

March 21, 2023

SB321 Opponent

Richard Pund, Self

Chairman Thompson and Members of the Committee,

My name is Richard Pund and I am a resident of Overland Park. My testimony is in opposition to SB321. Because there is less than one day to read and submit testimony for this bill, I apologize in advance if any of my statements are incorrect. There isn't a lot of time for fact-checking.

There are several reasons why I oppose this bill. The first reason is related to Sections 3 and 6. I can't think of any technical reason why registration should close 30 days before the presidential primary when all of our other elections are at 20 days. Coming up with a new regulation for this election specifically just adds more complexity to the rules that voters have to navigate. If this bill were enacted as written, there would be at least four different cutoffs for declaring party affiliation depending on the election and the status of the voter. Instead of this added complexity, I propose allowing voters to register and declare party affiliation on election day for all of our elections. According to the National Conference of State Legislatures, 20 states plus Washington DC currently allow election day registration. Any challenges that come with election day registration have already been solved elsewhere.

The next reason I oppose this bill is found in Section 7b. Since the ballot will be finalized on February 17, it is likely that there will be a handful of candidates still running at that time. In 2016, there were still 5 Republicans in the race on that date. In 2020, there were still 8 Democrats. It would help voters if they could indicate preference for multiple candidates. While SB321 does not appear to regulate how parties will allocate their delegates, because Section 7b only allows for the selection of one candidate then that will lead to a significant number of wasted votes. Some candidates will not reach the 10-15% threshold parties have set in the past. Ranked-choice voting would be one way for voters to cast their ballots sincerely without worry that it will be wasted.

In fact, the 2020 Democratic presidential primary used ranked-choice voting. This raises some questions that I have about this bill - 1) Why does it not support the election method Democrats used in their most recent presidential primary? 2) If Democrats decide to not participate in this bill because they want to keep using ranked-choice, does this make it so the state is paying the costs of the Republican primary and not the Democratic one?

Finally, it is disappointing that this bill does not address a big issue with our presidential elections - the allocation of electors. Our winner-take-all allocation means that general-election candidates have ignored our state in recent times. According to nationalpopularvote.com, there were no general-election campaign events in our state in either 2016 or 2020. Adopting the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact would put our votes on equal footing with the rest of the country, instead of being the afterthought we are now.

Thank you for your time,

Richard Pund, Overland Park

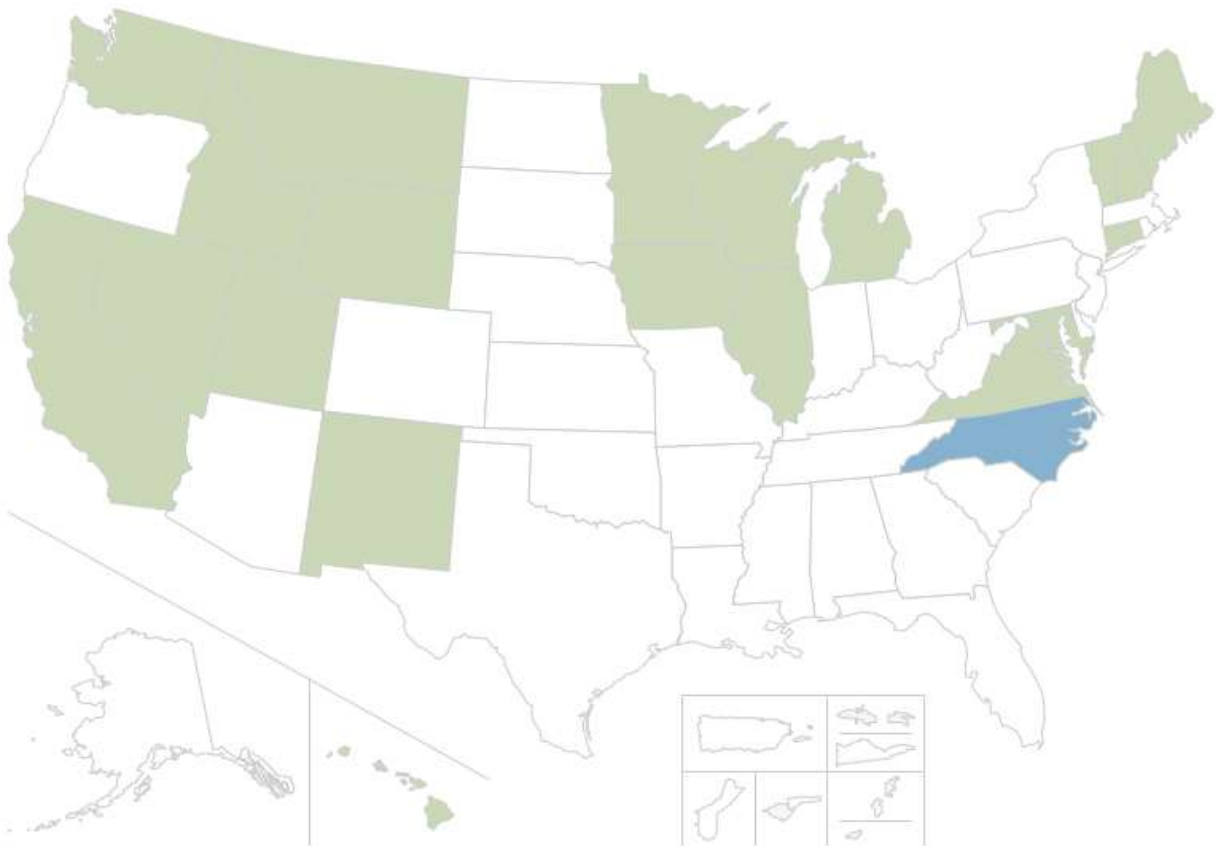
Appendix



Map of states and territories with same-day and election day registration

Copied from <https://www.ncsl.org/elections-and-campaigns/same-day-voter-registration>

States With Same-Day and Election Day Registration

Click a state to learn more about specific guidelines. Note: ED means Election Day and EV means early voting.



-  States that allow same-day registration, including on Election Day.
-  States that allow same-day registration only during the early voting period.