



PROTECTING THE VOTE FOR ALL AMERICANS

Via Email

November 24, 2021

The Honorable Roy Cooper
Governor of the State of North Carolina
20301 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-0301
contactgov@nc.gov

Dear Governor Cooper:

On Monday, November 22, 2021, the legislature passed and delivered to you for a decision Senate Bill 326, which would create barriers for eligible North Carolina residents to exercise their freedom to vote by mail-in absentee ballot. Fair Elections Center¹ writes to urge you to veto this harmful bill and ensure that North Carolina's elections remain accessible for all.

Among other things, Senate Bill 326 would discard all mail-in absentee ballots that are not received by the time polls close on Election Day, regardless of postmark dates. Under current law, ballots that are postmarked by Election Day and received by the county board of elections within three days of Election Day are counted.²

During a hearing in the House Rules Committee on Wednesday, November 17, 2021, Senator Warren Daniel explained that this bill comes after a "collusive" settlement agreement with Attorney General Josh Stein and the State Board of Elections in 2020, which increased the number of days mail-in absentee ballots could be received and counted from three to nine days after Election Day. Critically, during this extended mail-in ballot deadline, local election offices

¹ Fair Elections Center is a national, nonpartisan voting rights and election reform 501(c)(3) non-profit organization based in Washington, D.C. Its mission is to use litigation, education, and advocacy to remove barriers to registration and voting, particularly those disenfranchising underrepresented and marginalized communities, and to improve election administration.

² N.C. Gen. Stat. Ann. § 163-231(b)(2).

received and counted over 14,500 mail-in ballots.³ Despite this significant number of ballots, Senator Daniel maintained that each additional day after Election Day creates the possibility of distrust in the process.

This legislation does nothing to ensure election integrity. Rather, it is a cynical strategy that creates harsh barriers and effectively disenfranchises thousands of otherwise-eligible voters in North Carolina. No matter their age, background, or disability, North Carolinians deserve to exercise their freedom to vote—including by mail-in absentee ballot—and have a say in the key decisions that impact their lives.

We urge you to veto Senate Bill 326 because it would make North Carolina's elections less accessible and efficient. Thank you for allowing Fair Elections Center to express its opposition to Senate Bill 326.

Sincerely,

Michelle Kanter Cohen
Policy Director & Senior Counsel
Fair Elections Center
mkantercohen@fairelectionscenter.org

³ Michael Hyland, *NC Republican Bill Would Change Deadline for Mail-In Ballots, Opponents Say It Will Silence Voters*, CBS17.COM (Nov. 17, 2021, 4:52 PM), <https://www.cbs17.com/news/capitol-report/nc-republican-bill-would-change-deadline-for-mail-in-ballots-opponents-say-it-will-silence-voters/>.