

Democracy North Carolina

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Thousands of NC Voters Silenced By New Election Rules

More than 2,300 North Carolina voters were turned away in the November 2014 election after taking the trouble to fill out extra paperwork that would have allowed each of their ballots to count in 2012.

These silenced voters come from every walk of life: a policeman, minister, prison guard, student, business owner, soldier, office worker, single mother working two jobs, farmer. They are Republicans, Democrats, Libertarians and Unaffiliated – men and women of all races, from all parts of the state.

They are the front-line victims of sweeping changes made to North Carolina's election law in 2013. They were not blocked by the controversial ID requirement – that part of the law does not take effect until 2016. Rather, they were blocked by the elimination of two back-up, safety provisions that once helped thousands of honest voters make sure their ballots counted.

The loss of these two safety provisions means (1) voters with registration problems, including the Division of Motor Vehicles failing to transfer their registration, can no longer correct those problems during the Early Voting period and successfully vote, because the "same-day registration" law was repealed; and (2) voters can no longer cast a ballot on Election Day at a precinct polling place near their workplace or children's school, because the old "out-of-precinct voting" law was repealed.

Tens of thousands of voters are affected by these two changes. To find some of them, Democracy North Carolina reviewed 18,000 provisional ballots cast in the November 2014 election. **We found 2,344 voters whose provisional ballots would have counted if the safety rules were still in place; instead their ballots were rejected.** They were silenced. We are collecting stories from these voters.

Although they come from every walk of life, from all parties, races, and age groups, their composition is startling. The chart below shows that the new rules are affecting African Americans and other people of color at a higher rate than white voters, and Democrats more than Republicans. While Black voters make up 22% of all registered voters, they were 38% of those silenced by the two rule changes.

The 2,344 voters who took the time to fill out the paperwork that goes with a provisional ballot are the tip of the iceberg of the thousands with similar problems who simply left the polls without leaving a record. They felt the harsh impact of the new law, personally. For more, see www.democracy-nc.org.

Votes Silenced: Who Tried & Failed to Vote in 2014 Due to New Law

NORTH CAROLINA	State Total	White	Black	Other Non-White	Race Not Known	Democrat	Republican	Libertarian	Unaffiliated
Voters Silenced in 2014 General Elec.	2,344	1,109	890	183	162	1,107	598	23	616
% Voters Silenced By Race & Party	100%	47%	38%	8%	7%	47%	26%	1%	26%
For Comparison, % of All Reg. Voters By Race & Party	100%	71%	22%	5%	2%	42%	31%	0.4%	27%