

Democracy North Carolina

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Statement on the Monster Elections Law Signed Today by Gov. Pat McCrory

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Gov. Pat McCrory today signed the monster, 60-part elections bill into law. The radical new law makes the most sweeping changes to North Carolina's election process in decades. It redefines and restricts who can vote, where, when and how and, at the same time, allows more special-interest, private money to pour into our public elections, often from secret sources.

To call it a law to promote confidence in elections is ridiculous. It is a devious law designed to help certain politicians and wealthy donors, not honest voters. It not only slices a week off early voting and ends pre-registration of teenagers, it raises contribution limits five-fold to judicial candidates, eliminates disclosure of electioneering spending by corporations in the summer months before a fall election, and repeals North Carolina's pioneering "Stand By Your Ad" law.

The substance and process of this monster law demonstrates a complete disrespect of voters and free and fair elections. Under the cover of an ID requirement, legislative leaders and the governor have adopted a host of radical measures that would likely not have survived under the scrutiny of focused media coverage and real public debate.

Among the controversial measures that will make it harder for North Carolina citizens to register and vote, the new law:

- Cuts a full week off the Early Voting period
- Eliminates flexibility in opening Early Voting sites at different hours within a county
- Eliminates same-day voter registration during Early Voting
- Eliminates straight party ticket voting
- Repeals pre-registration for 16 and 17 year olds and repeals mandate for election officials to conduct high-school registration drives
- Authorizes many more partisan, vigilante poll observers to disrupt and challenge voters inside polling places
- Expands the scope of who may examine registration records and challenge voters
- Repeals limited out-of-precinct voting for the person who mistakenly goes to the wrong poll
- Makes it more difficult to add satellite polling sites for the elderly or voters with disabilities

The parts of the law that allow more big money to flow into our elections have received far less public attention, and yet their impact on our political system will be just as serious and far reaching. In addition to killing the state's successful public financing programs, HB-589

increases campaign contribution limits, kills the state's pioneering "Stand By Your Ad" law, makes it harder to know what outside groups are spending, and increases the influence of "dark money" in NC elections.

Here is a summary of the provisions that open our elections to more big money and more secret money:

- Ends the state's pioneering "Stand By Your Ad" law, which requires the candidate or CEO to appear on television or radio and say "I am (candidate or CEO) and I approve this message." The Federal Stand by Your Ad law was based off of North Carolina's law.
- Repeals judicial public financing and two other public financing programs
- Repeals a disclosure measure designed to give the public knowledge about who paid for certain kinds of campaign ads by requiring the top 5 donors to a corporate entity from the last 6 months to be disclosed in print media. Repealing the provision keeps dark money even more secret from the public.
- Two provisions that will mean outside groups can spend unlimited amounts of money, from virtually any source, throughout the summer against a candidate without disclosing the source or amounts to the public. From the May primary to September 7 of even-numbered years, the public will get no information about who is financing electioneering spending.
- Increases the corporate money that can go to political party headquarters to pay for new costs, such as personnel and fundraising.
- Raises contribution limits from \$4,000 to \$5,000 per election and indexes the limit to increase every two years to keep up with inflation. It also raises contribution limits for all judicial candidates from \$1,000 to \$5,000.
- Studies rather than requires electronic filing.

The new law is elitist politics at its worst – politicians rigging the election process for their own narrow interests and the benefit of their wealthy donors.