



# MORE JOBS, BIGGER PAYCHECKS: THE TRUTH ABOUT NC'S TAX REFORMS

BY STEPHANIE O. CROFTON AND LUIS G. DOPICO

Economic theory, and simple common sense, tell us that higher taxes and larger and longer unemployment benefits detract from businesses' and workers' incentives to invest, work, and look for work. But how large are the impacts of changes in policy? We answer that question in the recent study, "More Jobs, Bigger Paychecks: The Truth about NC's Tax Reforms," released on October 10 by the Civitas Institute.

Read the whole story at [www.morejobsbiggerpaychecks.com](http://www.morejobsbiggerpaychecks.com).

In recent years, North Carolina has carried out several major changes in economic policy, ranging from sales and income tax cuts to reforms to the state's unemployment insurance program. Specifically, these policy changes include: (1) the sunset of a temporary 1-cent sales tax surcharge in 2011, (2) introducing a flat income tax that reduced the top rate from 7.75 percent in 2013 to 5.80 percent in 2014, (3) reducing maximum weekly unemployment insurance benefits from \$522 in 2013 to

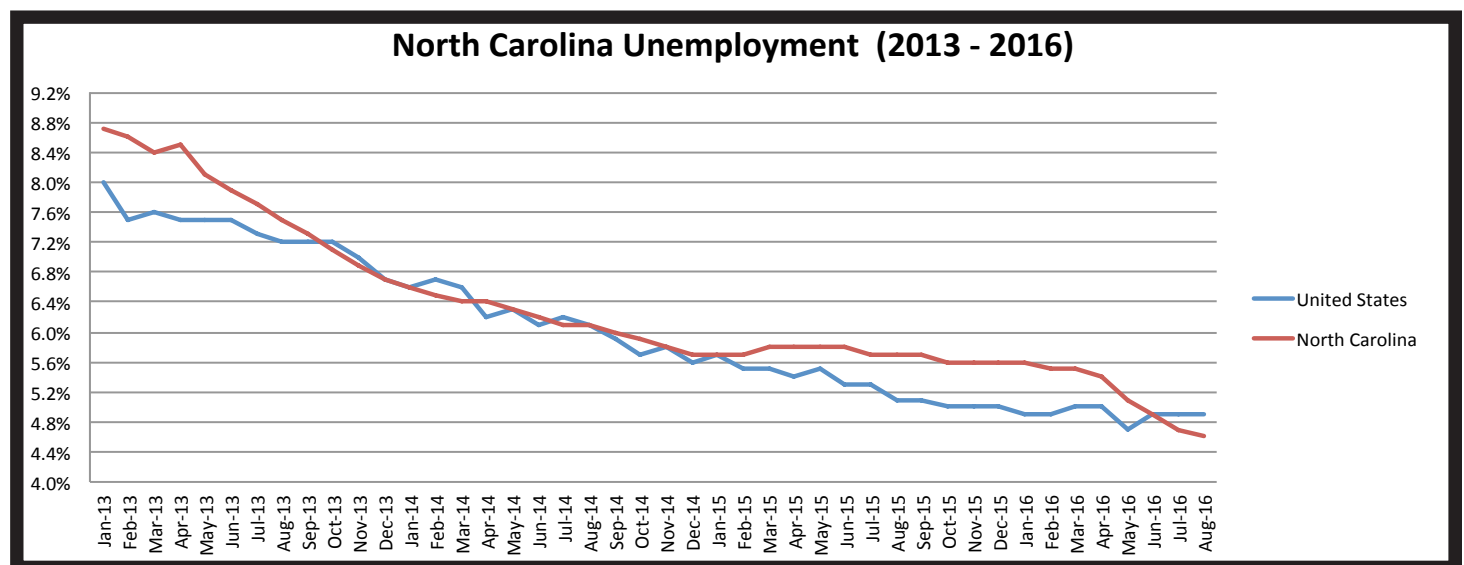
\$350 in 2014, and (4) reducing the maximum number of weeks for regular unemployment insurance benefits, in stages, from 26 in 2012 to 12 in 2015.

North Carolina's policy changes are among the most

unmatched in size by other states, with North Carolina being unique in approving such significant cuts to both taxes in such a short time frame. Similarly, the reforms to unemployment insurance

changes. Our state's ranking in the nonpartisan Tax Foundation's State Business Tax Climate Index climbed from 44th to 16th within a single year as a result of these policy changes. North Carolina's

To estimate the impacts of North Carolina's recent policy changes, we measured the average relationships between key economic policies and key measures of economic performance across the 50 U.S.



significant in the United States since 2000, and as such attracted nationwide attention. States change their sales and income tax rates and unemployment insurance systems relatively rarely, and changes are typically small. For instance, from 2000 to 2016, our state's sales and income tax cuts were almost

were virtually unprecedented, although it is important to note that the reduction in maximum benefits went from substantially above the national average (as measured as a share of average income) to only somewhat below it.

Many observers have noted North Carolina's large policy

ranking in the American Legislative Exchange Council's (ALEC) ALEC-Laffer State Economic Competitiveness Index climbed from 23rd to second within three years. ALEC also noted that our state's ranking in economic performance simultaneously climbed from 27th to eight.

states during 2000-2015. Our analysis shows that states with lower sales tax rates, income tax rates, and lower and shorter unemployment insurance benefits experienced higher economic growth, employment growth, and wage growth, and lower unemployment rates.

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## State Official's Voting Advice Leads to Firing

BY SUSAN MYRICK

A State Board of Elections (SBE) employee recently misrepresented voting laws so badly that following her advice might be a crime – and Civitas has a recording of the whole talk.

As this publication went to press, SBE Executive Director Kim Strach notified board members that Dr. E. Lee Cooley had been terminated as a voter outreach specialist for the SBE. Strach said Cooley's termination was based on the Civitas report, including the audio of one of Cooley's "educational" seminars.

Strach communicated more troubling news when she revealed Cooley had not only emailed the presentation to attendees, but also sent a list of Democratic candidates – and only Democratic candidates – to the attendees. Strach made it clear that the SBE never

endorses and would never endorse any candidate or party.

Board secretary Rhonda Amoroso called the situation "egregious and atrocious" and

answer to that question. The two Democrats on the State Board did not take part in the discussion on Cooley's actions.

On September 28 and 29 in

by Dr. Cooley, a voter outreach specialist from the SBE. People attending the meeting learned things that, if put into practice, could end with charges of voter fraud.

By the time Cooley's talk ended she had communicated to the audience more than nine times that it was legal to vote someone else's absentee ballot. She was wrong: State law clearly forbids the kind of "help" she said was legal.

That is not all. Unfortunately, she proceeded to tell the audience that, in some circumstances, it is perfectly legal for owners and staff at a health care facility to assist patients/residents with their absentee-by-mail votes. Again, that's wrong: State law clearly says they may not.

Meanwhile, the Civitas Institute has filed a public

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 6**



asked if the case had been sent to the district attorney. Unfortunately, at the time of publication we do not have the

Pasquotank County, citizens, elections officials and staff, and party activists attended two voter education seminars led

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# The Left's Fatal Contradiction Endangers All

BY JAMES TYNEN

Controversy over police-related shootings has highlighted liberalism's fatal contradiction: The Left constantly calls for government to grow ever more powerful—but leftists are always stunned when powerful government kills people.

As Yale law professor Stephen L. Carter once wrote: "On the opening day of law school, I always counsel my first-year students never to support a law they are not willing to kill to enforce. Usually they greet this advice with something between skepticism and puzzlement, until I remind them that the police go armed to enforce the will of the state, and if you resist, they might kill you."

We are not talking about the need for police officers to use force to protect themselves or others.

Nor is this discussion about the details of what happened in specific incidents. This is about how expanding government will invariably increase conflicts between police and citizens.

Consider the case of Eric Garner, the New York City man who died after a confrontation with police in 2014. What led to the confrontation? Garner was selling "loosies," single cigarettes, on the street.

Government created this underground market through high cigarette taxes. New York state has the nation's highest cigarette tax, \$4.35 a pack. New York City adds a \$1.50 tax.

At that price, smuggling and selling cigarettes becomes profitable, and when something is profitable, people will do it.

Garner was breaking the law. But should it be a capital crime for a poor man to sell untaxed cigarettes?

Ferguson, Mo., became a focus of national attention after a police-related shooting there. The incident, however, also put the spotlight on how and why local government laid a heavy hand on residents.

Faced with budget woes, city officials leaned on police to write more tickets, and they complied.

In 2012, for instance, a Ferguson police captain reported: "The [court clerks] have been swamped all day with a line of people paying off fines today. Since 9:30 this morning there hasn't been less than five people waiting in line, and for the last three hours 10 to 15 people at all times." The city manager praised police for their "great work."

The money raised by citations rose from \$1.4 million to \$2.3 million between 2011 and 2014.

violation; \$427 for disturbing the peace; and \$531 for high grass and weeds in the yard.

Such fines can overwhelm people. For example, a Ferguson woman got two parking tickets

people, that's a tinderbox waiting for the first spark.

And though big government advocates always claim they are champions of minority groups, it turns out that minority groups

professor Douglas Husak, who wrote there are more than 3,000 federal crimes on the books.

