

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2005

SESSION LAW 2006-262
HOUSE BILL 128

AN ACT TO AUTHORIZE COUNTY BOARDS OF ELECTIONS TO TAKE STEPS EARLIER TO COUNT MAILED ABSENTEE VOTES; TO CLARIFY HOW A VOTER SHALL REPORT A MOVE; TO CLARIFY THE RESIDENCE FOR VOTING PURPOSES OF CERTAIN PERSONS; TO AMEND THE STATUTES RELATING TO CHALLENGES; TO SPECIFY HOW FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS MAY MAKE LOANS WITHOUT VIOLATING THE PROHIBITION ON CORPORATE CONTRIBUTIONS; TO MAKE CHANGES TO THE APPROPRIATIONS ACT AS IT RELATES TO ELECTIONS APPOINTMENTS; TO CLARIFY WHAT REASONABLE ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES INCLUDE; AND TO PROVIDE THAT EXCEPT FOR THEIR ENVELOPE, PROVISIONAL BALLOTS SHALL NOT BE MARKED TO BE IDENTIFIABLE TO A VOTER.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. G.S. 163-234 is amended by adding a new subdivision to read:

- "(2a) Notwithstanding the provisions of subdivision (2) of this section, a county board of elections may, at each meeting at which it approves absentee ballot applications pursuant to G.S. 163-230.1(c) and (c1), remove those ballots from their envelopes and have them read by an optical scanning machine, without printing the totals on the scanner. The board shall complete the counting of these ballots at the times provided in subdivision (2) of this section. The State Board of Elections shall provide instructions to county boards of elections for executing this procedure, and the instructions shall be designed to ensure the accuracy of the count, the participation of board members of both parties, and the secrecy of the results before election day. This subdivision applies only in counties that use optical scan devices to count absentee ballots."

SECTION 2. G.S. 163-82.15(a) reads as rewritten:

- "(a) Registrant's Duty to Report. – No registered voter shall be required to re-register upon moving from one precinct to another within the same county. Instead, a registrant shall notify the county board of the change of address by the close of registration for an election as set out in G.S. 163-82.6(c). In addition to any other method allowed by G.S. 163-82.6, the form may be submitted by electronic facsimile, under the same deadlines as if it had been submitted in person. The registrant shall make the notification by means of a voter registration form as described in G.S. 163-82.3, or

by another written notice, signed by the registrant, that includes the registrant's full name, former residence address, new residence address, and ~~date of moving the registrant's attestation that the registrant moved at least 30 days before the next primary or election from the old to the new address.~~"

SECTION 2.1. G.S. 163-57(1) reads as rewritten:

- "(1) That place shall be considered the residence of a person in which that person's habitation is fixed, and to which, whenever that person is absent, that person has the intention of returning.
- a. In the event that a person's habitation is divided by a State, county, municipal, precinct, ward, or other election district, then the location of the bedroom or usual sleeping area for that person with respect to the location of the boundary line at issue shall be controlling as the residency of that person.
 - b. If the person disputes the determination of residency, the person may request a hearing before the county board of elections making the determination of residency. The procedures for notice of hearing and the conduct of the hearing shall be as provided in G.S. 163-86. The presentation of an accurate and current determination of a person's residence and the boundary line at issue by map or other means available shall constitute prima facie evidence of the geographic location of the residence of that person.
 - c. In the event that a person's residence is not a traditional residence associated with real property, then the location of the usual sleeping area for that person shall be controlling as to the residency of that person. Residence shall be broadly construed to provide all persons with the opportunity to register and to vote, including stating a mailing address different from residence address."

SECTION 3.(a) G.S. 163-87 reads as rewritten:

"§ 163-87. Challenges allowed on day of primary or election.

On the day of a primary or election, at the time a registered voter offers to vote, any other registered voter of the precinct may exercise the right of challenge, and when he does so may enter the voting enclosure to make the challenge, but he shall retire therefrom as soon as the challenge is heard.

On the day of a primary or election, any other registered voter of the precinct may challenge a person for one or more of the following reasons:

- (1) One or more of the reasons listed in G.S. 163-85(c), or 163-85(c).
- (2) That the person has already voted in that primary or election, or election.
- (3) That the person presenting himself to vote is not who he represents himself to be.
- (4) If the challenge is made with respect to voting in a partisan primary, that the person is a registered voter of another political party.

