

Registration & Voting at One-Stop Sites: “Same-Day Registration”

Summary of NC H-91/ NC S-195

Purpose: This bill allows a person who misses the cut-off for registration (25 days before the election) to go to a One-Stop voting site, show proper ID, register and vote. One Stop sites are open from 19 to 3 days before Election Day – the “early voting” period. All ballots in this period are retrievable (technically, they are “in-person absentee ballots”), so if a problem is found, the ballot can be pulled and not counted in the official canvass of vote totals. The State Board of Elections says the procedures in H-91 provide for “secure and accessible voting.”

What Documentation Does the Person Present?

Under H-91, a person fills out a registration form in the presence of an elections official, shows proof of residence, and signs a statement, under penalty of perjury, that he or she is a US citizen and resides at the address given. Documents that show proof of residence include a NC driver’s license or other government-issued ID, a utility bill, bank statement, paycheck, government check, or other government document. The State Board of Elections may designate additional documents or procedures to establish proof of residence.

How is the Person’s Information Verified?

The verification process begins as soon as the registration is entered into the computer, just like all other registrations. The NC driver’s license or Social Security number (which are now part of the information on voter registration forms) is automatically transmitted to the Division of Motor Vehicles for verification, and the status of matches or near matches quickly returns to the county for confirmation or possible further research. A verification of the address also begins with a mailing sent to the person; there are at least 10 days between the end of the early voting period and the canvass, time enough for mail to be returned if the addressee is unknown. The person’s vote is counted unless the county board finds a problem with the applicant’s ID or address.

Can the Technology at One-Stop Sites Handle SDR?

The One-Stop, Early Voting sites are all equipped with computers, which currently allows the elections official to update the voter history records to prevent duplicate voting and also update an exiting voter’s address or name (because of marriage, etc.). This same technology would be used for the registration process. No new technology would be needed. (An existing voter cannot use SDR to change his or her party affiliation during a partisan primary.)

What About Voter Fraud?

In-person registrations are much more secure and reliable than registrations through the mail or other means. There are no more actual cases of fraud in states with Same-Day Registration than in states without SDR. (Six states have SDR on Election Day itself: Minnesota, Wisconsin, Maine, Idaho, New Hampshire, and Wyoming. Montana began Election-Day SDR in 2006)

For more, contact the NC Coalition for Same-Day Registration or NC Fair Share at 1-866-302-0031 or Democracy North Carolina at 1-888-OUR-VOTE www.democracy-nc.org

Fears Of Fraud Concerning “Registration & Voting at One-Stop Sites”

NC HOUSE BILL 91 (Prime sponsors: Reps. Ross, Parmon, Tolson, Holliman)

NC SENATE BILL 195 (Prime sponsor: Sen. Shaw)

What H-91/S-195 Allows: These bills allow a person who misses the registration deadline to go to an One-Stop, Early Voting site in the county, show a form of ID, fill out the registration form, swear they are a citizen under penalty of a felony, and vote, all on the same day – which is why it’s nicknamed *Same Day Registration*. People can use this process only during the early voting period (19 to 3 days before Election Day), not on Election Day itself.

Some people claim it’s necessary to require a government-issued photo ID to protect against fraud, but that’s just wrong. Here’s why:

► **Experience in other states:** Six states have used Same Day Registration (SDR) on Election Day itself for years (3 states for over 30 years, 3 for over a dozen years) and none of them have experienced any more fraud than states without SDR. Fraud is a mythical fear, not a real problem.

► **Other ID works:** None of those 6 SDR states require a driver’s license or government-issued photo ID as the only means to establish the new registrant’s identity. They all allow the person to use other documents or, in some states, allow a registered neighbor to vouch for the person.

► **Unconstitutional burden:** Requiring photo IDs is an unnecessary burden that acts as a barrier to many people. It has been ruled unconstitutional in Georgia and elsewhere. Voting is a constitutional right in North Carolina, not a privilege for those who happen to have photo IDs. Tens of thousands of North Carolinians don’t have one. Requiring a photo ID creates more problems than it solves.

► **Federal requirements:** The North Carolina proposal uses the same set of ID requirements and registration procedures that are required at other times people register, in accordance with the federal Help America Vote Act (HAVA). The bill also follows the National Voter Registration Act, and it uses the same process to verify the driver’s license or social security number and address.

► **State requirements:** Gary Bartlett of the State Board of Elections has written: "Following the procedures described in this legislation, I believe we can preserve the security and integrity of the election process and provide additional access for citizens who miss the registration deadline." In-person registration adds security, not a fraud risk.

► **Early Voting Period only:** The NC proposal only allows Same Day Registration during the One-Stop, Early Voting period that extends from 19 days to 3 days before Election Day. This gives time for the verification process to be completed before the official canvass day (vote count).

► **Retrievable ballot:** The person who registers under this legislation is voting with a retrievable ballot, so if a problem occurs their ballot can be retrieved and not counted.

► **Stiff penalties for violations:** The person who registers must sign a sworn statement, in front of an elections official, stating that they are giving the correct address, that they are at least 18, and that they are a US citizen. Lying is a Class I felony. If they then vote, while illegally registered, they are committing another felony. The fraud fears are just overblown to scare people.