply to an individual who makes uncoordinated independent  
 26 expenditures aggregating less than one thousand dollars (\$1,000) in a political  
 27 campaign; and  
 28 (2) Do not apply to an individual who incurs expenses with respect to a  
 29 referendum.

30 The disclosure requirements of this Part do not apply to any advertisement the expenditure  
 31 for which is required to be disclosed by G.S. 163-278.12A alone and by no other law."

32 **SECTION 11.5.** Part 1A of Article 22A of Chapter 163 of the General Statutes is  
 33 amended by adding a new section to read:

34 "**§ 163-278.39D. State Board of Elections to maintain records of digital communications**  
 35 **for political advertising.**

36 Any person using digital communication, as defined under G.S. 163-278.6(28a), that is  
 37 covered by G.S. 163-278.39(a) shall submit that digital communication to the State Board of  
 38 Elections along with the disclosure information required under G.S. 163-278.39. The State Board  
 39 of Elections shall maintain the information submitted pursuant to this section on the State Board  
 40 of Elections website and the information shall be deemed public records and available for  
 41 inspection on the website. The State Board shall display the following information on its website  
 42 as related to the digital communication:

- 43 (1) The name of the person.  
 44 (2) The city and state where the entity is located.  
 45 (3) The amount spent by the person for each candidate.  
 46 (4) A copy of the political advertisement.  
 47 (5) The dates or date range on which the political advertisement runs."

48 **SECTION 11.6.** This Part becomes effective September 1, 2023, and applies to  
 49 elections conducted on or after that date.

50  
 51 **PART XII. PROTECTION AGAINST FOREIGN INTERFERENCE**

1           **SECTION 12.1.** G.S. 163-278.39 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

2           "(a1) Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary and in accordance with any  
3 federal law, a foreign national expending funds for political advertising that addresses a specific  
4 issue to influence State or local government policy, a State or local government officer, or an  
5 election shall include a statement in the advertisement that identifies the foreign national and a  
6 statement disclosing that the advertising is sponsored by the foreign national. The phrase "foreign  
7 national" shall have the same meaning as defined in 52 U.S.C. § 30121(b)."  
8

9           **PART XIII. LIMITATIONS/SUPER PACS INFLUENCE**

10           **SECTION 13.1.** Part 1 of Article 22A of Chapter 163 of the General Statutes is  
11 amended by adding a new section to read:

12           "§ 163-278.12B. Limitations on super political action committees' influence.

13           (a) Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, any political committee  
14 that makes only independent expenditures shall notify the State Board of Elections, in writing,  
15 of any of the following:

16               (1) Any contribution in excess of one thousand dollars (\$1,000) received by the  
17 committee before an election but after the period covered by the last report  
18 due before that election. This notification shall be made within 48 hours after  
19 the receipt of the contribution and shall include the name of the committee,  
20 the contributor, and the date of receipt and amount of the contribution.

21               (2) Any contribution or donation in excess of one thousand dollars (\$1,000) made  
22 by the committee before an election but after the period covered by the last  
23 report due before that election. This notification shall be made within 48 hours  
24 after the contribution or donation is made and shall include the name of the  
25 committee and the recipient and the date and amount of the contribution or  
26 donation.

27           (b) Any person who receives, directly or indirectly, a contribution or donation subject to  
28 subsection (a) of this section and who transfers more than one thousand dollars (\$1,000) of the  
29 funds to another person shall disclose to that person, in writing, at the time the transfer is made  
30 each of the following:

31               (1) The identification of the political committee who made the contribution or  
32 donation and the date and amount of the contribution or donation.

33               (2) The identification of any other person subject to this section, as either a prior  
34 transferor or transferee of the funds from the political committee, and the date  
35 and amount of the contribution or donation.

36           (c) For purposes of this section, a contribution or donation includes a pledge, promise,  
37 understanding, or agreement to make a future contribution or donation."  
38

39           **PART XIV. REESTABLISH NORTH CAROLINA PUBLIC CAMPAIGN FUND**

40           **SECTION 14.1.** G.S. 163-278.69 is recodified as G.S. 163-278.158.

41           **SECTION 14.2.** Chapter 163 of the General Statutes is amended by adding the  
42 following new Article to read:

43                               "Article 22I.

44                               "The North Carolina Public Campaign Fund.

