

# Officials Expect Primaries to Run Smoothly

By CLEVE R. WOOTSON JR.  
Assistant State & National Editor

Despite a lengthy court battle that delayed the primaries in North Carolina for more than four months, elections officials expect the primaries to largely remain the same.

Don Wright, general counsel for the State Board of Elections, said he does not expect turnout to decrease because of confusion over the primary date.

In fact, Wright said there is a good chance voter turnout will be higher than usual as a result of the delay.

"There's been more press coverage of the September 10 primary date than there was of the May 5 primary date," he said.

The number of ballots cast might also increase because the board decided to ease restrictions on absentee ballots. This year voters will not have to provide specific reasons in order to vote absentee.

Although eased restrictions and increased publicity might beef up voter turnout, Wright said controversy and the popularity of the candidates ultimately decide the number of North

Carolinians who turn out at the polls during any given election.

"With turnouts in elections, the number one thing is how intense or how popular the lead race is - in this case, the Senate race," Wright said.

"It's sort of like a show. Who are the headliners? That's what brings people out to the polls."

But student leaders say that even during a major election it is difficult to get students to cast a ballot in the primaries.

The UNC-system Association of Student Governments is hoping to capitalize on the efforts of other N.C. voter registration groups to get more students to vote.

"They have the financial backing and, more importantly, they have a plan on how to recruit voters," said Jonathan Ducote, ASG president. "They've been working in this area for quite a while."

Ducote said he hopes more student participation in the election will focus legislators' attention on educational issues but that "the biggest thing we're

trying to do is just get people to vote."

Although considerable controversy surrounded the drawing of legislative district lines to be used in the upcoming elections, Wright said the State Board of Elections is not worried about security at polling places because it has never been an issue.

Wright said security problems rarely arise at polling places because people tend to respect the right to vote.

"The biggest security problem - and it's really not that big a problem - is bomb threats," he said.

"We get one or two bomb threats every year, but that's out of 2,800 North Carolina precincts."

Elections officials are more concerned about conducting a legitimate election, not potential acts of violence, he said. "You have a chief judge and two precinct judges who are in charge of order in each precinct," he said.

Law enforcement officers are not present at polling places because "officers tend to carry guns and also because there are many sheriff races going on," Wright added.

No additional security measures will be taken.

The State & National Editor can be reached at [stntdesk@unc.edu](mailto:stntdesk@unc.edu).

# BOG Vice Chairwoman Seeks To Make Return to N.C. Senate

By ELYSE ASHBURN  
State & National Editor

Long-time education advocate and Republican Teena Little hopes to gain the opportunity to champion her pet cause as a state senator.

On July 19, exactly a week after being elected vice chairman of the UNC-system Board of Governors, Little filed to run for the N.C. Senate.

Running in newly created District 22 - an open, one member district - Little is confident she will return to the Senate after an eight-year hiatus.

Little said she decided to run for a Senate position because she got a taste of serving in the N.C. Senate in 1994 and is eager to come back for more.

"I have served in the Senate before," Little said. "I enjoyed serving and thought I did a good job."

Little lost her Senate seat in 1996 when she placed third in the election for a two-member district behind Democrats Ellie Kinnaird and Howard Lee.

"I am a Republican, and traditionally Republicans don't do well in Orange County," Little said.

In addition to serving in the Senate, Little - a retired teacher - has sat on a myriad of educational boards, including the BOG, the N.C. State Board of Education and the Moore County Board

of Education.

"I've always been very interested in education," she said. "Education is a very big part of my life."

Although Little can not serve as both a member of the BOG and a state senator, she said education will remain one of her top priorities if elected. Other key issues she said she hopes to address are the dismal condition of the state's economy and the state's budget woes.

Little said that many North Carolinians, especially in her district - which encompasses Moore, Lee and part of Harnett counties - are without jobs and that citizens must be provided an opportunity to work in order for the state to escape a recurring deficit.

"If people do not have jobs, they are not creating revenue," she said.

Little said she likes the idea of serving in a single-member district because she expects she would be able to have more face time with her constituents if elected.

"You have the opportunity to know



BOG Vice Chairwoman Teena Little would have to resign from the board if she wins the seat.

the people better and to do a better job for them," she said. "Politics is local."

Little's district was carved out of former District 16 as a result of an N.C. Supreme Court decision upholding a Superior Court ruling that states that multi-member districts are in violation of North Carolina's constitution.

With the authority of the higher court's ruling, N.C. Superior Court Judge Knox Jenkins redrew the state legislative districts himself after the N.C. General Assembly failed to draw satisfactory district lines. Jenkins placed multi-member districts like the old District 16 on the chopping block.

Harris Blake, a Senate candidate whom Little will face in the Republican primary, also lauded the benefits of single-member districts.

"Geographically, this district is doable," he said. "Constituents will know exactly who their senator is in Raleigh."

Blake said that to date the race has been pretty low-key.

"So far, there hasn't been any head-to-head competition," he said.

In addition to Little and Blake, Republicans Bobby Ray Hall and Tim McNeill and Democrats Wanda Hunt and Jimmy Love are vying for the District 22 senate seat.

The State & National Editor can be reached at [stntdesk@unc.edu](mailto:stntdesk@unc.edu).

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