~~On the day of a party primary, any voter of the precinct who is registered as a member of the political party conducting the primary may, at the time any registrant proposes to vote, challenge his right to vote upon the ground that he does not affiliate with the party conducting the primary or does not in good faith intend to support the candidates nominated in that party's primary, and it shall be the duty of the chief judge and judges of election to determine whether or not the challenged registrant has a right to vote in that primary according to the procedures prescribed in G.S. 163-88; provided that no challenge may be made on the grounds specified in the paragraph against an unaffiliated voter voting in the primary under G.S. 163-74(a1).~~

The chief judge, judge, or assistant appointed under G.S. 163-41 or 163-42 may enter challenges under this section against voters in the precinct for which appointed regardless of the place of residence of the chief judge, judge, or assistant.

If a person is challenged under this subsection, and the challenge is sustained under G.S. 163-85(c)(3), the voter may still transfer his registration under G.S. 163-82.15(e) if eligible under that section, and the registration shall not be cancelled under G.S. 163-90.2(a) if the transfer is made. A person who has transferred his registration under G.S. 163-82.15(e) may be challenged at the precinct to which the registration is being transferred.

SECTION 3.(b) G.S. 163-90.2 reads as rewritten:

"§ 163-90.2. Action when challenge sustained, overruled, or dismissed.

(a) When any challenge is sustained for any cause listed under G.S. 163-85(c), the board shall cancel or correct the voter registration of the voter and shall remove his card from the book, but voter. The board shall maintain such record for at least six months and during the pendency of any appeal. The challenged ballot shall be counted for any ballot items for which the challenged voter is eligible to vote, as if it were a provisional official ballot under the provisions of G.S. 163-166.11(4).

(b) When any challenge heard under G.S. 163-88 or 163-89 is sustained on the ground that the voter is not affiliated with the political party shown on his registration record, the board shall change the voter's party affiliation to "unaffiliated."

(c) When any challenge made under G.S. 163-85 is overruled or dismissed, the board shall erase the word "challenged" which appears on the person's registration records.

(d) A decision by a county board of elections on any challenge made under the provisions of this Article shall be appealable to the Superior Court of the county in which the offices of that board are located within 10 days. Only those persons against whom a challenge is sustained or persons who have made a challenge which is overruled shall have standing to file such appeal."

SECTION 4. G.S. 163-165(6) reads as rewritten:

"(6) "Provisional official ballot" means an official ballot that is voted and then placed in an envelope that contains an affidavit signed by the voter certifying identity and eligibility to vote. Except for its envelope, a provisional official ballot shall not be marked to make it identifiable to the voter."

SECTION 4.1.(a) G.S. 163-278.19(a) reads as rewritten:

"(a) Except as provided in subsections (a2), (b), (d), (e), (f), and (g) of this section it shall be unlawful for any corporation, business entity, labor union, professional association or insurance company directly or indirectly:

- (1) To make any contribution to a candidate or political committee (~~except a loan of money by a national or State bank or federal or State savings and loan association made in accordance with the applicable banking or savings and loan association laws and regulations and in the ordinary course of business~~) or to make any expenditure to support or oppose the nomination or election of a clearly identified candidate;
- (2) To pay or use or offer, consent or agree to pay or use any of its money or property for any contribution to a candidate or political committee or for any expenditure to support or oppose the nomination or election of a clearly identified candidate; or
- (3) To compensate, reimburse, or indemnify any person or individual for money or property so used or for any contribution or expenditure so made;

and it shall be unlawful for any officer, director, stockholder, attorney, agent or member of any corporation, business entity, labor union, professional association or insurance company to aid, abet, advise or consent to any such contribution or expenditure, or for any person or individual to solicit or knowingly receive any such contribution or expenditure. Supporting or opposing the election of clearly identified candidates includes supporting or opposing the candidates of a clearly identified political party. Any officer, director, stockholder, attorney, agent or member of any corporation, business entity, labor union, professional association or insurance company aiding or abetting in any contribution or expenditure made in violation of this section shall be guilty of a Class 2 misdemeanor, and shall in addition be liable to such corporation, business entity, labor union, professional association or insurance company for the amount of such contribution or expenditure, and the same may be recovered of him upon suit by any stockholder or member thereof."

