I, Angela Hawkins, hereby declare under penalty of perjury, the following:

1. I am a member of the Wake County Board of Elections. I was appointed in February 2019. Prior to that in Wake County I served as a precinct Judge for 7 elections and a poll worker for 1 additional election. I attended the Wake County Board of Elections training for Poll Workers or Help Desk Assistants for all years that I was an official. I also attended Chief Judge training for Early Voting in 2019. I am providing this declaration based on my personal experience and in my personal capacity.
2. Based on my almost 5 years of experience, I am familiar with the procedures for registering to vote and voting in this State. I have worked for many years to help ensure the orderly, fair, and smooth operation of elections in Wake County, and to help ensure that elections in Wake County are administered in a way that protects the integrity of the democratic process. I am confident that with the new election law passed by the General Assembly, North Carolina Session Law 2020-17 (“H.B. 1169”), that the State will be able to conduct fair and safe elections in the Fall without the need for the additional changes to the registration and voting processes being demanded by Plaintiffs. Based on my experience, I am concerned that the changes being demanded by Plaintiffs will in fact be detrimental to the fair and efficient conduct of elections and will undermine public confidence in the democratic process.

3. First, I have concerns about the changes to the registration process being suggested by Plaintiffs and their declarant, Gary Bartlett. Mr. Bartlett suggests extending the 25-day deadline for voter registration through to the close of One-Stop Absentee Voting (Early Voting). Under the current law, eligible voters can both register in-person and vote during Early Voting so the ability to register and vote already exists. In my opinion, extending other methods of voter registration past the current 25-day prior to election deadline would be extremely problematic. The 25-day deadline allows staff time to prepare for the election, including validating registrations already submitted. Extending the 25-day deadline through Early Voting opens up the possibility of a voter mailing in a registration and then also going to a One-Stop site and registering and voting. There is little to no value
in having two types of voter registration simultaneously during the 17-day Early Voting period. Voters concerned about COVID-19 have ample time to mail in a voter registration application and still vote absentee, and if they intend to vote in-person they can do so by registering and voting at a One-Stop site.

4. Although new voter registrations may have been down in April of this year, as asserted by Mr. Bartlett in ¶15 of his declaration, this is hardly surprising given his cited statistic that there was an increase of 162% in registrations in January 2020 as compared to January 2016, which suggests that a large number of new voters had just registered prior to the 2020 primary elections. In my experience it is typical that voter registrations increase in the months before an election and decline in the months following an election as individuals who wished to vote register before an election so that they can do so. Further, it also hardly surprising that voter registrations were down in April given the stay-at-home orders in place at that time. Even with the stay-at-home orders, according to the NCSBE website (June 18, 2020) the number of registered voters from April 4, 2020 (6,972,252) to April 25, 2020 (6,980,984) increased by 8762. None of this is to suggest, however, that voters who wish to register to vote prior to the November election do not have sufficient accessible options to do so. Individuals wishing to register to vote in North Carolina have all of the following options available to them:

- Online voter registration available through the North Carolina DMV for individuals with a N.C. driver’s license or DMV-issued ID;
- By mail through the submission of a voter registration form to their local county board of elections office. The registration forms are available online or can be mailed to a voter following a telephonic request;
• In person at the DMV or CBOE;

• Same-day registration that is available during early voting at the polling sites through the end of early voting;

• CBOE Voter outreach drives.

If a voter is not a DMV customer and is concerned about registering in-person or lacks access to in-person locations to register due to the COVID pandemic, mailing in a voter registration form is an accepted alternative, and as the State lifts the stay-at-home orders, more in-person options also will become available.

5. Second, I also have concerns about eliminating the uniform voting hours requirement. This requirement serves several important functions. Uniform hours help reduce confusion on the part of voters regarding what early voting sites are open on what days and at what times. Voting hours for a county can be publicized and a voter in that county can be assured that their voting site will be open on those days and times without having to do further research. Uniform hours also eliminate the disparate treatment of some voters having preferred days or hours at their early voting sites while other voters do not. Uniform hours help ensure that all voters in a county have the same opportunity to vote. The uniform hours requirement also eliminates (or at least substantially reduces) partisan decision-making on where and when to allow early voting. County early voting plans have to be voted on and must be unanimous. If there is not agreement at the county level, the SBE makes the decision on the early voting sites. Without uniform hours, the political party in control of the SBE could set up early voting sites and hours to benefit that party’s voters
who may predominantly live in a certain area of the county or predominantly vote on a
given day or at a given time. It also reduces the appearance of partisanship or opportunity
for voters to make charges of partisan behavior in setting early voting hours, thereby
increasing confidence in elections.

6. **Third**, I have concerns about the changes to the absentee voting process
suggested by Mr. Bartlett in his declaration. The absentee voting process has been designed
to both allow registered voters to be able to vote by mail while at the same time reducing
the possibility for voter fraud. One of the most important aspects of the absentee voting
process is ensuring that the individual submitting the ballot is in fact the voter who is
registered to vote and is voting. For this reason, any changes to how absentee ballots can
be requested or submitted should ensure that the ballot can be traced back to the voter. I
have particular concerns about telephonic requests for ballots because it would make it
difficult to validate who the voter is, there would be no signature, and no paper trail if
further investigation is needed.

7. I do not believe that secure drop boxes for the return of absentee ballots is a
practical or sound idea. First, the same fairness concerns that support having uniform
voting hours exist here. The placement of these boxes could very well lead to the
appearance that some voters are advantaged over others who do not have the same access
to a secure box. The placement of the boxes invites charges of partisan manipulation.
Second, there would be a significant cost involved in purchasing, locating, and securing
these boxes. Third, the need to monitor and collect ballots from these boxes would be an
added burden on CBOE staff who already are having to undertake additional duties due to the COVID-19 situation. These boxes would have to be emptied and ballots collected, at a minimum, daily to prevent loss of ballots, tampering, vandalism, and/or theft. Fourth, there would also be a burden on the additional security necessary to accompany CBOE staff collecting ballots from these boxes. In my experience you would not want a single election official to be collecting and transporting these ballots alone without security. I also have concerns about how long it would take to test and implement a new drop box procedure.

8. I can testify from personal experience that contrary to what Mr. Bartlett alleges in his declaration that the Wake County Board of Elections has been provided guidance by our Executive Director on the steps that should be taken to allow voters to remedy any issues with their ballot request forms or absentee ballots. In Wake County, the Board Members are notified when there is an absentee ballot that has incorrect or missing information. County staff makes every attempt to contact the voter and obtain the missing or incomplete information. For example, at the March 2 county meeting there were 5 absentee ballots with incomplete information still pending with staff still trying to obtain information from the voter.

9. I also do not share Mr. Bartlett’s view that the changes he is supporting are necessary to preventing long lines on election day or prevent voters from being deterred from voting. In my experience the longest lines are in fact not on election day but during early voting. Moreover, it is also my experience that long lines do not deter voters. Once a voter has decided to vote and leaves home to do so, they typically will stand in line until
place, I am confident that the Wake County CBOE and its staff and workers will be able to do so. We are already looking into such measures as having single-use pens, enforcing social distancing requirements, having masks available, requiring workers to wear masks, sanitizing voting booths and other high touch surfaces frequently, and limiting the number individuals in the polling sites at any one time.

I declare under penalty of perjury under the law of the United States of America that the foregoing is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

Executed this 25th day of June, 2020.

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Angela Hawkins

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