

NC Election Protection Report

Lessons from the 2024 General Election



**Southern Coalition
for Social Justice**



DEMOCRACY NC



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I. INTRODUCTION

Voters in North Carolina must navigate complex, ever-changing rules and processes when they turn out to cast a ballot each election cycle. To help guide voters through this experience, Democracy North Carolina, Southern Coalition for Social Justice, and a broad coalition of North Carolina partners run the North Carolina Election Protection Hotline (888-OUR-VOTE). The Hotline's primary function is to serve as a trusted, non-partisan source of accurate information for North Carolina voters statewide, providing real-time assistance navigating the voting process and helping ensure all eligible ballots are cast and counted.

In the period leading up to the 2024 General Election, the Hotline fielded 6,460 calls from voters across the state. These calls included questions about the basics of voting, requests for assistance at the polls, reports of voter intimidation, and more.

Policymakers and election administrators often claim that voting is “too easy” and use that supposed ease to justify new restrictions and barriers to the ballot box, but the experiences of Hotline callers in the 2024 General Election reflect otherwise. From the very first step of registering to vote to having one's ballot counted, Hotline calls show eligible voters across the state bending over backward in an attempt to satisfy a multitude of administrative voting requirements — and sometimes still having their ballot kept out of the count.

This report presents the real-life experiences of Hotline callers alongside supplemental statewide voting data and research, casting light on the obstacles voters face and opportunities to improve the election system for all North Carolinians in five major areas raised frequently by callers:

- Voter registration
- Voter photo ID
- Voting by mail
- Voter intimidation and electioneering at the polls
- Disability access at the polls

Additional information on the support and advocacy provided to North Carolina voters through the Election Protection Hotline coalition in 2024 can be found in the [2024 NC Election Protection Preliminary Report](#) and the [2024 CBOE Monitoring Report](#).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The work of the North Carolina Election Protection Hotline would not be possible without the boundless dedication of partners and volunteers who answered calls, monitored voting sites, and worked with county and state election officials throughout the 2024 election cycle. Special thanks to all of our valued coalition friends and escalation team advocates, including ACLU of North Carolina, America Votes, Blueprint NC, Carolina Jews for Justice, Common Cause North Carolina, Disability Rights North Carolina, El Pueblo, Forward Justice, NAACP North Carolina State Conference, North Carolina Asian Americans Together, the League of Women Voters of North Carolina, North Carolina Black Alliance, North Carolina for the People, the Unitarian Universalist Justice Ministry, VoteRiders, and You Can Vote.

We also thank the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, who supports the NC Election Protection Hotline (888-OUR-VOTE) and administers the 866-OUR-VOTE national hotline on behalf of the national Election Protection Coalition.

II. VOTER REGISTRATION

Registration is the first requirement a North Carolinian must satisfy to be able to vote successfully. Come Election Day, if a person is not registered in their county, their vote will not be counted.

Voter registration first emerged in part as a tool to suppress political participation by certain citizens and communities.¹ Even now, thousands of ballots are rejected in every election because of issues with a voter's registration. While North Carolina was home to about 8 million voting-eligible adults in Fall 2024, the state had only about 7.5 million registered voters. In other words, there were approximately 500,000 unregistered eligible voters — even before counting outdated registrations in the state.² This research and data show that the voter registration process remains a significant barrier for many North Carolinians, especially those in Black and Latino communities, who are less likely to be registered to vote than white residents.³

Unsurprisingly, about one-third of all the Hotline calls received involved a question or issue related to voter registration.⁴ For some voters, this was just a matter of confirming that they were registered properly. But for many, registration was a much more complicated obstacle to overcome.

SAME-DAY REGISTRATION

Same-day registration is a critical resource for Hotline callers and for North Carolina voters more generally. Thanks to same-day registration, people who had never registered before and may not have known about the registration requirement are still able to vote. It also gives

registered voters a chance to fix potential issues with their registration and ensure their vote is counted. For example, if a voter moved counties but did not register at their new address, they can do so at an early voting site in their new county. If poll workers are unable to locate a voter's record, that voter can use same-day registration rather than casting a provisional ballot and risking it not counting if it turns out they were not properly registered before. Throughout the early voting period, Hotline volunteers were able to alert callers to the availability of same-day registration and guide them through the process.

The above chart shows the percentage of same-day registration Hotline calls that raised specific, common issues that same-day registration could

REQUIREMENTS TO REGISTER

There are several different ways North Carolinians can register, each with its own challenges. Up until the 25th day before an election, voters can register by mail, in person, or sometimes online. After that, but prior to Election Day, voters can register and vote on the same day during the early voting period at an early voting site— a process known as same-day registration.

Generally, North Carolinians cannot register on Election Day unless they recently became eligible after the regular voter registration deadline, either due to becoming a U.S. citizen or having their rights restored.

37.76%

Missed Deadline

28.73%

Voter Address Concerns

24.76%

Need to Update Registration

3.26%

Inactive Voting Status

3.16%

Online Voter Registration (OVR)

2.34%

Criminal Records

CALLER REGISTRATION ISSUES ADDRESSED BY SDR

Calls coded to “Same Day Registration” referred to the following specific challenges.

help fix. For example, nearly 25 percent of same-day registration calls involved callers needing to update their registration.

But unlike most other states with a same-day registration system,⁵ North Carolina does not allow voters to use same-day registration on Election Day. Registration problems that are relatively easy to resolve during the early voting period become more challenging — or even impossible — to resolve on Election Day.

After the end of early voting, the Hotline received over 550 calls from voters who were never registered, were not registered in their current county, or had problems with their registration. Because North Carolina does not allow same-day registration on Election Day, the vast majority of those callers were not able to successfully vote. These calls made up over 8.5% of **all** calls made to the Hotline ahead of the 2024 General Election.

An analysis of the provisional ballots cast during the election validates these experiences from Hotline callers. Provisional ballots are used when an election official cannot confirm a voter’s qualifications or eligibility to vote at a polling place. The voter casts a provisional ballot, and then the county board of elections researches the voter’s eligibility before deciding to accept or reject it. In the 2024 General Election, voters cast 65,230 total provisional ballots.⁶ The county boards of elections rejected nearly 62% (40,294) of those ballots. The most common reasons by far for rejecting provisional ballots were registration related, making up 89% of all rejected provisional ballots: the voters were not registered by the deadline, had been denied registration (usually due to mail delivery errors unrelated to a voter’s qualifications), or had been removed from the rolls.⁷ These trends are reflected in the Hotline data, with 66% of calls regarding provisional ballots resulting in either negative or unclear outcomes.

Young voters are more than twice as likely to use same-day registration as the full voting population.

These numbers do not account for people — like many Hotline callers who were not registered on Election Day — who chose to stay home or leave the polling place upon learning it was too late to register. Among callers to the Hotline inquiring about provisional ballots, roughly one-third claimed they were not even offered a provisional ballot by the poll worker. If same-day registration was available on Election Day, most, if not all, of those issues could have been resolved and those voters could have had their ballots counted.

Consider just a few common situations addressed in Hotline calls from the 2024 General Election where the individual could have voted if same-day registration was available on Election Day:

- A caller who had never voted before and did not realize you need to register first.
- A caller who recently moved to North Carolina and had not gotten a chance to register yet.
- A long-time voter who moved recently to another county and did not know they needed to register in that new county.
- A caller who moved to another county several years ago and believed their registration was updated when they got a new driver's license at the DMV.
- A caller who heard references to "same-day registration" and believed they would be able to register on Election Day.

PROOF OF RESIDENCE FOR SAME-DAY REGISTRANTS

When using same-day registration, a voter is required to provide additional proof of their residence, beyond what a person would have to provide to register by the 25-day deadline. To satisfy this requirement, voters can use one of the following current documents with their name and residential address: photo ID, utility bill, bank statement, paycheck, government document, or document from the entity that issued the voter's photo ID.⁸

Some Hotline callers were confused about what kinds of documents would satisfy this requirement, while others struggled to obtain a document that would work. The Hotline was able to walk these callers through the different kinds of documents that could be used and help them troubleshoot options (such as updating their accounts with a current address or locating a document from their school). **For example, one caller was struggling with same-day registration because she had no bills with her current address. Hotline volunteers were able to help her identify an option she did have access to: a pay stub.**

One point of confusion for callers was that a lease generally cannot be used as proof of rental residence. But for some callers, a lease was all they had; they did not have utility bills or other documents in their name, and thus they were not able to vote despite being residents of the county and meeting all the qualifications for voting. This is understandably confusing and frustrating for voters when a lease can be used to prove residence for so many other things — driver's licenses, library cards, and so on — but not voting.

The proof of residence requirement was also particularly challenging for students. Students and other young voters rely on same-day registration disproportionately compared to other age groups. Young voters are more than twice as likely to use same-day registration as the full voting population, and they usually constitute about 30-40% of the same-day registrants in a given election despite only making up 12-14% of the state's total registered voters.⁹ This makes sense considering young people are less likely to own a home. They also move at significantly higher rates than older people; students may move multiple times in a single year.¹⁰ Due to their age, they are also more likely to be first-time voters.

All these characteristics make same-day registration particularly important for young and student voters. Yet these voters also faced difficulties providing proof of residence. Student callers frequently shared they did not have an ID with their current address and they did not have utility bills, bank statements, or other mail sent to their college address, either because they do not have those items at all or because they list their family address instead. While schools can support students in proving their residence — for

example, by providing the county with a roster of students and their residential addresses¹¹ — not all schools do so or alert their students to these options. Here, too, the Hotline helped students understand the complex list of potential documents and identify solutions.

Registration address was a prominent concern raised in calls addressing campus and student voting. The chart below shows the number of calls received by the Hotline raising four common issues for college voters.

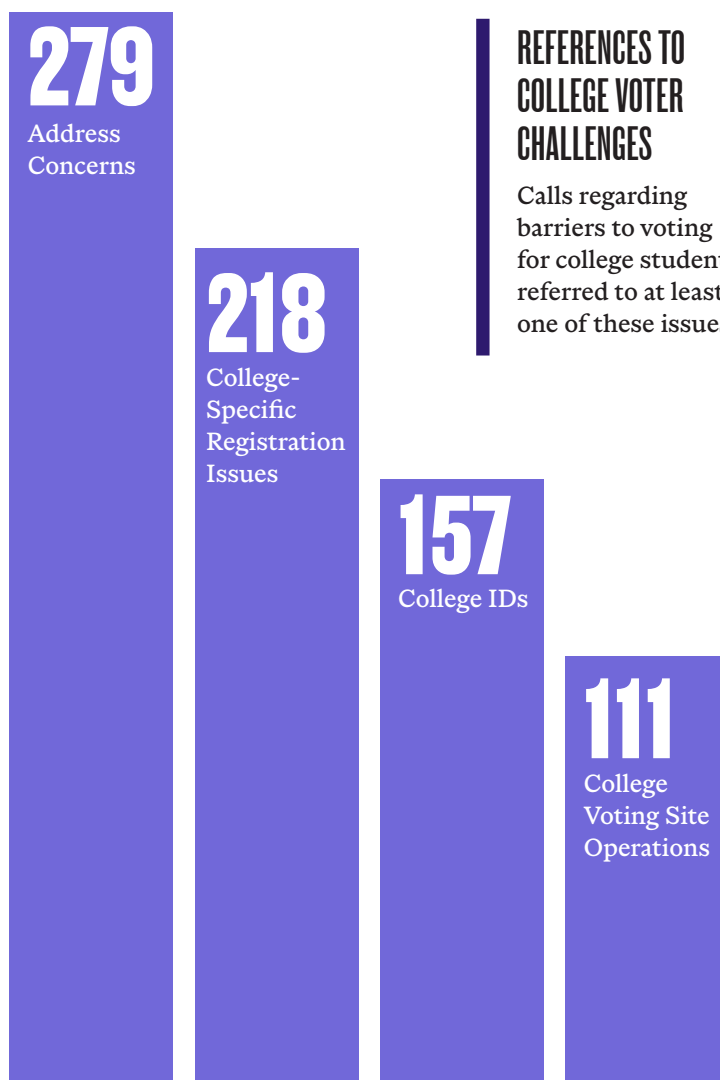
ONLINE VOTER REGISTRATION

The NC State Board of Elections allows online voter registration only for North Carolina Division of Motor Vehicles (NC DMV) customers. If a person does not have an NC DMV-issued ID (either a driver's license or non-operator ID), they are not currently able to register online. The Hotline received multiple reports from people who do not have an NC DMV ID who believed they successfully registered online, only to discover later — while searching for their own registration record or attempting to vote — that their registration did not go through in the first place. Online registration *should* be made available to all North Carolinians. But if the NC State Board continues to restrict it to NC DMV customers through the state Department of Transportation portal, it must ensure that those registrations are transmitted accurately to the State Board in a timely manner and that non-DMV customers are clearly directed to their other registration options.