Incredibly, there may also be as many as 300,000 federal regulations that might be

*"Incredibly, there may also be as many as 300,000 federal regulations that might be enforceable through criminal punishment at the whim of an administrative agency."*

totaling \$151. Sometimes homeless, she couldn't pay. The charges eventually surpassed \$1,000, and she ended up serving six days in jail.

That isn't a rare case. In 2013, state records indicated that though Ferguson's population is only about 20,000, the municipal court handed out 32,975 arrest warrants for minor offenses.

are often hardest hit by these policies.

Dan Kopf, a writer at Priceonomics.com, used census data to compare the cities that most rely on fines with their minority populations.

His conclusion: "In the 50 cities with the highest proportion of revenues from fines, African-Americans make up nearly 19 percent of the population."

enforceable through criminal punishment at the whim of an administrative agency.

Husak concluded that seven out of 10 American adults might have committed a crime that could put them in prison. Have you or your children ever, say, illegally downloaded a music video? That's a federal crime he noted.

Are you sure you're clear of all threat of federal law? Have you checked all those thousands of laws and regulations?

Of course police must have the tools to enforce the laws. But as government grows bigger and more intrusive, it creates more and more conflict with citizens—in New York, in Ferguson, in North Carolina, everywhere.

The answer to deadly encounters with police is not to expand government, as liberals demand. That only means government will need more of our money, and that armed agents of the law will intrude more often into our lives.

The answer is to cut down on the number of laws and make government stay out of our lives. That will remove onerous tasks from the police. And it's the best way to keep more people safe. ■



Nor were these cheap tickets. An investigation found fines like this: \$302 for a "manner of walking along the highway"

Of course, obeying the law, and law officers, is of paramount concern. But where a government levies harsh fines on so many

Finally, the danger of big government extends to people across our society. Professor Carter cited the work of Rutgers

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## NC Capitol Connection

### PUBLISHER

Francis X. De Luca  
francis.deluca@nccivitas.org

### MANAGING EDITOR

Jim Tynen  
jim.tynen@nccivitas.org

### GRAPHIC DESIGNER

Jona McDuffie

### EDITORIAL & ADVERTISING

805 Spring Forest Rd Ste 100  
Raleigh, NC 27609

phone: 919.834.2099

fax: 919.834.2350

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# Council of State Races May Have Big Impact

BY MATT CAULDER

With the election just over a month away, and most eyes on the presidential race, it's easy to lose focus on many of the other statewide races, but elections for the Council of State can have a big impact on North Carolinians' lives.

These Council of State positions include the Offices of the Lieutenant Governor, the Secretary of State, the State Treasurer, the State Auditor, and the Attorney General; and the Departments of Agriculture, Insurance, Labor, and Public Instruction.

Republican Lt. Gov. Dan Forest is running for re-election against Democrat Linda Coleman.

In North Carolina, the lieutenant governor, aside from other duties, presides over the state Senate. It is the only elected position to have powers in both the legislative and executive branches of state government.

The race for attorney general is interesting in that long-time Attorney General Roy Cooper has decided to not run for re-election, but instead is challenging Gov. Pat McCrory.

Two state legislators are vying to become the next attorney general. Republican Sen. Buck Newton is running against Sen. Josh Stein, a Democrat.

The attorney general is head of the state Department of Justice and is charged with providing legal representation and advice to all state agencies.

Secretary of State Elaine Marshall, who has been in office since 1997, is running against Republican challenger Michael LaPaglia.

The secretary of state is charged with overseeing many of the economic and business-related operations of the state government, such as registrations of professional bodies like corporations or charities.

State Treasurer Janet Cowell is not running for re-election in 2016. One candidate for that poll is Democrat Dan Blue III, a businessman and attorney who is son of Sen. Dan Blue. The Republican candidate is Dale Folwell, who was most recently head of the state's Division of Employment Security.

The treasurer is charged with overseeing the financial operations of the state, including its \$90 billion pension fund and the State Health Plan, while also acting as fiscal adviser to the state and local governments.

State Auditor Beth Wood, a Democrat, is running for re-election against Republican Chuck Stuber, a former FBI agent and chief investigator for the State Board of Elections.

The auditor's office is considered to be a fiscal watchdog charged with overseeing and reviewing the financial accounts of state agencies, including the public universities.

Commissioner of Agriculture Steve Troxler, a Republican, is running for re-election against Democrat Walter Smith, who is going for his second challenge against Troxler this November.

The commissioner of agriculture oversees the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, as well as serving as the chairman of the state Board of Agriculture.

Wayne Goodwin, the democratic commissioner of insurance, is running for re-election against Republican challenger Mike Causey, for another term.

The commissioner of insurance is charged with regulating the insurance industry in the state and overseeing insurance professionals in the state.

Commissioner of Labor Cherie Berry is running against Democrat Charles Meeker for another term as the head of the Department of Labor. The department is charged with safeguarding the "health, safety and general well-being" of more than 4 million workers.

Meeker formerly served as the mayor of Raleigh.

State Superintendent of Public Instruction June Atkinson, a Democrat, is running for re-election against Mark Johnson, an attorney who is also on the Forsyth County School Board.

The superintendent serves as the head of the Department of Public Instruction, overseeing the public school system in the state. ■

## Monthly Petition

# Petition to the State Board of Elections

To members of the State Elections Board and to state elections staff:

Civitas has published a range of articles in recent years detailing how state elections laws have been misinterpreted, flouted and subverted, sometimes by the Board's own staff. (See the articles on pages 1 and 12 of this newspaper.)

We call on you to make an absolute commitment to administer and enforce state election laws as written, and to do your utmost to protect the integrity of North Carolina's election system.

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# The Truth About North Carolina's Tax Reforms

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Applying our cross-state findings to North Carolina, we conclude that recent policy changes in our state already have had the following effects: Reducing sales tax rates in 2011 increased employment by 11,000 jobs, state GDP by \$1.4 billion, and wages by \$800 million between 2011 and 2015.

Reforming income taxes in 2013 increased employment by 8,800 jobs, state GDP by \$800 million, and wages by \$320 million between

2013 and 2015. Reducing maximum unemployment insurance benefits increased employment by 35,000 jobs, state GDP by \$6.3 billion, and wages by \$1.26 billion between 2012 and 2015, and reduced the unemployment rate by 0.6 percent in 2013.

Reducing the maximum number of weeks of regular unemployment insurance benefits increased employment by 88,000 jobs and reduced the unemployment rate by 1 percent between 2012 and

2015.

Over a 10-year period, we project in our study that North Carolina's recent policy changes will have even larger effects, as job and income growth continue to climb higher than they would have without the reforms.

It is important to note that the impacts of each of these policies were measured in isolation, and as such should not be added together to assume a cumulative impact.

Policymakers, and ultimately

voters, must make decisions about the level of services that governments will provide. Making these decisions should take into account the trade-offs involved. In our study, we confirm the long-standing findings that higher taxes and higher and longer unemployment insurance benefits detract from economic growth, employment growth, and wage growth. Undoing the policy changes of recent years would harm both North Carolina's ongoing recovery and

North Carolinians' long-term economic and employment prospects. ■

Stephanie O. Crofton, Ph.D., is the Charles T. Ingram Professor of Economics and Associate Dean, Earl N. Phillips School of Business, High Point University. Luis G. Dopico, Ph.D., is a research consultant for Macrometrix.

## When Police Give an Order, Gun Owners Must Comply

BY MATT CAULDER

Recent debates about police-involved shootings have obscured a point that could save lives: Whatever right you have to carry a handgun, on the street the only safe response to an armed officer's command is to obey it.

In a recent article, a Charlotte Observer reporter posed the question of whether carrying a firearm was reason enough for an interaction with the police. The article was in response to the officer-involved shooting of a Charlotte man by an officer of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department (CMPD).

The shooting sparked off riots in Charlotte. One 23-year-old man was shot and killed during the riots, and several people and

cocked and its safety off at the time of the shooting.

In other words, the weapon was ready to be fired with just a trigger pull, assuming there was a round in the chamber. That is not the way a firearm should or normally would be stored in a holster.

That means either Scott had been storing it in a very unsafe way or he was getting ready to use it. That it was in his hand makes it much more likely he was going to fire it.

Since that time, it has become known that the handgun was illegally purchased by Scott, who was a felon, from a man who has admitted to stealing the firearm in a burglary and

It was not until they saw Scott hold a gun up that they decided to arrest him for the drug violation and investigate his possession of the gun.

So the officers pulled back and then returned, wearing duty vests identifying themselves as police officers, as seen in the videos released. According to reports, they gave "loud and repeated verbal commands to drop the gun."

CMPD officials released photographs of the handgun, the ankle holster worn by Scott that is visible in the body camera footage, and also the blunt.

But Charlotte Observer reporter Steve Harrison raised a question in a story in the

Scott.

The line that Harrison's article blurs is that there is a difference between carrying a firearm – in a holster, for example – and literally carrying it in your hand, also called brandishing.

In the article, Harrison refers to a case in which one person in a group was legally carrying a firearm, and because of that the officers searched the rest of the group and turned up an illegal gun. The charge for that was later thrown out.

