

# OPINION

**THE CHRONICLE**  
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*Celebrating 41 Years of Community Journalism*

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## Our Mission

The Chronicle is dedicated to serving the residents of Winston-Salem and Forsyth County by giving voice to the voiceless, speaking truth to power, standing for integrity and encouraging open communication and lively debate throughout the community.

## Don't let complexities deter voting

The right to vote is guaranteed in the U.S. Constitution. The complicated voting system we have today is not. Where do officials get the rules that make voter registration complicated? Looks like they come from the financial industry.

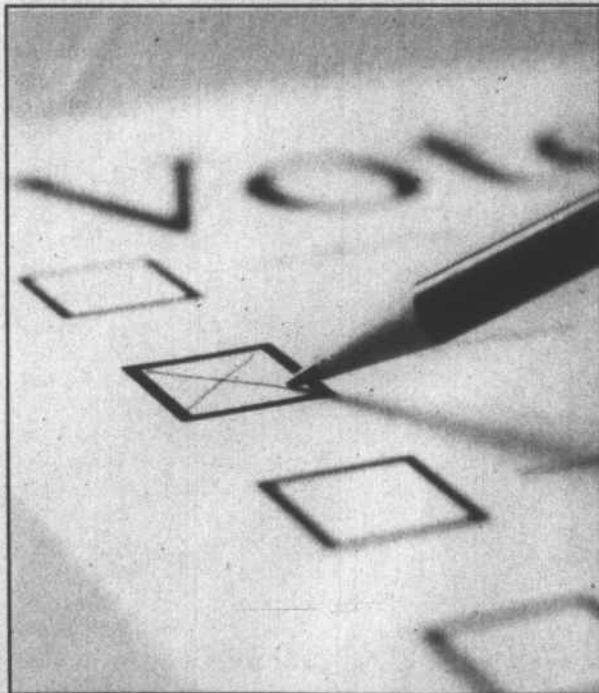
Once a person decides that he or she wants to register to vote, the process begins. The registration process is not getting much attention these days. The idea of showing a government-issued photo ID in order to vote in a voting booth is being challenged in court. But a photo ID is needed in order to register to vote, too. The complications begin at registration.

According to the North Carolina voter registration form, the Help America Vote Act ID, requirements include providing the ID number on a valid driver's license or non-operator's ID card on the registration form.

The form says: "Under federal and state law, if you are registering and cannot provide a valid ID number in Section 3, you should include with this application a copy of one of the documents below:

- \*A current and valid photo ID.
- \*A current utility bill, bank statement, government check, paycheck, or other government document that shows your name and address.

"If you do not provide a valid ID number on your application or submit a copy of one of the docu-



ments noted above, you must show ID the first time you vote."

Why do we need to give our photo ID information twice, when we register to vote and when we show up to vote?

The registration form also asks for the last four digits of people's Social Security Numbers.

In addition, it asks for previous voter registration information if people had a previous voter registration in another county or state.

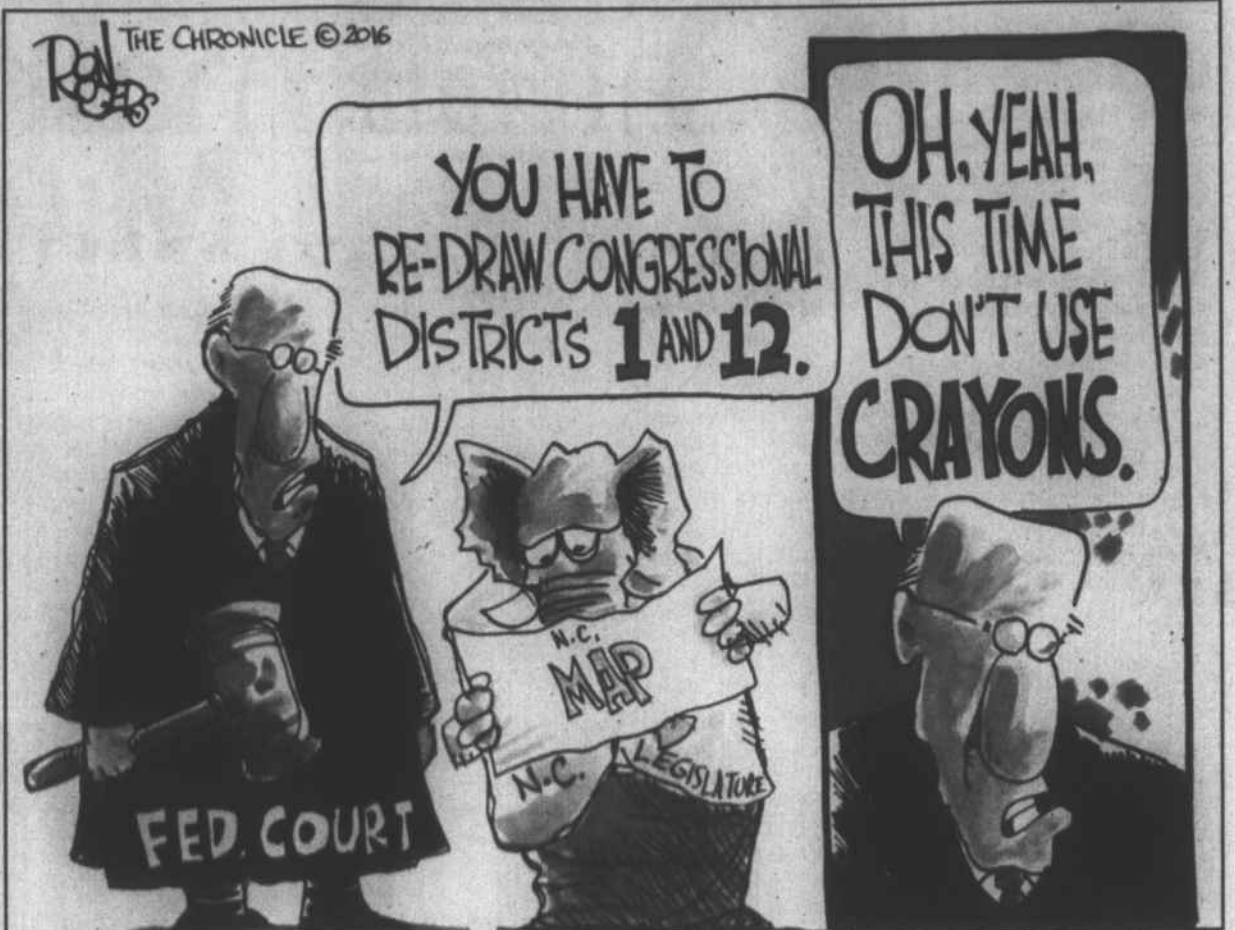
Then it will take two to three weeks before a person can get a voter registration card. Voter registration has been turned into a process similar to applying for a loan, which is complicated.