EDUCATING VOTERS ON REGISTRATION METHODS AND DEADLINES

Hotline calls during the voting period revealed a troubling degree of confusion around available registration methods and governing deadlines. Multiple hotline callers reported attempting to register by hardcopy form, online, or at the DMV, but after the 25-day deadline had passed, without realizing those registrations were too late for the upcoming election. For example, one caller registered at the DMV around October 20 and had been told he would be able to vote in the 2024 General

Election; another registered there on October 31. Thankfully, some of these callers contacted the Hotline during the early voting period, and they were made aware of the option to use same-day registration. But those who did not — often voters attempting to vote on Election Day and then calling the Hotline — had no way to register for the 2024 General Election. This deadline was especially challenging for callers who were temporarily displaced from their home county, such as those affected by Hurricane Helene. Those voters were not able to use same-day registration because that would require returning to their home county to vote in person, which may have meant traveling hours away from where they were staying.



REFERENCES TO COLLEGE VOTER CHALLENGES

Calls regarding barriers to voting for college students referred to at least one of these issues.

Note: A single call will often raise multiple issues (e.g., one college voter call might have involved both address concerns and college IDs).

Callers' confusion over their registration options and deadlines lines up with statewide data. The U.S. Census Bureau's Current Population Survey estimated nearly 14% of North Carolina's eligible voters were unable to register because they "did not meet registration deadlines" or "did not know where or how to register."¹² This data, coupled with the experiences of hundreds of Hotline callers, demonstrates a need for clearer and more obvious communication of deadlines on registration materials and alternatives when deadlines have passed. Telling voters that the deadline is 25 days before Election Day is one thing, but giving them the actual date (e.g. October 11, 2024, for the 2024 General Election) is better. Additionally, voters who attempt to register after the 25-day deadline should be directed to same-day registration during early voting.

RE-REGISTERING AFTER MOVING COUNTIES

While many registration-related Hotline calls came from first-time voters, the Hotline also received hundreds of calls from people who were already registered but needed to update something in their record: most often address, but also sometimes name and party affiliation.

In North Carolina, voter registration is tied to the voter's county of residence. When a voter moves to a **new county** within the state, they are essentially treated like a new registrant. They must either register by the 25-day deadline or use same-day registration during early voting in order to cast a ballot — they **cannot** update their address on Election Day and then vote. By contrast, if a person moves within the **same county** and has not updated their registration with their new address before Election Day, they will be able to update their address on Election Day and still vote.

This county-specific rule does not line up with how voters think about their registration status when moving. Many Hotline callers expected that once they are registered in North

Telling voters that the deadline is 25 days before election day is one thing, but giving them the actual date (e.g. October 11, 2024, for the 2024 General Election) is better.

Carolina, the registration travels with them (like a driver's license does with statewide driving privileges) and if they move and need to update their address, they can do so while voting on Election Day. Some callers may have moved less than a half hour away yet still need to re-register because they crossed county lines. That's even the case for an intra-city move where the city spans multiple counties; a voter might move homes within the City of Rocky Mount and, in the process, shift from Edgecombe to Nash County, necessitating an entirely new registration.

For callers who reached out early enough, the Hotline was able to alert them to the need to re-register by the end of the early voting period and guide them through the process depending on when they moved. But those who called after the end of early voting often had no options left other than to register for the next election.

Compare that to the state of Florida, where a voter who has moved to a different county can usually update their address at their new Election Day polling place and successfully cast a regular ballot.¹³ With modern technology, Florida election officials are able to easily process out-of-county address changes for voters. North Carolina should take a similar approach, given the now widespread use of electronic poll books and increased funding for modernizing the state's elections information management system.¹⁴

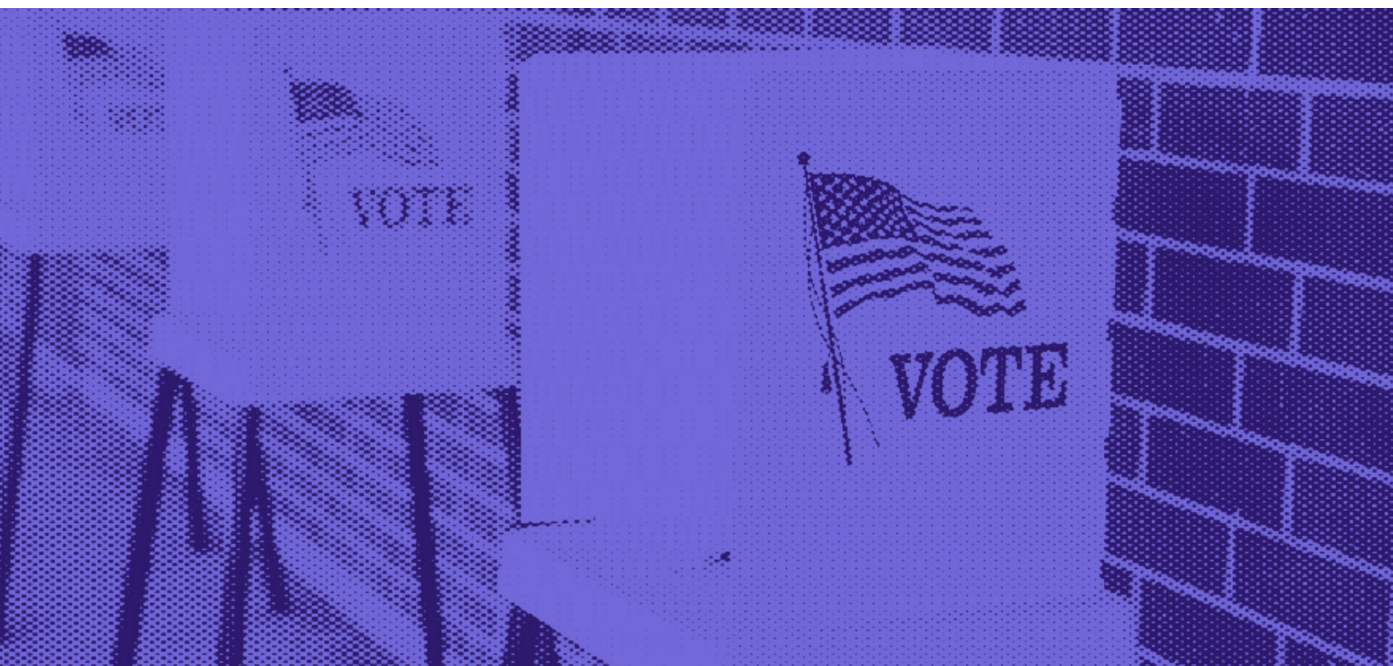
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Registration does not have to be the burden that it currently is in North Carolina. Most obviously, North Carolina could extend same-day registration beyond early voting to Election Day,

as is the case with most states with this option.¹⁵ **This change alone could have solved at least 550 Hotline callers' votes.**

Other structural changes that could help voters overcome the registration hurdle include:

- **Allowing Election Day Changes to Out-of-County Registrations:** Even if North Carolina does not adopt same-day registration on Election Day, it could choose to treat out-of-county and in-county moves the same, allowing these voters to update their registrations in their new county on Election Day. Other states have been able to implement this. North Carolina is already about to update its elections information management system, making it the perfect time to explore making address changes easier for voters across the state.
- **Automatic Voter Registration:** Across the country, states have been increasingly adopting Automatic Voter Registration. Under this system, when a person interacts with certain government agencies — for example, the DMV — voter registration becomes an “opt-out” process instead of “opt-in.” The agency will automatically transfer their information to election officials so they will be registered to vote unless they opt out. Automatic Voter Registration increases voter registration and participation, while also ensuring more accurate voter rolls, all for less money than other registration systems.¹⁶
- **Expanding Online Voter Registration:** The NC State Board’s current decision to limit online voter registration to NC DMV customers has confused voters and has disenfranchised non-DMV customers who believed they were registered until it was too late. State law would allow the State Board to offer and accept an electronic registration form for *all* North Carolinians.¹⁷
- **Expanding Other Voter Registration Options:** North Carolina could also explore other options to ensure all residents can register to vote. For example, Canada’s income tax forms include a voter registration checkbox, which has been significant in ensuring more than 90% of eligible Canadian voters are registered to cast a ballot.¹⁸
- **Improving Public Outreach on Voter Registration:** Callers’ experiences show a need for straightforward and far-reaching education and awareness campaigns for voter registration. Callers were confused about where, when, and how to register. Callers were also confused about same-day registration being available during early voting but not on Election Day. North Carolina used to have a Citizens Voter Registration Awareness Month, during which the State Board and all 100 county boards of elections ran registration drives across the state and offered voter education.¹⁹ Although the NC General Assembly eliminated this awareness month, there is clearly still a need for increased voter education and outreach. Local boards of elections are still free to act on that need.





III. VOTER PHOTO ID

North Carolina requires voter photo ID for both in-person and mail voters. The 2024 Election marked the first time the state implemented this requirement in a general election, meaning many voters were navigating the photo ID requirement for the first time.²⁰

State law restricts the types of photo ID that voters can use: acceptable IDs include North Carolina driver's licenses or DMV IDs, United States passports, military/veteran identification, tribal enrollment cards, and certain government and student identifications if they have been approved by the State Board of Elections.²¹

If a voter is unable to present an acceptable voter photo ID when voting, they can still vote by casting a provisional ballot and either (1) completing an ID Exception Form, or (2) returning to their county board of elections with their photo ID at a later date.²² About 10% of all provisional ballots in the 2024 General Election were cast by voters who did not provide a photo ID when voting.²³

The [Photo ID Exception Form](#) has three categories that voters can select from: (1) the voter has a “reasonable impediment” preventing them from showing an acceptable ID, (2)

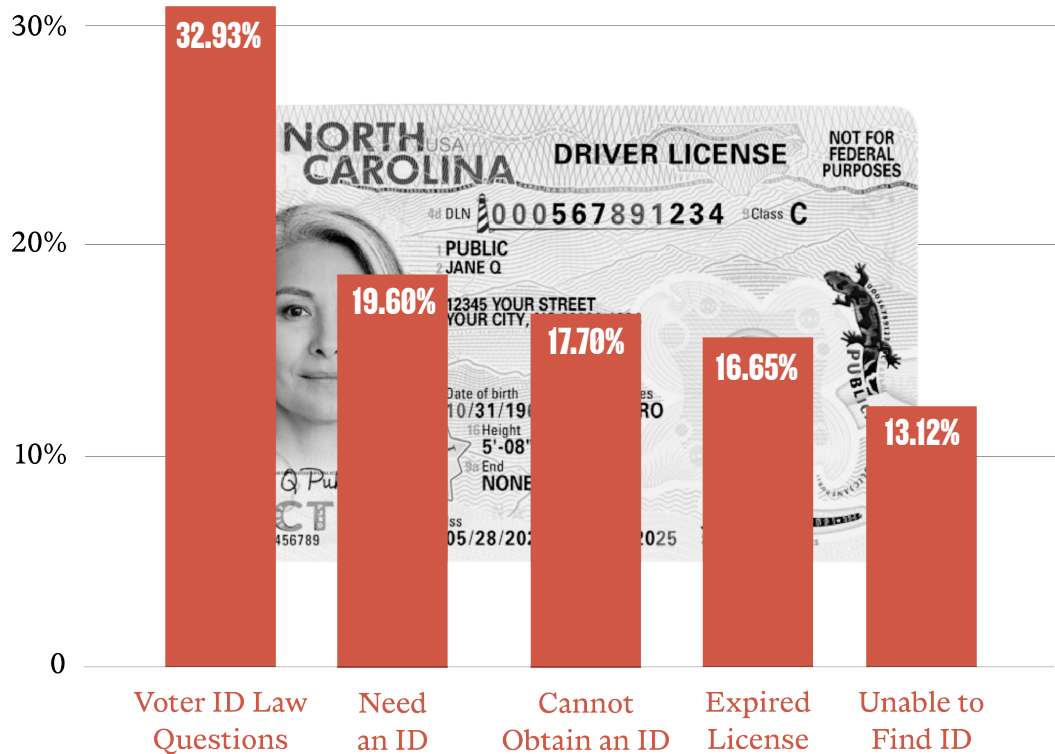
the voter has a religious objection to being photographed, or (3) the voter was a victim of a natural disaster within 100 days of the election. Voters who vote by mail also have the option of indicating that they are unable to provide a photocopy of their photo ID when returning their mail ballot.

Reasonable impediments — which range from an inability to obtain an ID, a lost or stolen ID, or some other reason the voter may indicate — were the most common reasons voters gave for not presenting a photo ID when voting in 2024.

