Voter Perceptions of Security and Fairness of Elections and the Implementation of Photo Identification Education in the 2014 North Carolina General Election

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I. Introduction

In the summer of 2013, the North Carolina state legislature passed a requirement that potential voters must show one of certain kinds of government-issued photo identification before being allowed to vote.[1] The requirement will be in place starting with the first election in 2016. Thus, in an effort to uncover barriers to program implementation and to educate voters, state election officials proceeded with a "soft roll-out" of the ID requirement during the 2014 elections. According to the North Carolina State Board of Elections website, the "soft roll-out" means that pollworkers ask voters if they have identification, but do not require the voters to present it:

> Beginning with the 2014 primary, county boards of elections will begin educating voters about the new photo ID requirements as voters present to vote during the early voting period or on the day of the primary or election. All voters will be asked whether they have acceptable photo ID and for those voters who indicate they do not have acceptable photo ID, the voter will be asked to sign an acknowledgement they do not have any form of photo ID that will be acceptable for purposes of voting. Voters may also complete an online survey to inform us that they do not have acceptable photo ID. Using these resources, the State Board of Elections and the county boards of elections will reach out to these voters to ensure they can obtain proper photo ID before 2016.[2]

In response, beginning with the primary election on May 6, 2014, Democracy North Carolina volunteers administered an exit poll at several locations across the state. Using those exit poll data, I prepared a report dated July 1, 2014 that showed that only about half of the voters knew when the ID requirement was slated to begin. Further, the survey evidence showed that there were statistically significant differences between white voters and African-American voters in terms of confidence in security and confidence in fairness of the rules.

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[1] Acceptable identifications are a current passport, a North Carolina driver's license or non-operator's permit, a veteran's or current military identification or a tribal identification card.
[2] North Carolina State Board of Elections, "Voter ID Requirements in North Carolina: Other Outreach Efforts." http://www.ncsbe.gov/ncsbe/voter-id, last accessed 23 June 2014.

However, as of the November 2014 election, statewide educational efforts had several more months to operate. Thus, Democracy North Carolina volunteers administered an exit poll during the general election held on November 4, 2014. Like the survey in May, the exit poll was a paper and pencil survey completed by voters as they left the polls on Election Day.[3] Volunteers for Democracy North Carolina entered the data into a spreadsheet and emailed the data to me and Master of Public Administration student Andreas Lefrank (who assisted me with the analysis).

The survey administered in November was slightly different from the one conducted in May—Democracy North Carolina had the experience of the primary to inform the design of the November 2014 survey. The only difference was in the first question on the survey, which for the primary election exit poll read as follows:

How was your experience of being asked about a photo ID? Was the information clear or confusing?

Clear and understandable
Somewhat confusing
Very confusing
I was not asked about a photo ID

The question for the general election exit poll:

Did a poll worker ask you today if <u>you</u> have one of the photo IDs that will be required to vote in the future? Yes/No/Don't Know

Along with Democracy North Carolina, we argue that the new question better measures whether or not the soft roll-out was implemented successfully or not. Since precinct workers were instructed to find out if potential voters had the correct identification that would be required in the future, the Election Day survey question is a better measure, because it does not simply

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[3] Almost all of the surveys were completed on Election Day (98.6 percent). Only 1.4 percent were completed during early voting.

assume that precinct workers asked about the requirement, but instead raises the possibility that they did not.

We begin this report by analyzing who responded to the survey and report statistics. Next, we analyze the effect of race; we compare answers of the four principal questions concerning the experience and the perceptions of security and fairness by race. Finally, we analyze the data using statistical matching and then regression. Both matching and regression allow us to consider the effects of race on perceptions, taking into account education, income, gender, and age. Note that matching also takes into account that the survey respondents were not randomly selected.

