

# IDs aren't required, but voters will see changes

BY LAYLA GARMIS  
THE CHRONICLE

With the May 6 primary election quickly approaching, voting rights advocates and candidates alike are scrambling to make sure that voters are empowered – and inspired – to hit the polls and make their voices heard.

A bevy of changes are slated to take effect this election cycle, but the controversial voter ID measure is not one of them; it won't be enacted until 2016.

The registration period has already closed for those who wish to vote in the primary, and same day voter registration will no longer be offered at Early Voting locations under the new laws.

The voter registration deadline for the Nov. 4 General Election is set for Tuesday, Oct. 10. Straight party voting is now a thing of the past, and candidates belonging to the party of the sitting governor will now be listed first in every race. The General Election early voting period has also been cut from 17 days to 10, and teens are not allowed to pre-register unless they will turn 18 before the Nov. 4.

Board of Elections member Fleming El-Amin says he is concerned that local voters will be discouraged from voting either because they are confused or intimidated by the new legislation.

"My overall concern has been are the citizens really aware of the changes," El-Amin stated, noting that he insisted that information about the new laws be posted on the Board of Elections Web site and at every precinct location. "... As far as I'm concerned, there's not enough education being done to inform the citizens."

Regulations regarding voter



challenges, provisional and absentee ballots will also go into effect this year, El-Amin said. According to the new laws, state-issued forms are now the only accepted absentee ballots, where as letters or notecards were previously allowed, and the ballots must be signed in the presence of two witnesses or a notary public.

The Board of Elections rejected nine absentee ballots at its last meeting because they did not meet the new requirements, El-Amin said.

State issued identification, such as a drivers license or identification card, will not be required at the polls until the 2016 election cycle, however officials will be asking voters whether they have an approved ID to determine if they are eligible to obtain a free one from the state for the purposes of voting in 2016.

Susan Campbell, president of the Forsyth County Democratic Party, says the laws are a source of frustration for the party and other groups that are interested in getting out the vote.

"We want people to vote," she said. "We need to stop putting up those barriers for people to vote. It's hard enough to get them to pay attention."

Voting rights advocates have decried the laws from the beginning, saying that they were designed to further disenfranchise poor and minority voters. The State of North Carolina is currently embroiled in two separate lawsuits challenging the constitutionality of the laws.

Democracy NC is part of a collaborative group of nonpartisan organizations that have joined forces to take action through an education and awareness event designed to inform

area voters about the voting laws the North Carolina General Assembly has enacted. "My Vote, My Power," which is slated for Saturday, April 26 at Rupert Bell Park, will be a chance for voters to interact with local and state candidates, get informed about voting laws, and ensure that they have the tools and information they need to vote in the upcoming primary and general election, organizers say.

"We're just trying to get the word out so people will be more knowledgeable about candidates," said Linda Sutton, a Democracy NC field organizer. "We had so many people in the past that actually depended on straight party voting ... now, you really need to know who you're voting for."

The Ministers Conference of Winston-Salem and Vicinity is also among the partners hosting the event, which will feature prizes, free refreshments, and plenty of opportunities for constituents to register to vote and interact with state and local candidates. Although the Ministers Conference is nonpartisan, the black church has always played a pivotal role in the fight for social justice, and the ministers continue to do so through their participation in events such as My Vote, My Power, explained Rev. Willard Bass, the organization's president.

"We thought it would be a good idea to help the citizens know first, the importance of voting, and then knowing who to vote for," he said. "I think the issues – even locally and statewide – are very critical."

Bass believes the voting laws disproportionately impact the

poor and people of color. He and other Ministers Conference members have traveled to Raleigh on numerous occasions, to lend their support to the chorus of voices calling for change during Moral Monday protests.

"If you've been following Moral Monday and what's been happening with our legislature, all of the bills and action that the legislature has taken have been against the poor and the needy," he said. "... It's just contrary to where we need to be, so it's key, then, for us to be involved as a community, because it behooves us to get involved."



Bass

*My Vote, My Power! will be held on Saturday, April 26 from 1-5 p.m. at Rupert Bell Park, 1501 Mt. Zion Place. For more information, contact Sutton at 336-870-2168. For more information about changes in voting laws, visit [www.democracy-nc.org](http://www.democracy-nc.org).*

*Early voting will be held April 24-25 and April 28-May 2 from 8 a.m.-5 p.m. and on Saturday, May 3 from 10 a.m.-1 p.m. at the Forsyth County Government Center, 201 North Chestnut Street. Voting at satellite locations (Kernersville Library, Lewisville Library and Rural Hall Library) will be open April 28-29 from 11 a.m.-6 p.m. and April 30-May 1 from 11 a.m.-5 p.m. The primary will be held on Tuesday, May 6. For more information or a full list of voting hours and locations, visit [www.fcvotes.com](http://www.fcvotes.com).*

## Bond

from page A1

posed \$175 million bond would pay for.