Voter photo ID laws are part of a long history of race-based voter suppression in North Carolina.²⁴ Black and Latino voters are less likely to possess photo IDs that satisfy North Carolina's requirements, and the list of acceptable photo IDs excludes the types of photo IDs that Black and Latino voters are more likely to possess.²⁵ This reality led a federal court to conclude that the voter photo ID law makes it “much more difficult for racial minorities to vote and to have their vote counted.”²⁶ The voter photo ID requirement also fails to add any benefit to North Carolina's election system; even before voter photo ID, voters' identities were confirmed in

VOTER ID ISSUES

Individuals calling about Voter ID referenced these challenges specifically.



multiple ways throughout the registration and voting process, including Social Security and driver's license database checks at registration, documentation for first-time registrants, and the voting check-in process.²⁷

Leading up to the 2024 General Election, over 400 voters contacted the Hotline with questions about the photo ID requirement or with reports of poll worker confusion over accepting photo IDs and providing ID-related provisional ballots. As reported in the [2024 CBOE Monitoring Report](#), implementation of the photo ID requirements in 2024 was inconsistent across counties, especially with respect to county board discussions around exception forms and whether to count the accompanying provisional ballots.

Despite these challenges, voters who contacted the Hotline received helpful information about the types of acceptable photo ID and how to have their ballot counted without a photo ID.

The chart above shows the percentage of voter ID-related Hotline calls that raised particular issues: general law questions, need for an ID, inability to obtain ID, expired drivers' licenses, and inability to find one's ID.

VOTER QUESTIONS ABOUT PHOTO ID

Hundreds of North Carolina voters called the Hotline with questions about what photo IDs could be used for voting, or how to get an acceptable photo ID if they did not already have one.

One common question was whether voters could use an expired ID — helpfully, the answer is yes if the ID has been expired for one year or less; if the voter is using a military, veterans, or tribal ID; or if the voter is over 65 and the ID was unexpired on their 65th birthday.²⁸ This spared many voters from needing to make a rushed trip to acquire a new ID, which can be especially difficult for working voters, voters in rural areas, and voters with disabilities who are less able to travel to the DMV or other ID-issuing agencies.

In 2024, long waits at the DMV and scarce appointment options also made it difficult for many voters to get a DMV-issued ID (either a driver's license or state ID), which is one of the most commonly used forms of voter photo ID. This can create unique challenges for voters who have moved to North Carolina from another state and are trying to acquire a North Carolina license. Voters who registered to vote within

90 days of the election may use an out-of-state ID when voting, but that option is not available to voters who registered earlier yet still have not received a North Carolina driver’s license. Moreover, the temporary driver’s licenses issued by the DMV to applicants while they await their permanent license by mail cannot be used as voter photo IDs. Some applicants waited months to receive their permanent license, like former Representative Sarah Stevens, whose license took nearly two months to arrive.²⁹ This resulted in confusion and frustration for several Hotline callers who attempted to vote using temporary licenses.

Fortunately, the Hotline was able to provide these voters with multiple options to have their ballots counted. Voters could cast a provisional ballot with an ID Exception Form and indicate, for example, “I applied for photo ID but have not received it.” Or, if the voter had time and transportation, they could go to their county board of elections and receive a free photo ID printed by the board. Reassuring Hotline callers

of their rights and the safeguards that exist even if they lack an approved photo ID helps prevent those voters from opting out of casting a ballot before reaching their polling place.

STUDENT VOTERS AND PHOTO ID

Dozens of student voters also contacted the Hotline to verify whether they could use their student ID to vote. For students to be able to use their student ID to vote, their school had to obtain approval from the NC State Board of Elections. In 2024, [69 schools across the state received approvals](#). Still, this left about half of the colleges and universities in North Carolina without approved student IDs. Moreover, students are less likely to have multiple forms of IDs to present when voting; for example, only about 60% of 18-year-olds have a driver’s license, and very few possess military or state IDs.³⁰ Community college student IDs were particularly underrepresented on the list of approved IDs, with only 26 of 59 community colleges receiving approval.

PHOTO ID PROVISIONAL BALLOT EXCEPTIONS LISTED BY VOTERS³¹

* Because voters can list multiple exceptions on a single form, the sum of all exceptions will exceed the total number of ID Exception Form provisional ballots.

** Because this exception applies to mail ballots and most counties do not include mail ballot data in the provisional file, this number likely vastly understates the use of the “no ability to photocopy” exception.

Listed Exception [*]	Number of Provisional Ballots Listing this Exception
Disability or Illness	423
Family Responsibilities	95
Lack of Birth Certificate or Other Underlying Documents Required	108
Lack of Transportation	285
Work Schedule	206
Lost or Stolen Photo Identification	1838
Photo Identification Applied for but Not Yet Received	991
No Ability to Photocopy ^{**}	13
Other Reasonable Impediment	914
State or Federal Law Prohibits Listing the Impediment	6
Natural Disaster	281
Religious Objection to Being Photographed	12

Multiple student voters attending Central Piedmont Community College, one of whom had lost her driver's license and did not have a passport, asked the Hotline whether they could use their student IDs and learned that their school's ID was not an approved option. Other students calling the Hotline only had digital student IDs, which are not acceptable photo IDs regardless of whether the school's physical ID has been approved.³²

Schools are increasingly adopting digital IDs for students and staff, and are even phasing out physical forms of ID.³³ For many students, this means they have to find an alternate form of ID, pay an additional fee for a physical card, and/or vote provisionally because their school no longer creates physical student IDs.³⁴ Universities that maintain a physical student ID for voting, but use a digital student ID for everything else, create a dual ID system that may add to the confusion faced by student populations on campus.³⁵

ADDRESSES ON PHOTO IDS

Another common question for voters was whether the address on their photo ID had to match the address on their voter registration. Because photo ID is used to verify identity and not residence, these addresses do not have to match.³⁶ In several counties, however, poll workers did not accept photo IDs that had a different address than the voter's registration. Examples of this reported through the Hotline include:

- In Davidson and Alamance counties, voters reported being made to show proof of their current address with additional documentation because their driver's licenses had their former address.
- In Wake and Perquimans counties, voters reported being turned away to vote entirely because of an address mismatch.
- In Mecklenburg and Forsyth counties, voters with address mismatches were made from voting provisional ballots.
- In Union, Mecklenburg, and Guilford counties, voters were told they could not use a U.S. Passport as a photo ID, despite being acceptable photo IDs, because passports do not have addresses on them.

In most of these situations, Hotline volunteers were able to inform voters that their addresses

did not have to match their registration or were able to speak directly to polling site staff and share the state law on the issue. Hotline coalition partners also shared some of these reports with the NC State Board of Elections and encouraged the Board to share additional guidance with county boards and poll workers.

CHALLENGES OBTAINING ID EXCEPTION FORMS

Another area of confusion for poll workers was provisional voting and Photo ID Exception Forms for voters who do not present a photo ID at the polls. Elections workers are supposed to offer any voter who cannot present an acceptable photo ID the option to vote provisionally, including with an ID Exception Form. But voters from all across the state called the Hotline because they had no photo ID and were not offered the option to vote provisionally or were only given the option to return to the county board of elections with their photo ID at a later date. This includes:

- In Mecklenburg County, a voter did not have a photo ID and was sent to talk to several different poll workers, none of whom offered the option to vote with an ID Exception Form. Only when she saw signs indicating that you could vote with or without an ID did she reach out to the Hotline to learn she could still cast a provisional ballot.
- Other voters in Mecklenburg County had similar experiences. One was turned away after affirmatively asking for an ID Exception Form. Another attempted to vote without an approved voter photo ID, and was neither offered an ID Exception Form nor a provisional. Only after contacting the Hotline did they learn of those options and then plan to get back in line to vote. Lastly, a voter reported that the poll workers at his site were not offering ID Exception Forms and when asked about them, said that they didn't know whether they had the forms or how to use them.
- In Guilford County, voters were told their only option was to use a provisional ballot and return to the county board with a photo ID at a later time.
- In Madison County, a voter was told she had to both fill out an exception form and return

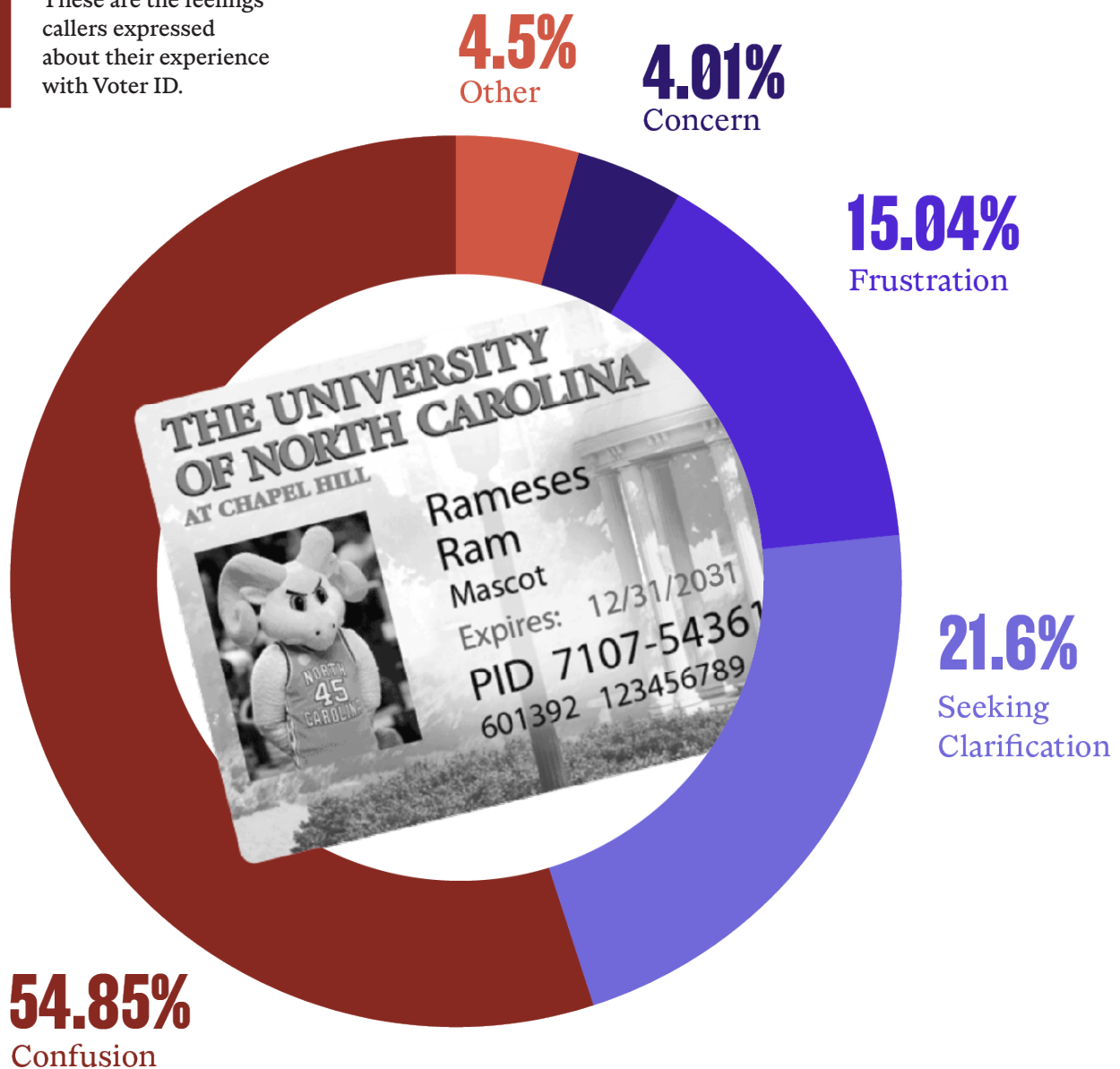
- to her county board with a photo ID to have her ballot counted.
- In Alamance and Robeson counties, voters were turned away without being informed of the ID Exception Form.

Through voter education and advocacy to county boards and the State Board of Elections, election

protection volunteers helped many voters access provisional ballots and provided helpful guidance to poll workers. Still, being passed to multiple poll workers, hearing conflicting information, and facing uncertainty about whether your ballot will count — or whether you can cast a ballot at all — creates confusion for voters and may make them less likely to engage in future voting.

CALLER PERSPECTIVE ABOUT VOTER ID

These are the feelings callers expressed about their experience with Voter ID.



CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

On March 26, 2026, the Middle District of North Carolina upheld the law requiring voter photo ID in North Carolina, meaning this requirement will be in place for future elections unless another court reverses the decision.³⁷ The 2024 General Election revealed where the photo ID process may be improved both for voters and for election workers.

