EXHIBIT 11

An Act to Provide Aid to North Carolinians in Response to the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Crisis, Sl. 2020-3 §4.1(c) (May 4, 2020)
AN ACT TO PROVIDE AID TO NORTH CAROLINIAN'S IN RESPONSE TO THE CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 (COVID-19) CRISIS.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

PART I. ECONOMIC SUPPORT

WAIVE ACCRUAL OF INTEREST ON DEFERRED PAYMENT OF CORPORATE INCOME AND FRANCHISE TAX AND INDIVIDUAL INCOME TAX AND EXTEND CERTAIN TAX-RELATED DEADLINES

SECTION 1.1.(a) Interest Waiver. – As a result of the COVID-19 outbreak, the Secretary of Revenue has extended the franchise, corporate income, and individual income tax payment deadline from April 15, 2020, to July 15, 2020, and pursuant to G.S. 105-249.2, the Secretary will not assess a penalty for failure to file a return or pay a tax due as long as the return is filed and the tax due is paid by July 15, 2020. Notwithstanding G.S. 105-241.21(b), the Secretary of Revenue shall also waive the accrual of interest from April 15, 2020, through July 15, 2020, on an underpayment of tax imposed on a franchise, corporate income, or individual income tax return, including a partnership and estate and trust tax return, due from April 15, 2020, through July 15, 2020. The relief from accrual of interest from April 15, 2020, through July 15, 2020, also includes interest imposed pursuant to G.S. 105-163.15 and G.S. 105-163.41 for payments due on or before July 15, 2020.

SECTION 1.1.(b) Refund Request. – For franchise, corporate income, and individual income tax, the statute of limitations for obtaining a refund is extended to July 15, 2020, for refund claims for which the statute of limitations to seek a refund expires on or after April 15, 2020, and before July 15, 2020.

SECTION 1.1.(c) Time-Sensitive Actions. – Certain actions required to be taken by a taxpayer on or after April 1, 2020, and before July 15, 2020, will be considered timely if the request or petition is filed on or before July 15, 2020. This subsection applies to requests for Departmental review under G.S. 105-241.11, petitions for a contested case hearing at the Office of Administrative Hearings under Article 3 of Chapter 150B of the General Statutes and G.S. 105-241.15, and petitions for judicial review under Article 4 of Chapter 150B of the General Statutes and G.S. 105-241.16.

SECTION 1.1.(d) This section is effective when it becomes law.

FLEXIBILITY TO ADMINISTER UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION AND SUTA TAX CREDIT

SECTION 1.2.(a) Chapter 96 of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new section to read:

"§ 96-14.15. Emergency unemployment benefits and tax credit to respond to the coronavirus emergency of 2020.

(a) Benefits Payable. – Unemployment benefits are payable in response to the coronavirus emergency in any of the following circumstances:
SECTION 3F.1.(d) This section is effective when it becomes law and expires 30 days after Executive Order No. 116 is rescinded.

INCREASED ACCESS TO TELEHEALTH UNDER THE MEDICARE PROGRAM

SECTION 3F.2. The General Assembly urges the federal Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services to provide reimbursement for health care delivered through audio-only communication, such as over the telephone, under the Medicare program in order to reduce barriers and increase access to health care for older adults.

PART IV. CONTINUITY OF STATE GOVERNMENT/REGULATORY RELIEF

EMERGENCY VIDEO NOTARIZATION

SECTION 4.1.(a) G.S. 10B-3 is amended by adding a new subdivision to read:

"(7a) Emergency video notarization. – An acknowledgement, affirmation, or oath notarization completed by a notary in compliance with the requirements of G.S. 10B-25. Emergency video notarization shall not include a verification proof as defined in G.S. 10B-3(28)."

SECTION 4.1.(b) G.S. 10B-10 reads as rewritten:

"§ 10B-10. Commission; oath of office; emergency extension.

…

(b) Except as provided in subsection (b1) of this section, the appointee shall appear before the register of deeds no later than 45 days after commissioning and shall be duly qualified by taking the general oath of office prescribed in G.S. 11-11 and the oath prescribed for officers in G.S. 11-7.

(b1) Notwithstanding subsection (b) of this section, if the Secretary grants a commission after March 9, 2020, and before August 1, 2020, the appointee shall have 90 days to appear before the register of deeds to take the general oath of office. A register of deeds may administer the required oath to such appointee using video conference technology provided the appointee is personally known to the register of deeds or the appointee provides satisfactory evidence of the appointee's identity to the register of deeds. As used in this subsection, video conference technology and satisfactory evidence are as defined in G.S. 10B-25.

…

(e) If the appointee does not appear before the register of deeds within 45 days of commissioning, the time prescribed in this section, the register of deeds must return the commission to the Secretary, and the appointee must reapply for commissioning. If the appointee reapplies within one year of the granting of the commission, the Secretary may waive the educational requirements of this Chapter."

SECTION 4.1.(c) Part 3 of Article 1 of Chapter 10B of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new section to read:

"§ 10B-25. Emergency video notarization.

(a) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, a notary may perform an emergency video notarization using video conference technology provided all of the requirements of this section are satisfied. A notary who is not satisfied that the principal's identity has been proven by satisfactory evidence shall not be required to complete an emergency video notarization. An emergency video notarization shall not change any originality verification requirements for recording with a register of deeds, clerk of superior court, or other government or private office in this State. Nothing in this section shall apply to any notarization under Article 20 of Chapter 163 of the General Statutes.

(b) As used in this section, video conference technology is electronic communication that:

(1) Occurs in real time.
(1a) Allows direct interaction between the principal seeking the notary's services and the notary so that each can communicate simultaneously by sight and sound through an electronic device or process.

(2) Includes audio with sound clear enough that each participant in the notarial act can hear and understand all other participants.

(3) Has sufficient quality to allow a clear and unobstructed visual observation of the face of each participant, and any identification provided by the principal for a sufficient time to allow the notary to determine if it is satisfactory evidence. The notary shall determine if the time is sufficient.

(4) Is not prerecorded video or audio or both.

(5) May be capable of recording by means of one of the following:
   a. The video conference technology's recording and storage services.
   b. An independent video recording device.
   c. Electronically saved screenshots clearly showing each participant's face, identification presented by the principal, and the notarized document.

(c) The requirement of personal appearance, appear in person before a notary, physical presence, and presence, as those terms are used in this Chapter, are satisfied for the purpose of an emergency video notarization if the notary is physically present in North Carolina, the principal verifies to the notary that he or she is physically present in North Carolina at the time of the notarization, the principal identifies the county where he or she is located at the time of the notarial act, and the principal and notary use video conference technology that complies with the requirements of this section.