45           "§ 163-278.150. Purpose of the North Carolina Public Campaign Fund.

46           The purpose of this Article is to ensure the fairness of democratic elections in North Carolina  
47 and to protect the constitutional rights of voters and candidates from the detrimental effects of  
48 increasingly large amounts of money being raised and spent to influence the outcome of  
49 elections, those effects being especially problematic in elections of the judiciary, since  
50 impartiality is uniquely important to the integrity and credibility of the courts. Accordingly, this  
51 Article establishes the North Carolina Public Campaign Fund as an alternative source of

1 campaign financing for candidates who demonstrate public support and voluntarily accept strict  
2 fundraising and spending limits. This Article is available to candidates for justice of the Supreme  
3 Court and judge of the Court of Appeals in elections to be held in 2024 and thereafter.

4 **"§ 163-278.151. Definitions.**

5 The following definitions apply in this Article:

- 6 (1) Board. – The State Board of Elections.  
7 (2) Candidate. – An individual who becomes a candidate as described in  
8 G.S. 163-278.6(9). The term includes a political committee authorized by the  
9 candidate for that candidate's election.  
10 (3) Certified candidate. – A candidate running for office who chooses to receive  
11 campaign funds from the Fund and who is certified under  
12 G.S. 163-278.153(c).  
13 (4) Contested primary and contested general election. – An election in which  
14 there are more candidates than the number to be elected. A distribution from  
15 the Fund pursuant to this Article is not a "contribution" and is not subject to  
16 the limitations of G.S. 163-278.13 or the prohibitions of G.S. 163-278.15 or  
17 G.S. 163-278.19.  
18 (5) Contribution. – Defined in G.S. 163-278.6. A distribution from the Fund  
19 pursuant to this Article is not a "contribution" and is not subject to the  
20 limitations of G.S. 163-278.13 or the prohibitions of G.S. 163-278.15 or  
21 G.S. 163-278.19.  
22 (6) Electioneering communication. – As defined in G.S. 163-278.6, except that it  
23 is made during the period beginning 30 days before absentee ballots become  
24 available for a primary and ending on primary election day and during the  
25 period 60 days before absentee ballots become available for a general election  
26 and ending on general election day.  
27 (7) Expenditure. – Defined in G.S. 163-278.6.  
28 (8) Fund. – The North Carolina Public Campaign Fund established in  
29 G.S. 163-278.152.  
30 (9) Independent expenditure. – Defined in G.S. 163-278.6.  
31 (10) Maximum qualifying contributions. – An amount of qualifying contributions  
32 equal to 60 times the filing fee for candidacy for the office.  
33 (11) Minimum qualifying contributions. – An amount of qualifying contributions  
34 equal to 30 times the filing fee for candidacy for the office.  
35 (12) Nonparticipating candidate. – A candidate running for office who is not  
36 seeking to be certified under G.S. 163-278.153(c).  
37 (13) Office. – A position on the North Carolina Court of Appeals or North Carolina  
38 Supreme Court.  
39 (14) Participating candidate. – A candidate for office who has filed a declaration  
40 of intent to participate under G.S. 163-278.153.  
41 (15) Political committee. – Defined in G.S. 163-278.6.  
42 (16) Qualifying contribution. – A contribution of not less than ten dollars (\$10.00)  
43 and not more than five hundred dollars (\$500.00) in the form prescribed for  
44 noncash monetary contributions in G.S. 163-278.14(b) to the candidate or the  
45 candidate's committee that meets both of the following conditions:  
46 a. Made by an individual who is a registered voter in this State at the time  
47 of the submittal of the report specified in G.S. 163-278.153(c).  
48 b. Made during the qualifying period and obtained with the approval of  
49 the candidate or candidate's committee.  
50 (17) Qualifying period. – The period beginning September 1 in the year before the  
51 election and ending on the day of the primary of the election year.

1           (18) Referendum committee. – Defined in G.S. 163-278.6.

2 **"§ 163-278.152. North Carolina Public Campaign Fund established; sources of funding.**

3           (a) Establishment of Fund. – The North Carolina Public Campaign Fund is established to  
4 finance the election campaigns of certified candidates for office and to pay administrative and  
5 enforcement costs of the Board related to this Article. The Fund is a special, dedicated,  
6 nonlapsing, nonreverting fund. All expenses of administering this Article, including production  
7 and distribution of the Voter Guide required by G.S. 163-278.158 and personnel and other costs  
8 incurred by the Board, including public education about the Fund, shall be paid from the Fund  
9 and not from the General Fund. Any interest generated by the Fund is credited to the Fund. The  
10 Board shall administer the Fund.

