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## Widespread voter fraud not an issue in NC, data shows

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by Jake Seaton, WNCN News - email

RALEIGH, N.C. - One of the more compelling arguments for voter identification is the suppression of voter fraud. But for North Carolina, the number of cases of voter fraud reported by the state Board of Elections is minimal.

In 2012, nearly 7 million ballots were cast in the general and two primary elections. Of those 6,947,317 ballots, the state Board of Elections said 121 alleged cases of voter fraud were referred to the appropriate district attorney's office.

That means of the nearly 7 million votes cast, voter fraud accounted for 0.00174 percent of the ballots.

Looking back at the 2010 election cycle -- which was not a presidential year -- 3.79 million ballots were cast and only 28 cases of voter fraud were turned over to the appropriate DA's office. So in 2010, voter fraud accounted for 0.000738 percent of ballots cast.

The state Board of Elections acknowledges that far more cases of voter fraud are reported each voting cycle. But the majority of those cases are deemed unfounded and never referred to the DA's office.

"In those cases where there is reasonable suspicion of voter fraud, the matter is turned over to the appropriate district attorney's office," the state BOE said.

Still, the state legislature passed sweeping election law changes Thursday evening that requires voters to present a photo ID at the polls. The measure now awaits Gov. Pat McCrory's signature.

In an interview with NBC News's Craig Melvin in March, House Speaker Thom Tillis (R-Mecklenburg) recognized that voter fraud is a minimal issue in the state and said suppressing fraud is not the primary reason behind House Bill 589.

"We call this restoring confidence in elections," Tillis said. "There is some voter fraud, but that's not the primary reason for doing this."

Tillis added that "there are a lot of people who are just concerned with the potential risk of fraud," and the bill "would make nearly three-fourths of the population more comfortable and more confident when they go to the polls."

An [Elon University Poll](#) conducted in February found 72.2 percent of North Carolina residents support the idea of requiring voters to show photo identification at the polls.

Among the forms of identification accepted according to H.B. 589 are the following:

- A North Carolina driver's license, including a learner's permit or a provisional license
- A special identification card issued under [G.S. 20-37.7.28](#)
- A United States passport.
- A United States military identification card
- A Veterans Identification Card issued by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs for use at Veterans Administration medical facilities
- A tribal enrollment card issued by a federally recognized tribe
- A tribal enrollment card issued by a federally recognized tribe or a tribe recognized by this State under [Chapter 71A of the General Statute](#)

- A driver's license or nonoperators identification card issued by another state, the District of Columbia, or a territory or commonwealth of the United States, but only if the voter's voter registration was within 90 days of the election

Non-partisan voting rights groups and Democrats say the new restrictions presented in the bill amount to a blatant attempt to suppress voter turnout. Opponents also say the move will make North Carolina experience similar problems seen in Florida.

"At the core, our democracy should be about asking people to participate -- getting people to be participants and active in their political processes, being involved in a democracy," said Bob Hall of Democracy NC. "This is just the reverse."

Rep. Harry Warren (R-Rowan), however, said he does not anticipate North Carolina voters to experience any challenges when they report to the polls.

"I don't anticipate any more time consumption to have that ID ready when you give them your name, you present your ID. I think by January 2015 it will be a very smooth operation," Warren said.

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RELATED LINKS

- [Documented Cases of Voter Fraud in NC \(2000-2012\) \[PDF\]](#)
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