ELECTION OBSERVERS (N.C.G.S 163-45) - Effective January 2014

County political parties may appoint 10 poll observers, who must be residents of the county (an increase in the number).

PREREGISTRATION FOR YOUTHS ELIMINATED (repeal sections of N.C.G.S. 163-82) – Effective September 2013

The pre-registration for 16 and 17 year old is no longer allowed. Citizens Awareness Month and the required annual registration drive in high schools are eliminated (effective January 2014). High schools are still required to make registration applications available.

SAME-DAY REGISTRATION ELIMINATED (repeal of 163-82.6A) - Effective January 2014

Voters must be registered at least 25 days before the election.

IMPROVE VOTER ROLLS (N.C.G.S. 163-82.14)

The State Board must update voting rolls at least twice a year, including accepting notices from more sources to remove deceased voters and sharing information with other states.

CHALLENGE OF VOTERS (N.C.G.S. 163-84 & 87) - Effective January 2014

Any North Carolina voter can challenge a voter as not being registered or violating another rule (previously voters could only challenge the status of other voters in the same county). On the day of the election, any voter may challenge the voter status of another voter in the same county (previously voters could only challenge the status of voters in the same precinct).

CANDIDATE NAMES ON BALLOT BY GOVERNOR'S PARTY (N.C.G.S. 163-165.6(d)) – Effective January 2014

The candidate(s) of the governor’s party will appear first, in alphabetical order, then those of the other major party.

The number of petition signers a candidate needs to be on the ballot without paying a filing fee has been lowered.

VOTE FOR THE PERSON, NOT THE PARTY (N.C.G.S. 163-165.6(e)) - Effective January 2014

Eliminates straight-ticket voting, so that voters must mark their preferred candidate in each race on the ballot.

PAPER BALLOTS REQUIRED (N.C.G.S. 163-165.7) - Effective January 2018

All touch screen voting machines must also produce a paper ballot as the voter’s official record.

VOTING OUT OF PRECINCT (N.C.G.S. 163-166.11(5)) - Effective January 2014

Ballots casted in the wrong precinct on Election Day will not be counted.

PHOTO ID REQUIREMENT (N.C.G.S. 163-166.13) - Effective January 2016

Valid, unexpired ID must be shown prior to voting.

Acceptable forms:

- North Carolina driver’s license, learner’s permit, or provisional license
- Special identification card for non-drivers
- US passport
- US military ID or Veterans ID card
- Tribal enrollment card
- Out-of-state driver’s license if newly registered (within 90 days)

Exceptions:

- Voters over 70 years or older whose ID was current on their 70th birthday may show expired ID and military and veterans IDs do not need an issuance or expiration date.
- Those with religious objections

Valid ID’s are first determined by the local election judges. Voters with questionable ID or without ID can cast a provisional ballot and the voter must present an acceptable ID to the county board of elections by 12PM of the day before the elections canvass.

Provisions are included to provide free non-driver’s license IDs through the DMV.

HOURS OF VOTING (N.C.G.S. 163-166.01) – Effective January 2014

Polls are open from 6:30 AM to 7:30 PM and hours can only be extended due to late opening or interruptions. Polls may stay open for an addition time but only the exact time of the interruption. State Board of Elections must approve extended time (previously the local board could keep the polls open until 8:30 PM). If a voter is in line at the time polls close, he/she will be allowed to vote.
EXTENDED REGISTRATION LOCATIONS  
(N.C.G.S. 163-182.22) - Effective January 2014

Registration can occur at county-run senior centers and through county park and recreation services, if approved by the state and county boards of election.

MAIL-IN ABSENTEE VOTING (various sections N.C.G.S. 163-299 through 231) - Effective January 2014

Various changes to the absentee request forms and ballots, including requiring a drivers’ license number, voter ID card number, last four digits of a Social Security number, or copy of utility bill, bank statement, pay stub, or certain other documents. For voting, two witnesses or one notary public must sign the ballot (previously one witness was needed)

EARLY VOTING (N.C.G.S. 163-227.2) – Effective January 2016

Begins on the second Thursday before Election Day and ends the Saturday before Election Day at 1:00 PM (reduced by one week). Counties must provide the same number of total schedule voting hours as in 2010 or 2012, unless the county board of elections reduced the number by a unanimous vote with approval from the State Board of Elections.

REPEAL OF PUBLIC FINANCING OPTIONS  
(various sections of N.C.G.S. 163-278)

Certain public funding for campaigns, parties and matching funds are eliminated, including the printing of voter guides. This includes provisions on state tax returns were taxpayers may designate tax dollars go to a party or the Public Campaign Fund (repeal of N.C.G.S. 105-159.1 & 159.2) Attorneys no longer have to pay extra fees to subsidize judicial elections.

ELECTION CYCLE CHANGES AND DEFINING ELECTIONEERING COMMUNICATIONS  
(various sections)

Defines the election cycle and “electioneering communication” so that disclosure requirements do not apply from the May primary to September 7th of the election year. Allows groups and individuals to spend money on ads without the requirement of revealing the source of the funding.

CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS (N.C.G.S. 163-278.13) – Effective January 2014

Individuals may contribution up to $5,000 per election to a candidate or political action committee (an increase from $4,000).

NO BUNDLING LOBBYISTS- (N.C.G.S. 163-278.13C)  
Effective October 2013

Registered lobbyist cannot collect or pass along any campaign donations to a legislative or executive branch candidate. This includes donations from a client’s PAC.

LIMITED COMPENSATION FOR VOTER REGISTRATION DRIVES (N.C.G.S. 163-274(a)(14))-  
Effective January 2014

Bans the practice of a worker being paid based on the number of completed voter registration forms. They can be paid for their time.

REMOVAL OF EXPANDED ELECTION ADVERTISEMENT DISCLOSURE REQUIREMENTS (repeal of N.C.G.S. 163-278.39A and 278.101) - Effective January 2014

Advertisements and electioneering communications are no longer required to include as much detail information about the sponsor of the ad or communication in as much detail.

PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY (N.C.G.S. 163-213.2) - Effective January 2016

If South Carolina holds its presidential primary before March 15, then North Carolina will hold its Presidential primary the next Tuesday. The May primary will still be held for other candidates.

SPECIAL ELECTIONS & VACANCIES (various sections)- Effective January 2014

Various changes to special and local elections (such as to approve local sales taxes). Changes to how certain vacancies will be filled and judicial elections may be won by a plurality vote (rather than the instant run-off elections).

AUTHORIZED STUDIES TO EXAMINE VARIOUS ISSUES INCLUDING:

- The appropriate size of voting precincts
- The size of polling locations, including parking
- Whether to make changes to the “second primary” system
- Electronic filing of campaign finance records
- Political committees and electioneering communications
- Digital photos to be used at polling locations
- Vacancies in the General Assembly and U.S. House of Representatives
- The use of election observers

This summary was produced by the Public Policy Institute of Western Carolina University as a general informational guide. The information contained stems from N.C. Session Law 2013-381 (House Bill 589) and the North Carolina General Statutes, with additional information provided by Democracy North Carolina and the UNC School of Government.