11           (b) Sources of Funding. – Money received from all of the following sources shall be  
12 deposited in the Fund:

13           (1) Designations made to the Public Campaign Fund by individual taxpayers  
14 pursuant to G.S. 105-159.3.

15           (2) Public Campaign Fund revenues distributed for an election that remain  
16 unspent or uncommitted at the time the recipient is no longer a certified  
17 candidate in the election.

18           (3) Money ordered returned to the Public Campaign Fund in accordance with  
19 G.S. 163-278.157.

20           (4) Voluntary donations made directly to the Public Campaign Fund.  
21 Corporations, other business entities, labor unions, and professional  
22 associations may make donations to the Fund.

23           (5) Money collected from the sixty dollar (\$60.00) surcharge on attorney  
24 membership fees in G.S. 84-34.

25           (c) Determination of Fund Amount. – By October 1, 2024, and every two years thereafter,  
26 the State Board shall prepare and provide to the Joint Legislative Elections Oversight Committee  
27 a report documenting, evaluating, and making recommendations relating to the administration,  
28 implementation, and enforcement of this Article. In its report, the Board shall set out the funds  
29 received to date and the expected needs of the Fund for the next election.

30 **"§ 163-278.153. Requirements for participation; certification of candidates.**

31           (a) Declaration of Intent to Participate. – Any individual choosing to receive campaign  
32 funds from the Fund shall first file with the Board a declaration of intent to participate under this  
33 Article as a candidate for a stated office. The declaration of intent shall be filed before or during  
34 the qualifying period and before collecting any qualifying contributions. In the declaration, the  
35 candidate shall swear or affirm that only one political committee, identified with its treasurer,  
36 shall handle all contributions, expenditures, and obligations for the participating candidate and  
37 that the candidate will comply with the contribution and expenditure limits set forth in subsection  
38 (d) of this section and all other requirements set forth in this Article or adopted by the Board.  
39 Failure to comply is a violation of this Article.

40           (b) Demonstration of Support of Candidacy. – Participating candidates who seek  
41 certification to receive campaign funds from the Fund shall first, during the qualifying period, if  
42 seeking office on the Supreme Court, obtain qualifying contributions from at least 425 registered  
43 voters in an aggregate sum that at least equals the amount of minimum qualifying contributions  
44 described in G.S. 163-278.151(11) but that does not exceed the amount of maximum qualifying  
45 contributions described in G.S. 163-278.151(10). If a participating candidate is seeking  
46 certification for an office on the Court of Appeals, the candidate shall obtain qualifying  
47 contributions from at least 400 registered voters in an aggregate sum that at least equals the  
48 amount of minimum qualifying contributions described in G.S. 163-278.151(11) but that does  
49 not exceed the amount of maximum qualifying contributions described in G.S. 163-278.151(10).

50           No payment, gift, anything of value, or the opportunity to win anything of value shall be  
51 given in exchange for a qualifying contribution.

1       (c)   Certification of Candidates. – Upon receipt of a submittal of the record of  
2 demonstrated support by a participating candidate, the Board shall determine whether or not the  
3 candidate has complied with all of the following requirements:

- 4           (1)   Signed and filed a declaration of intent to participate in this Article.
- 5           (2)   Submitted a report itemizing the appropriate number of qualifying  
6 contributions received from registered voters, which the Board shall verify  
7 through a random sample or other means it adopts. The report shall include  
8 the county of residence of each registered voter listed.
- 9           (3)   Filed a valid notice of candidacy pursuant to Article 26 of this Chapter.
- 10          (4)   Otherwise met the requirements for participation in this Article.

11       The Board shall certify candidates complying with the requirements of this section as soon  
12 as possible and no later than five business days after receipt of a satisfactory record of  
13 demonstrated support.

