



DEMOCRACY NORTH CAROLINA

2007-08 DEMOCRACY AGENDA

Democracy North Carolina's mission is to make real the promise of "one person, one vote" – the bedrock principle of equal rights and self-determination. Elections and policy makers must be accountable to voters, not wealthy special interests. To increase the power and participation of voters and decrease the influence of special-interest donors, we promote these priorities:

BIG WINS IN 2007!

EXPANDED VOTER-OWNED ELECTIONS

Voter-owned public financing is working for state-wide judicial candidates. Two steps to expand this program were enacted in 2007: Beginning in 2008, candidates for three Council of State agency heads (Commissioner of Insurance, Superintendent of Public Instruction, and Auditor) will have the option of "clean" public financing for their campaigns. Also: The town of Chapel Hill can begin a local public financing pilot in 2009. (We'll keep pushing to expand Voter-Owned Elections, "step by step.")

BEGAN SAME-DAY REGISTRATION

North Carolina ranks in the bottom 15 nationally for voter turnout. A 2007 law allows a citizen to register and vote during the "one stop" early voting period, with safeguards against fraud. The new law will especially help youth, low-income people, and voters who forget to re-register after moving. (We need to expand SDR to become Election Day.)

IMPROVED JUDICIAL CAMPAIGN REFORM

Aspects of the Voter-Owned program for judicial candidates were recently refined. Candidates attacked by certain bogus "issue" groups or 527 committees will now be protected with matching "rescue" funds, even if their opponent is in the public financing program. The Judicial Voter Guide will continue to be mailed to all NC residents.

SHARPENED NEW LOBBYING/ETHICS LAW

The landmark ethics and lobbying reform law of 2006 was strengthened. Ethics Commission hearings on non-frivolous cases will be open; legal defense funds must follow new regulations; and convicted public officials can lose their pensions.

INSTANT RUNOFF VOTING

Costly, low-turnout runoff elections can be ended by using preference voting (if your first choice is not

among the top vote-getters in the "virtual" runoff, your vote goes to your second-choice candidate). In 2007, Cary and Hendersonville experimented with IRV. More local elections can pilot its use in 2008.

EX-FELON VOTING RIGHTS

There are over 70,000 ex-felons in NC. Many do not know they have the right to vote once they've completed the terms of their sentence. Now, ex-offenders must be educated about their right to vote and offered a voter registration form.

WORK FOR 2008

REGULATE 527s AND ELECTIONEERING

More groups are using Section 527 of the IRS Code to escape full regulation even though they engage in election activity. A new state law should uniformly regulate the financing of all advocacy in elections.

REFORM THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE

The method for allocating electoral college votes should change to reflect the results of the popular vote – either through the National Popular Vote compact and/or by allocating electoral college votes based on who wins each Congressional district.

PROTECT THE RIGHT TO VOTE

Every vote must be counted, with well-supervised audits open to the public. Voter intimidation tactics must be stopped. Add and equip more "one-stop" voting locations. Pilot "super-voting" centers in high growth areas, without cutting polling places in low-density areas. Make Election Day a state holiday.

IMPROVE THE POLITICAL PROCESS

We support new reforms offered by the Coalition for Lobbying & Government Reform, such as more time for debating the budget and term limits for legislative leaders. Legislators should be paid more. Ballot access for new parties should be easier.

For information on actions to take, background, etc., go to www.democracy-nc.org or call 1-888-OUR-VOTE.