

Profiles of Voters Harmed by DMV's Failure to Comply with NVRA

From Interviews with 2014 Voters Conducted by Democracy North Carolina

To find voters who may have had a registration problem with DMV, Democracy NC called voters who used a provisional ballot in the 2014 general election because a poll worker classified them as having a registration problem. More than 40% of the voters called said they had problems stemming from their interaction with DMV. Here are 20 of the stories.

Brittany N., White, Female, Libertarian, Age 18, Henderson County. This was her first time voting and she was "pretty mad" about the whole ordeal. She registered at the DMV when she got her driver's license, but the poll officials could not find her name on the registration rolls. She had to use a provisional ballot. Eventually, the county elections staff verified that she had registered at DMV so her provisional ballot was approved. She said it was very frustrating and "needs to get fixed so others don't have to go through what I did."

Daniel W., White, Male, Unaffiliated, Age 23, Nash County. He registered to vote at the DMV after turning 18 and kept the same address as his permanent address while attending college in Tennessee for two years. He did not register or vote in Tennessee. When he returned home to vote, he was told he was not on the registration rolls. He used a provisional ballot, but it did not count. He is now a law enforcement officer in NC.

Donna D., White, Female, Unaffiliated, Age 54, Harnett County. She and her husband were told their names were not on the registration rolls. She says they moved from Johnston County and assumed that their registration would be transferred to Harnett County when they changed their driver's license at the DMV office. Her provisional ballot was rejected.

Eric B., White, Male, Republican, Age 28, Pender County. He moved "just 5 minutes down the road," from Onslow County where he was registered to vote. He used DMV's online system to update his driver's license and assumed that his voter registration would be updated, too. "It should be easy to have these integrated together," he said. "Why should this be so hard?" When Pender County officials could not find him on the rolls, he voted with a provisional ballot but it did not count. He takes pride in having voted steadily since he turned 18 and is upset that his vote didn't count in 2014.

Ernesto J., Latino, Male, Unaffiliated, Age 40, Cabarrus County. He moved from Mecklenburg to Cabarrus County and changed his driver's license address online. He doesn't think the system asked him about updating his registration, but he took it for granted that it would update his registration address. When he went to vote, he was surprised to learn that he was not on the registration rolls. He cast a provisional ballot, but it did not count.

Eugene P., White, Male, Republican, Age 46, Haywood County. He moved from Iredell County back to Haywood County in August 2014 and got his license updated at the DMV. He said, Yes, when the DMV examiner asked if he wanted to register to vote in the county. "I thought I was good to go, but apparently I had to do something else." When he went to vote, they told him he was not on the rolls, so he had to "fill out more paperwork." The Haywood County Board of Elections verified that he had registered at DMV and his ballot counted.

Hannah V., White, Female, Republican, Age 24, Buncombe County. She moved from Buncombe to Watauga County in 2013 to attend college, then moved back to Buncombe in 2014. She used DMV's online system to change her driver's license back to Buncombe County. When she went to vote in 2014 in Buncombe County, the poll officials said she was not on the registration rolls – they only had a record of her cancelation from when she moved to Watauga. So she used a provisional ballot, but it did not get approved.

Isaac B., Black, Male, Democrat, Age 19, Scotland County. He registered to vote at DMV in Laurinburg, but when he went to vote they did not find him on the registration rolls. They told him about voting with a provisional ballot. "If it's the only way, then I wanted to do it," he said. Election officials verified that he had registered at DMV and his ballot counted.

Jillian B., White, Female, Republican, Age 26, Catawba County. She had been registered in Caldwell County, but got married and moved to Catawba County at the time of the 2014 election. She thought she registered when she got her new driver's license, but when she went to vote, it was awkward and "a hardship" to learn that she was not registered and had to fill out a provisional ballot. She was rushing to get to work and had already gone to the wrong precinct to begin with. The poll workers couldn't find her and directed her to the correct polling place for her address, but those poll workers couldn't find her on the rolls either. So she used the provisional ballot. The election officials eventually learned that she had registered at the DMV, so her ballot was counted. Like the other voters interviewed, she thinks the DMV procedures should get improved so this doesn't happen again.