Now, in deference to openness, Harrison contacted me for comment on this story to get my thoughts on open carry and when and where people are allowed to hold firearms.

It was an interview that I ended up declining, for several reasons, but I wanted to take the time now to address the difference between what Scott was doing and what thousands of legal open firearm carriers do in the state every day.

There are two ways to legally carry a handgun in the state of North Carolina, assuming you are carrying in a place that allows firearms or carrying is not otherwise prohibited by law. You may either carry a firearm with a concealed handgun permit issued by your sheriff or by carrying the firearm in a way where it is visible, called open carry.

Most often, when a person is open carrying, he or she has the handgun in an outside-the-waistband holster on one hip, and maybe spare magazines or speed loaders in a carrier on the other side.

There are outliers who open carry with shoulder holsters, drop-leg thigh holsters, inside-the-waistband holsters with their shirt tucked behind the grip of the firearm, etc.

According to the police report, that is not what Scott was doing. First, he presumably had the handgun stored in a concealed ankle holster. Second, the gun was in his hand as he exited the vehicle.

So Scott was looking at some jail time out of this situation, for drug possession, possession of a firearm by a felon, concealing a deadly weapon, and maybe more. Not an ideal situation, but he would be alive.

So it appears that the officers clearly had reason to interact with Scott based on the evidence.

But let me play devil's advocate here. What if Scott had been an upstanding citizen who legally owned his firearm and the police ordered him to drop his gun?

Well, I can tell you if it were me, that gun would hit the pavement.

I don't care if it was a prized \$1,500 Colt 1911 or a \$150 Hi-Point, that gun is hitting the ground, because in that situation my life would be on the line.

Whether it is reckless anger, pride or stupidity that makes someone think they can fight the police in the street, the result sadly is often the same when officers are forced to defend their lives with deadly force, or at least feel they have to.

You never win against the police on the street; if you are in the right, you only win in the courts.

This is not to say that an officer who wrongfully kills a civilian won't lose his badge, or go to jail, or that the police department won't be forced to pay the family a lot of money in civil court for the death of their family member, but where will that citizen be? Dead.

Legal scholars, journalists and legislators can debate the fine points. In the real world, when an armed officer of the law tells you to do something, do it.

Then you'll be alive to argue about your rights before a judge and a jury. ■

This article originally appeared at [nccapitolconnection.com](http://nccapitolconnection.com).



officers were injured.

In the aftermath of the shooting, some claimed that Keith Scott, the 43-year-old man who was fatally wounded by a two-year veteran of the CMPD, was holding a book and not a handgun. But video and photo evidence released since the shooting has shown Scott was holding a Colt Mustang .380 semiautomatic pistol that, according to photographs taken as evidence in the shooting, was

then selling it to Scott.

According to police reports, "Two plainclothes officers were sitting inside of their unmarked police vehicle preparing to serve an arrest warrant in the parking lot of The Village at College Downs" when Scott pulled up beside them and was observed rolling "what they believed to be a marijuana 'blunt.'" The officers ignored the drug activity in favor of completing the warrant operation.

Charlotte Observer: "CMPD said Keith Lamont Scott had a gun. Was that reason enough to order him to drop it?" In other words, should the police, who were at the apartment complex to serve a warrant to a different person, ever have approached Scott at all?

Harrison, through the lens of comments from a Campbell University law professor, questioned whether CMPD even had cause to speak with

# State Official's Voting Advice Leads to Her Firing

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records request – for her travel logs, emails, etc. – so we can further assess the damage she has done.

To hear the recording and learn more, go online to [tinyurl.com/NCSBE-Civitas](http://tinyurl.com/NCSBE-Civitas).

Following are a few of her comments, in boldface, transcribed from a recording of her talk, as mentioned above. Key times are also noted.

**Cooley says, "But where does the voter want the ballot to go to? — That voter is going to say, I want my ballot to go to my near relative. So who's that near relative?"**

After Cooley recites the list of near relatives she says,

**12:53: "... and these are persons who have an interest in that homeless person. So that ballot can go to that near relative who can vote that ballot, in a manner that is in the best interest of that homeless person."**

The citizens in Pasquotank County let this information settle in and then someone offers a question:

14:00: Q1: I've recently become power of attorney for my parents.

**Cooley interrupts: "Legal guardian also."**

Q1: Well, I guess so, but I am power of attorney. Can I vote their ballots as power of attorney?

**Cooley: "Yes, ma'am, uh huh, yes ma'am, you can request those ballots."**

Q1: Okay, I can request them, but can I vote for them?

**Cooley: "Yes, ma'am, yes**

**ma'am."**

Another man asks:

Q2: Wait a minute, does that mean she can mark their ballots?

**Cooley: "Yes sir, she can. Well, she has power of attorney, so yes she can do that. And with the other relatives you're going to make sure you work that out. You're going to vote your mom's ballot because your mom wants you to vote that ballot and we'll get to that a little bit later."**

Cooley then talks on various voting-related subjects, then asks for questions.

56:35: Q3: If I am a near relative, am I able to fill out

about her brother and takes her interpretation of North Carolina's voter laws to a new level.

**57:15: "Now my brother, likes to drink a little toddy, he ain't going to make it to early voting, he ain't going to make it to vote on election day, but every year he expects me to request an absentee ballot and vote the ballot for him. 'Sister, did I vote?' That's what they call me – 'Sister, did I vote?' Yes, you did. And, everything is fine."**

Q3: So I can fill out a ballot for somebody else if I qualify as a near relative.

Cooley: "Yes, ma'am, you can."

*"Thank goodness Civitas picked (the story) up"*

– SBE Secretary Rhonda Amoroso

the ballot for ... (Cooley interrupts)

**Cooley: "You can vote that ballot for that person, but you all must be in agreement about that, you can't just decide, I just can't decide my brother don't vote so I am just going to go get a ballot and vote it for him, you all must be in agreement about that. OK."**

**"Because he could decide this year 'I am going to go vote.' You must have a discussion about that, he must give you permission to do that or that's just the way you operate with that voter."**

Without any prompting, Cooley decides to tell a story

Cooley moves to one last topic, a very serious topic and one that has an ugly history in North Carolina.

**58:30: "It is against the law for anybody who works in a nursing home, rest home, mental health clinic, substance abuse clinic, hospital or group home, if**

*To hear the recording, go to our website at [www.nccivitas.org/2016/state-elections-expert-is-wrong-on-voting-law/](http://www.nccivitas.org/2016/state-elections-expert-is-wrong-on-voting-law/)*

**you work there, it's against the law for you to assist anybody who is a patient or resident in any of these facilities in the voting process."**

**"Now, you can go to jail. Charges can be pressed. I know we think we're doing some good. But, all I am saying is that it's against the law – if you get caught."**

That's right, Cooley stressed that it's against the law – "if you get caught."

Then Cooley asks the audience: How do these people vote? She tells them that they have near relatives who request ballots on their behalf. She then lays out another scenario where a daughter of the patient will have the ballot sent to her (the daughter's) house and she will vote it on her mom's behalf.

**1:02:11: "Or maybe daughter says send the ballot to my house and daughter is going to vote that ballot because mom and daughter have discussed it and mom just says go ahead and vote it for me."**

Cooley then discusses Multipartisan Assistance Teams, MATs, teams sanctioned by the SBE, that go to clinics, group homes, etc. when they are asked to assist voters in the absentee voting process. Cooley discusses the provision in the law that allows someone other than a near relative or legal guardian