SECTION 4.1.(b) G.S. 163-278.19 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

"(a2) Proceeds of loans made in the ordinary course of business by financial institutions may be used for contributions made in compliance with this Chapter. Financial institutions may also grant revolving credit to political committees and referendum committees in the ordinary course of business."

SECTION 4.1.(c) G.S. 163-278.15 reads as rewritten:

"§ 163-278.15. No acceptance of contributions made by corporations, foreign and domestic.

(a) No candidate, political committee, political party, or treasurer shall accept any contribution made by any corporation, foreign or domestic, regardless of whether such corporation does business in the State of North Carolina. This section does not apply with regard to entities permitted to make contributions by G.S. 163-278.19(f).

(b) A candidate or political committee may accept a contribution knowing that the contribution is the proceeds of a loan made in the ordinary course of business by a financial institution if all of the following conditions are met:

- (1) The full amount of the loan is secured by collateral placed, or by guaranties given, by one or more individuals or entities who are not prohibited by this Article from making contributions to the candidate or political committee. The value of the collateral posted by each individual or entity, or the amount of each guaranty, may not exceed the contribution limitations applicable under this Article to each individual or entity. The value of collateral posted may exceed the contribution limitations applicable under this Article in cases where the amount of the loan secured by that collateral does not exceed the contribution limitations applicable to the individual or entity.
- (2) During the time that any loan remains outstanding and unpaid, then the value of any collateral posted, or the amount of each guaranty, for that loan shall be considered to be a contribution by the individual or entity securing the loan. If the loan, or any portion of the loan, is repaid to the financial institution by the candidate or political committee to whom the loan was made during the contribution limitation period for the same "election" as defined in G.S. 163-278.13(d) in which the loan was made, the individual or entity securing the loan shall be eligible to further contribute to that candidate or political committee up to the amount of the repayment. If multiple individuals or entities secured the loan that is repaid to the financial institution by the candidate or political committee, then the amount repaid shall be prorated amongst the multiple individuals or entities.
- (3) If the loan is to the candidate or political committee, only the candidate, the candidate's spouse, or the political committee to whom the loan was made may repay the loan.

The State Board of Elections shall develop forms for reporting the proceeds of loans in a full and accurate manner."

SECTION 4.2. Section 23A.3 of S.L. 2005-276 is repealed.

SECTION 4.3. G.S. 163-278.19(e) reads as rewritten:

"(e) Notwithstanding the prohibitions specified in this Article and Article 22 of this Chapter, a political committee organized under provisions of this Article shall be entitled to receive and the corporation, business entity, labor union, professional association, or insurance company designated on the committee's organizational report as the parent entity of the employees or members who organized the committee is authorized to give reasonable administrative support that shall include ~~include, but not be limited to,~~ record keeping, computer services, billings, mailings to members of the committee, membership development, fund-raising activities, office supplies, office space, and such other support as is reasonably necessary for the administration of the committee.

The approximate cost of any ~~record keeping, computer services, billings, mailings, office supplies, and office space provided on a continuing basis reasonable administrative support~~ shall be submitted to the committee, in writing, and the committee shall include that cost on the report required by G.S. 163-278.9(a)(6). Also included in the report shall be the approximate allocable portion of the compensation of any officer or employee of the corporation, business entity, labor union, professional association, or insurance company who has devoted more than thirty-five percent (35%) of his time during normal business hours of the corporation, business entity, labor union, professional association, or insurance company during the period covered by the required report. The approximate cost submitted by the parent corporation, business entity, labor union, professional association, or insurance company shall be entered on the committee's report as the final entry on its list of "contributions" and a copy of the written approximate cost received by it shall be attached.

The reasonable administrative support given by a corporation, business entity, labor union, professional association, or insurance company shall be designated on the books of the corporation, business entity, labor union, professional association, or insurance company as such and may not be treated by it as a business deduction for State income tax purposes."

SECTION 5. Section 4 of this act becomes effective January 1, 2007. The remainder of this act is effective when it becomes law, except that any criminal penalty resulting from this act becomes effective October 1, 2006. Prosecutions for offenses committed before October 1, 2006, are not abated or affected by this act, and the statutes that would be applicable but for this act remain applicable to those prosecutions.

In the General Assembly read three times and ratified this the 27th day of July, 2006.

s/ Beverly E. Perdue
President of the Senate

s/ James B. Black
Speaker of the House of Representatives

s/ Michael F. Easley
Governor

Approved 1:12 p.m. this 27th day of August, 2006