"These are not really wants, these are needs," Police Chief Barry Rountree said about what his department would reap from the bond.

Among the Police Department proposals contingent upon a bond are the creation of satellite police stations in communities that the officers patrol. The satellites, which Rountree says residents strongly favor, would be located at University Parkway and North Point Boulevard, Hanes Mall Boulevard and Jonestown Road and in the Lucia Building on Waughtown Street.

Bond funds would also be used to make repairs at the aging Public Safety Center and complete phase two of renovations at the Beaty Public Safety Training and Support Center to add classrooms, a forensic lab and evidence storage facilities.

The Fire Department would also use bond funds to update outdated facilities, including fire stations on Ogburn Avenue, Arbor Road and one near Wake Forest University, said Fire Chief Antony Farmer, who said the upgrades are crucial.

Sidewalk repair and construction, pedestrian enhancements to Business 40 bridges and new greenways like the one connecting the Waughtown area to the Peachtree and Salem Creek greenways are proposed as well, according to City Transportation Department Director Toneq' McCullough.

Bond funds would greatly increase the budget for road resurfacing, helping to make quicker improvements to weather-battered streets, she added.

Bond money would also push forward the long-proposed transforma-



McCullough

tion of the former Union Station off of Martin Luther King Jr. Drive into a multimodal transportation hub that would operate in conjunction with the downtown Clark Campbell Transportation Center.

"There will be amenities there for the bus riders, potentially things like places to shop or eat," McCullough said about the proposed transportation center.

Virtually every city department would receive an infusion of funds for projects if the bond becomes reality. Community and Business Development Director Ritchie Brooks said more funds would be available for new home construction, home renovations and a city loan program that helps businesses make aesthetic improvements.

Recreation facilities like pools, parks and lakes would see improvements, and two brand new parks – a rock quarry off Reynolds Park Road and Jamison Park near Meadowlark Drive – would be constructed, Recreation and Parks Director Tim Grant said.

In addition to asking questions and giving feedback to city officials and Burke – who, along with other members of the City Council, will decide in August whether or not to place the bond on the ballot – those who attended were asked to fill out and leave comment cards. If a bond referendum makes it to the ballot and voters approve it, property owners could see their tax rate increase by up to 2.5 cents in July 2015.

Dori Colly spent some time inquiring about the proposed recreation improvements. Her seven-year-old son has special needs; she thinks the proposed splash park at Winston Lake and facilities at the proposed quarry park would be ideal for him.

Harold Holmes, a retired Wake Forest University dean of Student Services, said he believes the improvements would move the city in the right direction.

"A lot of it is past my time to really use it ... but I've got kids and grandkids here," he said of the improvements. "We care about them and we want to keep them in this community. We lose so much of our college educated kids to other areas, it would be nice to have them feel like there's enough, both employment and quality of life-wise, to not ... leave and set up shop somewhere else."

For more information, including a full schedule of upcoming community bond meetings, go to [www.city-ofws.org/2014bonds/](http://www.city-ofws.org/2014bonds/).

The Chronicle (USPS 067-910) was established by Ernest H. Pitt and Ndubisi Egemonye in 1974 and is published every Thursday by Winston-Salem Chronicle Publishing Co. Inc., 617 N. Liberty Street, Winston-Salem, N.C. 27101. Periodicals postage paid at Winston-Salem, N.C. Annual subscription price is \$30.72.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to:  
The Chronicle, P.O. Box 1636  
Winston-Salem, NC 27102-1636

**Attention:**  
high school students  
parents of  
high school students  
unemployed or  
underemployed adults  
anyone who wants  
to have a better life

**Come To Our Open House**  
Saturday, April 26 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.  
Main Campus at 2100 Silas Creek Parkway

Get information about:  
~ Career-Focused Programs  
~ College Transfer Programs  
~ Job Training  
~ Financial Aid  
~ Workshops and Program Demonstrations  
~ And Much More!

Apply Now & You Can Begin Classes In May or June!

**ForsythTech**  
Education For Life  
[www.ForsythTech.edu](http://www.ForsythTech.edu)

FORSYTH TECH 2100 Silas Creek Parkway Winston-Salem, NC 336.723.0371

**Let's do it again!**

**SEASON TICKETS ON SALE NOW**

**WWW.WSSU.EDU/TICKETS**

*Be a part of our team!*