

# Countering Dubious Claims of Voter Fraud in North Carolina

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**Claiming our elections are unsafe in order to pass restrictive voting rules is a longstanding but newly energized way to disenfranchise Black and brown voters.**

- Over the past decade, politicians have stoked unfounded fears over election security.
- This fear mongering has resulted in strict new voting laws that make it harder for eligible voters to cast a ballot.
- These policies - including strict Voter ID laws - disproportionately affect Black and brown voters.<sup>1</sup>
- Jim Crow-era voter suppression never went away - it simply evolved.

**Deliberate attempts by individuals to break voting laws are extremely rare.**

- North Carolina has seen only a handful of cases where voters deliberately broke voting laws.<sup>2</sup>
- Over the past five years, there have been:
  - 52 reports of voters attempting to vote twice.
  - 7 reports of individuals impersonating a voter.
  - 4 reports of vote buying.
  - 7 reports of non-citizens voting.

**There are serious punishments in place for those who break voting laws.**

- In North Carolina, most election crimes are a Class I felony that carry a prison sentence.<sup>3</sup>

**We have security measures in place to detect election malfeasance.**

- Before election results are certified, election officials perform an audit to detect issues.<sup>4</sup>
- One such audit helped expose an election scheme by a Republican political operative who stole and tampered with absentee ballots in 2018.<sup>5</sup>

**We can continue to improve election security, while also ensuring that every eligible voter has access to the ballot.**

- We should continue to pass legislation that makes our elections safe and accessible.
- This includes harnessing new technology to improve our systems – such as using signature verification software for absentee ballots.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <http://pages.ucsd.edu/~zhajnal/page5/documents/voterIDhajnaletal.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://s3.amazonaws.com/dl.ncsbe.gov/Investigations/NCSBE%20Referred%20Cases%202015-2020.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.ncsl.org/research/elections-and-campaigns/double-voting.aspx>

<sup>4</sup> [https://s3.amazonaws.com/dl.ncsbe.gov/Media\\_Kits/YourVoteCountsNC/ElectionSecurity\\_10TalkingPoints.pdf](https://s3.amazonaws.com/dl.ncsbe.gov/Media_Kits/YourVoteCountsNC/ElectionSecurity_10TalkingPoints.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/analysis-opinion/false-narrative-vote-mail-fraud>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/analysis-opinion/false-narrative-vote-mail-fraud>

**The vast majority of voters who have broken election laws are felons who are unaware that they have lost their voting rights.<sup>7</sup>**

- Lanisha Bratcher, a 32-year-old woman who voted in 2016 while on probation for a felony, cast a ballot in the 2016 Presidential Election. She had no idea she was ineligible to vote. However, the district attorney in Hoke county charged her with a class I felony for voting while serving a criminal sentence. She faced up to 19 months in prison.<sup>8</sup>

**Other claims of voter fraud are almost always mistakes made by poll workers or voters.**

- Clerical errors by poll workers sometimes result in voters being told that they have already voted. This is used as fodder for rumors about voter impersonation.
- In these rare cases, voters are able to cast a provisional ballot, allowing the County Board of Elections to investigate the error and have the correct vote count.
- Fears about the security of elections has even prompted some voters to vote twice, paranoid that their ballot may not have counted.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.newsobserver.com/news/politics-government/state-politics/article145971264.html>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2020/jul/21/voting-arrest-racist-law-north-carolina-lanisha-brachter>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.wbtv.com/2020/11/03/union-county-man-votes-twice-after-early-vote-isnt-recorded-system/>