Luke H., White, Male, Republican, Age 25, Pitt County. He moved from Ohio (his wife is from NC) and registered to vote at the DMV when he got his license, in May 2014. He was surprised to learn that "the paperwork wasn't filed" for him and his name was not on the rolls. His wife had no problem voting because she was previously registered, but he found it to be quite a hassle. The Pitt County Board of Elections found many mistakes at DMV but their research could not verify that he registered at DMV so his ballot did not count.

Margaret T., Black, Female, Democrat, Age 60, Hertford County. When she moved from Edgecombe County to Hertford County, she intentionally went to "Motor Vehicles" and got her license updated; they asked "do you want to vote in the county" and she said "yes." But when she went to an early voting location in Hertford County, they said her "paperwork wasn't there." The election people said they were "having problems" with DMV – "we have had several complaints." They helped her do a provisional ballot. "They said it would be counted." When told her that her ballot did not count, she said "I'm shocked. . . . I'm so disappointed." "I'm like 'Wow, what happened?'"

Martin P., White, Male, Democrat, Age 54, registered in Buncombe County. He voted in Buncombe County in 2006, 2008, and 2010. He moved away for a couple of years and came back and registered at the DMV so he could vote. But when he went to vote in 2014, his name didn't appear on the rolls, so he cast a provisional ballot, but it did not count. He was upset by the whole thing, because he really "enjoys voting."

Mary F., Black, Female, Democrat, Age 50, Perquimans County. She moved to Perquimans County from Wisconsin and lives near where she grew up as a child. She remembers being

at the DMV and saying Yes when asked if she wanted to register to vote, but she worried that everything was going so fast because it was the end of the day. The registration didn't get to the county board of elections, so Mary had to vote with a provisional ballot, but it did not count. Sydni Baker, director of the Perquimans County Board of Elections, said there had been problems getting the registration images from DMV to the county boards.

Morris R., Black, Male, Democrat, Age 57, Wayne County. He is originally from Wayne County but lived in Wake County for "25 to 30 years." He moved back to Wayne County and remembers the DMV examiner asking him if he wanted to change his registration. He is a regular voter; he voted in Wake County in midterm and presidential election years. But the Wayne County officials could not find his name, so his provisional ballot did not count.

Moses C., Black, Male, Democrat, Age 60, Cleveland County. When he moved to Cleveland County, he and his wife went to the DMV office on the same day to change their licenses and both asked to be registered to vote. His wife had no trouble when she went to vote in 2014, but when he went, the officials said he was not registered. When he explained he registered at the DMV, they said they had that problem with "a lot of people." His ballot did not count.

Rachel G., White, Female, Democrat, New Hanover County. She moved back to New Hanover County and went to the DMV to change her address in 2013. The DMV examiner asked her about updating her voter registration and she said "yes." However, when she went to vote early in 2014, the election officials said her name was not on the rolls. She voted with a provisional ballot, but it did not count.

Sharon L., White, Female, Unaffiliated, Age 65, New Hanover County. She has lived in the same place since 1985 but she married in 2005 and changed her name on her driver's license at the DMV and thought a change to her voter registration was taken care of, but it wasn't. She is an infrequent voter but decided to vote in 2014. The poll officials said they could not find her name so she cast a provisional ballot, but it did not count.

Sonya M., Black, Female, Democrat, Age 52, Guilford County. She was trying to get in and out quickly by voting at the beginning of the day on her way to work. But the poll workers could not find her name on the registration rolls, so she had to go to another line. Rather than vote on the touch-screen machine like other voters, she had to use a paper provisional ballot. It was all disturbing to her. Upon research, the Guilford County Board of Elections learned that she had registered at the DMV as she stated. So her ballot counted.

Stevens P., White, Male, Republican, Age 19, Harnett County. He was surprised when the poll official said his name was not on the registration rolls. He remembers pre-registering as a 17 year old when he went to the DMV in September 2012. For whatever reason, his information did not reach the board of elections, and his provisional ballot did not count.

Sylena F., Black, Female, Democrat, Age 28, Vance County. She grew up in Vance County and went to college in Raleigh. She registered while she was a student at NC State University and voted in Wake County in 2008 and 2012. She moved back to Vance County in 2013 and changed her address at the DMV but can't remember being asked about registering to vote. When she went to an early voting center in Henderson, she was told she was not registered. She had to use a provisional ballot, but it did not count.