- **Improve and increase training for county boards and poll workers, including a reminder that a Photo ID Exception Form must be offered to every voter who does not present a photo ID:** Voters who used the ID Exception Form were largely successful in having their ballots counted. Over 4,500 voters submitted ID Exception Forms (mostly using the reasonable impediment option), and over 85% of those forms were accepted. Those who did not use an ID Exception Form and instead opted to return to the county board with an acceptable photo ID at a later date had the opposite experience: Only about 25% of those voters were able to return to their county board and have their ballot accepted. Voters who are not informed of the option to vote with an ID Exception Form are therefore far less likely to have their ballot counted.³⁸
- **Continue outreach to colleges and universities about the student ID approval process:** In 2024, 69 colleges and
- **universities had student IDs approved by the NC State Board of Elections.** This helped student voters, many of whom do not have other forms of ID. For the 2025 and 2026 elections, [only 59 student IDs have been approved by the State Board.](#) Educating school administrators about the approval process and encouraging them to apply for approval will allow more students to have their ballots counted.
- **Approve the usage of digital photo IDs as voter photo IDs:** Digital IDs are at least as secure as physical IDs,³⁹ and permitting the usage of digital student IDs as voter photo IDs would lessen confusion from voters and poll workers and allow more students to have their ballots counted.
- **Increase outreach to state and local government employers for employee ID approval:** Though [a combined 73 student and employee IDs were approved for the 2026 election](#), filtering the list shows that only 36 of these approvals are for employee IDs. This is a small fraction of the number of state and local governments that could potentially apply for voter photo ID approval. In North Carolina, there are 100 counties, over 500 municipalities, and over 100 public school districts. Increasing outreach to state and local governments would decrease the barrier the photo ID creates in voting, especially for Black and Latino voters.⁴⁰
- **Increase community outreach about availability of free voter photo ID:** Free photo IDs are available at every county board of elections office in North Carolina, but many voters do not know about this option or cannot travel to their county board's office. Sharing information about the availability of these IDs, which are often quicker to obtain than DMV-issued IDs, would help voters obtain necessary

photo IDs and reduce the need to cast provisional ballots. Offering free voter photo IDs at additional locations, such as early voting sites, would also help voters with difficult schedules and/or fewer transportation options to obtain an ID.



IV. VOTING BY MAIL

Nearly 300,000 North Carolinians voted by mail during the 2024 General Election.⁴¹ For many of these voters, a mail ballot was their only available option to participate in the election.

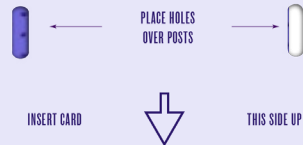
The Hotline received calls from people with disabilities, people in hospitals or care facilities, people with limited transportation access, students temporarily away for school, people temporarily living out-of-state, and more, all of whom expressed needing to vote by mail.

Some of these callers expressed worry that, given the deadlines and expected delays with U.S. Postal Service (USPS) delivery, the option might not work for them. Others were confused about the process for voting by mail.

The Hotline helped callers with each step in the process: requesting, completing, monitoring, and returning their mail ballots. In total, the Hotline received over 1,000 calls dealing with voting by mail in the 2024 General Election, making up nearly 17% of calls despite vote-by-mail ballots constituting just a little over 5% of the total ballots cast in the election.⁴² This suggests that voting by mail is a confusing process for North Carolina voters, requiring a disproportionate amount of assistance compared to other forms of voting.

REQUESTING AND RECEIVING A MAIL BALLOT

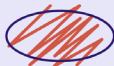
In North Carolina, a voter must first submit a request for a mail ballot by a certain deadline, wait for their ballot to be delivered, and then return the completed ballot by Election Day. In the 2024 General Election, the request deadline was one week before Election Day. Even under that deadline, the Hotline received calls from voters who had not requested a ballot in time and did not know



HAS VOTER BEEN HELPED?

Caller tried to submit a mail-in ballot application but received notice that it was rejected because it was filled out incorrectly and she wants to know how to vote. First, I talked her through how she could update her mail-in ballot application so that she could get the ballot by mail like she originally wanted. However, she now has decided that she does not want to mail-in vote because she has had trouble receiving mail and wants to make sure she gets her ballot. As a result, I talked her through her polling location voting day and she is planning to vote in person now.

YES



NO



ELECTION PROTECTION HOTLINE TICKET



about the deadline. Since then, the NC General Assembly has moved the request deadline even earlier to two weeks before Election Day.

Hotline callers reported a range of challenges with requesting a mail ballot, such as lack of or limited access to technology, inability to use technology to request a ballot due to disability, and needing help to submit a request but not having anyone to help them. Some callers who intended to vote by mail had their ballot request rejected due to filling out the request incorrectly, and had to vote in person instead. Others learned that they missed the deadline to request their ballot. The Hotline was able to help some of these callers make a new voting plan, but some were unable to appear in person to cast a ballot and could not vote at all.

The Hotline also fielded calls from voters who submitted their request on time yet had not received their ballot after weeks of waiting. Here, too, timing was a challenge. Hotline volunteers were able to assist many of these callers in following up on their ballot request, but they were left with much less time to complete and return their ballots, causing some to shift their plans to vote in person instead. For other callers, by the time they realized there was an issue with their ballot arriving, there was not enough time for their county board of elections to mail them a ballot or for them to return it. Despite these voters' best efforts, they were left without an accessible solution.

Consider just a few Hotline examples:

- One caller waited three weeks for her mail ballot at her temporary residence in California. Because of the delay in receiving her ballot, she had to pay for priority shipping to get her ballot returned on time.
- Multiple North Carolina voters away at college faced significant delays after their requests, waiting weeks or even a month without having received their mail ballot. One tried five separate times to get her ballot sent to her yet never received it. Because many of these students were far from home, they did not have the fallback option of voting in person.
- Another student struggled with her college's mail center. She requested her mail ballot on September 23 and received a notification from the mail center that the ballot arrived on October 1. But when she went to pick it

up, they did not have it, and they did not get it to her until Election Day, at which point it was too late to return it.

- One caller, a disabled Vietnam War veteran, had not received his requested mail ballot by late October, and the ballot tracking system did not have a record of his request.
- Other callers were displaced by Hurricane Helene. One, for example, waited two weeks for her ballot but had not received it. Another tried to request a mail ballot first in early October and again later that month. Each time, she received an automated email confirming receipt of the request, but she did not receive a ballot either time. She tried calling her county board of elections but was not able to get through to speak with a person.

An unanticipated injury or illness also can render a voter unable to go to the polls on Election Day. In these emergency circumstances, North Carolina law allows the voter, a relative, or guardian to request a mail ballot in person at their county board of elections office during a limited window after the mail ballot request deadline.⁴³ This emergency request also applies to voters with disabilities, who can have any person of their choosing request and collect their ballot in person.⁴⁴ The Hotline was able to alert voters to this little-known voting option and guide them through the process. However, some callers did not have anyone they could send to pick up their ballot.

COMPLETING A MAIL BALLOT

Voters who successfully requested and received their mail ballot then had to properly complete that ballot in the presence of two witnesses or one notary (who must, in turn, sign the return envelope). Hotline callers reported feeling burdened by this requirement, and some reported they were unable to find the required witnesses to certify their ballot. One explained that "it is too difficult to find a witness," especially for elderly people, and another reported that at least eight ballots from voters at a rehabilitation center had been rejected for incomplete witness information. Only one other state, Alabama, requires two witnesses to vote by mail; 39 states plus Washington, D.C. do not require any witnesses at all, and the other nine states require one witness or notary.⁴⁵

Some callers also expressed confusion over changes in law since prior cycles. For example, in 2020, responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, the NC General Assembly allowed voters to cast mail ballots with a single witness.⁴⁶ Despite this one-witness approach not having created any issues in 2020, in subsequent elections, voters again had to have their mail ballot signed by two witnesses or a notary.

A look at the publicly available absentee file from the 2024 General Election shows:

- Over 5,000 mail ballots were rejected due to missing witness information,
- Over 50 mail ballots were rejected due to not being properly notarized, and
- More than 30 mail ballots were rejected due to missing assistant information.⁴⁷

Other callers turned to the Hotline for help tracking and monitoring their ballots, including obtaining help understanding different ballot return statuses. Some issues — namely, issues with the voter’s signature or photo ID — could still be fixed after Election Day through multiple methods, including email. But for others, such as

missing witness signatures, the voter is required to complete a new ballot mailed to them by the county board of elections and then return that ballot by Election Day. This distinction was frustrating and posed difficulties for Hotline callers whose ballots were not flagged as having errors until close to Election Day.

Take, for example, one caller who was temporarily living in Connecticut. On the day before Election Day, she received notice that the witness section of her ballot had been deemed insufficient. Her county board sent her a new ballot that day by priority mail, but she was naturally concerned she would not receive it in time to complete and return it, especially because she believed her witness section had been completed correctly. Because the alleged issue was with the witness section, she did not have the easier, post-election cure options that some voters can use.

The chart below shows the number of Hotline calls received about mail ballot completion that raised certain common topics. Note that a single call can often raise multiple topics (e.g., one call might have involved questions about both witnesses and assistance).



ABSENTEE COMPLETION ISSUES

Callers asking about completing their absentee ballot specifically referenced these hurdles.

MAIL VOTING IN CARE FACILITIES

Voters residing in assisted living facilities or other care homes face unique challenges in successfully casting a ballot. These voters often cannot commute to the polls and must rely on relatives or a Multipartisan Assistance Team (MAT) to obtain a mail ballot, complete it according to the requirements, and submit it to the county board of elections. MATs are bodies of at least two registered voters in the county appointed by county boards of elections who are trained and authorized to assist voters with mail ballots.⁴⁸ Voters with disabilities can also receive assistance from any person of their choosing.⁴⁹

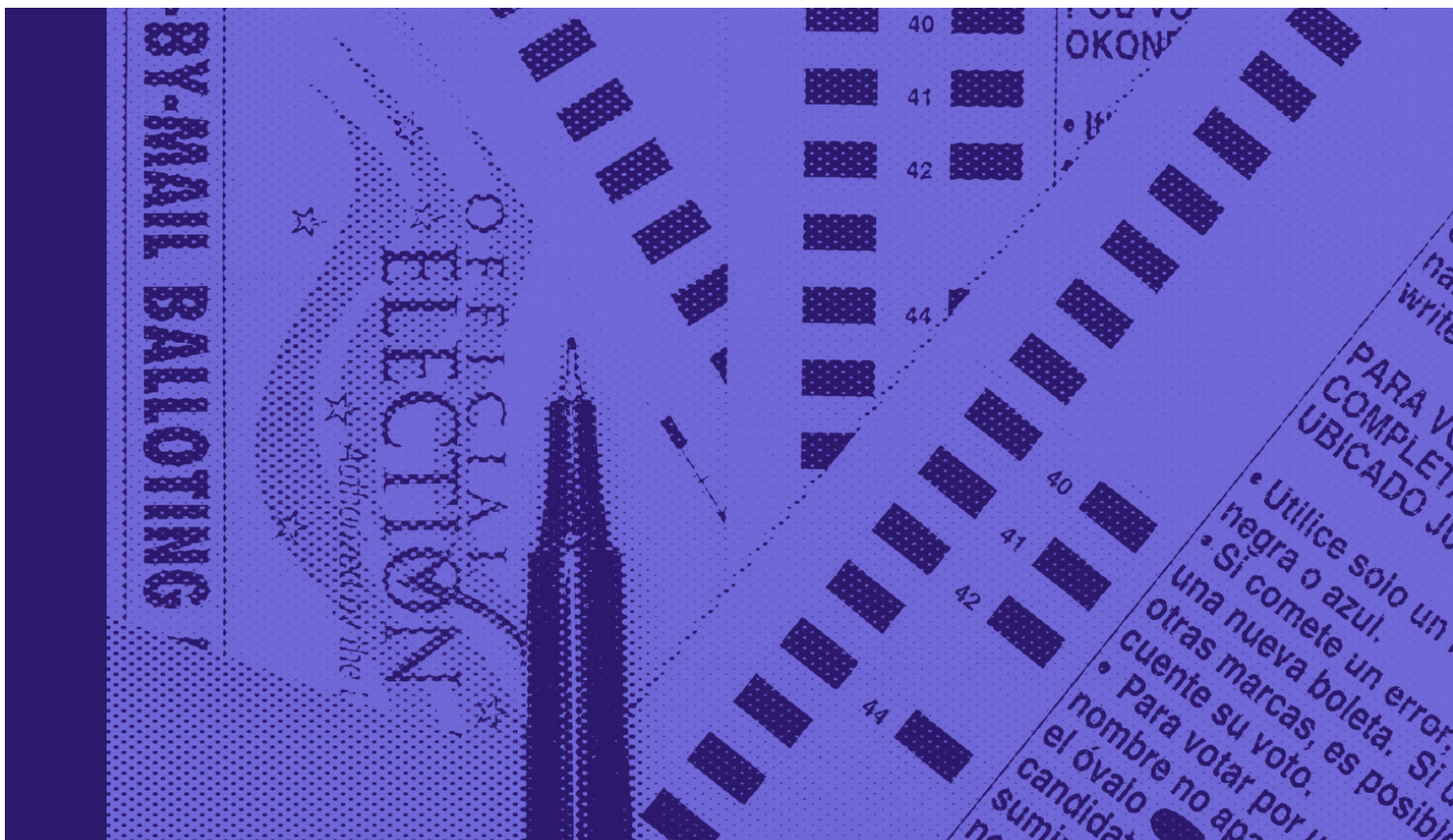
Hotline calls reflected confusion and concerns about receiving or providing assistance to care facility residents for mail ballots. A number of callers requested information about whether they were allowed and how to assist a loved one with voting by mail. Callers also reported concerns with facility staff and MATs in these residences, including MATs not showing up or providing incorrect information, and facilities refusing