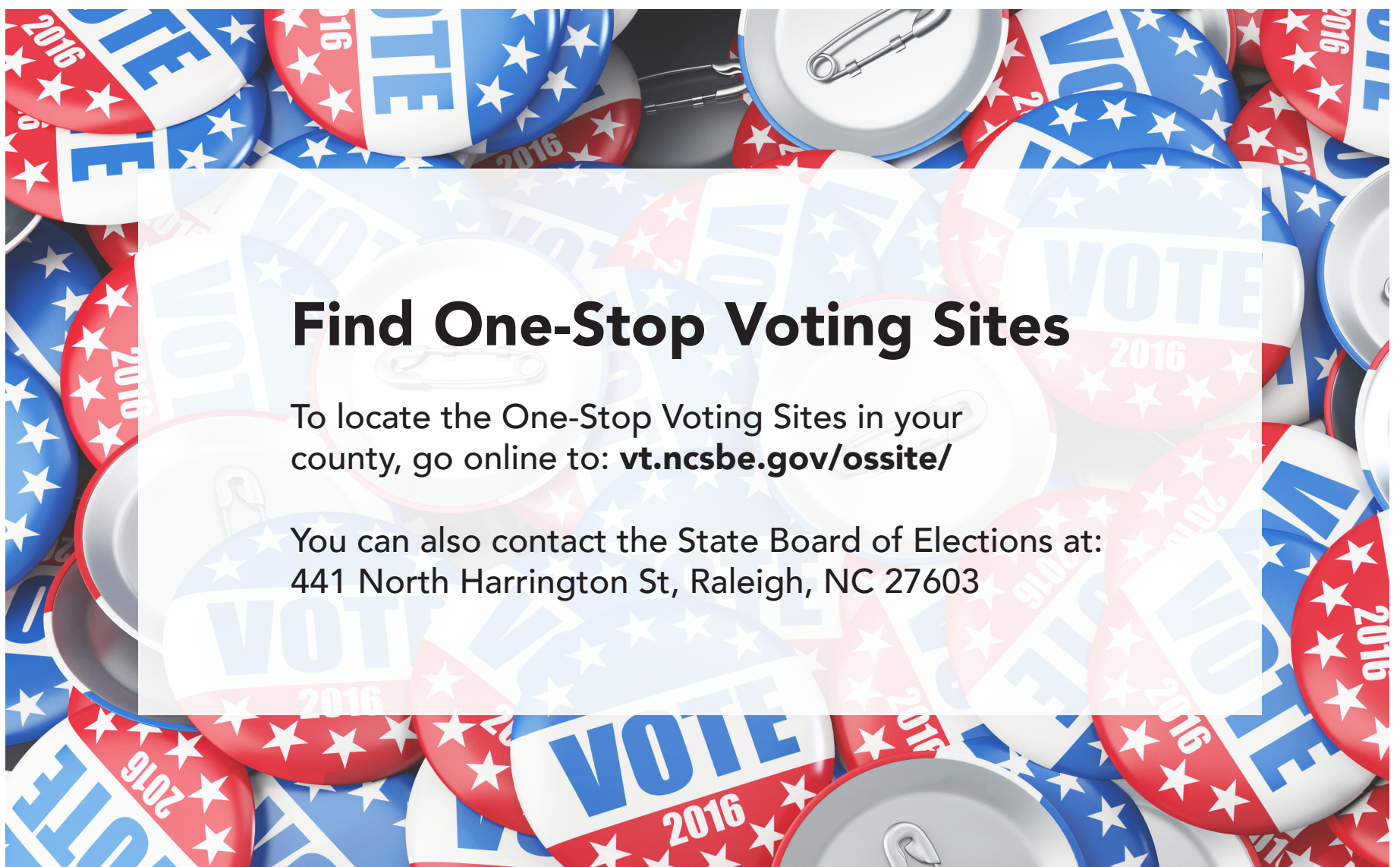
to help the patient if the MAT can't accommodate a request for help within seven calendar days of a telephonic request to the county board of elections.

Unfortunately, Cooley got this completely wrong, too. She told the group that if the MAT couldn't assist in that seven-day window, then anyone, even employees of the facility, could assist the voter.

This too is contrary to North Carolina law, specifically NCGS 163-226.3(a)(4). Under no circumstances may a owner or a worker in a health care facility assist a patient in casting an absentee ballot.

There was so much wrong with Dr. Cooley's presentation. It's disturbing to think that she had been traveling to many of North Carolina's communities repeating lies and misrepresentations, basically putting our sacred right to vote in jeopardy. Cooley was telling the crowds that come to learn from her that it is lawful to vote for someone else as long as you are a "near relative" or have power of attorney or are a legal guardian. She might have been inducing others to commit voter fraud and she may have committed voter fraud as well.

The Left, in opposing voter photo ID laws, has always told us that absentee by mail is where committing voter fraud would be the easiest. That's why hearing Dr. Cooley lay out a plan to increase absentee mail requests and possibly encourage voter fraud seems to be a fulfillment of their predictions of voter fraud through absentee ballots. ■



**Find One-Stop Voting Sites**

To locate the One-Stop Voting Sites in your county, go online to: [vt.ncsbe.gov/ossite/](http://vt.ncsbe.gov/ossite/)

You can also contact the State Board of Elections at:  
441 North Harrington St, Raleigh, NC 27603

# A Grateful Thanks to a Gracious North Carolina

BY JOHN GRAVES

We immigrated to North Carolina just two years ago. We left our home in Ojai, Calif., on June 6, 2014. We drove 2,480 miles across our nation to an unknown and strange New South. Everyone asked, “Why are you moving *There?*” Everyone looked askance at us.

So I thought I’d offer an explanation to the doubters back in California and a grateful thanks to our new homeland.

Our last image of California: Shades of gray and brown discolored the once-verdant landscape of the Central Valley. The mid-morning sun illuminated the eastern slopes, covered in desert grasses slowly reclaiming the human wasteland. Shards of broken dreams littered the neglected, fallow fields. Where water once irrigated this desert into bloom, bankruptcy has closed most farms.

As we drove east, the moist and verdant South arose first in Arkansas, going vividly green in the Tennessee hills.

Our first impression of North Carolina: Graciousness. Friendship. Hospitality. Warmth. There is an infectious charm to everyone we meet.

“Heh! You’re newcomers, eh? Where you coming in from? Can I get you a cuppa coffee? Wanna stay for some dinner?”

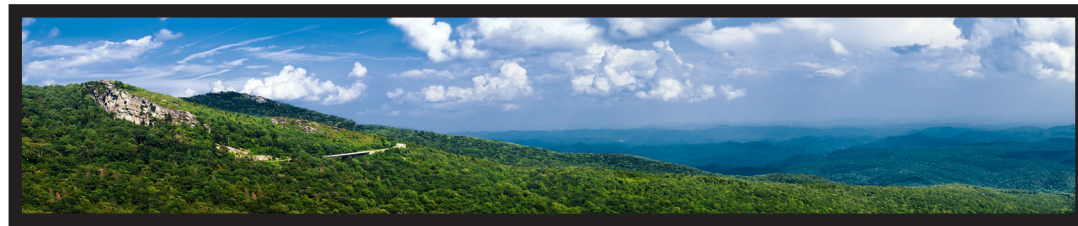
A black teenager holds the door open for my amazed wife at the grocery store. Her thanks prompt a kindly “yes ma’am.”

The churches are full on Sundays.

We settled into our short-term condo on the shores of Crabtree Lake in Cary and found our first impressions were accurate. The people in the Tar Heel State

are warm and gracious. They have a natural curiosity that does not intrude.

The prejudices of my youth spent in Florida and Texas are entirely absent in today’s South.



Black Lives Matter prejudices are much more obvious in California than any racial issue here.

As for politics, we’re like children in a candy store. Debate here is far different from that in California.

In NC, discussions are open-minded. People ask honest questions – and then listen. (Californians are less known for their listening than for their talking.)

Another difference is that elections here are close, unlike in the one-party state of California. Media here remain in the claws of the beast, yes, but conservative groups and voters have an importance almost entirely missing from California “politicks.”

Bottom line: “Raleigh gets it right” versus the “Soviet Socialist Republic of Sacramento.”

We may not always agree as conservatives (or “conservatarians”) with the governor, but Pat McCrory has so much more élan than California Gov. Jerry “Moonbeam” Brown. The North Carolina General Assembly is open and friendly. Races are open, interesting and raucous.

Also, voters still really have to register here (and until recently

had to show actual ID). In California, a driver’s license gets you a voter’s registration online and in the mail. Simple. But that’s hardly the way a real republic would do things.

outside the meeting halls. In the Golden State, however, myriad mobs of unruly granny gangs forced their opinions and their papers on you as you ran the gauntlet into the auditorium.

We left the hall in disgrace – at the performance of such old, spoiled children.

Fast forward to June 2014, at the NC State campus. An orderly group of petitioners was outside the auditorium discussing their opposition to fracking and pipelines running through four local counties. Inside, the moderator – another author friend from the industry and the Triangle – called on a wide variety of people, listening to their points of view.

One lady graciously sang her protest. Several young people indicated their awareness of the issues. A few politicians expressed their stances, without needing the accompaniment of drumbeats. I shared my views, too.

This contrast closes my discussion of California versus North Carolina. Childish and immature adults versus mature and intelligent adolescents. Firebrands versus friendly foes. Alarmists versus actual sensible voters. “No, you can’t!” versus “Yes, we can.”

We answer the question “why” with a simple response. Because we found out how gracious people could be, even when they disagree.

Thank you, North Carolina, and thank you, North Carolinians, for welcoming us, pilgrims from a grim desert, lost in its own nightmare. ■

John Graves is the author of “Broken Wing: Birds, Blades and Broken Promises,” “Fracking, America’s Alternative Energy Revolution,” and “The 7% Solution.”

To those North Carolinians who have welcomed us as immigrants to a new land over the past 26 months, thank you for your generosity, your kindness and your intelligence.

Inside pandemonium ruled. Drums, chants, signs and shouting were the primary form of communication.

One brave soul from the oil fields, someone I have



John Graves

The freshening autumn breeze cools the air and the tempers.

And California’s political temper would benefit from cooling.

The environment has always been my major concern. Having written a well-received book on fracking and another on wind energy, I attended meetings on fracking in California and in North Carolina. The contrast could not be more evident.

Both meetings had protesters

known as both an engineer and a “toolpusher,” had the courage to stand and deliver his views. He tried to make simple scientific points about fracking: Groundwater is not contaminated; earthquakes do not result; CO2 emissions decline; and even the EPA agreed.

It was no avail. Posters, signs, trash and spittle rained down on him (and on me). No gavel was pounded. No order was called.