II.   Description of Basic Data

A. Substantive Results

In this section, we analyze the results of the survey in the order in which the questions were listed on the survey. Table 1 indicates the answer to the question as to whether a pollworker asked the voter whether he or she possessed one of the types of photo identifications that will be required to vote in the future. Table 1 indicates that about half of all respondents (51.6 percent) reported that the pollworker had asked them if they had one of the forms of photo identification that will be required in 2016.[4] In other words, pollworkers likely did not ask about half of the voters whether or not they had proper identification. The reader must keep in mind that the survey does depend on voter recollection, and thus, could be subject to error. However, in all

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[4] Note that in one county (Beaufort), the volunteers utilized the incorrect survey—they used the one from the primary. The only difference between the two surveys is the first question (the primary survey queries whether "you" have the appropriate ID, rather than did you understand the information presented about an ID being required in the future). We have coded those surveys as "missing" for the first response, but included the data for all the other questions, even though the first question on the survey was different. We do not expect those responses to be affected in any meaningful way.

likelihood, the "asking" likely would have occurred only a few minutes prior to the survey administration.

Table 1: Did a poll worker ask you today if <u>you</u> have one of the photo IDs that will be required to vote in the future?

Date	Percent Reporting Response	Number Reporting Response
Yes	51.6%	4,442
No	47.2%	4,065
Don't Know	1%	89
No Response/Blank (or gave more than one answer)	NA	296

Table 2 indicates that just over half of the respondents knew when the new identification requirements would begin, although nearly half did not know when the requirement begins. Nearly one in five did not answer the question, which possibly means they did not know. The reader should keep in mind that the respondents had just left the polling place where they were supposed to have been asked about photo ID in addition to being reminded that they needed one for the 2016 primary. We examined knowledge of the start date in comparison to the respondent reports of having been asked about ID: note that 22 percent of the voters who reported they were not asked also did not name the correct start of the program.

Table 2: What is the First Election When Voters Will Be Required to Show An Acceptable Photo ID at the Polls?

Date	Percent Reporting Response	Number Reporting Response
Primary election in 2015	10.4%	923
Primary election in 2016	53.1%	4695
General election in 2016	19%	1686
Don't know/Not sure	17.3%	1534
No Response/Blank (or gave more than one answer)	NA	54

In Table 3, we show the results of the question addressing how all of the changes enacted in the Summer of 2013 made the voter feel in terms of confidence in the security of North Carolina elections and prevention of fraud. About 36 percent felt "more confident"; another 36 percent felt "about the same". Another 27.5 percent felt "less confident."

Table 3: There are other election changes in addition to the ID, such as new registration rules and Early Voting times. Do all these changes make you feel more or less confident in the security of NC elections and prevention of fraud?

Confidence in Election Security	Percent	Number
More Confident	36.2%	3,178
Less Confident	27.5%	2,419
About the Same	36.2%	3,181
No Response/Blank (or gave more than one answer)	NA	114

Next, we queried whether the changes made the voter feel more confident, less confident, or about the same in terms of the fairness of the elections (that is, whether the identification changes benefitted one party or another). Close to 37 percent said "less confident", another third said "more confident" and the final third said "about the same."

Table 4: Do all these changes make you feel more or less confident that NC elections are fair and voting rules do not favor one political party more than another?

Confidence in Election Fairness	Percent	Number
More Confident	31.8%	2,791
Less Confident	36.9%	3,238
About the Same	31.2%	2,740
Not Sure	NA	1
No Response/Blank (or gave more than one answer)	NA	122

B. Demographics of Survey Respondents

Who answered our survey? Table 5 shows that the plurality of voters was between the ages of 50-65 (about 27 percent). Those that are 65 and older comprised the smallest age group- with just 15.3 percent of voters.

Table 5: What is your age?

Age Category	Percent	Number
Under 30	19.2%	1,692
30-39	19%	1,672
40-49	19.7%	1,734
50-64	26.7%	2,352
65 or Older	15.3%	1,346
Missing/Blank (or gave more than one answer)	NA	96

The vast majority of our respondents (almost two-thirds) were women (see Table 6).

Table 6: What is your gender?

Gender	Percent	Number
Female	61%	5,333
Male	38.9%	3,408
Missing/Blank (or gave more than one answer)	NA	151

A typical respondent also had a college degree (44.2 percent), though another 18 percent had a high school diploma (Table 7). The exit poll slightly overrepresented the education of the typical North Carolina citizen (about 85 percent have a high school degree or more, according to the Census Bureau)[5], but political science scholars have long known that voters are more educated on average than other citizens.