The voter ID requirement to vote in person is burdensome, especially after going through the registration process. This process has nothing to do with the U.S. Constitution.

At least North Carolina still provides an alternative to voting in person. Several organizations are pushing absentee voting, although there is a form to fill out to request the ballot.

Early voting will still require the photo ID when voting in person, but things will be confusing at the polls this year, so at least that could take that burden off of voters.

The bottom line is, people have to register in order to vote. And people have to vote in order to change government. People should not let the complications deter them from exercising their constitutional right to vote. Our ancestors fought and died for it because it's that important. The deadline to register is Feb. 19.



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Roy Cooper hides from the issues

To the Editor:

[There were two "chickens" holding signs which read "Roy Cooper-DEBATE" at Attorney General Roy Cooper's office in Raleigh, on Tuesday, Feb. 9.]

The chickens in front of Roy Cooper's office are there to symbolize how he as a candidate is afraid (chicken) to "debate" and discuss his

stands on the critical issues facing the people of our state. He is hiding from the voters his stands and beliefs on matters which are severely impacting the lives of all North Carolinians.

What is also amazing is not only does Roy Cooper hide from the issues being addressed in debates, but Roy Cooper also hides from the issues being specifically included on his own website.

My website and public statements clearly present where I stand on my strong support for: more public education funding; raising teacher pay beyond the national average; reinstating teacher tenure; raising state employee pay; raising the mini-

mum wage to \$15 an hour by the end of my four-year term; no fracking; no offshore drilling; creating jobs in smaller counties as well as our larger counties; Medicaid expansion; and so many other issues for every voter to see and evaluate.

Roy Cooper's unwillingness to debate or put on his website where he stands on the many issues facing our state today clearly shortchanges the public and takes the people of this state "for granted." I call upon my opponent to debate and let the people know where he stands.

Ken Spaulding,  
Democrat for Governor



Photo by Ken Spaulding Campaign

### Don't blame those who exposed 'computerized apartheid'

To the Editor:

We congratulate the team of attorneys and researchers at the Southern Coalition for Social Justice who have skillfully challenged North Carolina's racially gerrymandered political districts! The panel of federal judges agreed that N.C. legislative leaders used race as the "nonnegotiable criterion" for how the boundary lines were drawn for Congressional Districts 1 and 12.

Black and white voters were carefully segregated on the assumption that black voters uniformly voted against the Republican mapmakers' interests and therefore needed to be packed together and isolated to restrict their political influence.

Democracy North Carolina is a plaintiff in a related challenge that is

working its way through the courts. We oppose the maps because they aggressively segregate voters and undermine the ability of voters to form multiracial "fusion" coalitions



Bob Hall

amounts to computerized apartheid.

There will be a lot of teeth gnashing and tongue lashing about the chaos this ruling creates, but two important points should not be overlooked.

First, this ruling sends an important signal for the other court challenges to recent manipulations of election law in North Carolina. Here are federal judges ruling that General Assembly leaders purposely used racial bias in deciding election proce-

dures!

Second, as for the election underway, the ruling only affects the primary for NC's 13 U.S. House seats, i.e., the process for deciding each party's nominees for the general election. The other primary elections could proceed, unless a court quickly blocks them. North Carolina has had redistricting decisions cause parties to pick nominees in the summer before, or even decide to pick them through a caucus or convention method rather than popular ballot.

We deserve fair districts before the general election is held. Don't let backers of the racially gerrymandered districts get away with blaming the messengers who spoke the truth and finally got some judges to pay attention.

The mapmakers should have known better at the beginning of their power-grabbing exercise, paused to be a little less greedy, and saved us all from the turmoil caused by their excessively partisan manipulation of election laws. Maybe they believe dividing voters by race serves their interests, but it actually undermines everyone's faith in fair elections.

Bob Hall  
Democracy North Carolina