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**I support the following actions and want to help make a difference in North Carolina:**

- Implementation of statewide Education Savings Accounts (ESA)
- School choice
- Elimination of personal and corporate income tax
- Support Taxpayer Protection Act
- Reduction in state spending
- Elimination of pork/earmark spending
- Ending tax credits for special interests
- Make NC state taxes the lowest in the nation
- Requiring supermajorities for tax increases
- Elimination of Certificate of Need Laws (CON)
- Lowering health care costs by increasing supply
- Ending state control of medical service supply
- Eliminating withholding union dues from state workers at taxpayer’s expense
- Establishing term limits for NC state legislators
- Putting limits on session length for NC Legislature (Session Limits)
- Passing real voter ID laws to ensure election integrity
- Elimination Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard (REPS)
- Oil & gas drilling
- Other \_\_\_\_\_



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# Terrible Twosome: Same-Day Voting + No Voter ID

BY SUSAN MYRICK

So here we go again: another Presidential Election without real safeguards to protect our votes.

Ballots have been mailed to and returned by voters who have requested them, and in-person early voting has begun. Election workers in hundreds of early voting sites, known as one-stops, are handing ballots to millions of people without any way of knowing who those people really are. Doesn't sound good, you say?

Wait, it only gets worse, because in North Carolina we mix voting without an ID with same-day registration (SDR) ... for 17 days.

That's a lot of time and a lot of people, making for many opportunities for problems with voting. The kicker: SDR voters vote in the same way as every other voter, and their ballots are counted just like every other ballot. The difference is these voters are not required to go through the same address verification check as voters who register to vote by the statutory deadline. And once the ballots are cast – even if the voters don't live where they say they lived – their votes are counted.

The federal Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals recently reinstated an extra week of one-stop early voting and threw out the voter ID provision in North Carolina's 2013 election reform bill, known as VIVA (Voter Information Verification Act).

If you've read anything about SDR in North Carolina's mainstream media, you probably haven't gotten the whole story, and some of what you've read and heard is just plain wrong.

Case in point: A recent article in the Charlotte Observer, written by Steve Harrison. While he attempted to be informative, the article is lacking in the end.

Harrison gets points for talking to someone from both sides of the issue, because that rarely happens. In this article he talks to Francis De Luca of the Civitas Institute and Bob Hall of Democracy NC.

You may remember Hall as a liberal activist, registered lobbyist and executive director of a group that was an original member of the now infamous Blueprint NC organization. You will remember that Blueprint NC was the source of a leaked strategy memo in 2013 that exposed the game of how a coalition of liberal nonprofits will "attack" elected officials in North Carolina. It even called for its members to "eviscerate the leadership and weaken their ability to govern."

Ultimately, Hall's work with the State Board of Elections

(SBE) produced a collection of some of the most liberal voting laws in the land – including same-day registration.

The Observer article, "Does same-day voter registration in NC increase fraud risk? Experts disagree," starts out soundly enough. Harrison describes the ideological differences surrounding SDR by pointing out that Republicans believe that SDR provides for higher chances of voter fraud. The GOP even cites data that show SDR voters fail verification at a higher rate than voters who register to vote before the 25-day deadline.

*"That's the most egregious flaw with SDR – allowing people who register to vote to cast their ballots, bypassing the necessary address verification process."*

In the article, however, Hall tells Harrison that the higher rate of unverified registrations among SDR voters is likely due to people moving. The Charlotte Observer reporter does not ask a follow-up question, so one would conclude that Hall has evidence to prove his claim.

Not so! In fact, no one knows who these voters are. They don't know who they are because people using SDR are not required to show an ID either, only a document that shows their purported address. That document can even be a utility bill!

Hall goes on to say that in 2012 the local boards were not mailing out verification cards (that should have been mailed out immediately) until December or January – after the election. This argument actually strengthens the case against SDR, seeing that if the board of elections is unable to carry out its duties surrounding a particular process there is something seriously wrong, and the process should not be allowed to continue until solutions are found.

Next, Harrison writes that the SBE sent him an analysis that showed that, in the March 2016 primary, out of 22,563 people who used SDR, 514 of them could not be verified. That's about 2.3 percent of SDR voters who appear not to live where they say they lived when they registered to vote, but voted at the same time (and their vote counted). The SBE even said that if these voters had registered before the statutory deadline (25 days ahead of Election Day), they would not have been allowed to vote.

Those SDR votes, even though unverified as required by law,

counted the same as votes cast by citizens who went through the normal registration process.

Just in case you think that 514 is a small and perhaps insignificant number, many political contests have been won and lost by fewer votes. The upcoming election will see that number increase tenfold, seeing that in 2012 nearly 300,000 people used SDR.

The SBE knows the number of returned verification cards will continue to grow as the U.S. Postal Service continues to return undeliverable cards weeks and even months after

they are mailed out – thus after the votes have been certified.

Civitas proved this with our own analysis of the 2012 primary election vote. The Civitas study showed that 7.3 percent of SDR voters had a first-class mailing returned as undeliverable, compared with a 3.06 percent return rate for people who registered in the 45-day period leading up to the statutory deadline to vote, which is 25 days ahead of Election Day.

Then the Observer story states categorically that there are more than a dozen states that use SDR. The problem is: Not all SDR is equal. There are actually 12 states that allow SDR – but for only one day: Election Day.

While that's bad enough, there are only three states (North Carolina, Maryland and Ohio) that allow SDR during the entire early voting period. In North Carolina, that means people will be allowed to register and vote during a 17-day period just before Election Day, and these voters will not go through the same verification process as the rest of us.

That's the most egregious flaw with SDR – allowing people who register to vote to cast their ballots, bypassing the necessary address verification process. Seventeen days is a long time for people who choose not to follow the law to vote and have their vote counted, and then those people can just disappear.

In 2008 and 2012, thousands of SDR voters registered to vote, voted, and had their votes counted. Only after the election was certified and the votes officially counted was it determined they didn't live where they said they lived. In all cases, those votes were allowed to stand.

The last topic in the Charlotte Observer article attempts to waylay readers' fears by talking with Mecklenburg County Board of Elections Director Michael Dickerson. Dickerson said: "Mecklenburg County has always been able to send verification letters within two days after someone registers."

So it is good that Dickerson follows the law, but in the next sentence he tells the rest of the story. Dickerson can control when the letters can go out, but not when they are returned undeliverable.

He acknowledges that the board of elections is at the mercy of the U.S. Postal Service. As Civitas discovered in its study, many of the unverified ballots come back weeks or months after they were sent out. There is usually less than a month's time between the beginning of one-stop voting and the certification of the election, when all the votes are officially counted, and it can take a full month to complete the verification process.

Even though Dickerson has admitted that the elections board is at the mercy of the U.S. Postal Service to return verification mailings as undeliverable, he said, "That can happen after the election has occurred. In theory that gives elections supervisors' time to remove

unverified ballots before a county's vote tally is officially counted, which is usually 10 days after an election."

"In theory" are the operative words in this paragraph, because that is all it is, a theory. It can happen, but most of the time it does not, and, if it does, counties don't usually remove voters and/or votes from the official tally.

Let's underline that: SDR verification letters are most often returned as undeliverable after the day the votes are officially certified – according to the SBE's own training documents, if the verification process is not completed prior to canvass, but SDR fails mail verification, then they send a confirmation card. This means the voter's vote stands and the voter stays on the rolls to vote again another day. That is a gaping opportunity for vote fraud.

I'll give Steve Harrison of the Charlotte Observer a grade of "D" for this article. It was very short on fact, with a high degree of smoke and mirrors, but he did quote Francis De Luca who said, "Any difference in the way people are treated between regular registration and same-day registration to me means people have unequal access to the ballot box."

That quote is the only reason the Observer didn't get an "F." ■

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# NC Jobless Rate Continued to Drop in August

BY NCCC STAFF

North Carolina's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate in August was 4.6 percent, falling 0.1 of a percentage point from July's revised rate, the state Commerce Department reported.

This meant the NC unemployment rate dropped even further below the U.S. rate, which was reported to be 4.9 percent.

The state's August 2016 unemployment rate was 1.1 percentage points lower than it was a year ago. The number of people employed increased 96,272 over the year. The number of people unemployed also decreased 49,242 over the year.

As reported last month in NC Capitol Connection, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics has

announced that North Carolina had one of the biggest decreases in the unemployment rate in the nation during the past year.