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[5] http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/37000.html, last accessed 1 April 2015.

Table 7: What is the highest level of your formal education?[6]

Educational Level Category	Percent	Number
Did not finish high school	3.9%	346
High School graduate or GED	17.9%	1,569
Some College or Associate degree	33.9%	2,969
College graduate or post-college degree	44.2%	3,872
Missing/Blank	NA	136

Table 8 shows that more than half of the respondents reported their race as African-American/Black (Table 8). About one-third made $25,000-$49,999—the modal response to the income question (Table 9).[7] Interestingly, about one in four who reported income said their income was under $25,000. Scholars know that citizens are more likely to vote the higher their level of income.

Table 8: What is your race or ethnicity?

Race/Ethnicity	Percent	Number
White	41.8%	3,651
African-American	51.2%	4,479
Asian-American	1.1%	94
Hispanic/Latino	1.7%	154
Native American	0.8%	73
Other	2.2%	199
More than one race listed	0.9%	83
Missing/Blank	NA	159

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[6] These data are corrected to reflect the highest degree attained. We found that in some cases, respondents checked the boxes for all of the types o degrees they had instead of simply the highest degree..

[7] According to the Census Bureau, the median income for North Carolina was $46,334. See http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/37000.html, last access 1 April 2015.

Table 9: Which of the following includes your total family yearly income before taxes?

Income Category	Percent	Number
Less than $25,000	23.8%	1,983
$25,000-$49,999	31.1%	2,581
$50,000-$74,999	20.4%	1,697
$75,000-$99,999	11%	915
$100,000 or more	13.5%	1,128
Missing/Blank	NA	588

III. Comparing the Racial Differences Among Responses

In North Carolina (and other Southern states), there has been an extensive history of voting discrimination based on race, with African American citizens seeing the brunt of the discrimination. Thus, it is of especial concern to examine whether the answers to these questions vary depending on whether the respondent is majority (White/Caucasian) or minority (African American). Here, for ease of interpretation, we present comparisons of the substantive questions based on race. In Section IV, we will examine whether or not race causes the responses to vary, that is, taking into account education, gender, income and age.

First, Table 10 compares the various races of the voters by whether the pollworkers asked them on Election Day if they had a voter identification that will be required in the future. White voters were just as likely as African American voters to report they had been asked about identification. If one only compares those reporting being White versus those reporting being African American, there is no statistically significant relationship between race and whether a pollworker asked if the voter had the proper identification.

Table 10: Did a poll worker ask you today if <u>you</u> have one of the photo IDs (by race)

Response	White	African-American	Asian-American	Hispanic/Latino	Native American	Other	More than one race listed
Yes	52.2% (1,851)	51.4% (2,231)	48.9% (45)	47.7% (73)	45.2% (33)	52.8% (103)	57.5% (46)
No	46.7% (1,658)	47.7% (2,074)	48.9% (45)	51% (78)	53.4% (39)	45.6% (89)	42.5% (34)
Don't Know	1.1% (40)	0.9% (39)	2.2% (2)	1.3% (2)	1.4% (1)	1.5% (3)	NA (0)

Table 11 indicates the election in which members of each racial subgroup believe the stricter voter identification requirement begins. Note that African Americans are slightly less likely to report when the correct date the identification requirement will begin: (White voters: 55.7 percent v. African American voters 51.5 percent). African Americans are significantly less likely <u>to know</u> the correct date that the requirement begins (X^2=14.24; p=0.00).[8]

Table 11: Does the Respondent Know When the Photo ID Requirement Begins (by race)

Response	White	African-American	Asian-American	Hispanic/Latino	Native American	Other	More than one race listed
Primary Election 2015	9.4% (343)	11.6% (517)	4.3% (4)	11% (17)	8.2% (6)	9% (18)	9.6% (8)
Primary election in 2016	55.7% (2033)	51.5% (2306)	41.5% (39)	48.7% (75)	52.1% (38)	50.3% (100)	56.6% (47)
General election in 2016	19.3% (704)	18.4% (825)	28.7% (27)	24.7% (38)	12.3% (9)	25.1% (50)	14.5% (12)
Don't Know	15.6% (568)	18.5% (827)	25.5% (24)	15.6% (24)	27.4% (20)	15.6% (31)	19.3% (16)

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[8] In this report, we focus most on the differences between African Americans and White voters because of the legacy of slavery and discrimination against African Americans. However, the reader should take note that the Asian-American, Hispanic/Latino, and Native American minorities appear to be much less informed than the other groups. We note these sample sizes are considerably smaller, which gives us somewhat less confidence in the results, but further study should be conducted.