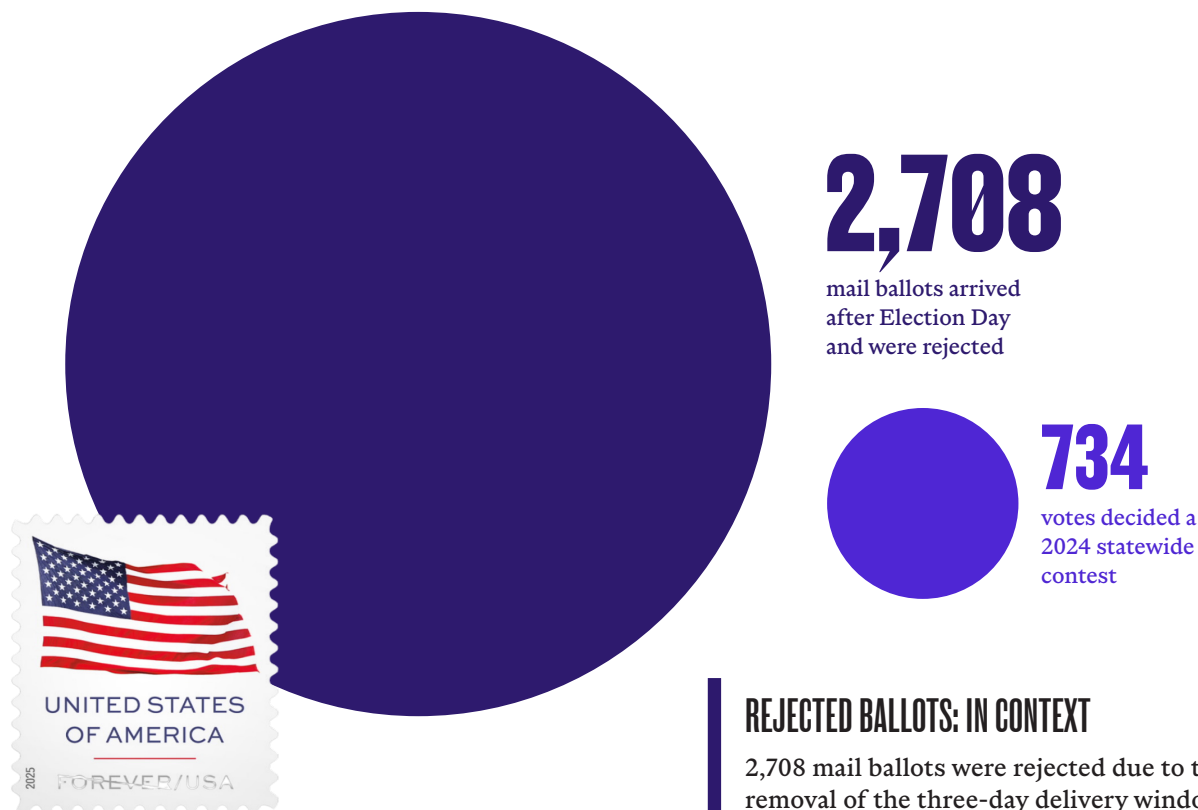
to transport voters to the polls if the voter had received a mail ballot.

RETURNING A MAIL BALLOT

For voters who successfully requested, received, and completed a mail ballot, the next step was to return the ballot either by mail or in person at an early voting site or their county board of elections office, ensuring it was received by the county board no later than 7:30 p.m. on Election Day.

Previously, every mail ballot postmarked by Election Day and received by the county boards within three business days after Election Day would be counted. But in the fall of 2023, the NC General Assembly eliminated that three-day delivery window.⁵⁰ This means that county boards of elections are now required to throw out all mail ballots received after 7:30 p.m. on Election Day. This change coincided with lawsuits and bills filed across the country seeking to disqualify ballots that arrive after Election Day.⁵¹





REJECTED BALLOTS: IN CONTEXT

2,708 mail ballots were rejected due to the removal of the three-day delivery window — a number larger than the number of votes that decided a statewide contest in 2024.

According to the publicly available absentee file for the 2024 General Election, at least **2,708 mail ballots** arrived after Election Day but within the previously permitted three-day delivery window.⁵² To put that number in context, consider the small margins of victory for some North Carolina elections relative to total turnout: One 2024 statewide contest was decided by just 734 votes out of 5.5 million, and many local contests are decided by even narrower margins.⁵³ Even more voters were affected by the change beyond the 2,708 whose ballots were rejected, as that number does not account for those voters — such as multiple Hotline callers — who decided not to mail their ballots out of a belief that they would not arrive in time to be counted.

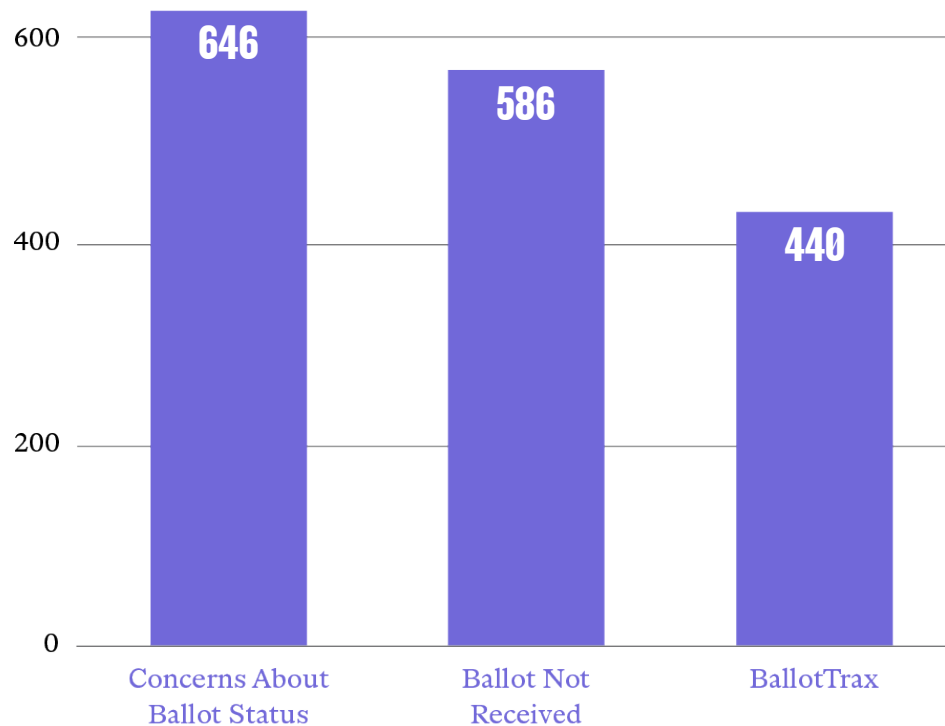
Leading up to the 2024 General Election, many voters called the Hotline expressing anxiety over whether the USPS would be able to deliver their ballot in time for it to be counted. At this stage, some of these voters preferred to vote in person for fear that their mail ballot would not reach the county board in time if they mailed it, and they wanted to know how to ensure they would not be accused of double voting. Others wanted to know about acceptable alternative

methods of returning a mail ballot. For instance, could someone else deliver the ballot in person on the voter's behalf? (*Yes, any voter can have a near relative drop off their ballot, and a voter with disabilities can have anyone do so.*) Where could the ballot be dropped off and what is required at drop-off? (*Mail ballots can be dropped off at the county board of elections office or an early voting site, but not an Election Day voting site.*) Many voters changed their plans after learning about their options from the Hotline, and others unfortunately learned that they had no viable path to return their ballot on time.

In addition, just as callers faced mail delivery delays in receiving their ballots, they also saw delays in returning their ballots and having those ballots counted. For example, one North Carolinian studying out of state returned her mail ballot over two weeks before the election, yet it still had not been received by the county board of elections as of November 1. County board staff themselves had expressed concern and frustration about potential USPS delivery issues given the number of ballots they mailed out versus the number that had been returned.

ABSENTEE VOTING CHALLENGES

When callers asked questions about tracking their absentee ballot request, they referenced at least one of these subjects.



The chart above shows the number of Hotline calls received that raised common topics for voters monitoring the status of their mail ballots, including callers awaiting their ballot's arrival and callers who returned their ballot and wanted to know if it was counted. Note that a single call may raise multiple topics (e.g., one call might implicate both concerns about voting status and BallotTrax).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Voting by mail in North Carolina is a complex and cumbersome process, which is likely part of why North Carolina has such low mail ballot usage relative to the national average and many other states.⁵⁴ For those who use it, it is often because they have no other manageable option for voting. Hotline calls offer abundant examples of the many obstacles voters encounter from step one of the process — requesting a mail ballot — up to the final step of returning their ballot and having it counted.

As this report shows, cases of eligible voters' ballots being rejected due to increasingly restrictive and ever-changing election laws are all too common. Other states with simpler mail ballot procedures highlight practices that would benefit North Carolina voters if implemented here:

- Permanent Vote-by-Mail Lists:** While North Carolina requires most voters to submit a new formal request for a mail ballot for each election, many states have permanent vote-by-mail lists, allowing voters who opt in once to automatically be sent a ballot by mail in every subsequent election.⁵⁵ Ten states allow any voter to opt in to their single-sign-on list and nine allow voters with permanent disabilities to opt in. An additional six states automatically send mail ballot applications to voters on a permanent list — these voters must still return the completed application in order to receive a mail ballot for that election.⁵⁶ In California, Colorado, Hawaii, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Vermont, Washington, and Washington, D.C., all voters are mailed ballots.⁵⁷
- Ballot Drop Boxes:** North Carolina law currently prohibits ballot drop boxes (a receptacle where voters can return mail ballots in sealed and signed envelopes), whereas 29 states and Washington, D.C. explicitly permit drop boxes in statute. In fact, in states that hold all-mail elections, returning by drop box or in person is the most common return method.⁵⁸
- Allow Voters to Choose Who Can Return Their Ballot:** While some states, such as Rhode Island or Wyoming, do not specify who may or may not return a ballot on behalf



of a voter, many states' laws explicitly permit a voter to entrust someone else to return the ballot on their behalf.⁵⁹ In North Carolina, a voter is limited in who they may choose to return their mail ballot — for most voters, current law requires it be a near relative or verifiable legal guardian.⁶⁰ Several other states — such as Minnesota, North Dakota, and New Jersey — leave the choice of who may return a mail ballot up to the voter entirely.

- **Postage-Paid Election Mail:** North Carolina requires its voters to pay their own postage when returning a ballot by mail. By contrast, 19 states and Washington, D.C. cover postage costs through election offices rather than requiring the voter to pay. This is typically a business-reply mailing, and so local officials only pay for return postage for the ballots that are returned via USPS.⁶¹
- **Receipt and Postmark Deadlines for Mail Ballots:** Before the 2024 General Election, North Carolina was among the multiple states that count ballots postmarked by Election Day but received shortly

thereafter.⁶² A 2026 U.S. Supreme Court decision confirmed the legality of state laws that permit that practice.⁶³ North Carolina should return to that approach and ensure that ballots cast by Election Day are not discarded due to issues with mail delivery times.

Between the expiration of changes that were made to some restrictive voting rules in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the implementation of newly restrictive voting rules, mail voters in the 2024 General Election had to navigate one barrier after another. Despite the numerous hurdles and potential pitfalls North Carolina voters encounter throughout the vote-by-mail process, the high volume of calls to the Hotline from voters seeking to vote by mail shows that it is still a valuable option worth improving upon. The lessons that can be drawn from voter experiences in our own state combined with the possibilities illustrated by other states' more voter-supportive rules should serve as our guide to a smoother, more efficient, and more accessible vote-by-mail process in North Carolina.

V. VOTER INTIMIDATION AND ELECTIONEERING AT THE POLLS

When voters go to the polls, they should be able to cast their ballot safely and comfortably without experiencing intimidation or harassment.