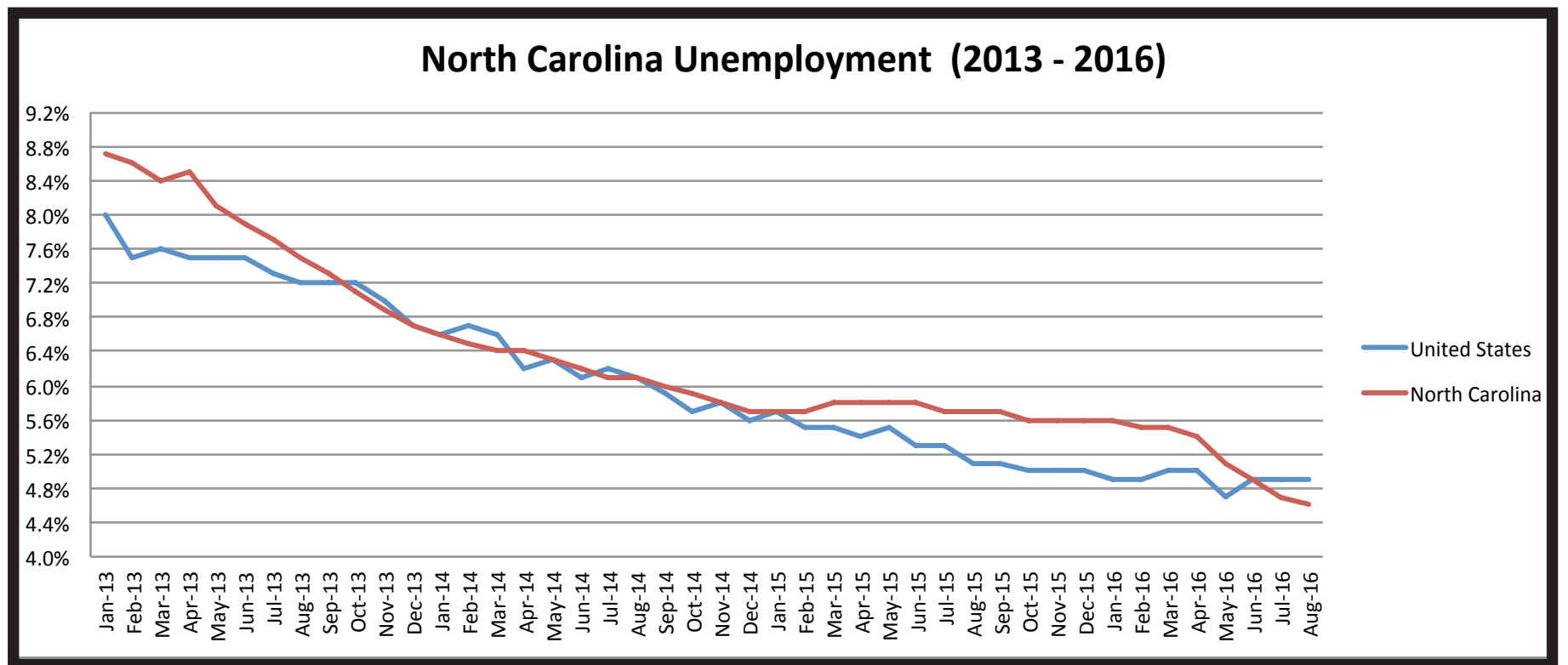
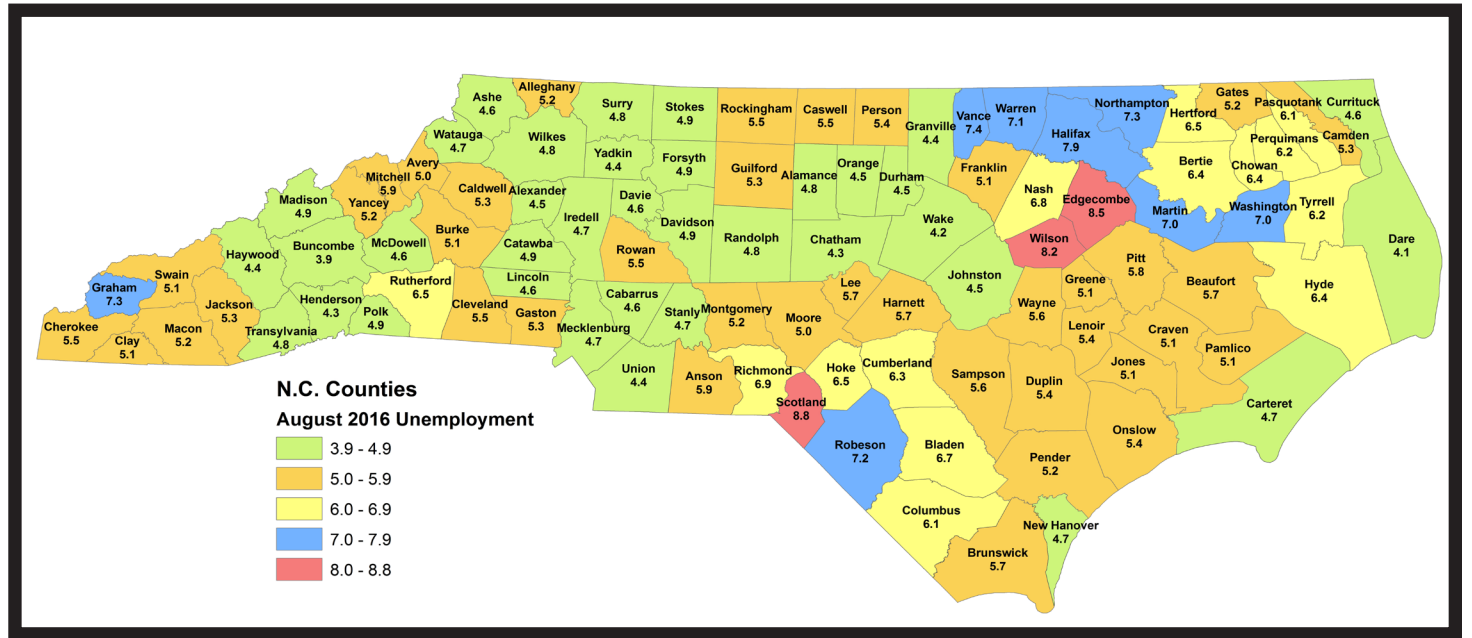
The first chart below shows county unemployment rates.

The second shows the decline in the state unemployment rate, from one of the highest in the country at the start of 2013 to August of this year when it dipped below, the national

average.

The chart at the bottom of the page shows the county-by-county trends from October 2008, just before that presidential election; to

January 2013, when Gov. Pat McCrory took office and the current majority firmed up its hold on the General Assembly; and today's figures. ■



## 2008 - 2013 - 2016 N.C. Unemployment Rate Comparison

County	10-08	1-13	8-16	County	10-08	1-13	8-16	County	10-08	1-13	8-16	County	10-08	1-13	8-16
Alamance	7.1	10	4.8	Cumberland	6.8	11	6.3	Johnston	6.1	8.9	4.5	Randolph	6.7	11.1	4.8
Alexander	7.9	10.2	4.5	Currituck	3.6	10.5	4.6	Jones	6.8	10.7	5.1	Richmond	9.5	13.6	6.9
Alleghany	6.6	12.6	5.2	Dare	4.2	20.1	4.1	Lee	8.2	12.7	5.7	Robeson	8.1	13.9	7.2
Anson	9.5	12.8	5.9	Davidson	7.4	10.7	4.9	Lenoir	7.8	10.8	5.4	Rockingham	7.9	11.7	5.5
Ashe	6.3	13.8	4.6	Davie	6.9	9.3	4.6	Lincoln	7.2	10.8	4.6	Rowan	7.2	10.3	5.5
Avery	5.6	13.7	5	Duplin	5.9	10.6	5.4	Macon	5.3	13.3	5.2	Rutherford	8.7	14.7	6.5
Beaufort	7.3	11.8	5.7	Durham	5.4	7.9	4.5	Madison	5.7	10.1	4.9	Sampson	5.4	9	5.6
Bertie	7.5	13.5	6.4	Edgecombe	11.4	16.6	8.5	Martin	6.9	12	7	Scotland	11.7	17.8	8.8
Bladen	8.1	13.6	6.7	Forsyth	6.3	9.4	4.9	Mcdowell	8.1	11.9	4.6	Stanly	7	10.1	4.7
Brunswick	6.9	12.2	5.7	Franklin	6.7	9.6	5.1	Mecklenburg	6.6	9.7	4.7	Stokes	6.1	9	4.9
Buncombe	5.1	8.1	3.9	Gaston	7.7	11.1	5.3	Mitchell	7.7	15.5	5.9	Surry	8.3	11.1	4.8
Burke	8.6	11.6	5.1	Gates	5.2	8.3	5.2	Montgomery	8.3	11.1	5.2	Swain	5.5	19	5.1
Cabarrus	6.4	9.4	4.6	Graham	8.2	20.4	7.3	Moore	6.4	10.1	5	Transylvania	5	11.5	4.8
Caldwell	8.3	12	5.3	Granville	7	10.3	4.4	Nash	8.6	12.7	6.8	Tyrrell	6	13	6.2
Camden	5.4	9.4	5.3	Greene	7	9.8	5.1	New Hanover	5.4	10.4	4.7	Union	6	8.6	4.4
Carteret	5	10.6	4.7	Guilford	6.7	10.3	5.3	Northampton	7.7	12.1	7.3	Vance	9.8	13.8	7.4
Caswell	8.2	10.4	5.5	Halifax	9.7	14.7	7.9	Onslow	5.8	9.6	5.4	Wake	5	7.8	4.2
Catawba	7.9	11.6	4.9	Harnett	7.1	11.5	5.7	Orange	4.2	6.6	4.5	Warren	9.7	12.9	7.1
Chatham	5.5	7.5	4.3	Haywood	5.7	10.2	4.4	Pamlico	5.7	11.2	5.1	Washington	7.2	13.5	7
Cherokee	8.7	14.1	5.5	Henderson	5.1	7.9	4.3	Pasquotank	6.4	12.4	6.1	Watauga	4.1	9.5	4.7
Chowan	8.5	11.3	6.4	Hertford	6.6	11.5	6.5	Pender	6.4	11.5	5.2	Wayne	6.3	9.8	5.6
Clay	6	10.6	5.1	Hoke	6.3	9.7	6.5	Perquimans	6.7	11.1	6.2	Wilkes	8.2	11.7	4.8
Cleveland	8.5	11.3	5.5	Hyde	4.6	15.7	6.4	Person	7.3	11.1	5.4	Wilson	7.9	13	8.2
Craven	6.2	10.8	5.1	Iredell	6.5	10.4	4.7	Pitt	7	9.9	5.8	Yadkin	6.1	10.1	4.4
				Jackson	4.3	11.3	5.3	Polk	5	8.2	4.9	Yancey	7.2	13.8	5.2

# No Surge in NC Voter Registration ... So Far

BY SUSAN MYRICK

We have yet to witness the usual surge in voter registration before a presidential election.

