

# Democracy North Carolina

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For Immediate Release, March 16, 2017

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## Voters Accused of Fraud Share Stories of Shock & Anger, Push State Elections Board for Changes

Voters in 16 North Carolina counties who were falsely accused of voter fraud by Gov. Pat McCrory's 2016 reelection campaign are sharing their stories of shock and outrage with the State Board of Elections and calling on the agency to change the process that allowed charges to be filed against them without any evidence of wrongdoing.

In a series of official protest complaints filed last November, agents for the McCrory campaign claimed that the voters cast "invalid ballots" because they were "known to have voted in multiple states" or voted while being "adjudged guilty of a felony."

"I was literally shocked. I was upset for several days," Betty B. Adams, a falsely accused voter from Cumberland County, told Kim Strach, executive director of the State Board of Elections, in a meeting on Monday.

Joseph Golden described the surprise and frustration of having his name appear in Brunswick County newspapers and someone on social media writing, "There's a cheater amongst us."

Anne Hughes of Moore County told Strach that she was "just incredulous" when she learned that she and her husband had been accused of voting in two states. "I was shocked and horrified and furious to learn our name was on a list with people who were alleged to have broken a federal law."

"You obey the law, you do all the stuff you're supposed to, and then some person just randomly, without any burden of proof, can accuse you of breaking the law," added Aysha Nasir of Orange County.

Adams, Golden, Hughes and Nasir were part of the delegation of falsely accused voters who shared their experiences on a conference call with Strach, other agency staff, and leaders of Democracy North Carolina, the voting-rights organization that arranged the meeting.

*A 14-minute excerpt of the emotional testimony from seven voters is available at: <http://demnc.co/ncsboecall>. Contact info for the voters is available from Jen Jones, Democracy NC Communications Director, 919-260-5906 (cell); 919-908-7920 (o) [jenjones@democracy-nc.org](mailto:jenjones@democracy-nc.org).*

The voters presented Strach **with a letter** that said, "Throwing around accusations of voter fraud creates significant harm to innocent voters like us. People who make irresponsible accusations, over and over, affecting many innocent voters, should be held accountable for their actions."

The official document used to file a protest is a simple two-page form that does not require the signer to provide evidence of wrongdoing or attest that they have personal knowledge of a violation of election law. [[Click here](#) for an example of a form claiming a voter is “known to have voted in multiple states.” [Click here](#) for an example of voters accused of voting while “adjudged guilty of a felony.”]

The letter from the accused voters calls on the State Board to “(1) change the form for filing a protest complaint so it requires a presentation of evidence to support an allegation; and (2) create a process to hold accountable anyone who files a frivolous or negligent complaint or a pattern of repeated false complaints.”

Strach told the group that she appreciated hearing their statements, calling them “very powerful.” She said her staff was already working on possible revisions for the protest form and process, and she anticipated taking several recommendations to the five-member State Board of Elections at its next meeting. One change she mentioned would require the protestor to swear under penalty of perjury that the information in the form is true.

The voters expressed their support and encouragement for fixing the problem of protests being filed without evidence or accountability. “Whatever needs to be done to stop this in the future, I think now is the time to let’s push this button and make that happen,” said Robert Chadwick, a falsely accused voter from Wake County.

“Why is this happening in this country now?” asked Carol Turner of Moore County. “Where are the laws that protect those of us who haven’t done anything wrong and allow those who want to make up these stories to be able to do that?”

Turner ended by telling Strach that what she’s feeling “is disbelief, it’s anger, it’s frustration, but most of all it’s sadness that this is where we’re at.”

Bob Hall with Democracy North Carolina said his organization is conducting a county-by-county investigation of the protests and their impact on innocent voters.

“Unfortunately, North Carolina is ground zero for witnessing the damage inflicted on honest voters and the elections system by inflated or bogus claims of voter fraud,” Hall said.

“The testimony of the voters shows the real pain and harm caused by these irresponsible claims,” he added. “Their stories also show that anybody can suddenly find themselves charged with a crime when voter fraud accusations are used as a political weapon.”

Hall noted that research by Democracy North Carolina and elections officials determined that a large majority of the nearly 100 voters charged with double voting or voting while serving a felony sentence were completely innocent. Boards of elections ultimately dismissed the complaints after devoting considerable resources to contacting the voters and holding hearings at the local and state level.

*Democracy North Carolina is a statewide nonpartisan organization that uses research, organizing, and training to increase civic participation, reduce the influence of big money in politics, and remove systemic barriers to voting and serving in elected office.*

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