(d) A notary who has personal knowledge of a principal may rely on the video conference technology to verify the principal's identity unless the notary, in the notary's sole discretion, requires satisfactory evidence. A notary who does not have personal knowledge of a principal shall require satisfactory evidence of the principal's identity. The requirement of satisfactory evidence, as that term is used in this Chapter, is satisfied for the purpose of an emergency video notarization if identification of the principal is based on at least one document that meets all of the following:
   (1) Is current or, if expired, did not expire prior to March 10, 2020.
   (2) Is issued by a federal, state, or federal or state-recognized tribal government agency.
   (3) Bears a photographic image of the principal's face.
   (4) Has both the principal's signature and a physical description of the principal.

(e) The notary shall use video conference technology to observe each principal sign each document that is to be notarized. The principal shall verbally state what documents are being signed for the notarial record. After the document is signed by the principal, the principal or the principal's designee shall do the following:
   (1) If an original wet-signed notarization on an original wet-signed document is not required, transmit a legible copy of the signed document to the notary by fax or other electronic means on the same day it was signed. The notary shall notarize the document on the same day the notary receives the document, and the notary shall transmit the notarized document back to the principal or the principal's designee by physical delivery, fax, or other electronic means on the same day the notary signed the document.

   (2) If an original wet-signed notarization on an original wet-signed document is required, transmit a legible copy of the signed document by fax or other electronic means to the notary on the same day on which the document was signed and also deliver the original signed document to the notary by mail or other physical method. The notary shall compare the original document with
If the faxed or electronic document is the same as the document received by mail or physical delivery, the notary shall notarize the wet signature on the original document and date the notarial act as of the date of the act observed using video conference technology and promptly transmit the original wet-notarized original document to the principal or the principal's designee by mail or other physical delivery as directed by the principal.

(f) If the notarial act is an oath or affirmation, the notary shall administer the oath or affirmation to the affiant using video conference technology.

(g) An acknowledgement or jurat certificate for an emergency video notarization shall include all of the following:

1. The North Carolina county in which the notary public was located during the emergency video notarization.
2. The North Carolina county in which the principal stated he or she was physically located during the emergency video notarization.
3. The following statement:

   I signed this notarial certificate on __________ (Date) according to the emergency video notarization requirements contained in G.S. 10B-25.

(h) If an acknowledgement or jurat certificate provided to a notary does not include the statement required by subsection (g) of this section, the notary shall insert the statement. By making or giving a notarial certificate using emergency video notarization, whether or not stated in the certificate, a notary certifies compliance with all the requirements of this section.

(i) A notary who performs an emergency video notarization shall record information about the notarization in a notary journal that is the exclusive property of the notary. The journal shall be retained by the notary for at least 10 years and may be maintained in electronic form. The notary shall keep the journal in a secure location and shall not allow another person to make entries in the journal. A notary may surrender the journal to the notary's employer upon termination of employment, but the notary shall also keep and maintain an accurate copy of the journal.

(j) At a minimum, for each emergency video notarization, the notary shall include the following information in the journal:

1. The time of day when the notary observed the signing of the document by each principal and was presented with the principal's acceptable form of identification.
2. The date of the completion of the emergency video notarization notarial certificate.
3. The last and first name of each principal.
4. The type of notarial act performed.
5. The type of document notarized or proceeding performed.
6. The type of acceptable form of identification presented including, if applicable, the issuing agency and identification number on the identification presented.
7. The type of video conference technology used during the emergency video notarization.
8. A statement that the notary and each principal could see and hear each other.
9. Whether any other person was present with the principal at the time of signature and if so, the name of that person.

(k) A third party involved in a transaction that utilizes an emergency video notarization may require additional information to be included in the journal kept by the notary under subsection (j) of this section such as inclusion of a recording in the notary's journal or the method
used by the notary to determine that a wet-signed original document is the same as the faxed or electronically submitted document.

(f) As a public official, a notary shall maintain the confidentiality of a principal's documents at all times.

(m) The Secretary may issue interpretive guidance or issue emergency or temporary rules as necessary to ensure the integrity of the emergency video notarization measures provided for in this section.

(n) This section shall expire at 12:01 A.M. on August 1, 2020; provided, however, all notarial acts made in accordance with this section and while this section is in effect shall remain effective and shall not need to be reaffirmed.

SECTION 4.1.(d) This section is effective when it becomes law.

EMERGENCY VIDEO WITNESSING

SECTION 4.2.(a) Chapter 10B of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new Article to read:

"Article 3.
"Video Witnessing During State of Emergency.

"§ 10B-200. Applicability.
(a) This Article applies to the witnessing and signature of all records, as defined in G.S. 10B-3(19), signed, by a principal physically located in the State of North Carolina, on or after the effective date of this act.
(b) This Article expires August 1, 2020.
(c) No action described in this Article constitutes a notarial act, as defined in G.S. 10B-3(11), and no action described in this Article is governed by Article 1 or 2 of this Chapter.

"§ 10B-201. Emergency video witnessing.
(a) Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, any person who witnesses the signature of a record through video conference technology shall be considered an "in-person" witness, and the record shall be considered to have been signed by the principal signer "in the presence of" such witness, if the video conference technology allows for direct, real-time audio and video interaction between each principal signer and the witness.
(b) Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, an attesting witness to a record shall be considered to have signed such record in the presence of the principal signer, if all of the following are satisfied:
(1) The signature of the principal signer is witnessed by the attesting witness in accordance with the requirements of subsection (a) of this section.
(2) The attesting witness immediately thereafter signs such record while the video conference technology still allows for direct, real-time audio and video interaction between the principal signer and the attesting witness.
(c) Any record witnessed pursuant to this section shall contain all of the following:
(1) A conspicuous statement indicating that the record was witnessed by one or more witnesses physically located in the State of North Carolina pursuant to this Article.
(2) The county in which each remote witness was physically located when witnessing execution of the record.
(3) The county in which each principal signer was physically located during the witnessed execution of the record.
(d) Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, absent an express prohibition in a legal document against signing in counterparts, any record witnessed pursuant to this Article may be signed in counterpart, which counterparts, when combined, shall create a single original record."
EXHIBIT 12

North Carolina Absentee Application and Certificate, made available by Pitt County, North Carolina
Absence Application and Certificate

Fraudulently or Falsely completing this form is a Class 1 felony under Chapter 163 of the N.C. General Statutes

The following people are PROHIBITED from signing the Witnesses’ Certification:

For all voters: a candidate, UNLESS the candidate is the voter’s near relative;

For voters who are patients or residents of a hospital, clinic, nursing home, or adult care home: (1) an owner, manager, director, or employee of that facility; (2) an individual who holds any federal, State, or local elective office; and (3) an individual who holds office in a State, congressional district, county or precinct political party or organization, or who is a campaign manager or treasurer for any candidate or political party.