State and federal law protect voters against intimidation, making it unlawful to “intimidate, threaten, or coerce” people in ways that interfere with voting.⁶⁴ North Carolina election officials are charged with protecting voters against intimidation and harassment; they must “enforce peace and good order in and about” the voting place, keep open and unobstructed access, and “prevent and stop improper practices and attempts to obstruct, intimidate, or interfere with any person in registering or voting.”⁶⁵

State law also establishes a “buffer zone” at each voting site: an area between 25 and 50 feet around the polling place entrance excluding political advertising and electioneers who are distributing literature, soliciting votes, or “otherwise engag[ing] in election-related activity.”⁶⁶ Outside of this buffer zone, community members can hand out sample ballots, promote candidates, and engage with voters entering the polling place on issues of importance to them. This space outside the buffer zone can be a great opportunity for voter education and for building positive community energy around voting. However, everyone must remain respectful of voters’ ability to enter the polling place and should be mindful not to deter voters.

Once inside the polling place, a voter should still be free from interference or harassment,⁶⁷ and they are entitled to privacy from poll observers while casting their vote.⁶⁸

Unfortunately, during the 2024 General Election, the Hotline fielded over 400 calls regarding voter intimidation from callers spanning 61 of North Carolina’s 100 counties. Many callers reported multiple concerns; over one-third of the calls concerned electioneering, over half reported aggressive in-person voter intimidation, and

32 reported police presence at the polls. Many other Hotline callers also reported instances of poll worker misconduct that could have a similarly intimidating effect on voters. Hotline volunteers ensured that voters experiencing these issues were heard and supported. Where issues were ongoing, the Hotline escalated these calls to Election Protection coalition partners — including the team of voter intimidation response specialists within the [Protect Our Vote NC Coalition](#) — who would work with the caller and county officials to attempt to resolve the intimidating behavior and ensure a welcoming voting experience for all.

ELECTIONEERING, IN-PERSON INTIMIDATION, AND HOSTILITY

The Hotline received a troubling number of reports of intimidation and hostility instigated by individuals electioneering at voting sites. Different voters reported being insulted for not accepting materials outside the polling place in Haywood County; having sample ballots for the opposite party grabbed out of their hands in Chatham County; being told that they “have



TARGETING OF LATINO VOTERS IN 2024

Throughout the 2024 General Election, there was a clear and concerning pattern of hostility toward and attempted intimidation of Latino and Spanish-speaking voters. The most pervasive and coordinated example was a series of signs written in Spanish posted at polling places across the state. The language on the signs translated to: “Warning: if you are not a citizen of the United States of America, you cannot vote in elections. It is illegal! It is a crime. (18 U.S. code § 611). You could be deported. Don’t do it! Paid for by North Carolina Election Integrity Team.”⁶⁹

Voters and volunteers alike shared concerns with the Hotline about these signs and their potential chilling effect on voters. Election Protection coalition members and allies advocated for the removal of these signs, citing how they targeted Spanish-speaking voters with intimidating threats of legal action, and the signs garnered press attention from multiple news outlets in the state.⁷⁰ This intimidating behavior toward Latino voters was not limited to signage either; for example, another call reported an instance of an electioneer interfering with conversations between Spanish-speaking voters and volunteers at a polling site in Lee County.

to be idiots” to vote a certain way or that voting a certain way is a “terrible choice” in Wake and Forsyth counties; and even being physically grabbed in Wake County.

Hotline callers also reported a range of negative experiences with individuals who were not necessarily electioneering but nonetheless creating a hostile environment, especially for voters of color. For example, in Cabarrus County, at the Cabarrus Arena & Events Center, there was a report that a voter was harassed by a group of individuals who repeated racist chants and surrounded her car, causing her to feel so uncomfortable that she left the polling place without voting. At the Mooresville War Memorial Recreation Building in Iredell County, an individual was screaming at voters, volunteers, and poll workers, to the point where the caller reporting the issue felt physically unsafe. At the Orange Works site in Orange County, an individual was driving around displaying violent imagery before being asked to leave by the police. Sometimes intimidating behavior went unchecked by local election officials. In one example, the Hotline received a report from the Kannapolis Train Depot voting site that signs for Black candidates were defaced and removed while signs for other candidates remained; police and the chief judge of the site had knowledge of this behavior and did not intervene.

The Hotline also received multiple reports from across the state of issues related to the buffer zone, including electioneering inside the buffer zone and polling places with absent or insufficiently clear buffer zone markings. These reports show that the buffer zone — one of the most binary and easily enforceable policies to

protect voters from harassment or intimidation — can be easily overlooked.

POLL WORKER MISCONDUCT

Poll workers are essential to the functioning of our elections, however, sometimes poll worker behavior leads to uncomfortable or alarming experiences for voters. Examples of this reported through the Hotline include:

- Numerous instances of poll workers attempting to influence voters to vote a certain way or sharing their personal opinions about how to vote.
- A poll worker in Iredell County making inappropriate and rude remarks about a voter’s name and questioning the voter’s ethnicity and birthplace.
- A poll worker in Wake County observing voters place ballots in the tabulator in a way that made voters feel like ballot selections were not confidential.

The Hotline callers reporting these incidents shared discomfort, nervousness, and frustration about their experiences. For example, one voter shared that this was her first time voting in person. One of the poll workers started sharing their own thoughts on the candidates, and when the voter responded that she thought the conversation was inappropriate, the poll worker shoved her ballot at her. This experience left the voter feeling intimidated and caused her to rush through the rest of the voting process. To prevent these negative experiences and ensure a fair process, poll workers must be trained and encouraged to remain neutral and treat all voters with respect and dignity.

POLICE PRESENCE AT THE POLLS

Historically, police played a key role in blocking Black voters from accessing the ballot in the Jim Crow South,⁷¹ and studies consistently show that law enforcement continues to over-police communities of color, with 41% of Black Americans having reported being stopped or detained based on their race and 21% of Black Americans having been victims of police violence.⁷² Accordingly, police presence at polling sites today can and does discourage people from voting; for example, a study of Alabama's 2017 special election found that police presence at voting sites corresponded with a 32% reduction in Black voter turnout.⁷³ For this reason, although election officials can call law enforcement to respond to situations that they assess are escalating out of control or creating serious safety concerns for poll workers or voters, law enforcement should not be stationed at polling places while voting is occurring and, if called to respond to an issue at a polling place, should depart when that issue is resolved.⁷⁴

The Hotline received numerous reports of law enforcement at the polls during the 2024 General Election. In several cases, police adhered to the limitations on their presence, showing up when called to incidents at the polls. But multiple Hotline callers reported instances

of police lingering at or monitoring the polls in violation of state guidance.⁷⁵ Some reports were of officers sitting at the polls, identifiable as police via uniform or police car, such as in Pasquotank, Cumberland, Mecklenburg, and Forsyth counties. In Gaston County, the sheriff's department even planned to be stationed at polling sites all day.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The hundreds of instances of intimidation, aggressive electioneering, and harassment reported to the Hotline — even if not all squarely within the definition of illegal intimidation — indicate that voters are far too often not feeling safe and comfortable at the polls, and there is important work to do to make fully accessible polls and voting a reality. To help voters have an experience free of intimidation, we recommend:

- **Improve Public Education and Reporting Systems for Voter Intimidation and Harassment:** The NC State Board of Elections should develop and share public communications with clear definitions of intimidation and explanations of voters' rights at the polls. As part of this campaign, it should also create and publicize avenues for reporting and redress for voters who are victims of intimidation.



- **Improve Election Official Training:** Training for county officials and election workers should include information on identifying both unlawful intimidation and implicit bias. Training should also include de-escalation methods, other resources to address intimidation at polling places without law enforcement intervention, and information on when and how law enforcement can be involved.
- **Increase Statewide Coordination:** The NC State Board should ensure there is a statewide plan for swiftly addressing intimidating activity at the polls, whether from members of the public, local or state law enforcement, or federal law enforcement. An effective plan could include affirmative outreach to local law enforcement to ensure they understand the bounds of appropriate conduct and the risk that law enforcement at the polls can have a chilling effect on voter engagement, while also coordinating on how to address intimidation by the public or federal entities.
- **Engage in Contingency Planning:** Public discourse and events in other states provide insight into possible avenues for intimidation and election interference, such that state entities and coalitions can prepare in advance to swiftly respond should these events unfold in North Carolina. State agencies and coalitions should have established processes to respond to military or federal law enforcement activity, both at the polls⁷⁶ and after the election.⁷⁷

VI. DISABILITY ACCESS AT THE POLLS

For many people, voting can be a relatively smooth process. Nevertheless, many people with disabilities have vastly different experiences at the polls, facing hours-long lines for in-person and curbside voting, poll workers questioning their disabilities, and confusion about accommodations or accessibility entering the polling site and in the voting booth. In short, what may seem a simple in-and-out task for most North Carolinians is a series of hurdles to overcome for disabled voters. The sample of Hotline calls from the 2024 General Election shows that the ease of voting for many North Carolinians is not the norm for disabled voters, and the state has a way to go to make elections truly accessible for all its residents.

GETTING TO THE POLLS

For many, access to transportation and mobility is a challenge due to their disability. At least 37 people called the Hotline to request a ride to the polls related to accessibility needs, making up about one-third of all calls requesting a ride to the polls. Through our partnerships with coalition members Disability Rights North Carolina (DRNC) and North Carolina Black Alliance (NCBA), volunteers were able to connect voters with rides to their polling place. These calls demonstrate how services like these are vital for many disabled voters to access the polls.

ACCESSING THE POLLING PLACE

After arriving, many disabled voters experienced difficulties accessing their polling places in the 2024 General Election. Although polling places are required to be accessible,⁷⁸ callers reported numerous physical access issues across the state. For example, at one site in Onslow County, voters' access to the polling place was blocked, preventing at least one voter from voting. Other callers reported a lack of signage for voters using wheelchairs and walkers, which created safety concerns when those individuals unloaded from their vehicles at the wrong location to vote. Callers also raised concerns about parking

for disabled voters, sharing that for disabled or elderly voters, the parking was too far from the main entrance. Accessible parking spots were also occasionally blocked, leaving people without an appropriate place to park. In Rowan, Durham, and Guilford counties, the spots were blocked by “tents of both parties” or by cars using curbside voting.

RECEIVING ASSISTANCE TO CAST A BALLOT

Once inside the polling place, voters who are blind, disabled, or unable to read or write English may receive assistance with voting from a person of their choice.⁷⁹ Statutes lay out this process: the voter should arrive at their polling place and request permission from the chief judge to have assistance; the voter identifies the person they want to give them assistance; and they receive assistance filling out their ballot.⁸⁰

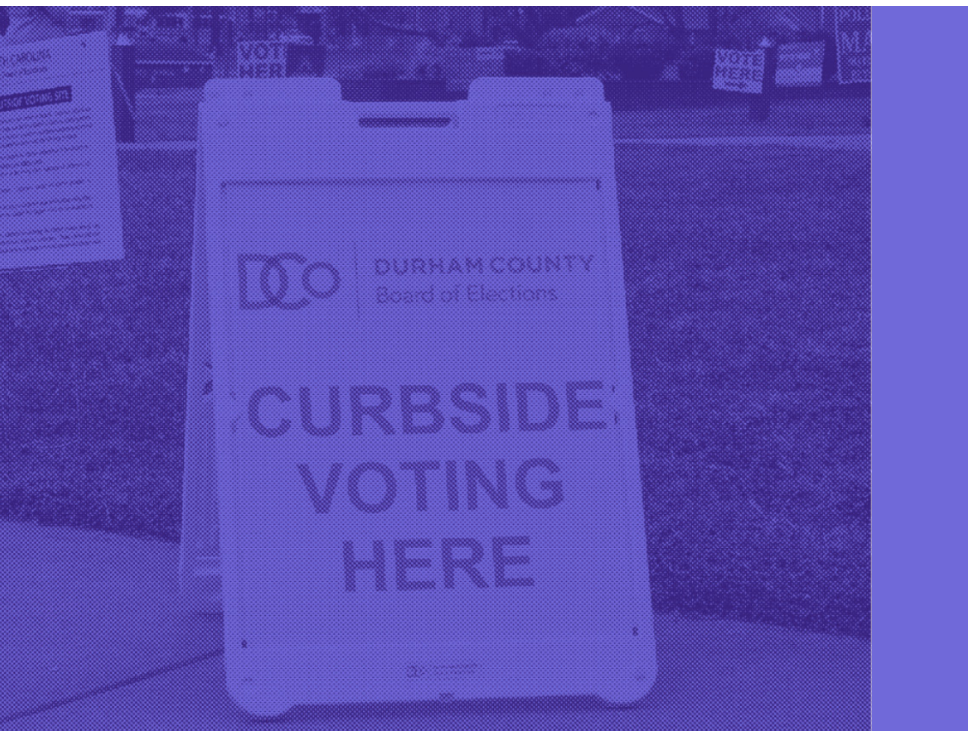
Unfortunately, the way voting assistance is supposed to work and what disabled voters actually experience can deviate dramatically. Many callers did not know they could give or receive this assistance in voting; several people called the Hotline to ask whether they could receive assistance or provide it to another person