Table 12 presents the analysis considering the voters' confidence in the security of the elections, in terms of prevention of fraud. African American and White responses are statistically significantly different in their reports of confidence in security. The percentage of African Americans who report they are "more confident in the security of elections" is statistically significantly smaller than the percentage of White voters reporting they are more confident. Close to 43 percent of White respondents report they are "more confident in security" but only 30.6 percent of African Americans feel "more confident." [9] African American voters are also statistically significantly more likely to report they are "less confident in the security of elections". About 32 percent of African Americans are "less confident" in security compared to almost 23 percent of White voters.[10]

Table 12: Is Voter More or Less Confident in Election Security by Racial Subgroups

Response	White	African American	Asian-American	Hispanic / Latino	Native American	Other	More than one race listed
More Confident in Security	42.7% (1,548)	30.6% (1363)	47.8% (44)	44.4% (68)	38.4% (28)	33.2% (65)	42.2% (35)
Less Confident in Security	22.8% (825)	32.1% (1430)	15.2% (14)	20.9% (32)	19.2% (14)	24% (47)	22.9% (19)
About the Same Amount	34.5% (1251)	37.3% (1658)	37% (34)	34.6% (53)	42.5% (31)	42.9% (84)	34.9% (29)

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[9] X^2=126.7, p=0.00.
[10] X^2=87.00, p=0.00.

Table 13 shows that the racial differences are similar when comparing feelings about election fairness. An even 39 percent of White voters are "more confident"; only about 25 percent of African American voters are "more confident" about fairness with the 2013 election law changes (this is a statistically significant difference[11]). More than 40 percent of African Americans are "less confident"; about one-third of White voters are less confident (also statistically significant difference[12]).

Table 13: Is Voter More or Less Confident in Election Fairness by Racial Subgroups

Response	White	African-American	Asian-American	Hispanic/Latino	Native American	Other	More than one race listed
More Confident in Fairness	39% (1412)	25.4% (1130)	45.2% (42)	45.8% (70)	43.8% (32)	25.9% (51)	39.8% (33)
Less Confident in Fairness	33.5% (1213)	40.4% (1797)	28% (26)	28.8% (44)	19.2% (14)	36.5% (72)	36.1% (30)
About the Same Amount	27.4% (992)	34.3% (1526)	26.9% (25)	25.5% (39)	37% (27)	37.6% (74)	24.1% (20)

IV.   Multivariate Analyses

The previous section informs us that there is little racial difference in whether people know when the voter identification law begins. However, African American voters are not only less confident in the security of elections given the recent changes to North Carolina law, but are also

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[11] χ^2=172.41, p=0.00.
[12] χ^2=39.8, p=0.00

less confident in the fairness of the rules than are their Anglo counterparts. In order to be confident about the bivariate findings, it is important to take into account the other factors which could play a role in determining knowledge or confidence instead of race. In this section, I analyze "knowledge of the correct date of implementation," "confidence in security" and "confidence in fairness" as dependent variables using two different statistical techniques.

There are multiple ways to approach the multivariate analysis of these data. In particular, one could use logistic regression, as I did in the primary election report.[13] However, if our main interest is to make controlled comparisons of the effect of race on knowledge or confidence, a better technique is that of propensity score matching.

Consider that in a "normal" experimental study with randomly-assigned groups, in a situation with a treatment and a control, the confounding variables will be randomly distributed between the two groups—whether one can observe the potentially confounding variables or not. In an observation study (where the researcher is unable to randomly assign respondents to treatment and control groups, such as the current experiment), the researcher is unable to know whether the groups are equivalent in terms of unobserved and potentially important variables.[14] Rather than make assumptions about the probability of the subject being in the treatment or control group, the treatment and control groups are created using a technique called propensity score matching. While the language may seem a bit awkward—here the treatment is race—if the respondent is African American, then he or she is in one group. If the respondent is White, he or she is in the control group. A researcher cannot randomly assign a voter to be an African

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[13] See http://www.democracy-nc.org/downloads/SurveyReportJune2014Kropf.pdf.