Affix NON-BARCODE
Label HERE

Affix BARCODE
Label HERE

Board Approval Date

Voter’s Certification (Required)
I am applying for an absentee ballot • I am a duly qualified voter, registered as an affiliate of the political party indicated on this application • All information represented on this application is correct • I am entitled to vote in this election • If I am an Unaffiliated voter voting in a primary election, I am voting in the party primary indicated on the attached label • If the party indicated is (UNA), I am voting a nonpartisan ballot.

I further certify that I marked the enclosed ballot (or it was marked for me according to my instructions) in the presence of:

☐ two (2) witnesses who are at least 18 years of age and who are not disqualified by law to witness the casting of my absentee ballot (the witnesses must complete the Option 1 of the Witnesses’ Certification)

OR

☐ a notary public (the notary must complete Option 2 of the Witnesses’ Certification)

Signature of Voter (Required)
Date

Name Correction (if applicable)

Signature of Assistant (if applicable)
Date

Address where application and ballots should be mailed

Voter Assistant Certification (if applicable)
I certify that: • The voter requested my assistance • I assisted the Voter by marking the ballot only according to the Voter’s instruction; and/or I assisted the Voter in completing the Absentee Application and Certificate • I assisted the Voter only in the Voter’s presence • I am the Voter’s near relative or verifiable legal guardian, or I am providing assistance because a near relative or legal guardian is unavailable to assist the Voter.

Signature of Assistant
Date

Witnesses’ Certification

Option 1: Two (2) Witnesses
(Required Unless a Notary Public is the Witness)
I certify that: • I am at least 18 years old • I am not disqualified from witnessing the ballot as described in the WARNING on the flap of this envelope • The Voter marked the enclosed ballot in my presence, or caused it to be marked in the Voter’s presence according to his/her instruction • The Voter signed this Absentee Application and Certificate, or caused it to be signed • I respected the secrecy of the ballot and the Voter’s privacy, unless I assisted the Voter at his/her request [complete Voter Assistant Certification section].

Witness #1

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<td>Address (Required)</td>
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<td>City, State and Zip</td>
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Witness #2

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<td>Address (Required)</td>
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<td>City, State and Zip</td>
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Option 2: Notary Public as Witness
(Required Unless Two Witnesses Provided)
I certify that: on the ____________ day of ____________________________, 20 ________, the Voter:

_________________________________________ personally appeared before me, was positively identified, and in my presence, the Voter marked the enclosed ballot, or caused it to be marked in my presence according to the Voter’s presence according to his/her instruction • The Voter signed this Absentee Application and Certificate, or caused it to be signed • I am at least 18 years old • I am not disqualified from witnessing the ballot as described in the WARNING on the flap of this envelope • I respected the secrecy of the ballot and the privacy of the Voter, unless I assisted the Voter at his/her request [complete Voter Assistant Certification section].

Signature (Required)
Date

Address where application and ballots should be mailed

Case 1:20-cv-00457-WO-JLW   Document 12-8   Filed 06/05/20   Page 8 of 39
EXHIBIT 13

Federal Write-in Absentee Ballot, made available by the Federal Voting Assistance Program
Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot

- If you do not receive your absentee ballot in enough time to meet your state’s deadlines, use this ballot as a backup. If you send in this ballot and receive your state’s ballot later, you should fill out and return your state ballot as well. Your election office will count only one ballot.

- The following require you to register and request an absentee ballot before filling out this form: AL, AS, AR, CT, FL, GU, HI, ID, IL, IN, KS, LA, NH, NJ, NM, NY, PA, PR, RI, SD, TX, WI, WV, and WY. If your state or territory is listed, complete a Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) online at FVAP.gov.

- If you already registered and requested a ballot, send in the Voter Information page and the Official Backup Ballot.

- Please be aware that some states will accept this form as registration and as an absentee ballot request for future elections.

You can vote wherever you are. This is how.

1. Fill out your Voter Information page completely and accurately.
   - Your U.S. voting residence address is used to determine where you are eligible to vote absentee. For military voters, it is usually your last address in your state of legal residence. For overseas citizens, it is usually the last place you lived before moving overseas. You do not need to have any current ties with this address. DO NOT write a PO Box # in section 2.
   - Most states allow you to provide a Driver’s License number or the last 4 digits of your SSN. Some states require a full SSN. See your state’s guidelines at FVAP.gov.
   - If you cannot receive mail at your mailing address, please specify a mail forwarding address.
   - Most states require you to specify a political party to vote in primary elections. This information may be used to register you with a party.
   - **Section 6 Requirements:** Alabama requires two witness signatures; Alaska, Virginia and Wisconsin, require one witness signature; Puerto Rico requires your mother’s and father’s first name; Vermont requires a voter’s oath. Additional state instructions can be found at FVAP.gov.
   - Remember to sign the bottom of the Voter Information page!

2. Carefully fill out and seal your Official Backup Ballot.
   - DO NOT sign your ballot or include any personal information. Keep your ballot anonymous.
   - If using a self-sealing form, remove the adhesive liner, fold and seal tightly.
   - If you printed out the form, fold the voted ballot and seal it in an envelope marked “ballot enclosed”.

3. Assemble your documents for mailing.
   - Put your Voter Information page and Official Backup Ballot into the mailing envelope.
   - You can find the address for your election office at FVAP.gov.
   - All states accept this form by mail, but they vary on email and fax. See your state’s rules in the Voting Assistance Guide online at FVAP.gov.

Questions?
Email vote@fvap.gov

Agency Disclosure Statement

The public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 15 minutes per response, including time to review instructions, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing the burden to: Department of Defense, Washington Headquarters Services, Executive Services Directorate, Information Management Division, 4800 Mark Center Dr., East Tower, Suite 03F09, Alexandria, VA 22350-3100. [OMB Control #0704-0502]. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to any penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number. DO NOT RETURN YOUR FORM TO THE ADDRESS ABOVE.

Privacy Advisory

When completed, this form contains personally identifiable information and is protected by the Privacy Act of 1974, as amended.
Voter Information

Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB)

Print clearly in blue or black ink, please see back for instructions.

1. Who are you? Pick one.
For absent Uniformed Service members, their families, and citizens residing outside the United States. □ I am on active duty in the Uniformed Services or Merchant Marine -OR- □ I am an eligible spouse or dependent. □ I am a U.S. citizen living outside the country, and I intend to return. □ I am a U.S. citizen living outside the country, and my intent to return is uncertain. □ I am a U.S. citizen living outside the country, and I have never lived in the United States.