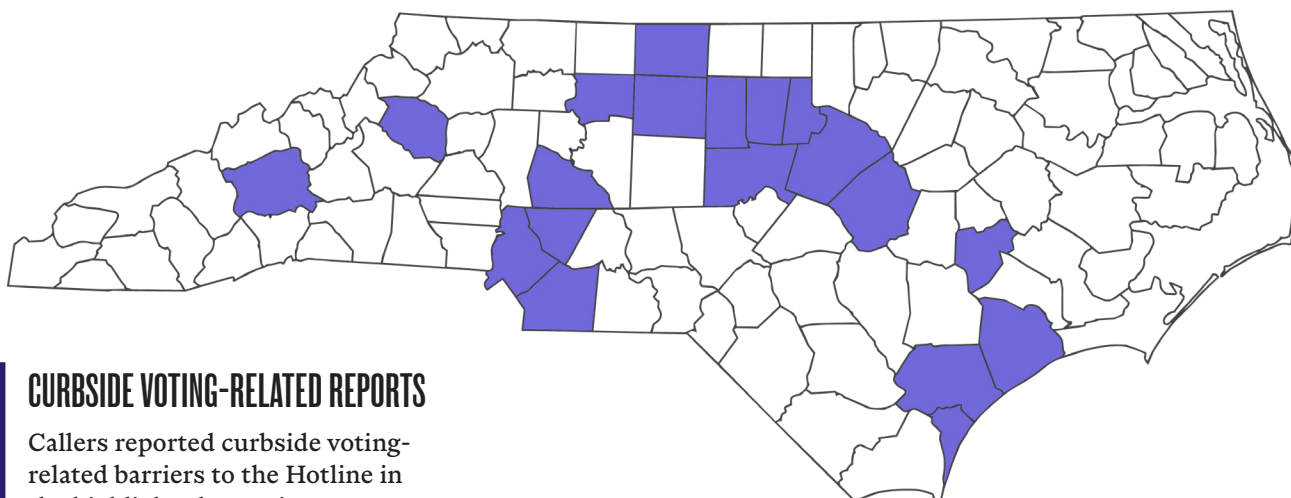
in the voting booth. A few callers informed the Hotline that they were prohibited from assisting their relatives or other voters who requested assistance due to disability. Some were told, incorrectly, that only family members could provide assistance. Accessing language-related assistance also proved difficult for some callers, who reached out to the Hotline inquiring about American Sign Language interpreter assistance or reporting being denied assistance for their language disability. In that case, an election official in Beaufort County refused to let a caller speak for their child, who is deaf and uses sign language, when asked to recite their name and address. Hotline partners worked with these callers and their county boards of elections to report these incidents and correct election officials on assistance rights.

These experiences highlight a troubling inconsistency in how disabled voters and their aides are treated, with many callers receiving conflicting information from election officials, being prohibited from entering the polling place with the disabled voter, or reporting that disabled voters were denied assistance to cast a ballot. These issues indicate a need for more guidance and an increased emphasis on training poll workers to accommodate voters with disabilities to ensure they can successfully cast their vote in person without barriers based on their disability.

CURBSIDE VOTING

The Hotline received at least 120 calls seeking guidance on curbside voting issues. Curbside voting is required at each voting site, allowing voters to cast a ballot from their car “or in the immediate proximity of the voting place” if, due to age or physical disability, they are unable to enter the voting place without assistance.⁸¹ Despite this clear requirement, curbside voting proved to be challenging for Hotline callers, who described the process and their experiences as “disorganized and chaotic.” Callers’ reports to the Hotline pointed to





CURBSIDE VOTING-RELATED REPORTS

Callers reported curbside voting-related barriers to the Hotline in the highlighted counties.

problems with signage, long wait times, and other logistical barriers. The sheer number of calls about curbside voting emphasizes the need to prioritize polling places' organization and efficiency with the curbside process.

CURBSIDE SIGNAGE

The NC State Board of Elections provides that “[s]igns should be in place to direct voters to the curbside voting location.”⁸² However, callers from several counties, including Guilford, Buncombe, and Alamance counties, reported inadequate signage, resulting in confusion and frustration as voters drove around polling places to locate the curbside voting area. Additionally, a caller in Wake County noted that the curbside lines were being misused by voters attempting to drop off mail ballots, which created unnecessary congestion around the polling place and safety issues for pedestrians at the site.

LONG WAIT TIMES

Curbside voters also experienced long lines and wait times. People reported waiting anywhere from 35 minutes to *four hours*. Callers stated the lines were backed up, with one voter in Wayne County reporting there were about 60 cars in line waiting to vote at the public library.

Such long waits would be difficult for any voter, but they are especially challenging for voters with disabilities. One voter called to report a long line, stating that she was over 90 years old and

waiting in long lines for curbside is tough for her.

Some delays appeared to be prompted or exacerbated by a shortage of poll workers stationed to assist curbside voters. The State Board requires that “every voting site has a working notification system for curbside voters to alert elections officials of the voter’s presence.”⁸³ However, many callers told Hotline volunteers that there were no poll workers to assist them, with one in Guilford County saying they were calling the number at the polling place to get a poll worker to come out for curbside voting, but the polling place was not answering the phone. Another caller in Rowan County said they had been in line for curbside for 90 minutes with three other vehicles, and nobody had come out to help any of them vote. Many of these voters did not have someone in the car who could go inside the voting site to request assistance with curbside voting.

Curbside voting was also impeded by parking shortages, with non-curbside voters parking in the curbside voting area and blocking the ability to vote curbside. Some voting sites had issues with voters confusing the accessible parking spots with curbside spots and vice versa, and at least one voter in Guilford County could not get to curbside voting because the spaces were blocked. As the curbside voting lines grew, many voters reported parking lot congestion and total blockages of the parking lot to voters trying to cast a ballot inside.

Due to the long lines and lack of assistance in Orange, Chatham, Guilford, Wake, Union, New

Stronger guidance and training are crucial to ensure disabled voters are able to cast their ballots with dignity and respect.

Hanover, Buncombe, Mecklenburg, Cabarrus, Lenoir, Durham, Pender, Alamance, and Forsyth counties, callers reported that some people left. Voters reported feeling discouraged and said the curbside voting process was disorganized.

When Hotline volunteers received calls noting signage issues or long wait times, they communicated these issues to Election Protection partners. These partners worked to address the obstacles by calling county boards of elections, sending on-the-ground monitors in the area to check in at a particular polling site, or even springing to action themselves by traveling to the polling site and speaking with a chief judge to try to rectify the issue.

DENIAL OF CURBSIDE VOTING

Once voters reached the front of the curbside line, some were wrongfully denied the opportunity to vote curbside.

State Board guidance prohibits election workers from “ask[ing] probing questions or seek[ing] proof of a disability from a voter who presents to vote curbside.”⁸⁴ However, poll workers turned some voters away from the curbside line in spite of this guidance during the 2024 election. One voter in Rockingham County was forced to go inside the polling place because they were required to prove their disability despite displaying a disability parking sticker. Another voter in Cabarrus County was told they could not vote curbside *without a sticker*. More voters were denied the use of curbside voting because poll workers questioned their disabilities. An elderly voter in Alamance County was denied curbside voting because although they could not stand for long periods of time, they were able to come inside, while a poll worker in Wake County told a voter they were “not disabled enough” to use curbside voting. Voters expressed

feeling uncomfortable and intimidated by the election officials’ questioning of their disability, and one voter in Caldwell County was told that their vote “would be challenged” if they voted curbside. Another voter in Johnston County was heckled during their curbside voting experience and accused of “voting illegally by claiming a disability.” Stronger guidance and training are crucial to ensure disabled voters are able to cast their ballots with dignity and respect.

RIDESHARE SERVICES AND CURBSIDE VOTING

Voters using rideshare services like Uber, Lyft, or shuttle services to get to their polling place faced additional difficulties in voting curbside. A few voters in this situation were denied use of the curbside line and were told to get in the regular line to vote, even when they used a walker and a motorized wheelchair, respectively. Another disabled voter who arrived via Uber had to rely on a volunteer with a car to get in the curbside line to vote, despite North Carolina law providing that curbside voters be allowed to vote “either in the vehicle conveying that voter or in the immediate proximity of the voting place.”⁸⁵

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Hotline received over 430 calls from individuals requesting information or reporting concerns regarding voting while disabled. Of course, the number of calls received on the Hotline does not reflect the number of disabled North Carolinians who experience difficulties with voting. This sample, however, provides insight into some of the challenges disabled voters face when attempting to cast their ballot. Many voters, and lawmakers, take for granted their experiences casting a ballot without a disability, and this data provides a useful tool and starting point to improve the voting experience for disabled North Carolinians.

- **Mandatory Election Official Training on Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA), Help America Vote Act (HAVA), and NC State Law:** The NC State Board should implement training aimed at increasing volunteers’ and officials knowledge and informing voters themselves of their rights, as well as inspiring consciousness of disabled voters’ experiences. Emphasis should be put on actions or behaviors that



are not permitted under these laws, such as questioning someone's disability or denying a person the opportunity to vote due to their disability.

- **Accessible Voting “Know Your Rights” Campaign:** Disabled voters should be empowered by equipping them with knowledge of their rights during the voting process.
- **Automatic Mail Voting:** Given that many disabled voters rely on voting by mail, registration and automatic renewal for mail ballots would prevent them from having to request a ballot each year. For many disabled voters, missing a mail ballot request deadline may mean missing their opportunity to vote. This program would remove an additional step for voters so they can be sure to access their ballot.
- **Curbside Voting Task Force:** Designated election officials should be exclusively dedicated to curbside voting. Duties and roles may include conducting/attending training on curbside voting requirements and procedures, stationing exclusively at curbside locations to maximize efficient service, monitoring lines and wait times, and directing traffic and handling logistics. The goal would be to have informed election officials who uniformly enforce curbside voting requirements, efficiently process curbside ballots and maintain low wait times, and keep curbside an accessible form of voting.
- **Compulsory Audits on Voting Sites for Physical Accessibility:** New and existing polling places should be audited for compliance with ADA requirements. That process should also ensure the site is equipped with adequate signage directing voters, entrance ways and doors are accessible without additional assistance, and accessible parking spaces are available and open for disabled voters' use. However, this effort should not be used to suppress low-income areas or communities of color by closing non-compliant sites in those areas.⁸⁶ These audits should be conducted with community input and in collaboration with local disability rights advocates.
- **Increase Resources for Language Accessibility:** Provide additional mandatory training to election officials regarding language access; hire county, region, or statewide language interpreters to be on call during election periods; and publicize rules regarding assisting a voter at the polls.
- **More Multipartisan Assistance Teams (MATs) Across the State:** Some disabled voters reported difficulty in obtaining witnesses to attest to their mail ballots. Wider resources establishing and publicizing MATs could help alleviate the burden on disabled voters who prefer using absentee voting. Reform and oversight of MAT programs can also maximize their efficiency and increase public trust given some voters' reports of negative experiences with MATs.

VII. CONCLUSION

The North Carolina Election Protection Hotline (888-OUR-VOTE) heard from thousands of voters in 2024, with calls revealing the pervasive challenges they faced in casting their ballots. The Hotline provided real-time information needed to make casting a ballot more inclusive and simpler for those voters who reached out.

However, the thousands of voters who receive assistance from the Hotline represent only a fraction of the eligible voters in North Carolina. By centering the experience of impacted voters, our hope is that this report sheds light on the types of barriers all voters routinely face (despite beliefs to the contrary), while highlighting the corresponding policy and election administration

changes that would improve ballot access for all North Carolinians.

Nearly two years after the 2024 General Election and only a few months out from the 2026 General Election, Democracy NC and SCSJ remain committed not only to educating voters through the Hotline, but also to working towards building a more inclusive and accessible voting system for all North Carolinians.

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DON'T GIVE AWAY YOUR POWER — VOTE!

Questions about how and where to vote or facing issues? Text or call the NC Election Protection Hotline at 888-OUR-VOTE (888-687-8683) for real-time help from trained volunteers!



Scan the QR code for more voting information in Southern states.



Scan the QR code to view Democracy NC's voting resources.

VIII. ENDNOTES

¹ Alexander Keysar, Inst. for Responsive Gov't, *Voter Registration: A Very Short History* at 2 (2022), <https://responsivegov.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Voter-Registration-A-Very-Short-History.pdf>.