14       (d)   Restrictions on Contributions and Expenditures for Participating and Certified  
15 Candidates. – The following restrictions shall apply to contributions and expenditures with  
16 respect to participating and certified candidates:

- 17           (1)   Beginning January 1 of the year before the election and before the filing of a  
18 declaration of intent, a candidate for office may accept in contributions up to  
19 twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25,000) from sources and in amounts  
20 permitted by Article 22A of this Chapter and may expend up to twenty-five  
21 thousand dollars (\$25,000) for any campaign purpose. A candidate who  
22 exceeds either of these limits shall be ineligible to file a declaration of intent  
23 or receive funds from the Public Campaign Fund.
- 24           (2)   From the filing of a declaration of intent through the end of the qualifying  
25 period, a candidate may accept only qualifying contributions, contributions  
26 under ten dollars (\$10.00) from North Carolina voters, and personal and  
27 family contributions permitted under subdivision (4) of this subsection. The  
28 total contributions the candidate may accept during this period shall not  
29 exceed the maximum qualifying contributions for that candidate. In addition  
30 to these contributions, the candidate may only expend during this period the  
31 remaining money raised pursuant to subdivision (1) of this subsection. Except  
32 for personal and family contributions permitted under subdivision (4) of this  
33 subsection, multiple contributions from the same contributor to the same  
34 candidate shall not exceed five hundred dollars (\$500.00).
- 35           (3)   After the qualifying period and through the date of the general election, the  
36 candidate shall expend only the funds the candidate receives from the Fund  
37 pursuant to G.S. 163-278.155(b)(4) plus any funds remaining from the  
38 qualifying period.
- 39           (4)   During the qualifying period, the candidate may contribute up to one thousand  
40 dollars (\$1,000) of that candidate's own money to the campaign and may  
41 accept in contributions one thousand dollars (\$1,000) from each member of  
42 that candidate's family consisting of spouse, parent, child, brother, and sister.  
43 Up to five hundred dollars (\$500.00) of a contribution from the candidate's  
44 family member may be treated as a qualifying contribution if it meets the  
45 requirements of G.S. 163-278.151(16)a. and b.
- 46           (5)   A candidate and the candidate's committee shall limit the use of all revenues  
47 permitted by this subsection to expenditures for campaign-related purposes  
48 only. The Board shall publish guidelines outlining permissible  
49 campaign-related expenditures. In establishing those guidelines, the Board  
50 shall differentiate expenditures that reasonably further a candidate's campaign  
51 from expenditures for personal use that would be incurred in the absence of



1 the candidacy. In establishing the guidelines, the Board shall review relevant  
2 provisions of the Federal Election Campaign Act, and rules adopted pursuant  
3 to it, and similar provisions in other states.

4 (6) Any contribution received by a participating or certified candidate that falls  
5 outside that permitted by this subsection shall be returned to the donor as soon  
6 as practicable. Contributions intentionally made, solicited, or accepted in  
7 violation of this Article are subject to civil penalties as specified in  
8 G.S. 163-278.157. The funds involved shall be forfeited to the Civil Penalty  
9 and Forfeiture Fund.

10 (7) A candidate shall return to the Fund any amount distributed for an election  
11 that is unspent and uncommitted at the date of the election, or at the time the  
12 individual ceases to be a certified candidate, whichever occurs first. For  
13 accounting purposes, all qualifying, personal, and family contributions shall  
14 be considered spent before revenue from the Fund is spent or committed.

15 (e) Revocation. – A candidate may revoke, in writing to the Board, a decision to  
16 participate in the Public Campaign Fund at any time before the deadline set by the Board for the  
17 candidate's submission of information for the Voter Guide described in G.S. 163-278.158. After  
18 a timely revocation, that candidate may accept and expend outside the limits of this Article  
19 without violating this Article. Within 10 days after revocation, a candidate shall return to the  
20 State Board all money received from the Fund.

21 **"§ 163-278.154. Special participation provisions for candidates in vacancy elections.**

22 (a) Participation Provisions Modified. – Candidates involved in elections described in  
23 G.S. 163-358 may participate in the Fund subject to the provisions of G.S. 163-278.153 as  
24 modified by this section. The Board shall adapt other provisions of this Article to those elections.

25 (b) Qualifying. – The Board shall designate a special qualifying period of no less than  
26 four weeks for these candidates, beginning at the close of the notice-of-candidacy filing period.  
27 To receive certification, a participating candidate shall raise at least 225 qualifying contributions,  
28 totaling at least 20 times the amount of the filing fee for the office, for a four-week qualifying  
29 period. If the Board sets a longer qualifying period, then for each additional week that the  
30 qualifying period extends beyond four weeks, the minimum number of qualifying contributions  
31 required for certification shall increase by 25 and the minimum amount of the qualifying  
32 contributions shall increase by two times the filing fee. The minimum qualifying contributions  
33 shall not exceed the limit set by G.S. 163-278.153(b).

