

# Changes to NC voter ID rankle some, but could preserve law

By Gary D. Robertson

RALEIGH, N.C. (AP) - Federal and state lawsuits filed nearly two years ago challenging what's in North Carolina's election overhaul law are finally heading to trial starting next month.

But unexpected moves on the way to the courthouse could break down arguments of plaintiffs seeking to overturn the law's most high-profile component: a photo identification requirement to vote in person starting next year.

Republicans who have defended robustly their 2013 law quickly passed through the General Assembly this month changes that could allow perhaps hundreds to vote in person without qualifying photo IDs.

GOP Gov. Pat McCrory signed the bill, which will allow people who have a "reasonable impediment" to obtaining a driver's license, government ID or other photo document that the law requires to cast a legal ballot anyway if they provide other documentation. The updated law also will allow more expired driver's licenses to qualify.

While the legislature overwhelmingly approved the changes, a cadre of conservative activists says GOP leaders gutted the photo ID requirement and opened up potential fraud. Passing voter ID was a top priority of Republicans when they took over the legislature in 2011.

"The more we look at it, the more our breath is taken away at the depth of the loophole," said Jay DeLancy, director of the Voter Integrity Project of North Carolina. "There are so many ways that this bill is unbelievably bad."

GOP lawmakers disagree strongly, saying they are responding to feedback about how the voter ID mandate would be carried out reasonably. Some feedback originated from recent public hearings organized by the State Board of Elections.

"Reasonable impediments" in North Carolina's new law include illness, lack of transportation to obtain a photo ID, or a lost or stolen card.

"Turning away a valid voter at the poll is unjust. Allowing voters to game the system is unjust," said Rep. David Lewis, R-Harnett, in a blog post. "We've tried to strike a balance - improve the real and perceived integrity of the system while not stopping valid, registered voters from voting."

But it's clear voter ID authors were concerned the lack of hardship exceptions could jeopardize the entire voter ID mandate in court. At least two GOP lawmakers have said publicly changes were made because the Division of Motor Vehicles had failed to assist effectively people obtain government IDs provided in the law.

"We've had reports of people having problems getting the voter ID that they needed, even when they had all the paperwork straight," said Rep. Larry Pittman, R-Cabarrus.

Affidavits of registered voters collected for plaintiffs suing in state court recall some obstacles.

Charise Dill, 25, of Henderson County said in a sworn statement she was twice refused photo IDs at DMV offices. She said she was working two jobs and going to community college and couldn't afford a photo ID. DMV workers told her she couldn't get

a free ID, she said.

"It was an embarrassing experience and I do not want to experience that again; no one should have to go through this to get an ID to vote," Dill said. Press Millen, an attorney representing individuals suing in state court, said the "landscape has changed tremendously" with the changes.

The new law "has eliminated a number of the things - and some of the most egregious - that we're complaining about," Millen said.

DMV said last week, however, more than 1,000 people have received free IDs and workers "have been carefully trained to help eligible customers request and receive" the cards, Commissioner Kelly Thomas said in a release.

While the state lawsuit addresses only voter ID, three federal lawsuits scheduled for trial July 13 also challenge 2013 provisions that reduced the number of early-voting days and eliminated same-day registration during the early-vote period.

The Rev. William Barber, state president of the NAACP, which is one of the federal lawsuit plaintiffs, said the voter ID changes may further confuse voters told of different anticipated ID requirements when they went to the polls in 2014.

"It is still an undue burden on voters," Barber said.

## Supreme Court will re-hear Texas affirmative action

By Mark Sherman

WASHINGTON (AP) - The Supreme Court said June 29 it will dive back into the fight over the use of race in admissions at the University of Texas, a decision that prescribes tighter limits on affirmative action in higher education.

The justices said they will hear for a second time the case of a white woman who was denied admission to the university's flagship Austin campus.

The conservative-leaning federal appeals court in New Orleans has twice upheld the university's admissions process, including in a ruling last year that followed a Supreme Court order to reconsider the woman's case.

The case began in 2008 when Abigail Fisher, who is white, was denied admission to the University of Texas's flagship Austin campus because she did not graduate in the top 10 percent of her high school class - the criterion for 75 percent of the school's admissions. The university also passed her over for a position among the remaining 25 percent, which is reserved for special scholarships and people who meet a formula for personal achievement that includes race as a factor.

Edward Blum, who helped engineer Fisher's lawsuit, said he is encouraged by the court's second look at the case. "The outcome of this case may bring our nation closer to the day when a student's race and ethnicity is not a factor that a school may consider during the admissions process," Blum said.

University of Texas president Greg Fenves defended the school's admissions policy as narrowly-tailored and constitutional. Fenves said the use of race "as one factor in an individualized, holistic admissions policy allows us to assemble a student body that brings with it the educational benefits of diversity for all students."

The case went to the U.S. Supreme Court in June 2013. But rather than issue a definitive ruling on affirmative action, the justices voted 7-1 to tell a lower appeals court to take another look at Fisher's lawsuit. That meant the university's admissions policies remained unchanged.

Last year, the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals again upheld the university's admissions policy. Fisher is a graduate of Louisiana State University.

Justice Elena Kagan is not taking part in the case. She sat out the first round as well, presumably because of her work on the case when she served in the Justice Department before joining the court.

The case, Fisher v. University of Texas, 14-981, will be argued in the fall.

Associated Press writer Jim Vertuno contributed to this report from Austin, Texas.

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Defendant

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Notice is hereby issued by the Circuit Court for BALTIMORE CITY, that the relief sought in the aforementioned petition/complaint/motion may be granted, unless cause be shown to the contrary. Defendant is to file a response to the petition/complaint/motion on or before

10th day of September, 2015. Failure to file the response within the time allowed may result in a judgment by default or the granting of the relief sought, provided a copy of this Notice

be published in some newspaper published in this county/city, once in each of three (3) successive weeks on or before August 10, 2015. July 11, 18, 25, 2015

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**ANNOUNCEMENT**

The Durham Board of County Commissioners solicits applicants to fill positions on the following citizen boards and commissions:

- Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission (1 Position - Education)
- Boxing and Wrestling Commission (1 At-Large Position)
- Community Child Protection Team/Child Fatality Prevention Team (1 At-Large Position, 1 Law Enforcement Officer and 1 Death of Child before 18)
- Convention Center Authority (1 At-Large Position)
- Dangerous Dog Appeal Board (4 At-Large Positions)
- Environmental Affairs Board (1 Position - 1 Air Quality/Air Resources)
- Farmland Protection Advisory Board (1 Position - Business Representative)
- Industrial Facilities and Pollution Control Financing Authority (1 At-Large Position)
- Juvenile Crime Prevention Council (1 Position - 1 Person Under Age 18)
- Public Health Board (1 Position - 1 Engineer)
- Transportation Advisory Board (1 At Large Position)
- Workforce Development Board (4 Position - **Seeking Individuals in Executive Leadership** - 1 Private Sector, 1 Labor Organization, 1 Economic Development Agency and 1 Community Based Organizations serving veterans and/or individuals with disabilities)

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**\*Please note that appointment schedules may change without notice.**

Appointments will be considered by the County Commissioners on Monday, August 24, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. in the Commissioners' Meeting Room, second floor, Durham County Government Administrative Complex, 200 East Main Street

For applications or additional information, please contact the Clerk to the Board's Office at 560-0025. Website: [www.dconcc.gov](http://www.dconcc.gov)

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