Last name
First name
Middle name
Social Security Number

2. What is your U.S. voting residence address?
Your voting materials will not be sent to this address. See instructions on other side of form.
Street address
City, town, village
County

3. Where are you now? You MUST give your CURRENT contact information.
Your mailing address. (Different from above)
Your mail forwarding address. (If different from mailing address)

4. What is your contact information? This is so election officials can reach you about your request.
Provide the country code and area code with your phone and fax number. Do not use a Defense Switched Network (DSN) number.
Email:
Alternate email:
Phone:
Fax:

5. What are your preferences for future elections?
A. Do you want to register and request a ballot for all elections you are eligible to vote in? □ Yes □ No
B. How do you want to receive voting materials from your election office? □ Mail □ Email or online □ Fax
C. What is your political party for primary elections?

6. What additional information must you provide?
The following need more information: Alabama, Alaska, Puerto Rico, Vermont, Virginia and Wisconsin, see back for instructions. Additional state instructions can be found at FVAP.gov.

7. You must read and sign this statement.
I swear or affirm, under penalty of perjury, that:
- The information on this form is true, accurate, and complete to the best of my knowledge. I understand that a material misstatement of fact in completion of this document may constitute grounds for conviction of perjury.
- I am a U.S. citizen, at least 18 years of age (or will be by the day of election), eligible to vote in the requested jurisdiction, and
- I am not disqualified to vote due to having been convicted of a felony or other disqualifying offense, nor have I been adjudicated mentally incompetent; or if so, my voting rights have been reinstated; and
- I am not registering, requesting a ballot, or voting in any other jurisdiction in the United States, except the jurisdiction cited in this voting form.
- In voting, I have marked and sealed this ballot in private and have not allowed any person to observe the marking of this ballot, except those authorized to assist voters under State and Federal law.

Sign here

Today’s date (MM/DD/YYYY) / /
Official Backup Ballot
Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB)

Print clearly in blue or black ink.

Instructions
- This ballot can be used to vote for federal offices.
- DO NOT write your name or any identifying number (SSN, driver’s license) on this ballot.
- Photocopy this page if you require additional room for candidates or ballot initiatives.
- If you are voting in American Samoa, Guam, Puerto Rico, or the U.S. Virgin Islands, you may vote for Delegate or Resident Commissioner, and in presidential primaries.
- State laws vary about using the FWAB for other offices like Governor or Mayor. Learn more online at FVAP.gov.

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<td>U.S. Senator</td>
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<td>U. S. Representative, Delegate, or Resident Commissioner to Congress</td>
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Standard Form 186 (Rev.04-2019), OMB No. 0704-0502
Official Ballot
Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot

Fold your ballot and keep it private. Put it in the envelope.
Before you seal this envelope:

1. Sign and fold your *Voter Information* page.
2. Fold and seal your *Official Backup Ballot*.
3. Put both inside this envelope, and mail it to your election office. The address can be found at FVAP.gov.

For election officials:

This is an official Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot authorized by 52 U.S.C. § 20301.

If you have questions about it, contact your State officials.
From
(Your name and mailing address.)

International airmail postage is required if not mailed using the U.S. Postal Service, APO/FPO/DPO system, or diplomatic pouch.

I have enclosed my ballot for the [ ] [ ] election.

MM YYYY
EXHIBIT 14

Recommendations for Election Polling Locations, published by the CDC
Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

Recommendations for Election Polling Locations
Interim guidance to prevent spread of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)

Updated March 27, 2020

Summary of changes:

- Encourage moving election polling locations away from long term care facilities and facilities housing older persons to minimize COVID-19 exposure among older individuals and those with chronic medical conditions.
- Updated EPA COVID Disinfectant link.

Background

There is much to learn about the novel coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) that causes coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). Based on what is currently known about SARS-CoV-2 and about similar coronaviruses, spread from person-to-person happens most frequently among close contacts (within about 6 feet). This type of transmission occurs via respiratory droplets. Transmission of SARS-CoV-2 to persons from surfaces contaminated with the virus has not been documented. Transmission of coronavirus in general occurs much more commonly through respiratory droplets than through contact with contaminated surfaces. Current evidence suggests that SARS-CoV-2 may remain viable for hours to days on surfaces made from a variety of materials. Cleaning of visibly dirty surfaces followed by disinfection is a best practice measure for prevention of COVID-19 and other viral respiratory illnesses in election polling locations.

Purpose

This guidance provides recommendations on the routine cleaning and disinfection of polling location areas and associated voting equipment (e.g., pens, voting machines, computers). It suggests actions that polling station workers can take to reduce the risk of exposure to COVID-19 by limiting the survival of the virus in the environment. This guidance will be updated if additional information becomes available.

Definitions:

- Community settings (e.g. polling locations, households, schools, daycares, businesses) encompass most non-healthcare settings and are visited by the general public.
- Cleaning refers to the removal of dirt and impurities including germs from surfaces. Cleaning alone does not kill germs. But by removing them, it decreases the number of germs and therefore any risk of spreading infection.
- Disinfecting kills germs on surfaces. Disinfecting works by using chemicals to kill germs on surfaces. This process does not necessarily clean dirty surfaces or remove germs. But killing germs remaining on a surface after cleaning further reduce any risk of spreading infection.

Actions for elections officials in advance of election day

- Encourage voters to use voting methods that minimize direct contact with other people and reduce crowd size at polling stations.
  - Encourage mail-in methods of voting if allowed in the jurisdiction.
  - Encourage early voting, where voter crowds may be smaller throughout the day. This minimizes the number of individuals a voter may come in contact with.
  - Encourage drive-up voting for eligible voters if allowed in the jurisdiction.
  - Encourage voters planning to vote in-person on election day to arrive at off-peak times. For example, if voter crowds are lighter mid-morning, advertise that in advance to the community.
Preventive actions polling workers can take

- **Stay at home if you have fever, respiratory symptoms, or believe you are sick**
- **Practice hand hygiene frequently**: wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- **Practice routine cleaning of frequently touched surfaces**: including tables, doorknobs, light switches, handles, desks, toilets, faucets, sinks, etc.
- **Disinfect surfaces that may be contaminated with germs after cleaning**: A list of products with EPA-approved emerging viral pathogens claims is available. Products with EPA-approved emerging viral pathogens claims are expected to be effective against the virus that causes COVID-19 based on data for harder to kill viruses. Follow the manufacturer’s instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products (e.g., concentration, application method and contact time, use of personal protective equipment).
- **Clean and disinfect voting-associated equipment (e.g., voting machines, laptops, tablets, keyboards) routinely**: Follow the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products.
  - Consult with the voting machine manufacturer for guidance on appropriate disinfection products for voting machines and associated electronics.
  - Consider use of wipeable covers for electronics.
  - If no manufacturer guidance is available, consider the use of alcohol-based wipes or spray containing at least 70% alcohol to clean voting machine buttons and touch screens. Dry surfaces thoroughly to avoid pooling of liquids.