34 (c) Allocations. – Certified candidates shall receive one percent (1%) of the funding to  
35 which they would be eligible under G.S. 163-278.155 times the number of calendar days between  
36 the end of the special qualifying period and the day of the general election. That amount shall  
37 not exceed one hundred percent (100%) of the funding to which they would be eligible under  
38 G.S. 163-278.155.

39 **"§ 163-278.155. Distribution from the Fund.**

40 (a) Timing of Fund Distribution. – The Board shall distribute to a certified candidate  
41 revenue from the Fund in an amount determined under subdivision (b)(4) of this section within  
42 five business days after the certified candidate's name is approved to appear on the ballot in a  
43 contested general election but no earlier than five business days after the primary.

44 (b) Amount of Fund Distribution. – By August 1, 2024, and no less frequently than every  
45 two years thereafter, the Board shall determine the amount of funds, rounded to the nearest one  
46 hundred dollars (\$100.00), to be distributed to certified candidates as follows:

47 (1) Uncontested primaries. – No funds shall be distributed.

48 (2) Contested primaries. – No funds shall be distributed.

49 (3) Uncontested general elections. – No funds shall be distributed.

50 (4) Contested general elections. – Funds shall be distributed to a certified  
51 candidate for a position on the Court of Appeals in an amount equal to 225

1 times the candidate's filing fee as set forth in G.S. 163-353. Funds shall be  
2 distributed to a certified candidate for a position on the Supreme Court in an  
3 amount equal to 350 times the candidate's filing fee as set forth in  
4 G.S. 163-353.

5 (c) Method of Fund Distribution. – The Board, in consultation with the State Treasurer  
6 and the State Controller, shall develop a rapid, reliable method of conveying funds to certified  
7 candidates. In all cases, the Board shall distribute funds to certified candidates in a manner that  
8 is expeditious, ensures accountability, and safeguards the integrity of the Fund. If the money in  
9 the Fund is insufficient to fully fund all certified candidates, then the available money shall be  
10 distributed proportionally, according to each candidate's eligible funding, and the candidate may  
11 raise additional money in the same manner as a noncertified candidate for the same office up to  
12 the unfunded amount of the candidate's eligible funding.

13 (d) Beginning October 1, 2028, and every five years thereafter, the Board shall appoint a  
14 three-member committee to conduct an independent review regarding any need for modification  
15 of funds distributed to certified candidates pursuant to this section. The committee shall consist  
16 of one member from the North Carolina Bar Association, one member who is a public financing  
17 expert, as determined by the Board, and one member who is a former Justice of the North  
18 Carolina Supreme Court or Judge of the North Carolina Court of Appeals who has used the Fund.  
19 In conducting the independent review, the committee shall, at a minimum, consider the need for  
20 modification of funds as a result of changes in election costs and inflationary adjustments.

21 **"§ 163-278.156. Reporting requirements.**

22 (a) Reporting by Participating and Certified Candidates. – Notwithstanding other  
23 provisions of law, participating and certified candidates shall report any money received,  
24 including all previously unreported qualifying contributions, all campaign expenditures,  
25 obligations, and related activities to the Board according to procedures developed by the Board.  
26 A certified candidate who ceases to be certified or ceases to be a candidate or who loses an  
27 election shall file a final report with the Board and return any unspent revenues received from  
28 the Fund. In developing these procedures, the Board shall utilize existing campaign reporting  
29 procedures whenever practical.

30 (b) Timely Access to Reports. – The Board shall ensure prompt public access to the  
31 reports received in accordance with this Article. The Board may utilize electronic means of  
32 reporting and storing information.