[14] Alternatively, in a large survey where the observations are randomly selected, one can also make causal inferences about the effect of race on confidence or knowledge. However, in a study such as the present study, where Democracy North Carolina relied on volunteers to obtain surveys (but that the volunteers were told to obtain as many surveys as possible), statistical matching is a good choice to make controlled comparisons between two racial groups.

America voter or a Caucasian voter, so we utilize propensity score matching to make the controlled comparison.

Using propensity matching, one must first specify variables which estimate the probability of the subject being in the treatment or control group. Essentially, that allows the researcher to estimate the propensity score, and then match those observed in the treatment and control groups based on that propensity (Barabus, 2004; West and Thoemmes, 2010; Rubin, et al., 2004; Sekhon, 2009). In other words, we are finding the conditional probability that a voter selected for the survey is black or white; we are using that conditional probability to put two similar voters (one Black, one White) together for the comparison. This technique is theorized to be less sensitive to leaving out important control variables.

> Propensity score matching also avoids any specification of regression models for the relationship between the outcome and the covariates. Although propensity score models must be fit to estimate the probability of receiving treatment, estimates of treatment effects are generally less sensitive to misspecification of the propensity score model than regression models are to misspecification of the regression model (Drake 1993; Rubin 1997)" (Rubin, et al., 2004: 110).

Though this estimation technique is not a panacea, it can provide a more valid way to compare the outcomes of the treatment and control groups.

Scholars have used propensity score matching to analyze observed outcomes comparing a group which has been exposed to some public policy and another group which has not. Evaluation of election/voting reforms programs provide some fairly recent examples. For example, does instituting vote-by-mail (Kousser and Mullin, 2007) or consolidating voting precincts affect voter turnout (Brady and McNulty, 2011; McNulty, Dowling and Ariotti, 2009)? In the current study, everyone has been exposed to the same policy change (the state legislature did not assign only some counties to the soft roll out of the voter identification law)! However,

the key point here is whether one group or people or another might have different reactions to the law based on their race.

In the present model, I expect that whether the selected respondent will be African American or White will depend on two county-level variables: Black turnout and Democratic turnout. Here, turnout is defined as the proportion of the registered voters who choose to vote. Individual level variables will matter as well: respondent sex, age, education and income levels. Essentially, I run a logistic regression model that gives the propensity that a respondent will be black or white. The propensity score is used to match and compare the respondents and provide an "average treatment effect". Although there are many types of matching, two of the most typical types of matching are propensity score matching and nearest neighbor matching. The results are presented in Table 14. In order to make the results more interpretable, I created two dummy variables (two category variables) for each measure of confidence: a respondent could be either more confident (versus less confident or about the same) OR less confident (versus more confident or about the same).

Table 14: Difference in Whether African American and Caucasian Voters Reported Pollworker Asked Voters about Identification and Knowledge of Implementation Date (Average Treatment Effects)

Matching Technique	Pollworker Asked Respondent About Identification	Know the Correct Implementation Date
Propensity Score	.021 (.022)	-.033 (.022)
Nearest Neighbor	.021 (.020)	-.017 (.018)

*** $p<0.01$, ** $p<0.05$, * $p<0.1$

Table 15: Difference in African and Caucasian Voters in Confidence in Fairness and Security (Average Treatment Effects)

Matching Technique	More Confident in Security (Compared to about the same and less)	Less Confident in Security (Compared to about the same and more)	More Confidence in the Fairness (Compared to about the same and less)	Less Confidence in the Fairness (Compared to about the same and more)
Propensity Score	-.146 *** (.020)	.116 *** (.018)	-.161 *** (.019)	.111 *** (.019)
Nearest Neighbor	-.164 *** (.018)	.119 *** (.019)	-.170 *** (.017)	.129 *** (.018)

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Tables 14 and 15 indicate the difference between Black respondents and White respondents, given the conditional probability of selecting an African American for the survey (the conditional probability takes into account the potentially confounding variables). There are two results given in the tables for each dependent variable; the differing matching methods produce robust results (e.g., the results are similar in size and significance). Also note that these results are the average differences in the proportion of one race giving one response versus another.