Preventive action polling stations workers can take for themselves and the general public

Based on available data, the most important measures to prevent transmission of viruses in crowded public areas include careful and consistent cleaning of one’s hands. Therefore:

- **Ensure bathrooms at the polling station are supplied adequately with soap, water, and drying materials so visitors and staff can wash their hands.**
- **Provide an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol** for use before or after using the voting machine or the final step in the voting process. Consider placing the alcohol-based hand sanitizer in visible, frequently used locations such as registration desks and exits.
- **Incorporate social distancing strategies, as feasible.** Social distancing strategies increase the space between individuals and decrease the frequency of contact among individuals to reduce the risk of spreading a disease. Keeping individuals at least 6 feet apart is ideal based on what is known about COVID-19. If this is not feasible, efforts should be made to keep individuals as far apart as is practical. Feasibility of strategies will depend on the space available in the polling station and the number of voters who arrive at one time. Polling station workers can:
  - Increase distance between voting booths.
  - Limit nonessential visitors. For example, poll workers should be encouraged not to bring children, grandchildren, etc. with them as they work the polls.
  - Remind voters upon arrival to try to leave space between themselves and others. Encourage voters to stay 6 feet apart if feasible. Polling places may provide signs to help voters and workers remember this.
  - Discourage voters and workers from greeting others with physical contact (e.g., handshakes). Include this reminder on signs about social distancing.

Recommendations for processing mail-in ballots

- Workers handling mail in ballots should practice hand hygiene frequently
References

- Handwashing: Clean Hands Save Lives
- Protect Yourself & Your Family

No additional precautions are recommended for storage of ballots
EXHIBIT 15

The 2014 EAC Election Administration and Voting Survey Comprehensive Report (Table 39), published by the U.S. Election Assistance Comm’n
A Summary of Key Findings

The Impact of the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 on the Administration of Elections for Federal Office 2013-2014

Survey Findings of the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act
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<td>...</td>
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<td>...</td>
<td>351 100.0</td>
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<td>730,926</td>
<td>7,889</td>
<td>16,315</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>16,568</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>27,034</td>
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<td>D4a</td>
<td>D4b</td>
<td>D4c</td>
<td>D4d</td>
<td>D4e</td>
<td>D4f</td>
<td>calc</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### TABLE 39. NUMBER AND AGES OF POLL WORKERS

Questions D3, D4. Number of poll workers used and age category.

**Question D3**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arizona</td>
<td>Maricopa County also hired 116 citizen board troubleshooters that do not serve as polling place board workers but are assigned several specific polling place locations to assist the board workers at these locations with any issues that come up on Election Day. This quantity of additional workers (116) is NOT reflected in the Maricopa’s D3 grand total.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indiana</td>
<td>One jurisdiction commented that its poll worker total includes Election Day and satellite workers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California</td>
<td>One county noted that its D3 figure does not include reserve workers and couriers (46 cases). Another county commented that its D3 figure includes poll workers and rover/super rovers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minnesota</td>
<td>One county noted that their figure for D3 is an estimate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DC</td>
<td>The DC Board of Elections tracks the ages of poll workers by percentage, rather than number.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Hampshire</td>
<td>Minimum required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>Bay County lost a large number of poll workers midcycle and had to continually recruit additional workers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>Three jurisdictions reported that their D3 figures included only Election Day workers, while four jurisdictions indicated that their totals included both workers for both Election Day and early voting. One jurisdiction commented that its Election Day workers were the same as its early voting workers. Another jurisdiction noted that its total included workers who were exclusively ballot board, central count, temporary workers, security, or IT. One jurisdiction included both typical and student election workers in its count. One jurisdiction commented that its figure for D3 is an estimate. One jurisdiction commented, “Double the total of D3a if primary, there is never less than three persons at a polling place, if a particular polling place is heavy Hispanic then an interpreter is added, even if there is an interpreter at the main election office.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Vermont

One jurisdiction reported that it held 2-hour shifts for four ballot workers throughout the day, and its total also includes BCA counters. A different jurisdiction noted that its D3 total does not include one individual who came to help count only. Another jurisdiction indicated that its total includes both volunteer and paid vote counters (hand count town). One jurisdiction indicated that its total includes the town clerk and the assistant town clerk, while a different jurisdiction reported that it did not include its town clerk or assistant town clerk in its total. One jurisdiction noted that its total does not include the people who helped count votes.

Wyoming

One jurisdiction indicated that its total for D3 includes polling place workers, absentee board members, test board members, canvass board members, and alternate workers.
### TABLE 39. NUMBER AND AGES OF POLL WORKERS

**Questions D3, D4. Number of poll workers used and age category.**

**Question D4**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arkansas</td>
<td>One jurisdiction commented that most of its election workers are over 40 years old, while another jurisdiction commented that most of its election workers are between 61 and 70 years old.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indiana</td>
<td>The average age of poll workers in Clay County was 60.58. Another jurisdiction estimated that the average age of its poll workers was between 45 and 70; two other jurisdictions estimated the average age to be between 45 and 60. One jurisdiction commented that it “had a lot more [poll workers] over 71, but they could not work. This includes alternates.” Another jurisdiction reported that its oldest poll worker was 88 years old. Two jurisdictions reported that their average poll worker ages skewed high.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arizona</td>
<td>Maricopa County implemented a student poll workers program back in 2008. Since its inception, it has realized a steady increase in participation among students. For the 2014 election, of the 3,848 workers in Maricopa County, over 152 of these board workers were students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louisiana</td>
<td>Data not available.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California</td>
<td>Thirteen counties indicated that the poll worker data was unavailable for certain groups of poll workers; one county indicated that it did not have age data for any poll workers. One jurisdiction noted that it was entirely vote by mail, so it did not have any poll workers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minnesota</td>
<td>Minnesota does not collect age data.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colorado</td>
<td>Seven jurisdictions commented that poll worker age information was unavailable. One jurisdiction commented that it had 31 student judges, but otherwise, it does not track by age.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Hampshire</td>
<td>Data not available.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>Notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>New York does not capture demographic information regarding poll workers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vermont</td>
<td>One jurisdiction commented that all of its poll workers appear to be over 40 years old. Another jurisdiction noted that its figures for QD4 were mostly estimates. A fourth jurisdiction indicated that the individual who came in to count was in the 61 to 70 age range category.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Carolina</td>
<td>Age data not available for poll workers 18 years of age and older.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington</td>
<td>One jurisdiction commented that its figures for D4 do not include permanent staff, only temporary staff hired specifically to work at an accessible voting center.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Dakota</td>
<td>One jurisdiction indicated that it did not have age data for 12 of its poll workers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Virginia</td>
<td>One jurisdiction estimated its age breakdown to be 10% for 26–40, 70% for 41–60, and 20% for 61–70. Another jurisdiction indicated that its responses for D4 are approximate totals. Two jurisdictions commented that the majority of its poll workers were between 41 and 60 years of age.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>One jurisdiction reported that it does not collect age data. Another jurisdiction reported that it included age counts for both Election Day and early voting election workers. One jurisdiction indicated that it only had age data available for its student election workers; similarly, another jurisdiction commented, &quot;While no exact figures are readily available, the bulk of election workers are in the older three groupings, with a handful of younger adults and six student clerks.&quot; One jurisdiction reported that most of its poll workers are over 65 years of age. Two jurisdictions reported that their D4 figures were estimates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wyoming</td>
<td>One jurisdiction reported that its oldest worker was 84, and its youngest worker was 35. Another jurisdiction commented that &quot;most will be unable to serve in 2 years.&quot; A third jurisdiction reported that it had one student judge, but it does not track the ages of its other poll workers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
EXHIBIT 16