In 2012, between Sept. 15 and Oct. 6, North Carolina's voter rolls grew by 75,753. Democrats saw a gain of 33,400, Republicans had a net gain of 14,966 voters, and the unaffiliated ranks grew by 26,375 voters. **See chart on page 11.**

In the comparable time

period between Sept. 17 and Oct. 8, 2016, we've witnessed a decline, in comparison to 2012, in voter registration in all but one segment of voters. The voter rolls have grown in this 2016 three-week period by 53,215 voters – that's 22,538 fewer voters registering to vote compared to 2012. The Democrat Party grew by 12,792 voters in 2016, which is 20,608 fewer voters than the Democrats

signed up in 2012 in the same period. Republicans added 12,603 voters in this 2016 three-week period, 2,363 less than in 2012. And, while the unaffiliated ranks grew by more than the two major parties combined in 2016, a net gain of 27,017 voters, that number is only 642 more than in the comparable period in 2012.

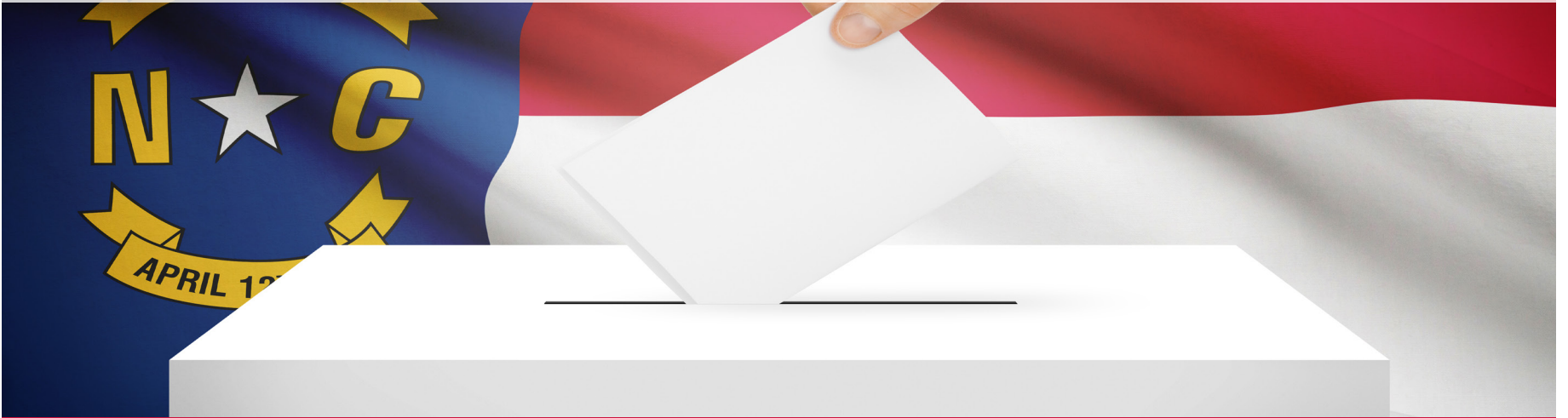
Between Sept. 17 and Oct. 8, 2016 Democrats lost voters

in 22 counties and gained voters in 77, and Jones County voter registration stayed the same. Republicans saw a net loss of one voter in Bertie County, while they saw gains in the remaining 99 counties. Unaffiliated numbers grew in 99 counties and stayed the same in Camden County.

At this point it doesn't appear that 2016 will match 2012 in terms of voter registration. The

practice known as Same Day Registration (SDR) has been reinstated due to a recent federal court's ruling against voting reforms enacted in 2013. The usual groups who have been known for voter registration drives may be relying on SDR to boost registration overall. In 2012, nearly 250,000 people registered to vote and voted at the same time. ■

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Join Civitas President Francis De Luca and a panel of leading political experts in Raleigh on Monday, November 7, the night before Election Day, as we unveil our final Civitas Poll of the year, and analyze the results and the early voting trends in our state.

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6:30 p.m. — Program

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Card No. \_\_\_\_\_

Amount: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ CVV: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Changes represent the difference in voter registration between September 17, 2016 and October 8, 2016