33 **"§ 163-278.157. Civil penalty.**

34 In addition to any other penalties that may be applicable, any individual, political committee,  
35 or other entity that violates any provision of this Article is subject to a civil penalty of up to ten  
36 thousand dollars (\$10,000) per violation or three times the amount of any financial transactions  
37 involved in the violation, whichever is greater. In addition to any fine, for good cause shown, a  
38 candidate found in violation of this Article may be required to return to the Fund all amounts  
39 distributed to the candidate from the Fund. If the Board makes a determination that a violation  
40 of this Article has occurred, the Board shall calculate and assess the amount of the civil penalty  
41 and shall notify the entity that is assessed the civil penalty of the amount that has been assessed.  
42 The Board shall then proceed in the manner prescribed in G.S. 163-278.34. In determining  
43 whether or not a candidate is in violation of this Article, the Board may consider as a mitigating  
44 factor any circumstances out of the candidate's control."

45 **SECTION 14.3.** G.S. 84-34 reads as rewritten:

46 **"§ 84-34. Membership fees and list of members.**

47 Every active member of the North Carolina State Bar shall, prior to the first day of July of  
48 each year, pay to the secretary-treasurer an annual membership fee in an amount determined by  
49 the Council but not to exceed three hundred dollars (\$300.00), ~~and every~~ plus a surcharge of sixty  
50 dollars (\$60.00) for the implementation of Article 22I of Chapter 163 of the General Statutes. A  
51 member shall be provided the option to designate that the surcharge required by this section be

1 used in its entirety for the Judicial Voter Guide described in G.S. 163-278.158. Each member  
2 shall notify the secretary-treasurer of the member's correct mailing address. Any member who  
3 fails to pay the required dues by the last day of June of each year shall be subject to a late fee in  
4 an amount determined by the Council but not to exceed thirty dollars (\$30.00). All dues for prior  
5 years shall be as were set forth in the General Statutes then in effect. The membership fee shall  
6 be regarded as a service charge for the maintenance of the several services authorized by this  
7 Article, and shall be in addition to all fees required in connection with admissions to practice,  
8 and in addition to all license taxes required by law. The fee shall not be prorated: Provided, that  
9 no fee shall be required of an attorney licensed after this Article shall have gone into effect until  
10 the first day of January of the calendar year following that in which the attorney was licensed;  
11 but this proviso shall not apply to attorneys from other states admitted on certificate. The fees  
12 shall be disbursed by the secretary-treasurer on the order of the Council. The sixty dollar (\$60.00)  
13 surcharge shall be sent on a monthly schedule to the State Board of Elections. The  
14 secretary-treasurer shall annually, at a time and in a law magazine or daily newspaper to be  
15 prescribed by the Council, publish an account of the financial transactions of the Council in a  
16 form to be prescribed by it. The secretary-treasurer shall compile and keep currently correct from  
17 the names and mailing addresses forwarded to the secretary-treasurer and from any other  
18 available sources of information a list of members of the North Carolina State Bar and furnish to  
19 the clerk of the superior court in each county, not later than the first day of October in each year,  
20 a list showing the name and address of each attorney for that county who has not complied with  
21 the provisions of this Article. The name of each of the active members who are in arrears in the  
22 payment of membership fees shall be furnished to the presiding judge at the next term of the  
23 superior court after the first day of October of each year, by the clerk of the superior court of  
24 each county wherein the member or members reside, and the court shall thereupon take action  
25 that is necessary and proper. The names and addresses of attorneys so certified shall be kept  
26 available to the public. The Secretary of Revenue is hereby directed to supply the  
27 secretary-treasurer, from records of license tax payments, with any information for which the  
28 secretary-treasurer may call in order to enable the secretary-treasurer to comply with this  
29 requirement.

30 The list submitted to several clerks of the superior court shall also be submitted to the Council  
31 at its October meeting of each year and it shall take the action thereon that is necessary and  
32 proper."

33 **SECTION 14.4.** Part 2 of Article 4 of Chapter 105 of the General Statutes is amended  
34 by adding a new section to read:

35 **"§ 105-159.3. Designation of tax to North Carolina Public Campaign Fund.**

36 (a) Allocation to the North Carolina Public Campaign Fund. – To ensure the financial  
37 viability of the North Carolina Public Campaign Fund established in Article 22I of Chapter 163  
38 of the General Statutes, the Department must allocate to that Fund three dollars (\$3.00) from the  
39 income taxes paid each year by each individual with an income tax liability of at least that  
40 amount, if the individual agrees. A taxpayer must be given the opportunity to indicate an  
41 agreement to that allocation in the manner described in subsection (b) of this section. In the case  
42 of a married couple filing a joint return, each individual must have the option of agreeing to the  
43 allocation. The amounts allocated under this subsection to the Fund must be credited to it on a  
44 quarterly basis.

