

# Troubling Election Law Changes Buried in a Broader Reform Package

*North Carolina House Bill 958 Defends Entrenched Politicians From Surging Independent Voters*

RALEIGH, NC, UNITED STATES, June 16, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- At a time when Unaffiliated voters represent the largest and fastest growing voting bloc in North Carolina, politicians in the NC legislature are proposing new obstacles for independent voters.



## **HOUSE BILL 958: Election Law Changes.**

*2025-2026 General Assembly*

North Carolina House Bill 958 is in committee. The next hearing starts Tuesday, June 16 at 10:00 a.m.

A North Carolina House Elections Law committee meets to review the proposed House Bill 958. This bill seeks to do reasonable things like clarify and streamline vote counting rules and make it easier for campaign committees to solicit small donations.

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*Rob Yates, LPNC  
Communications Director*

“Then there are unreasonable things,” says Libertarian Party of North Carolina's (LPNC) Communications Director Rob Yates. Yates is also a Better Ballot North Carolina board member.

According to Yates, the most unreasonable provision prevents ranked choice voting throughout the state. Sometimes called an "instant runoff," ranked choice voting prevents the wasted time and expense of a second

election when no candidate crosses the threshold set for winning the first election.

In addition, second elections can be unrepresentative and disregard the preferences of voters from the first election day. For example, in North Carolina's 2024 primary, turnout was about 24%, while turnout for the second primary that year was less than 2.8%, says data from the North Carolina State Board of Elections.

Yates points out that, "ranked choice voting, or any other type of approval voting, gives voters their preferred candidates rather than disregarding their votes and replacing them with the

votes of the few ardent partisans who show up for the second election."

With the benefits of lower cost, less time, and greater voter participation, one might think the law would require ranked choice voting. But there is one reason the legislature wants to prevent ranked choice voting. Politics.

The Republican National Committee has officially opposed ranked-choice voting on the ground that it would "eliminate the historic political party system." And Democrats oppose it too where they have control. In 2019, Democratic Governor Gavin Newsom vetoed a bill in California that would have allowed ranked choice voting in municipal elections.



Rob Yates says that House Bill 958 needs lots of improvement.

"This is exactly right," says Yates. "With ranked choice voting, more candidates can run without splitting the vote, and the independent voters will have more choices. For this reason, this part of House Bill 958 is a direct attack on unaffiliated and independent-minded voters."

#### More restrictions

Other provisions of the proposed Bill 958 can be objected to on the basis of restricting ballot access. In most cases, these objections are countered by the benefits of more clarity and better voting security. But Yates points out that there is another restriction that appears to be without any benefit other than blocking challenges to the two-party system. This is a restriction on gathering signatures for petitions.

According to the NC legislative website's Bill Summary: "Section 2.10 would make it a Class 2 misdemeanor for a person to be compensated based on the number of signatures collected for a petition."

To understand the potential impact, note that petitions can be filed to call for an election or referendum, to form a new political party, to waive payment of a filing fee, to place an unaffiliated candidate on the ballot, or to qualify as a write-in candidate. Depending on the petition sought, it could require tens of thousands of signatures. Already, the number of signatures required make it extremely difficult for direct citizen action, and as a result, only the

most well-funded campaigns can use the signature process to gain access.

With this proposed restriction on petition signature gathering, It makes activity like gaining new third party ballot access and putting independent candidates on the ballot mostly out of reach.

### Improving the bill

On Tuesday, June 16, starting at 10:00 a.m. in Raleigh, the NC House Elections Law committee meets to review the current version of proposed House Bill 958. This is an opportunity for legislators to improve the bill, making it better policy and something that can pass both chambers of the legislature and gain the governor's signature.

For voters who want to contact their legislators about the restriction on ranked choice voting, Yate tells us it is Section 2.5 of the current draft bill. For petition restrictions, that is Section 2.10. The current draft bill is on the NC legislative website, here:

<https://www.ncleg.gov/BillLookup/2025/H958>

The committee members to contact would be those on the Election Law standing committee, here: <https://www.ncleg.gov/Committees/CommitteeInfo/HouseStanding/21>

You can watch the work of the committee on a livestream of the committee session, here:

<https://www.ncleg.gov/LegislativeCalendarEvent/134473#videoHeader>

For more information on how the Libertarian Party of North Carolina stands for unaffiliated and independent-minded voters, find more here: <https://lpnc.org>

To learn more about the benefits of ranked choice voting and why the major parties may be opposed to this voter-friendly initiative, see: <https://www.betterballotnc.org/>

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