

Respect Our Vote!

Conservative legislators across the U.S. are changing voting laws to make it harder for many people to vote. Here in North Carolina, these bills are being pushed by legislators elected in 2010 with millions of dollars from right-wing donors who also fund private groups to fight against civil rights, public schools and fair taxes!

Here's an update on some of the anti-voter legislation in the NC General Assembly in Raleigh:

Mandatory photo ID for voters (HB-351): This bill would require voters to show a government-issued photo ID when they vote. It will create a new barrier to voting for 450,000 NC citizens, mostly seniors, low-income voters, people of color, women, and youth. **STATUS:** HB-351 was passed by the General Assembly and vetoed by Gov. Perdue. The legislature then failed to override the Governor's veto; however, another veto override could be attempted any time in 2012.

End Early Voting on Sunday (S-47): This was proposed even though 37,000 citizens used it in 2008. This is a direct attack on African-American churches and "Souls to the Polls." **STATUS:** The provision to end Sunday voting was removed from S-47.

Reduce the days / hours for Early Voting (HB-658, SB-47): This was proposed even though 60% of all NC voters used Early Voting in 2008. The bill would cut a week off the Early Voting period and also limit the hours that EV sites could be open. **STATUS:** HB-658 narrowly passed the NC House by 60-58 and is now in the Senate. SB-47 is in the House, where this provision was added.

Redistricting: Republicans led the redistricting process in NC and used it to help their party, not voters. The result – strangely shaped districts, minorities packed together, precincts split up, and more. **STATUS:** The legislature has approved new maps for Congressional, State House, and State Senate districts. The US Justice Department cleared these plans on narrow grounds; however, the plans are being challenged in state court and could also be challenged in federal court. Meanwhile, they are the districts for the 2012 election.

Release the HAVA Funds: Over \$4 million from the federal Help America Vote Act is in a NC bank account to help elections run smoothly – to fund Early Voting sites, train poll workers, and service voting machines; but it is being frozen because Republican leaders won't provide \$640,000 in matching money to release the \$4 million. They think Early Voting helps the wrong voters. Without funds, NC could be the Florida Fiasco of 2012!

Stop voters from registering during Early Voting by eliminating Same-Day Registration (S-47): This hard-won reform was used by 250,000 NC voters in 2008, especially by African-American and young voters. **STATUS:** SB-47 is in the NC House.

Better ballot access (H-32): This bill lowers the number of signatures needed to get a new political party or an independent candidate on the ballot. **STATUS:** Passed the NC House, now in the Senate Rules Committee.

End public financing for Council of State races and make judicial elections partisan (HB-452): "Voter-Owned" public financing gives voters more diversity in their choices and gives candidates a way to run without taking big donations from special interests. This bill keeps public financing for state judges but kills it for Council of State candidates. **STATUS:** HB-452 passed the House and is now in the Senate.

Take Action!

Contact your NC legislators in Raleigh at 919-733-4111. Tell them: **"Oppose any bills that would make voting harder and defend the Public Campaign programs."**

For more action steps, call Democracy North Carolina at 919-286-6000 or visit www.democracy-nc.org.