² Southern Coalition for Social Justice & Demos, *Who Are North Carolina's 1.5 Million Missing Voters?* at 7 (2025), https://southerncoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/2025_NCMissingVoters.pdf.

³ *Id.* at 7–8.

⁴ The Hotline received 2,141 total calls with registration-related questions or issues.

⁵ *Same-Day Voter Registration*, Nat'l Conference of State Legislatures, <https://www.ncsl.org/elections-and-campaigns/same-day-voter-registration> (last updated Mar. 27, 2026).

⁶ Provisional ballot data from the 2024 General Election is available at *Absentee and Provisional Data*, N.C. State Board of Elections, <https://www.ncsbe.gov/results-data/absentee-and-provisional-data> (last visited July 29, 2026).

⁷ This number includes voters whose provisional ballots were coded with the following rejection bases: NOT REGISTERED; PREVIOUSLY DENIED; REGISTRATION AFTER DEADLINE; and REMOVED.

⁸ N.C. Gen. Stat. § 163-82.6B(b)(2), (e); *Register in Person During Early Voting*, N.C. State Board of Elections, <https://www.ncsbe.gov/registering/how-register/register-person-during-early-voting> (last visited Aug. 2, 2026).

⁹ Expert Report of Kevin Quinn ¶¶ 70, 85–91 & tbls. 4–5, available at <https://scsj.box.com/s/22wki9d89rj18u1yktghb5ve60dufp2z>.

¹⁰ Expert Report of Jacob Grumbach ¶¶ 36, 40–44, available at <https://scsj.app.box.com/s/>

[s6xf54inbhc0odxlg0mx4nghbxqvyv6a](https://www.ncsbe.gov/registering/how-register/register-person-during-early-voting).

¹¹ *Register in Person During Early Voting*, N.C. State Board of Elections, <https://www.ncsbe.gov/registering/how-register/register-person-during-early-voting> (last visited Aug. 2, 2026).

¹² Southern Coalition for Social Justice & Demos, *Who Are North Carolina's 1.5 Million Missing Voters?* at 14 (2025), https://southerncoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/2025_NCMissingVoters.pdf.

¹³ Fla. Stat. § 101.045. As long as the polling location uses electronic poll books, the voter can cast a regular ballot. If the polling location uses paper poll books, the voter can cast a provisional ballot. See Fla. Division of Elections, *Polling Place Procedures Manual* at 20–21 (2024), <https://files.floridados.gov/media/708161/final-ds-de-11-manual.pdf>.

¹⁴ *Electronic Poll Books*, N.C. State Board of Elections, <https://www.ncsbe.gov/voting/voting-technology/electronic-poll-books> (last visited May 26, 2026); N.C. Session Law 2025–89, § 2E.5(a), <https://www.ncleg.gov/enactedlegislation/sessionlaws/pdf/2025-2026/sl2025-89.pdf> (appropriating \$15 million in funds to upgrade the State Election Information Management System).

¹⁵ *Same-Day Voter Registration*, Nat'l Conference of State Legislatures, <https://www.ncsl.org/elections-and-campaigns/same-day-voter-registration> (last updated Mar. 27, 2026).

¹⁶ N.C. for the People & Inst. for Southern Studies, *Blueprint for a Stronger Democracy* at 6–8 (2025), <https://southernstudies.org/sites/default/files/25BlueprintPreview.pdf>.

¹⁷ Letter from 30 Voting Rights and Civic Engagement Organizations to Sam Hayes, Executive Director, N.C. State Board of Elections,

at 5 (May 4, 2026), https://southerncoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/05/2026.05.04_Letter-to-NCSBE-re-Voter-Registration-Form-Availability-in-NC-1.pdf.

¹⁸ Vanessa Williamson, *Interest Grows in Combining Voter Registration With Tax Filing*, Tax Policy Center (June 3, 2021), <https://taxpolicycenter.org/taxvox/interest-grows-combining-voter-registration-tax-filing>.

¹⁹ See, e.g., N.C. State Board of Elections, *Numbered Memo 2012-19*, https://s3.amazonaws.com/dl.ncsbe.gov/sboe/numbermemo/2012/2012-19_CitizensAwarenessMonth_Sept2012.pdf.

²⁰ The photo ID requirement was also in place for the 2023 municipal elections. However, not all North Carolinians had a municipal election in 2023, and the voter turnout in 2023 was much lower than the turnout in 2024. See *Voter Turnout*, N.C. State Board of Elections, <https://www.ncsbe.gov/results-data/voter-turnout> (last visited July 31, 2026); *2023 Municipal Elections Turnout*, N.C. State Board of Elections, <https://www.ncsbe.gov/results-data/voter-turnout/2023-municipal-elections-turnout> (last visited July 31, 2026).

²¹ N.C. Gen. Stat. § 163-166.16(a).

²² N.C. Gen. Stat. § 163-166.16(c)–(e). In 2024, voters had until the close of business the day before county canvass (10 days after the election) to return to their county board of elections with an acceptable voter photo ID. Since 2024, this deadline has been moved earlier. As of this report's publication, voters must return to their county board by noon on the fifth business day after the election.

²³ Provisional ballot data from the 2024 General Election is available at *Absentee and Provisional Data*, N.C. State Board of Elections, <https://www.ncsbe.gov/results-data/absentee-and-provisional-data>.

[data](#) (last visited July 31, 2026).

²⁴ See, e.g., Democracy North Carolina, A Brief History of Voter Suppression in North Carolina (2021), <https://democracync.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/A-Brief-History-of-Voter-Suppression-in-NC-2.pdf>.

²⁵ *North Carolina NAACP v. Hirsch*, 2026 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 116045 (M.D.N.C. 2026).

²⁶ *Id.*

²⁷ See, e.g., N.C. Gen. Stat. §§ 163-82.12, 163-166.7(a), 163-166.12.

²⁸ N.C. Gen. Stat. § 163-166.16(a).

²⁹ Will Doran, Jack Hagel, & Paul Specht, *As complaints mount over long waits, DMV head questioned by NC lawmakers*, WRAL News (June 6, 2024), <https://www.wral.com/archive/21469526/>.

³⁰ Amicus Brief of Gunther Peck and Fair Elections Center at 7, *Republican Nat'l Comm. v. N.C. State Bd. of Elections*, available at https://southerncoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Amicus-Brief-w-Exh-FEC-Peck-9.25.24_Final-1.pdf [“Amicus Brief”].

³¹ Provisional ballot data from the 2024 General Election is available at *Absentee and Provisional Data*, N.C. State Board of Elections, <https://www.ncsbe.gov/results-data/absentee-and-provisional-data> (last visited July 31, 2026).

³² *Republican Nat'l Committee v. North Carolina State Board of Elections*, No. 24CV028888-910; see also Lynn Bonner, NC Elections Board settles lawsuit over digital photo ID, NC Newsline (Aug. 8, 2025), <https://ncnewsline.com/briefs/nc-elections-board-settles-lawsuit-over-digital-photo-id/>.

³³ See Amicus Brief, *supra* n.30, at 13-15.

³⁴ See *id.* at 5-6, 15; see also *Get My Card*, UNC One Card, <https://onecard.unc.edu/get-my-card/> (noting that “[a]ll newly issued One Cards will be mobile One Cards” and linking to policy allowing for physical IDs in only certain limited circumstances); *Get Your University DukeCard*, DukeCard, <https://dukecard.duke.edu/get-your-university-dukecard/> (“If you require a physical card for lab access or medical center access, please partner with your lab manager to complete a University Card Request form. Be sure to bring your completed [form] and valid Driver’s license or passport.”).

³⁵ Sajni Patel, *Amid voter ID decisions, students share experiences with obtaining*

physical One Cards, The Daily Tar Heel (Oct. 29, 2024), <https://dailytarheel.com/article/university-obtaining-physical-one-cards-20241029>; see also Ryan Kilgallen, *Class of 2027 receives physical ID-only DukeCards to meet NC voter ID requirement*, Duke Chronicle (Sept. 24, 2024), <https://dukechronicle.com/article/duke-university-dukecard-dukevoters-2027-voter-registration-requirement-north-carolina-state-board-of-elections-reject-mobile-id-bryan-center-plaza-20240925>.

³⁶ N.C. Gen. Stat. § 163-166.16(g); see also N.C. State Board of Elections, Numbered Memo 2023-03 at 9, <https://s3.amazonaws.com/dl.ncsbe.gov/sboe/numbermemo/2023/Numbered%20Memo%202023-03%20Photo%20ID%20and%20In-Person%20Voting.pdf>.

³⁷ *North Carolina NAACP v. Hirsch*, 2026 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 116045 (M.D.N.C. 2026); see also Forward Justice, *NC Photo Voter ID Legal Update* (March 27, 2026), <https://forwardjustice.org/nc-photo-voter-id-legal-update-march-2026/>.

³⁸ Provisional ballot data from the 2024 General Election is available at *Absentee and Provisional Data*, N.C. State Board of Elections, <https://www.ncsbe.gov/results-data/absentee-and-provisional-data> (last visited July 31, 2026).

³⁹ Amicus Brief, *supra* n.30, at 10-13.

⁴⁰ Analysis of ID-related provisional ballots cast in the 2024 general election indicates that over 30% of these ballots were cast by Black and Hispanic voters. See *Absentee and Provisional Data*, N.C. State Board of Elections, <https://www.ncsbe.gov/results-data/absentee-and-provisional-data> (last visited July 31, 2026).

⁴¹ *2024 General Election Turnout*, N.C. State Board of Elections, <https://www.ncsbe.gov/results-data/voter-turnout/2024-general-election-turnout> (last visited Aug. 2, 2026).

⁴² *2024 General Election Turnout*, N.C. State Board of Elections, <https://www.ncsbe.gov/results-data/voter-turnout/2024-general-election-turnout> (last visited Aug. 2, 2026).

⁴³ N.C. Gen. Stat. § 163-230.1(b); N.C. State Board of Elections, Numbered Memo 2022-11 at 3-4, https://s3.amazonaws.com/dl.ncsbe.gov/sboe/numbermemo/2022/Numbered%20Memo%202022-11_Court%20Order%20re%20Disabled%20Absentee%20Voters.pdf.

⁴⁴ N.C. State Board of Elections,

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⁴⁷ Absentee ballot data from the 2024 General Election is available at *Absentee and Provisional Data*, N.C. State Board of Elections, <https://www.ncsbe.gov/results-data/absentee-and-provisional-data> (last visited July 31, 2026).

⁴⁸ N.C. Gen. Stat. § 163-226.3(a)(4), (c).

⁴⁹ N.C. State Board of Elections, Numbered Memo 2022-11 at 1-2, https://s3.amazonaws.com/dl.ncsbe.gov/sboe/numbermemo/2022/Numbered%20Memo%202022-11_Court%20Order%20re%20Disabled%20Absentee%20Voters.pdf.

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⁵¹ See, e.g., Ashley Lopez, *Republicans say mail ballots arriving after Election Day in Nevada should be illegal*, NPR (June 6, 2024), <https://www.npr.org/2024/06/06/nx-s1-4973736/mail-ballot-return-lawsuits-nevada> (describing litigation and bills in multiple states seeking to tighten mail ballot receipt deadlines).

⁵² Absentee ballot data from the 2024 General Election is available at *Absentee and Provisional Data*, N.C. State Board of Elections, <https://www.ncsbe.gov/results-data/absentee-and-provisional-data> (last visited July 31, 2026).

⁵³ *11/05/2024 Official General Election Results – Statewide*, N.C. State Board of Elections, https://er.ncsbe.gov/?election_dt=11/05/2024&county_id=0&office=JUD&contest=0 (last updated Dec. 4, 2024); Chris Cooper, *It’s (Municipal) Election Day in NC*, Anatomy of a Purple State (Nov. 4, 2025), <https://chriscooperwcu.substack.com/p/its-municipal-election-day-in-nc>.

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<https://statesunited.org/resources/americans-vote-by-mail-2024/> (last updated Apr. 13, 2026); Election Assistance Commission, Election Administration and Voting Survey 2024 Comprehensive Report at 34-35 (2025), https://www.eac.gov/sites/default/files/2025-07/2024_EAVS_Report_508.pdf (Overview Table 1: Mail Voting in the 2024 General Election).

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N.C. Gen. Stat. § 163-275(17).

⁶⁵ N.C. Gen. Stat. § 163-48.

⁶⁶ N.C. Gen. Stat. § 163-166.4(a).

⁶⁷ N.C. Gen. Stat. § 163-166.4(a); N.C. Gen. Stat. § 163-273(a)(3) & (4).

⁶⁸ See N.C. State Board of Elections, Numbered Memo 2023-06, <https://s3.amazonaws.com/dl.ncsbe.gov/sboe/numbermemo/2023/Numbered%20Memo%202023-06%20Election%20Observers.pdf>.

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