

Public Records

From: Bob Hall [sprc@mindspring.com]
Sent: Thursday, November 10, 2005 11:24 AM
To: Gary Bartlett
Cc: Johnnie McLean
Subject: Draft of Bartlett letter re Same Day Registration

OK, Gary, here's the draft we discussed.... Rep. Ross is also delighted you are doing this. Thanks greatly!!

Rep. Deborah K. Ross
NC House of Representatives
2223 Legislative Building
Raleigh, NC 27601-1096

Dear Rep. Ross

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on HB-851, "Same-Day Registration at One-Stop Sites." As you know, the State Board of Elections has a responsibility to make the voting process both accessible and secure. In my view, the legislation provides procedures that meet this standard and that are workable administratively.

When you first approached us with an interest in Election-Day registration, I suggested that the best way to begin such a change would be to preserve the 25-day deadline for voter registration but add an option for citizens to go to a One-Stop Site, during the no-excuse absentee voting period, and present proper identification to an election official, fill out a registration application, and vote (using a retrievable ballot) -- all at the same time.

A registration application filled out, and sworn to, in the presence of an election official enhances the accuracy of the information obtained and transferred into our database. In-person registration also enhances a proper review of the identification documentation provided by the applicant. We will use the time before the official canvass to verify the information, through computer matches with DMV records, a check for duplicate registrations, and a verification mailing to the residence provided.

Election officials are now responsible for providing provisional ballots to a citizen who claims to be registered, even if the person appears at the wrong polling place. Tens of thousands of provisional ballots are now cast on Election Day, which imposes a significant burden of work on officials at a crucial time. The states that use Same-Day Registration have learned that SDR procedures simplify the process and eliminate the need for most provisional ballots. In fact, officials from these states say the procedures reduce the overall administrative burden (e.g., reducing the expense of researching provisional ballots) and produce a more reliable voter registration database, without adding a higher incidence of fraud.

Following the procedures described in the 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.

Obviously, the decision to implement this policy is a matter for you and your colleagues to consider and the State Board officially neither endorses nor opposes it as a policy. If it is adopted, I would recommend that it begin in an odd year, such as 2007, to give us the opportunity to implement its provisions during a less intense election. We are equipping One Stop Sites with the technology that can handle this added responsibility, but significant training will be needed before the systems can be used for maximum benefit.

I look forward to continuing to work with you to serve the citizens of North Carolina.

Sincerely,

GB