45 (b) Returns. – Individual income tax returns must give an individual an opportunity to  
46 agree to the allocation of three dollars (\$3.00) of the individual's tax liability to the North Carolina  
47 Public Campaign Fund. The Department must make it clear to the taxpayer that the dollars will  
48 support a nonpartisan court system, that the dollars will go to the Fund if the taxpayer marks an  
49 agreement, and that allocation of the dollars neither increases nor decreases the individual's tax  
50 liability. The following statement satisfies the intent of this requirement: "Three dollars (\$3.00)  
51 will go to the North Carolina Public Campaign Fund to support a nonpartisan court system, if

1 you agree. Your tax remains the same whether or not you agree." The Department must consult  
 2 with the State Board of Elections to ensure that the information given to taxpayers complies with  
 3 the intent of this section.

4 The Department must inform the entities it approves to reproduce the return of the  
 5 requirements of this section and that a return may not reflect an agreement or objection unless  
 6 the individual completing the return decided to agree or object after being presented with the  
 7 information required by subsection (c) of this section. No software package used in preparing  
 8 North Carolina income tax returns may default to an agreement or objection. A paid preparer of  
 9 tax returns may not mark an agreement or objection for a taxpayer without the taxpayer's consent.

10 (c) Instructions. – The instructions for individual income tax returns must include the  
 11 following explanatory statement: "The North Carolina Public Campaign Fund provides campaign  
 12 money to nonpartisan candidates for the North Carolina Supreme Court and Court of Appeals  
 13 who voluntarily accept strict campaign spending and fundraising limits. The Fund also helps  
 14 finance educational materials about voter registration, the role of the appellate courts, and the  
 15 candidates seeking election as appellate judges in North Carolina. Three dollars (\$3.00) from the  
 16 taxes you pay will go to the Fund if you mark an agreement. Regardless of what choice you make,  
 17 your tax will not increase, nor will any refund you are entitled to be reduced."

18 **SECTION 14.5.** G.S. 163-278.5 reads as rewritten:

19 **"§ 163-278.5. Scope of Article; severability.**

20 ...

21 This section applies to Articles ~~and 22I and 22M~~ of the General Statutes to the same extent  
 22 that it applies to this Article."

23 **SECTION 14.6.** G.S. 163-278.23 reads as rewritten:

24 **"§ 163-278.23. Duties of Executive Director of State Board.**

25 ...

26 This section applies to Articles ~~and 22I and 22M of the General Statutes~~ this Chapter to the  
 27 same extent that it applies to this Article."

28 **SECTION 14.7.** G.S. 163-278.99E reads as rewritten:

29 **"§ 163-278.99E. Voter education.**

30 Relationship to the Judicial Voter Guide. – The State Board may publish the Voter Guide in  
 31 conjunction with the Judicial Voter Guide described in ~~G.S. 163-278.69~~ G.S. 163-278.158."

32 **SECTION 14.8.** Section 38.1(a) of S.L. 2013-381 reads as rewritten:

33 **"SECTION 38.1(a)** Article 22D of Chapter 163 of the General Statutes is ~~repealed, except~~  
 34 ~~that G.S. 163-278.69 is repealed effective upon exhaustion of the funds for publication of the~~  
 35 ~~Judicial Voter Guide, repealed."~~

36 **SECTION 14.9.** Sections 21.1(i), 21.1(j), and 21.1(l) of S.L. 2013-360 and Sections  
 37 38.1(l), 38.1(m), and 38.1(o) of S.L. 2013-381 are repealed.

38 **SECTION 14.10.** Sections 14.1, 14.2, and 14.5 through 14.9 of this Part are effective  
 39 when this Part becomes law, provided that distributions from the Fund shall begin in the 2024  
 40 election year. G.S. 163-278.152(b)(5), as enacted by Section 14.2 of this Part, and Section 14.3  
 41 of this Part become effective January 1, 2024, and apply to the membership fees due for 2024.  
 42 Section 14.4 of this Part is effective for taxable years beginning on or after January 1, 2024. The  
 43 remainder of this Part is effective when it becomes law.