Table 14 shows that pollworkers are just as likely to ask someone who was African American as someone who was White whether they had the proper identification. Further, on average, there is no difference between African American respondents and White respondents in terms of the proportion of each group which knows when the photo identification requirement begins.

However, Table 15 provides evidence that there are racial differences in confidence. African Americans are significantly less likely to be more confident in the security of the election. African Americans are also more likely to report they are less confident in the security of the elections. Another way to consider it: between 14 and 16 percentage points fewer African American respondents than Caucasian respondents reported they were more confident. About 12 percentage points more African Americans than Caucasian Americans say they are less confident in the security. In terms of confidence in the fairness of the elections, about 16-17 percentage point fewer African Americans said they were more

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confident in the fairness. About 11-12 percentage point more African Americans said they were less confident.

For those who feel more comfortable with a logistic regression, those results are presented in Table 16. The reader should notice that substantively, the results are the same. White respondents and Black respondents are just as likely to know the date of the program implementation. However, there are statistically significant differences between African American and White respondents in terms of confidence.

Table 16: The Effects of Demographic Characteristics on Knowledge and Confidence Using Logistic Regression

	Know Implement Date	More Confident Security	Less Confident Security	More Confident Fair	Less Confident Fair
Respondent Black	-0.0438	-0.681***	0.656***	-0.784***	0.558***
	(0.0847)	(0.156)	(0.154)	(0.142)	(0.162)
Female	0.0300	-0.0157	-0.0610	-0.134***	-0.105**
	(0.0444)	(0.0486)	(0.0571)	(0.0468)	(0.0531)
Age	0.0155	-0.0617**	0.131***	0.00470	0.00945
	(0.0194)	(0.0240)	(0.0257)	(0.0256)	(0.0295)
Education	0.0399	-0.336***	0.300***	-0.329***	0.454***
	(0.0349)	(0.0481)	(0.0517)	(0.0410)	(0.0468)
Income	0.105***	-0.0140	0.0653**	-0.0307	0.0855***
	(0.0260)	(0.0314)	(0.0319)	(0.0325)	(0.0315)
Constant	-0.300*	1.082***	-2.819***	0.811***	-2.472***
	(0.172)	(0.191)	(0.266)	(0.167)	(0.231)
Observations	7,601	7,563	7,563	7,562	7,562

Robust standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Conclusion

Here, we present results that indicate that voters in the state of North Carolina are not more confident in the security and fairness of the elections. Furthermore, there are statistically significant racial differences in the percentage of each race reporting that they are confident, with White voters generally reporting that they are much more confident in security and fairness.

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Appendix A: Number of Respondents From Each County

County	Number	Percent
ALAMANCE	431	4.85
ALEXANDER	28	0.31
BEAUFORT	83	0.93
BRUNSWICK	10	0.11
BUNCOMBE	754	8.48
BURKE	26	0.29
CARTERET	279	3.14
CHATHAM	349	3.92
CLEVELAND	315	3.54
CRAVEN	132	1.48
CUMBERLAND	609	6.85
DUPLIN	163	1.83
DURHAM	1,188	13.36
EDGECOMBE	80	0.9
FORSYTH	455	5.12
FORSYTHE	13	0.15
GASTON	112	1.26
GUILFORD	967	10.87
HALIFAX	62	0.7
HENDERSON	12	0.13
JOHNSTON	96	1.08
LEE	167	1.88
LINCOLN	12	0.13
MECKLENBURG	536	6.03
NASH	80	0.9
NEW HANOVER	296	3.33
ORANGE	358	4.02
PASQUOTANK	53	0.6
PENDER	15	0.17
PITT	123	1.38
ROBESON	169	1.9
ROWAN	22	0.25
WAKE	628	7.06
WILSON	244	2.74
YANCEY	28	0.31