County	Total Voters	Total Change	Democrats	Democrat Change	Republicans	Republican Change	Libertarians	Libertarian Change	Unaffiliated Voters	Unaffiliated Change
<b>STATE TOTAL</b>	6,769,242	53,215	2,689,045	12,792	2,044,281	12,603	30,310	803	2,005,606	27,017
ALAMANCE	98,992	1,089	38,879	300	32,541	260	403	23	27,169	506
ALEXANDER	24,075	165	6,557	15	10,568	62	66	3	6,884	85
ALLEGHANY	7,372	47	2,812	-4	2,500	37	34	3	2,026	11
ANSON	17,279	101	11,911	29	2,393	25	19	1	2,956	46
ASHE	18,779	85	5,664	6	7,910	27	61	5	5,144	47
AVERY	11,808	74	1,474	8	6,958	30	43	0	3,333	36
BEAUFORT	32,887	181	13,822	-3	10,570	51	93	5	8,402	128
BERTIE	14,157	18	10,278	-1	1,512	-1	19	0	2,348	20
BLADEN	22,725	170	13,617	55	3,309	47	31	3	5,768	65
BRUNSWICK	93,525	884	26,836	108	34,684	392	310	9	31,695	375
BUNCOMBE	194,728	1,597	77,148	493	47,053	255	1,230	25	69,297	824
BURKE	57,822	146	19,231	-17	20,257	62	249	6	18,085	95
CABARRUS	129,338	1,043	40,518	294	48,378	266	619	12	39,823	471
CALDWELL	54,605	309	15,090	-1	24,319	140	326	10	14,870	160
CAMDEN	7,598	34	2,510	-1	2,278	33	41	2	2,769	0
CARTERET	51,990	388	12,821	17	21,698	162	221	7	17,250	202
CASWELL	15,522	129	8,186	-5	3,604	35	31	0	3,701	99
CATAWBA	102,858	572	27,240	62	44,016	226	362	3	31,240	281
CHATHAM	50,340	444	20,483	119	12,880	53	211	4	16,766	268
CHEROKEE	23,669	175	6,555	-9	9,812	95	116	3	7,186	86
CHOWAN	10,288	58	5,066	17	2,599	23	21	1	2,602	17
CLAY	8,959	59	2,223	5	3,581	22	37	0	3,118	32
CLEVELAND	62,310	518	26,525	53	19,765	244	192	-2	15,828	223
COLUMBUS	36,059	155	21,344	27	6,455	41	50	-1	8,210	88
CRAVEN	70,822	515	25,211	97	24,262	206	329	6	21,020	206
CUMBERLAND	205,479	2,098	96,735	621	47,330	283	900	42	60,514	1,152
CURRITUCK	18,683	168	4,167	5	6,639	80	125	3	7,752	80
DARE	29,154	157	9,213	9	8,775	45	182	1	10,984	102
DAVIDSON	103,797	594	27,485	70	48,136	282	392	10	27,784	232
DAVIE	29,134	161	5,701	12	14,951	68	89	3	8,393	78
DUPLIN	29,752	176	14,387	2	7,971	103	92	5	7,302	66
DURHAM	224,067	3,011	126,024	1,076	29,231	158	995	40	67,817	1,737
EDGECOMBE	38,119	-42	27,262	-54	6,107	8	66	0	4,684	4
FORSYTH	250,105	3,222	104,191	1,091	75,949	451	1,089	36	68,876	1,644
FRANKLIN	42,600	333	18,404	57	12,866	72	176	1	11,154	203
GASTON	138,652	1,023	45,400	150	52,673	377	560	19	40,019	477
GATES	8,509	56	4,708	-4	1,681	23	23	1	2,097	36
GRAHAM	6,391	34	2,020	-4	2,786	26	17	-1	1,568	13
GRANVILLE	37,045	252	18,781	-3	8,913	75	132	1	9,219	179
GREENE	11,350	44	6,732	2	2,006	25	26	0	2,586	17
GUILFORD	353,310	2,503	163,279	1,157	94,133	239	1,561	26	94,337	1,081
HALIFAX	38,411	51	25,966	19	4,611	9	79	2	7,755	21
HARNETT	71,469	514	26,687	98	24,598	155	437	9	19,747	252
HAYWOOD	43,521	289	17,360	7	12,950	127	199	9	13,012	146
HENDERSON	81,215	730	18,079	158	31,008	220	364	7	31,764	345
HERTFORD	14,953	34	11,090	2	1,422	8	33	0	2,408	24
HOKE	31,281	230	15,095	54	6,559	61	156	7	9,471	108
HYDE	3,460	14	2,081	-2	529	8	8	0	842	8
IREDELL	115,705	1,020	30,912	136	47,906	427	481	5	36,406	452
JACKSON	27,891	535	10,452	96	7,177	172	144	9	10,118	258
JOHNSTON	119,362	942	38,456	213	45,660	317	583	13	34,663	399
JONES	7,410	53	3,786	1	1,780	31	26	1	1,818	20
LEE	34,546	292	14,701	28	9,857	133	136	7	9,852	124
LENOIR	39,087	187	21,748	64	9,529	50	95	2	7,715	71
LINCOLN	54,647	589	14,453	83	23,526	243	200	7	16,468	256
MACON	25,269	163	6,900	12	10,079	63	97	3	8,193	85
MADISON	16,608	150	6,757	23	4,277	26	93	3	5,481	98
MARTIN	17,212	71	10,518	1	3,315	19	42	2	3,337	49
MCDOWELL	28,816	282	8,769	-46	10,662	178	117	11	9,268	139
MECKLENBURG	694,448	7,335	309,952	2,980	170,215	917	3,592	126	210,689	3,312
MITCHELL	11,192	105	1,170	20	6,830	41	28	1	3,164	43
MONTGOMERY	16,110	178	7,328	41	4,796	61	47	2	3,939	74
MOORE	65,221	752	16,844	115	26,547	238	318	15	21,512	384
NASH	65,573	174	33,711	18	18,593	62	167	4	13,102	90
NEW HANOVER	163,832	1,464	53,545	276	52,460	373	1,022	14	56,805	801
NORTHAMPTON	14,719	41	10,807	5	1,408	19	14	-1	2,490	18
ONSLow	103,698	1,266	29,090	229	36,868	457	741	31	36,999	549
ORANGE	115,017	1,453	53,962	298	17,252	73	683	35	43,120	1,047
PAMLICO	9,644	51	4,019	0	3,019	35	31	1	2,575	15
PASQUOTANK	28,166	348	13,509	49	5,824	81	138	1	8,695	217
PENDER	39,051	374	13,002	52	14,394	143	210	4	11,445	175
PERQUIMANS	10,090	44	4,300	-13	2,612	28	34	0	3,144	29
PERSON	26,510	203	12,454	28	6,455	71	91	3	7,510	101
PITT	119,755	1,367	55,922	473	31,162	288	621	19	32,050	587
POLK	15,883	121	4,606	20	5,496	48	73	1	5,708	52
RANDOLPH	91,003	189	19,936	10	45,153	92	367	8	25,547	79
RICHMOND	30,301	135	17,323	57	5,592	70	64	2	7,322	6
ROBESON	75,577	327	50,658	-3	9,450	88	172	3	15,297	239
ROCKINGHAM	59,886	331	23,858	36	20,250	112	197	2	15,581	181
ROWAN	93,397	496	28,867	56	37,657	189	307	2	26,566	249
RUTHERFORD	44,459	236	15,838	-53	16,045	238	182	2	12,394	49
SAMPSON	37,191	126	16,633	6	13,464	44	95	-1	6,999	77
SCOTLAND	22,672	200	13,249	50	3,604	67	43	0	5,776	83
STANLY	40,260	234	11,584	-1	17,496	110	114	5	11,066	120
STOKES	30,884	128	8,188	-33	14,782	102	149	5	7,765	54
SURRY	44,893	306	14,621	1	18,509	154	122	2	11,641	149
SWAIN	10,404	21	4,147	7	2,640	6	32	-1	3,585	9
TRANSYLVANIA	25,236	241	7,013	37	8,161	63	114	6	9,948	135
TYRRELL	2,455	11	1,469	-3	341	5	5	0	640	9
UNION	148,242	975	39,427	139	62,293	313	592	12	45,930	511
VANCE	29,933	209	20,061	61	4,346	17	56	2	5,470	129
WAKE	689,728	3,440	261,125	750	186,792	250	3,938	59	237,873	2,381
WARREN	13,551	126	9,484	52	1,727	16	34	0	2,306	58
WASHINGTON	8,743	119	5,970	19	1,109	12	23	1	1,641	87
WATAUGA	45,709	186	12,405	41	14,160	30	471	8	18,673	107
WAYNE	74,723	398	33,011	63	23,790	135	253	14	17,669	186
WILKES	42,348	183	10,325	-1	21,667	71	115	2	10,241	111
WILSON	55,538	242	29,718	113	13,727	58	125	1	11,968	70
YADKIN	23,839	122	4,303	4	13,224	54	66	2	6,246	62
YANCEY	13,844	66	5,311	-5	4,877	17	35	-1	3,621	55

## Scandal

# 'Expert' Gives Handy Tips on Voter Fraud, Revealing Problems at State Elections Board

BY SUSAN MYRICK

Following a Civitas investigative report early this month revealing that Dr. E. Lee Cooley, a voter outreach specialist from the NC State Board of Elections (SBE), gave explicit instructions on how citizens can actively commit voter fraud, Dr. Cooley was placed on "investigatory leave" by the SBE. She has since been fired. (See page 1)

"While this is an example of the misdeeds of one employee, these misdeeds call into question the hiring practices and standards of the SBE," Civitas President Francis De Luca said. "The primary responsibility of the State Board of Elections is to ensure that North Carolina conducts fair and accurate elections. In order to do this, the SBE should take our report and their investigation very seriously."

"We urge the SBE to review the practices of all staffers who work with the public, and make sure they are telling people what the law is, not what they think it is," he said.

"What we think this incident shows is the existence of extensive, underlying problems within the State Board of Election," he added. "It is even more important to address these problems than merely scrutinize Dr. Cooley's misdeeds, bad as they are."

The SBE announced Cooley had been placed on paid leave while the board conducted a "thorough review" of statements she made at a recent voter outreach meeting. The review stems from the Civitas report on the meeting.

Cooley, a voter outreach specialist, had been employed by the SBE since June 2015 and had been traveling North Carolina speaking to voters and election workers about election law and processes. What Cooley ended up doing, however, was giving explicit instructions on how citizens can actively commit voter fraud.

The Civitas article, "State Elections Expert is Wrong on Voting Law," included an audio recording of one of the two seminars in Pasquotank County where Cooley played fast and loose with North Carolina election law. Here is just one of the excerpts from the audio:

Cooley: "... and these are persons who have an interest in that homeless person. So that ballot can go to that near relative who can vote that ballot, in a manner that is in the best interest of that homeless person."

We hope the SBE takes this problem seriously. Its news release indicated the SBE was in "communication with

outside investigators to ensure public confidence in its review." Kim Strach, the SBE's executive director, said, "Providing accurate information about elections to the public is at the heart of what we do."

While Civitas doesn't know what outside agency the SBE is referring to, we will do our

best to find out. After releasing the report, we made an official public records request, asking for Cooley's emails, travel logs, expense reports, etc.

It is encouraging to see that one mainstream media outlet picked up this story. The Associated Press seems to understand the serious consequences of communicating inaccurate information to the electorate. We hope other news outlets follow suit. Citizens and even local elections officials believe what they hear or may even be afraid to question what they

hear from a person of authority, especially someone representing the SBE. So what do we do now? It appears that the SBE had hired an employee with an agenda. We need to know whether it is the State Board's agenda too. Who hired Dr. Cooley, and why? Who is responsible for her supervision, and how in the world can such a travesty have happened in North Carolina at such a crucial time? People all over the state have heard Dr. Cooley's misleading message. How much damage has she done?

It's time to clean house at the SBE.

If we can't trust the people that are in charge, the people

who are required by law to protect all of our votes, then it's time for a fresh start. The buck stops with Strach.

Also, the SBE needs to review the entire "Voter Outreach" effort immediately. Somehow the SBE needs to reach all the groups Cooley has ever addressed. Additionally, county boards of elections will have to pay particular attention to absentee ballots to assure that signatures are legitimate and have not been forged. Based on this recording, people have been led to believe that it is acceptable and legal to complete another person's ballot.

Moreover, it is past time to look at the way we administer elections and campaign finance at the state level. We have an outdated staff and structure that is set up for a state half the size of what we have now and for a time when North Carolinians voted in-person on one day instead of the current 18 days plus absentee by mail balloting, which occurs 60 days leading up to Election Day. ■

*"What we think this incident shows is the existence of extensive, underlying problems within the State Board of Election"*

- Civitas President Francis De Luca

Scandal is a regular column in *Civitas Capitol Connection* that will explore public corruption in NC Government.

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