



NORTH CAROLINA

State Board of Elections & Ethics Enforcement

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NUMBERED MEMO 2018-08

TO: County Boards of Elections
FROM: Kim Strach, Executive Director
RE: Election Preparation
DATE: September 5, 2018

Ballot Preparation Begins

Now that the courts have completed their review, we can now proceed with ballot preparation for the 2018 general election.

Our state statutory deadline for responding to requests for mail absentee ballot requests is this Friday, September 7. **Given the tasks involved in ballot preparation and the time required to complete these tasks, we will not meet this deadline.**

The federal UOCAVA deadline is September 22, which means ballots must be transmitted to military and overseas voters either on Friday, September 21 or Saturday, September 22 (if your local post office is open). This means we have 16 days to complete our processes and issue ballots timely. This task is a challenge, but we intend to meet it with 100 percent compliance. Though our timeline has been dramatically shortened, we will follow *all* of our usual, thorough proofing and auditing processes to ensure accurate ballots are printed and distributed.

The preparation process is underway. You should be receiving ballot proofs soon. It is imperative that you or your staff is available and working through the process until all approvals have been received and ballots are printed. This will require evenings and weekends. Please make sure your SBOE county partner has a phone number where you can be reached at all reasonable times.

Communication is essential during this process. If you encounter any problem with your ballot configuration or other ballot issues, please notify your SBOE partner as soon as possible. Any corrections made with the vendor without your county partner's knowledge could delay the approval process.

We must carefully proof each ballot to ensure the exact statutory language for each constitutional amendment is included on each ballot style. **We are your committed partner in this effort.**

Every election has its own time constraints, but this year's timeline leaves *no room for errors* that could result in the need to reprint ballots. We must commit to absolute diligence in the proofing process.

Should we determine that a county is not going to have printed ballots by September 21, we will institute an emergency plan to ensure our UOCAVA voters are provided the official ballot content timely and securely. Details of this plan will be provided to individual counties as needed.

Mock Election

We will conduct our mock election on Thursday, October 4. This is our best opportunity to test our election machinery before in-person voting begins. This critical part of our logic and accuracy procedures will help us identify problems that must be remedied prior to the beginning of one-stop early voting. One-stop early voting begins less than two weeks after our mock election.

Mock elections are most effective when logic and accuracy testing of voting equipment has been completed in advance. We understand how demanding and time-consuming this task is for many of you, and are ready to help you ensure that your county completes a successful mock election prior to the start of one-stop early voting.

Election security continues to be our critical focus. We must take all measures before, during and after the election to ensure the accuracy of election results. The processes we have in place to test our systems prior to voting are extremely important for us, as election officials, to identify any potential issues. Our mutual commitment to these processes is crucial so that our voters know we will spare no effort to ensure the security of their vote and the integrity of the election.