



South Ward candidate Carolyn Highsmith was among the candidates appealing to voters in front of the Forsyth County Government Center.



Early voting is currently going on at the Forsyth County Government Center.



South Ward Candidate John Larson, (right), and supporter Joshua Canzona were among those appealing to voters during early voting.

WSSU, IFB among possible early voting sites

BY TODD LUCK
THE CHRONICLE

Early voting sites at Winston-Salem State University and Industries



for the Blind are among those being debated by the Forsyth County Board of Elections (BOE) for the general election.

While early voting is currently going on for U.S. House of Representatives, N.C. Supreme Court and South Ward City Council, the BOE was already considering sites for early voting for the general election during its Tuesday, May 31 meeting. The BOE needs to submit an early voting plan to the state by July 29, but BOE Director Tim Tsujii said that the sooner the sites are finalized, the more time it gives staff to make arrangements to use them.

Fleming El-Amin, the sole Democrat on the three-member board, submitted a plan with 15 sites. Among the sites were first-time sites at Winston Lake YMCA and Industries for the Blind, along with a return to using Anderson Center at WSSU as a site.

"I'm determined to include them as much as I can this year," El-Amin

said about WSSU.

El-Amin was outvoted on including the Anderson Center and Sunday voting in an early voting plan for the March primary by Chair Ken Raymond and Stuart Russell. He appealed to the Republican-majority N.C. BOE who also voted against his plan, 3-2, along party lines.

The Anderson Center was an early voting site from 2000-2012, but that changed when Raymond became chair. Raymond objected to the site, claiming that when he was a poll worker there in 2010, there was a professor who gave students extra credit for voting, though he was never able to identify the professor. The Forsyth BOE at the time said there was no violation since no one was given anything of value for voting for a specific party or candidate.

When asked after the meeting if he planned to oppose the site again, Raymond said that he's "taking everything under consideration." El-Amin said that he'd be willing to appeal to the state BOE again if Anderson was rejected. During the March primary early voting meetings, the BOE received a 500-signature petition from WSSU students and another 500-signature petition from Democracy NC, asking for a site at the historically black university.

Another site the BOE

has gotten numerous requests for is at IFB, which is located just off North Point Boulevard, and has a large population of blind and visually impaired workers. Raymond said he has concerns about that site too, since staff found issues with it involving sufficient parking for voters and finding a place for campaign workers to electioneer. Fleming said he supported it because IFB has said they'd be willing to have their staff park elsewhere to make room for voter parking.

Russell indicated that the board was getting no shortage of public suggestions for early voting sites. During the meeting, Annette Scipio said St. Peter's Church and World Outreach Center, an East Winston mega church on Old Lexington Road, would like to be an early voting site. BOE staff prepared a 21-site list for the board to choose from that includes sites like Sims Recreation Center in Happy Hill and Hanes Hosiery Recreation Center.

Raymond and Russell planned to have their own 15-site plans at the board's next meeting on Monday, June 6. Russell said he expected them to agree on most sites, but to have disagreements on a few, like Anderson Center, and on Sunday voting, which El-Amin is once again including in his proposal.

During the meeting, Tsujii said 501 votes cast during the current early voting had been approved. For absentee ballots, 651 had been approved and 44

had been rejected.

Early voting for the June 7 primary continues at the Forsyth County Government Center, 201 N. Chestnut St. today, June 2,

and tomorrow, Friday, June 3, from 8 a.m.-5 p.m. The final day of early voting before the primary is Saturday, June 4, from 10 a.m.-1 p.m.

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U.S. Supreme Court 'all-white juries' decision affects N.C.

BY CASH MICHAELS
FOR THE CHRONICLE

A decisive U.S. Supreme Court ruling last week regarding the unconstitutional elimination of black jurors by Georgia prosecutors from a capital case over 30 years ago has clear implications for numerous cases currently being considered in the North Carolina court system, say legal experts.

By a 7-1 decision (the dissenting vote coming from the High Court's only black jurist, Associate Justice Clarence Thomas), the Supreme Court determined in the case of Timothy Tyrone Foster, a black defendant convicted by an all-white jury of killing a white woman, that prosecutors' notes confirmed four prospective black jurors were deliberately kept off to ensure a conviction. Subsequent Georgia courts would not rule that this was racially motivated despite the written evidence.

Several recent North Carolina cases have shown similar prosecutors' notes in capital cases involving black defendants to produce all-white juries, and observers believe the High Court ruling now strengthens arguments for those defendants seeking new trials, if not having their sentences commuted because of proven prosecutorial racial bias.

"In North Carolina, there has been a long and sordid history of racial discrimination in the selection of jurors," says attorney Irving Joyner, law professor at North Carolina Central University School

of Law in Durham and chairman of the N.C. NAACP Legal Redress Committee. "This discrimination has negatively impacted a large number of African-American defendants. The use of this discriminatory practice has been deeply engrained within the prosecutorial culture and has ruled the jury selection process. In the Foster decision, the U.S. Supreme Court loudly proclaimed that this practice violates the constitution and must cease. The sad thing is that Timothy Tyrone Foster spent 30 years in a Georgia prison before he could establish that this discrimination likely impacted the outcome of his trial."

According to Ken Rose, senior attorney at The Center for Death Penalty Litigation in Durham, "Lawyers who specialize in the death penalty say the ruling will give many death-sentenced men and women new rights to bring forward evidence of racial discrimination in jury selection at their own trials. Such evidence is usually barred if it is not introduced during the initial trial."

Attorney Rose continued, "The ruling will also compel North Carolina courts to more vigorously enforce laws that prohibit race discrimination in jury selection. The N.C. Supreme Court has heard more than 100 cases where prosecutors were accused of intentionally striking minority jurors, but it has never found a prosecutor's explanation for striking a black juror to be a cover for race discrimination, despite compelling evidence that the practice of excluding black jurors is prevalent."

In Georgia's Foster case, prosecutors' notes showed the letter "B" written next to the four black prospective jurors' names to



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