Chair Fudge, Ranking Member Davis, and Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony for your field hearing on voting rights and election administration in North Carolina, and to share the experiences of this state’s voters, who in recent years have been subjected to consistent attacks on voting access and deliberate, extreme racial and partisan gerrymanders. These measures have undermined both the ability for voters to participate in elections and the effectiveness of participation itself—by design. North Carolina’s experience underscores the necessity of congressional action to both restore the full protections of the Voting Rights Act and establish new standards to facilitate meaningful access to the political process.

My name is Tomas Lopez, and I am the executive director of Democracy North Carolina. We are a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that works to, among other goals, protect the right to vote in our state. As part of this work, we seek to bring North Carolinians—especially historically underrepresented people of color—into the political process and encourage their participation and leadership through voting, monitoring the election process, and issue advocacy. We also author original research on election administration, help coordinate a statewide nonpartisan poll monitoring and voter assistance network, and advocate for policies and practices that we believe will increase voter access and participation. Prior to this position, I was a voting rights attorney at the Brennan Center for Justice at NYU School of Law, where I litigated voting rights cases in the federal courts, contributed to research on election law and administration, and supported election reform efforts in several states.

This submission addresses several issues:

- Repeated efforts to restrict voting access through several means, including strict photo identification requirements and reductions to early voting;
- The voting experience in North Carolina, especially as to voters subjected to dysfunction and intimidation;
- The perpetuation of false narratives regarding voter fraud; and
- Extreme racial and partisan gerrymandering.

Many of these issues are the results of a concerted, years-long effort to limit voter participation and impact for the sake of short-term, perceived political advantage. All damage the vitality of our state and its democracy by harming the public’s ability to meaningfully take part in the political process.
the case. As written, the law requires universities, colleges, and community colleges to attest under penalty of perjury as to citizenship verification procedures outside of the scope of their work and within the scope of existing procedures under state and federal law, and imposes other administrative challenges that discouraged North Carolina campuses from complying, such as requiring that school staff take ID photographs themselves and modify their ID documentation.\(^5\) From the passage of the legislation, institutions were given less than three months to determine their ability to comply with these requirements and submit their attestation letters to state officials. As of this submission, 37 community colleges, colleges, and universities out of over 100 eligible institutions submitted documentation to the State Board of Elections in order to have their student ID cards approved for voting use in 2020. Of those, 11 campuses were denied – 10 constituent universities of the University of North Carolina system, including the flagship in Chapel Hill, and one HBCU. The General Assembly is currently considering legislation that would modify these requirements, including by removing the attestation requirement for institutions; that measure passed the North Carolina House, but faces uncertain prospects in the Senate.\(^6\)

We are concerned that, in practice, the ID law will work in much the same way as its predecessor—by imposing both a formal barrier for eligible voters, and an informal one that deters them from casting ballots due to confusion, misinformation, misapplication of the law, or intimidation. Indeed, the introduction of student IDs as another potentially-eligible ID for voting, but one that requires the institution to receive pre-approval by the State Board of Elections, increases the likely impact of both of these barriers on young voters in 2020.

**Reductions to Early Voting**

Restrictions to early voting have been another hallmark voter suppression tactic since 2013, when H589 cut a week off of North Carolina’s early voting period. North Carolina county boards of elections (BOEs) hold significant power over voting access in this state through their ability to set polling locations, determine early voting schedules, and train poll workers on current law. During the 2014 and 2016 election cycles, these county bodies implemented changes to local election procedures that resulted in reduced access for voters of color:

- In 2014, the Lincoln County Board of Elections passed an early voting plan that reduced voting hours from 2010, a move that was overridden by the State Board of Elections. As a result, hours had to be added to the early voting site in Lincolnton, the county seat – something the BOE chair strongly objected to because “it would have been favorable to the Democratic Party.” Although only 13% of the county population lives in Lincolnton, it is the home of 31% of the county’s African American voters.\(^7\)
- In 2014, over the objections of community members, the Forsyth County Board of Elections adopted an early voting plan that moved early voting sites outside of the urban center of Winston-Salem, where the majority of Black voters live, to whiter, more conservative suburbs. The plan removed an early voting site from Winston Salem State University, a HBCU that had been an early voting location in 2012, 2010, and 2008, and did not replace it with any other sites.

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\(^5\) N.C.G.S. § 163A-1145.2.

\(^6\) House Bill 646 (2019).

in eastern Winston-Salem, although multiple alternatives were suggested. “Our African American community has been hurt,” testified a local Democratic party official before the BOE.  

- In 2014 and 2016, the Chavis Heights Community Center precinct in Southeast Raleigh in Wake County demonstrated the effect that having out-of-precinct voting available as an option and its correct implementation by precinct officials can have on access for voters of color. In 2014, when North Carolina did not have out-of-precinct voting in place, our poll monitors counted over 300 voters, mostly African-American, turned away from the poll and sent to other polling locations. In many cases, voters told monitors they would not be able to get to another polling place – one person had used their last money on bus fare to Chavis Heights. In 2016, when out-of-precinct voting was permitted following the Fourth Circuit’s ruling, poll monitors reported that the chief judge at the polling place refused to offer provisional ballots to out-of-precinct voters. When voters demanded an out-of-precinct provisional, as was their right, precinct officials discouraged them from casting a ballot, saying, “it won’t count anyway.”

- In 2016, in an attempt to blunt the impact of the Fourth Circuit’s decision to restore the first week of early voting, many of the Republican-led county BOEs adopted early voting plans with fewer hours and sites during the first restored week. There were dramatic reductions in early voting hours in Guilford (-660), Mecklenburg (-282), Brunswick (-165), Craven (-141), Johnston (-124), Robeson (-121), and Jackson (-113) counties. Of those, Guilford, Craven, and Robeson counties were previously covered under Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act, and Mecklenburg and Johnston have significant Black voting populations, 33% and 16% of all registered voters (as of October 22, 2016) respectively.