## 44 **PART XV. CERTAIN INDIVIDUALS' VOTING RIGHTS RESTORED**

45 **SECTION 15.1.** G.S. 13-1 reads as rewritten:

46 **"§ 13-1. Restoration of citizenship.**

47 Any person convicted of a crime, whereby the rights of citizenship are forfeited, shall have  
 48 such rights automatically restored upon the occurrence of any one of the following conditions:

- 49 (1) ~~The unconditional discharge of an inmate, of a probationer, or of a parolee by~~  
 50 ~~the agency of the State having jurisdiction of that person or of a defendant~~  
 51

1 ~~under a suspended sentence by the court.~~release from active punishment to a  
 2 period of post-release supervision or parole of a person whose sentence was  
 3 not suspended by the court.

4 (1a) Upon the suspension of an active sentence resulting in the imposition of an  
 5 intermediate or community punishment.

6 ...."

7 **SECTION 15.2.** G.S. 13-2(a) reads as rewritten:

8 "(a) The agency, department, or court having jurisdiction over the ~~inmate, probationer,~~  
 9 ~~parolee or defendant person~~ at the time ~~his~~ the person's rights of citizenship are restored under  
 10 the provisions of G.S. 13-1(1) or (1a) shall immediately issue a certificate or order in duplicate  
 11 evidencing the ~~offender's unconditional~~ person's discharge and specifying the restoration of ~~his~~  
 12 the person's rights of citizenship.

13 The original of such certificate or order shall be promptly transmitted to the clerk of the  
 14 General Court of Justice in the county where the official record of the case from which the  
 15 conviction arose is filed. The clerk shall then file the certificate or order without charge with the  
 16 official record of the case."

17 **SECTION 15.3.** G.S. 163-82.14(c) reads as rewritten:

18 "(c) Conviction of a Felony. –

19 (1) Report of Conviction Within the State. – The State Board of Elections, on or  
 20 before the fifteenth day of every month, shall report to the county board of  
 21 elections of that county the name, county of residence, and residence address  
 22 if available, of each individual against whom a final judgment of conviction  
 23 of a felony has been entered in that county in the preceding calendar  
 24 ~~month.~~ month and whose rights have been forfeited and not yet restored under  
 25 G.S. 13-1.

26 (2) Report of Federal Conviction. – The Executive Director of the State Board of  
 27 Elections, upon receipt of a notice of conviction sent by a United States  
 28 Attorney pursuant to section 8(g) of the National Voter Registration Act, shall  
 29 notify the appropriate county boards of elections of ~~the conviction.~~ any  
 30 conviction for which citizen rights have been forfeited and not yet restored  
 31 under G.S. 13-1.

32 (3) County Board's Duty Upon Receiving Report of Conviction. – When a county  
 33 board of elections receives a notice pursuant to subdivision (1) or (2) of this  
 34 subsection relating to a resident of that county and that person is registered to  
 35 vote in that county, the board shall, after giving 30 days' written notice to the  
 36 voter at his registration address, and if the voter makes no objection, remove  
 37 the person's name from its registration records. If the voter notifies the county  
 38 board of elections of his objection to the removal within 30 days of the notice,  
 39 the chairman of the board of elections shall enter a challenge under  
 40 G.S. 163-85(c)(5), and the notice the county board received pursuant to this  
 41 subsection shall be prima facie evidence for the preliminary hearing that the  
 42 registrant was convicted of a ~~felony.~~ felony and the registrant's citizenship  
 43 rights have not been restored."

44  
 45 **PART XVI. PENALTIES FOR VIOLATIONS OF THIS ACT**

46 **SECTION 16.1.** It is unlawful to try to evade the reporting and disclosure  
 47 requirements of Parts X through XIII of this act by structuring, or attempting to structure, any  
 48 solicitation, contribution, donation, expenditure, disbursement, or other transaction. The penalty  
 49 for any violation of these Parts of the act shall be not less than the amount contributed or  
 50 undisclosed or greater than double that amount contributed or undisclosed.

1 **PART XVII. SEVERABILITY**

2           **SECTION 17.1.** If any provision of this act or its application is held invalid, the  
3 invalidity does not affect other provisions or applications of this act that can be given effect  
4 without the invalid provisions or application and, to this end, the provisions of this act are  
5 severable.

6  
7 **PART XVIII. EFFECTIVE DATE**

8           **SECTION 18.1.** Except as otherwise provided, this act is effective when it becomes  
9 law.