

## Controversial new election laws suppress Democrat voters, opponents say

### NORTH CAROLINIANS RILED UP OVER RECENT CHANGES TO STATE VOTER ID LAWS

BY BRYAN DOOLEY  
DIVERSITY COORDINATOR & SENIOR WRITER

Throughout American history, debate has raged over which citizens have the right to vote. This debate has spawned some of the most famous and interesting quotes, from Patrick Henry's "No taxation without representation," to conservative talk show host Rush Limbaugh's "More people vote in 'American Idol' than in any U.S. election."

More quotes will likely come from North Carolina voters now that Governor Pat McCrory has signed new election laws for the state.

These laws demonstrate the pervasiveness of the Republican preoccupation with voter fraud rather than with making it easier to vote.

"Our biggest problem is a lot of people who should vote, don't," said Maria Rosales, associate professor of political science. "Yet politicians in Raleigh are more concerned with the small number of people who vote, instead of the many people who

should vote but don't."

The new law ends straight-ticket voting, reduces the amount of early voting days from 17 to 10, ends pre-registration for 16- and 17-year-olds and, most controversially, requires a state-issued photo identification. The full law will not take effect for another two election cycles.

The law already sparks discontent and has been challenged by two civil rights groups — the NAACP and the Southern Coalition for Social Justice — as well as by the Department of Justice.

"You can probably count the number of voting fraud cases on one hand," said Robert Duncan, visiting assistant professor of political science. "This law really is an attempt to limit the political voices of minorities, the elderly, and college students — in effect, to disenfranchise the Democratic Party base."

Bob Williams, professor of economics, expressed a similar opinion.

"This is voter suppression," said Williams. "All these reforms make it harder for those identified as Democrats to vote."

"Interestingly, what they are doing is contrary to conservative values. This is more government intervention where there is no problem."

Changing voting laws is often done by the party in power, whether Republican or Democrat, in an attempt to stay in power.

"Throughout our history, parties have used changes in voting laws as a way to seek partisan advantage while also asserting a principled argument," said Kyle Dell, associate professor of political science, in an email interview. "Very rarely do you see a party backing a change in voting laws that the party does not believe would help them at the ballot box."

Isela Gutiérrez-Gunter, research associate and Latino outreach coordinator, provides an example.

"All voting laws are partisan, and designed to maintain power," said Gutiérrez-Gunter. "For example, in 2010 the Republicans gained a great deal of power in the state and took advantage of the fact that it was a redistricting year. They also undid some changes that the Democrats made to the absentee ballot procedure."

"Republicans are good at getting the old people to vote by absentee ballot, so Democrats made the form more complicated and less accessible. With the Republicans in power, it is now easier to vote by absentee ballot."

Williams analyzes the conservatives' motivation behind the new laws.

"Studies have shown that during early voting days, the Republicans do most of the voting during the first few days," said Williams. "In the last few days, that switches to Democrats. (Republicans)

eliminated those last days."

Limiting the days to vote and other aspects of the new law makes it harder for college students to vote, but it is not impossible.

"Out-of-state voters should get a North Carolina photo ID at the address they are living at in 2014," said Gutiérrez-Gunter. "They should update their registration every time they move, including on campus, because sometimes the precincts change. Or voters can start practicing now, with the new absentee ballot process, because it does not require a photo ID."

Former student body president Tim Leisman '13 encourages students to get involved in the movement to change the law.

"Get out there, vote, make your voice heard," said Leisman in an email interview. "Get into the Moral Mondays movement, and write to Congressperson Howard Coble, Representative Marcus Brandon and others who represent our district. They need to know we are agitated."

Students can also join non-profit organizations that push for voting rights.

"One of our most important rights as American citizens is our voting right," said Sarah Dreier-Kasik, president of the Center for Continuing Education Student Government Association. "Our choices determine our future."

## SENATE UPDATE

### This Week's Developments

Jeff Jeske called attention to Guilford's decision to stop offering public transportation to the Bryan Series. Parker Hurley and members of Trans\*Action updated students on their efforts this semester. Students participated in another general discussion about APSA. PPS scholars came to Senate be a part of the discussion. Students were encouraged to email President Chabotar ([chabotar@guilford.edu](mailto:chabotar@guilford.edu)) and the APSA committee ([apsa@guilford.edu](mailto:apsa@guilford.edu)) to ask for a three-week extension on the deadline for community feedback.

### Next Week's Plans

Students will be encouraged to help decide whether the rollover funds should be reappropriated to bolster the current state of the academic fund as well as the general fund. Jada Drew and Jorge Zeballos may also come to give an update

### Contact Us

We need to hear your voice. Have an idea? Concern? Great recipe? It's important to us.

Questions? Email: [senate@guilford.edu](mailto:senate@guilford.edu) or visit <http://guilfordsenate.wordpress.com>

Compiled by Samir Hazboun, Community Senate President

## Information for on-campus January term

All you need to do to participate in an on campus January term experience is register in November at the same time as registration for the spring. Reduced cost: \$500 flat fee for all experiences.

In order to do an independent project, go to the registrar for the January Term Independent Project Form.

For internships: see Megan Walters in the Career Development Center.

### Calendar of January term deadlines

Monday, Oct. 28

- Grant application deadline for J-term.

Thursday, Nov. 7

- Students notified of acceptance for activity and grant awards for programs at Guilford.

Monday, Nov. 11-18

- Registration for J-term at Guilford and for Spring semester 2014.

Friday, Jan. 3

- J-term begins at Guilford, unless your experience begins on another date.