A second troubling development is a June 2018 law, S325, which mandates a 12-hour early voting schedule during the week and requires those same hours across all sites. While uniformity may present theoretical benefits, the extended 12-hour day required by S325 has in practice increased the costs of early voting for counties and, in turn, reduced the total availability of early voting, particularly weekend hours.

North Carolina law requires counties to make early voting available at a minimum of one location and permits counties to establish additional early voting locations. In past cycles counties, especially in low-resourced areas, made early voting available at different times across a variety of locations during the early voting window—for instance, by having some sites open only on the weekends, or offering Sunday voting at only one or two locations. The 2018 law makes this impossible by requiring that counties keep any given early voting site open on the same days and same hours as all others. Additionally, the mandatory 12-hour weekday schedule forces counties to staff sites at hours when voters do not typically vote, thus reducing the total number of sites counties can afford to staff without increasing the number of usable voting hours.

This has produced several consequences in practice:

- 43 counties reduced the number of early voting sites in 2018 compared to 2014.

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11 S.L. 2018-112. As originally written, the statute removed the final Saturday of early voting beginning in 2018; this was subsequently postponed.

12 Democracy North Carolina has compiled these figures for use in this submission and in future reporting.
• 51 counties reduced the number of weekend days offered.
• 67 counties – over two-thirds of North Carolina’s 100 counties – reduced the number of weekend hours.
• Of the eight counties where a majority of voters are Black, four reduced sites, seven reduced weekend days, and all eight reduced the number of weekend hours during early voting. None saw increases in sites or weekend options.
• A ProPublica and WRAL analysis of Early Voting sites elimination found that about 1 in 5 rural voters saw the distance to an Early Voting site increase by more than a mile— and in some counties, like Halifax, the average distance between voters and Early Voting sites increased by as much as 6 miles.13

Despite these reductions, North Carolina voters turned out in impressive number in last year’s midterm election. But high overall turnout does not necessarily mean widespread or equitable access. Indeed, the three counties where turnout rates (the percentage of registered voters who cast ballots) decreased compared to 2014 are telling. Two were Jones and Pamlico, which received federal assistance after Hurricane Florence. The other was Halifax, the site of this field hearing, which had three Early Voting locations in 2012, 2014, and 2016, but only one in 2018. Halifax also saw the greatest increase in the average distance from voters to Early Voting Sites due to S325.

Elimination of the Last Saturday of Early Voting

Starting in 2019, S325 also eliminates the popular final Saturday of early voting for all future elections. It was traditionally the only weekend voting day offered in all 100 counties, and the turnout numbers bore that out— that day has traditionally been one of the highest turnout days of the entire voting period, despite the fact that many counties keep sites open for shorter periods that day than during the work week. We anticipate that this will result in the majority of North Carolina counties having no weekend Early Voting options, which are crucial for voters who work Monday through Friday. Without the last Saturday in 2018, 63 counties would have had no weekend option for voters to cast their ballots. Or, if weekend hours are offered, they will be offered at a minimal number of sites, which would be especially harmful to rural voters in sprawling counties without public transportation.

And in addition to being hugely popular with voters overall, this last Saturday has been disproportionately used by Black voters in North Carolina at the statewide level and in a sizable majority of the state’s 100 counties in the last five election cycles. In 2018, Black voters made up 22% of registered voters, but 27% of those who cast ballots on the last Saturday of Early Voting.

The Voting Experience in North Carolina

As in many states, election administration challenges affect voting access in North Carolina by making voting a more complicated and intimidating experience than it needs to be. We have observed this in action through our voter protection program; during every major election year, we work closely with partner organizations to recruit, train, and place hundreds of volunteer poll monitors at polling locations across the state. These poll monitors survey voters departing locations, and assist those who report problems by connecting them to a hotline locally staffed by volunteer attorneys. In 2018, the program’s 800 volunteers were present at 279 precincts in 55 counties on Election Day: a total that amounted to 1 in 10 polling places in the state. We use the information they collect to report on the voting experience and inform our policy recommendations.

EXHIBIT 17

Bipartisan Furor as North Carolina Election Law Shrinks Early Voting Locations by Almost 20 Percent (Sept. 24, 2018), written by Blake Peterson and published by ProPublica
In June, the North Carolina General Assembly passed legislation mandating that all early voting sites in the state remain open for uniform hours on weekdays from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., a move supporters argued would reduce confusion and ultimately make early voting easier and more accessible.

But with the start of early voting only weeks away, county election officials across the state — who previously had control over setting polling hours in their jurisdictions — say the new law has hamstrung their ability to best serve voters. Some officials in rural counties say they’ve had to shrink the number of early voting locations to accommodate the law’s longer hour requirements and stay within their budgets.

Nearly half of the state’s counties are shutting down polling places, in part because of a law passed in June.

by Blake Paterson, Sept. 24, 2018, 5 a.m. EDT
A ProPublica analysis of polling locations shows that North Carolina's 2018 midterm election will have nearly 20 percent fewer early voting locations than there were in 2014. Nearly half of North Carolina's 100 counties are shutting down polling places, in part because of the new law. Poorer rural counties, often strapped for resources to begin with, are having a particularly difficult time adjusting to the new requirement.

The closure of polling locations increases the time it takes for voters to travel to the polls, and it could result in lower turnout, making matters worse for a state already dealing with Hurricane Florence. Early voting in North Carolina begins on Oct. 17.

We interviewed more than two dozen county election officials across North Carolina. None said they were in favor of the new law, and none said they were contacted by state lawmakers for counsel on the legislation. Some referred to the policy as “overkill,” a waste of resources and an “unfunded mandate,” particularly burdensome for cash-strapped counties.

“We know our county. We know when most people go to vote early. The 12-hour, 7-a.m.-to-7-p.m. requirement just ties our hands when coming up with a catered approach that fits our county best,” said Steve Stone, the Republican chair of the Robeson County Board of Elections.

Republican state lawmakers, who championed the new law, argue that the consistency it provides will eliminate uncertainty among voters and expand early voting by increasing hours and allowing those who work full-time jobs to vote before or after work.

“The purpose of the uniformity is to make it easier and more convenient and more accessible for the voter to participate,” said David Lewis, a state representative who supported the bill. “I think that access to the polls, access to the ballots in a uniform fashion, is more important than poll worker or election worker convenience.”

Lewis says the law has led to an increase in the number of aggregate polling hours across the state. Indeed, polls for early voting will be open 49,696 hours in 2018, a substantial jump from the 25,887 hours offered in 2014, according to a preliminary analysis from the North Carolina State Board of Elections & Ethics Enforcement.

