Numbered Memo 2022-02

TO: County Boards of Elections
FROM: Karen Brinson Bell, Executive Director
RE: Ballot Quantities in Even-Year Primaries
DATE: March 16, 2022

This numbered memo provides updated information about the minimum number of ballots that must be ordered for even-year primary elections. It replaces the ballot quantity guidance in Numbered Memo 2020-02. This guidance is intended to be used for the 2022 primary and for future even-year primary elections.

Required minimums have been calculated to help ensure that voting sites have a sufficient supply of pre-printed ballots in the event of power failures or other disruptions. They also account for the increasing number of North Carolina unaffiliated voters—who may choose a primary ballot of any political party that allows participation by unaffiliated voters¹ or a nonpartisan ballot, if available—and who now outnumber voters registered with any single political party. Voter registration numbers are to be calculated as of the time ballots are ordered before the election.

The amounts of ballots required to be prepared by this memo are a minimum. County boards must always consider the unique needs of the county and expected turnout on Election Day in determining how many pre-printed ballots to order. Factors may include, but are not limited to, considerable changes in population or special ballot items like referenda.

All county boards should exercise their best judgment, including by reviewing turnout in past similar elections, in determining the number of ballots of each style to prepare and distribute to each voting location. All counties must ensure pre-printed or ballot-on-demand quantities are adequate to fulfill absentee ballot requests and factor in these requests when placing an order for ballots or ballot stock. The distribution of ballots to Election Day precincts should also take into account the turnout at one-stop locations during that election. County boards should monitor

¹ G.S. § 163-119.
same-day registrations and turnout during one-stop and order additional ballots as needed.

**County boards of elections are required to procure a supply of paper ballots as follows:**

- For counties that use pre-printed ballots as their primary method of voting, order ballots at least equal to **100%** of the number of registered voters in the county affiliated with each political party with a primary, for each ballot style.
  - For nonpartisan ballot styles, order ballots at least equal to 20% of unaffiliated voters plus voters whose party does not have a primary, for each ballot style. These voters will be listed as “NO BALLOT” on your reports.

- For counties that use ballot-marking devices and/or ballot-on-demand with blank stock as their primary method of voting, order pre-printed ballots at least equal to **50%** of the number of registered voters in the county affiliated with each political party with a primary.
  - Blank stock must be on hand equal to 100% of registered voters in the county.
  - For nonpartisan ballot styles, order pre-printed ballots at least equal to 10% of unaffiliated voters and voters whose party does not have a primary in the county, for each ballot style to account for unaffiliated voters who choose a nonpartisan ballot style. These voters will be listed as “NO BALLOT” on your reports.