

Nearly 400,000 names removed from N.C. voter registration in biennial list maintenance

Check voter registration online now while there is time to make corrections

BY HOWARD PEARRE

A total of 391,415 registered voters (of nearly 7.2 million) have been removed from North Carolina rolls in this year's "biennial voter registration list maintenance," according to Democracy NC. In 2019, more than half a million voters' names were removed. The process occurs in odd numbered years.

These are scary statistics considering efforts throughout the country to "win" elections by interfering with voters' access to polls. In North Carolina, the State Board of Elections enjoys a reputation of strict non-partisanship and transparency. But when this amount of data is processed, it is unreasonable to assume that mistakes won't happen.

To avoid an unpleasant surprise the next time you show up to vote, take time now to check your voter registration so there will be time to take corrective action if your name has been inadvertently removed. It's simple to do, just a few clicks on a computer or smartphone.

Here are the steps:

Go to Google.

Key in "NC voter lookup."

Select "Voter search" (usually the first choice).

On the next page, key in your first and last name (and county if you have a common name).

Click on the correct name if there are two or more of the same names.

Check to see if you are "active."

Then scroll down to make sure your address is correctly listed.

Scroll down further to check on voting place and other information, if needed.

Make needed changes:

If any of your information needs to be updated - your name, address (including apartment number), party affiliation - it may cause a hiccup on voting day. There are several ways you can make any needed changes.

You can obtain a voter registration form from the Forsyth County Board of Elections, complete it and return it. You can do this in person at the board's office at 201 N. Chestnut St. According to the board of elections, forms are also available at public libraries. Then return it to the board of elections in person or by U.S. mail. Just make sure it is received by the board no later than 25 days before an election you plan to vote it.

Second, if you have an N.C. driver's license, you can make the needed changes - or even register for the first time - online with a computer or smartphone. You can make changes to your listed home address or party affiliation through the Department of Motor Vehicles' website, although name changes still require a signed Voter Registration form.

Here are the steps:

Go to Google.

Key in "Online Voter Registration NC."

Select "Official NCDMV: Voter Registration Application - NCDOT" (may be the second choice in the Google list).

On the next page labeled "Voter Registration Application," click the "Get Started" button.

On the next page, click "Continue to my NCDMV Services" in the blue box (below the "Welcome to my NCDMV" heading).

On the next page, click "Continue as a guest." (Small letters, highlighted).

On the next page, scroll down to and select "Submit a Voter Registration Application."

Enter voter registration information (or changes) on the next pages.

Click "Submit."

Within several days, check the "NC Voter Lookup" site (as above) to make sure your changes were recorded. If not, call the Forsyth Board of Elections to find out why.

A third way to make changes (for name or address, but not party affiliation) is at an early voting site during the early voting period. To use this method, you will have to present a driver's license, water or electricity bill, or other official document verifying the new information. At the early voting poll, you will have to complete a new Voter Registration form. Then you will be able to vote at the same time.

In any case, act now, before the Election Day is bearing down, to make sure your name has not been removed and to make any necessary changes.

Protect your right to vote!

Howard Pearre conducts training sessions for volunteers to assist with voter registration. He is a member of Winston-Salem Writers and received an honorable mention for his short story, "September, 1957," at the 2020 International Human Rights Arts Festival.



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