But according to Robert Stein, a professor of political science at Rice University, aggregate hours are not nearly as important a factor to voter access as the number of early voting locations offered by a county.

“There is a lot of good research to suggest that when it comes to having a positive effect on early voting turnout, the important things are not the hours of operation but the location of the polling place and the distance and travel time it takes a voter to get there,” Stein said.
For many counties, the trade-off for more polling hours is fewer early voting locations. Take Gaston County, near Charlotte. In 2014, the county opened one main polling place at 8 a.m. and three additional ones at 10 a.m. According to Adam Ragan, the county’s nonpartisan director of elections, there are very few voters in the county eager to cast ballots early in the morning. The county, therefore, typically maximizes its resources by staggering voting hours across multiple locations.

“In elections administration, we have what we consider ‘non-usable hours,’” Ragan explained. “There are some locations where people won’t come at 7 a.m. or 8 a.m. That’s why we’ve always opened our auxiliary sites at 10 a.m.”

The county originally planned to open five early voting locations, but with the new policy it can now only afford to operate three.

While county election officials from both parties have expressed near uniform discontent over the new requirements, state lawmakers were split along partisan lines on the measure, with support coming exclusively from GOP lawmakers.

“It will put a strain on local boards,” Democratic Rep. Marcia Morey said on the floor of the North Carolina House of Representatives. “We need local flexibility, not the strong arm of the state for political purposes to suppress the vote.”

North Carolina’s Democratic Gov. Roy Cooper originally vetoed the bill, writing in a statement that “we should be making it easier for people to vote, not harder,” but GOP state lawmakers have veto-proof majorities in both chambers of the General Assembly and handily overrode the veto.

In addition to setting uniform polling hours, the original legislation also eliminated the final Saturday of early voting, a day that historically...
attracts a large number of black voters, opening legislators up to further charges of voter suppression.

Republican lawmakers subsequently backed off on this and restored the popular voting day. Lewis acknowledged the move was a mistake, though he said it had been proposed to give counties more time prepare for Election Day. Still, given the sordid history of voting rights violations in North Carolina, many Democrats remain skeptical of GOP lawmakers’ dedication to expanding access to early voting.

“I do not see it as an isolated event, but rather a part of a larger voter suppression effort,” said Al Daniels, a Democratic member of the Bladen County Board of Elections, of the uniform-hours law. “I see it as anti-voter, period.”

In 2013, the GOP-led General Assembly passed far-reaching legislation in the name of combating voter fraud that cut back on early voting, established a photo ID requirement and did away with pre-registration of high school students, same-day registration and out-of-precinct voting. A federal appeals court struck down the law, labeling it an unconstitutional attempt to “target African Americans with almost surgical precision.”

The 2013 law was passed in the wake of the Supreme Court decision in Shelby County v. Holder, which weakened a provision of the Voting Rights Act that had required a handful of jurisdictions — including parts of North Carolina — to submit voting law changes to the federal government to determine whether those changes had a discriminatory effect or purpose. Now, laws like North Carolina’s uniform-voting legislation don’t need to be given preclearance from the federal government before they can take effect.

“Given the context of the GOP legislature, it makes you want to raise your eyebrows that this just wasn’t some neutral requirement to have consistent voting hours around the state,” said Philip Lehman, the Democratic vice chair of Durham County’s Board of Elections and a former member of the state’s General Assembly.

Other arguments in favor of the law have only advanced suspicion of lawmakers’ motives. State Sen. Ralph Hise, one of a dozen Republican sponsors of the bill, said in an interview with ProPublica that the law was meant, in part, to rein in partisan maneuvering on county election boards. He said that, in previous elections, certain counties would strategically leave specific early voting sites open for longer to “impact the election.” When asked to provide an example of such conduct, during the interview and subsequently, however, Hise did not do so.

The new law came as a surprise to many local election officials who had already finalized their budgets. Elections in North Carolina, unlike some other states, are funded entirely at the county level, leaving some
administrators scrambling to figure out how to work within the confines of their budgets while accommodating the new law.

“I’m a full-fledged Republican and a Republican supporter, and I’m just disappointed in the General Assembly for not reaching out to election officials in the state and asking, ‘What do you think would work well for this early voting law?’” said Stone, the chair of the Robeson County Board of Elections.

The law appears to have exacerbated the divide between urban and rural counties, putting a greater strain on poorer, less populous counties, which often have smaller budgets, fewer full-time employees and an older voting population that is less willing to volunteer for what could be a 12-hour poll worker shift.

Take Bladen County. When it approved its operating budget this year, election officials set aside funds for four early voting sites. Though sparsely populated, Bladen County is large — the state’s fourth biggest by area — and local election administrators wanted to provide ample access to voters across the region.

Their plan had precedent. In every statewide election over the past decade, Bladen voters could cast their ballots at one of four early voting locations spread out across the county. Now, with the strict hours requirement, Bladen County can only afford to staff and operate one early voting site.

“We’re a small county and the law has affected us pretty badly,” said Bobby Ludlum, the GOP chair of Bladen County’s Board of Elections.

Wealthier, more populous counties appear to be doing better at weathering the changes. Still, election officials acknowledged that the law may adversely affect their rural counterparts.

“One size does not necessarily fit all,” said Michael Dickerson, the nonpartisan director of elections in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina’s most populous. “I’m very fortunate in this county. I’ve got over a million people living here, so we can find poll workers.”

The legislation has contributed to an already chaotic and uncertain year for election administrators in North Carolina. In addition to the difficulties they will encounter getting elections up and running in a state dealing with a major natural disaster, election officials are still scrambling to deal with man-made crises. A federal court in late August ruled that the state’s congressional maps were unconstitutionally gerrymandered and ordered they be redrawn immediately, sparking widespread confusion among election officials on whether the general election would move forward as planned. The court later clarified that the current maps should be used for the coming election.
A separate series of court battles over ballot language delayed the preparation and printing of election ballots, and the reduced timeline has left little flexibility in case ballots need to be reprinted. Adding to all of this, federal prosecutors in early September issued subpoenas to 44 county election boards asking that millions of voter records be handed over to immigration authorities by the end of the month.

While North Carolina has a handful of consequential congressional races in this fall’s election — the Cook Political Report rates four as competitive — most officials who spoke to ProPublica worry about how the early-voting changes and other laws might affect 2020, when the swing state will vote for president, governor and senator.

“It seems that every time we have an election, the rules are different,” said Jake Quinn, a Democratic member of the Buncombe County Board of Elections.

“We’re looking at different district boundaries, or we have to have voter IDs, or you can’t vote out of precinct, or the hours have to be changed. This is a problem. When you change the rules for voting every single election, some people are going to get discouraged by that,” he said. “All of this is very destabilizing.”

**Filed under:** Politics

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