

GOP Senators Introduce Voter Integrity Act

By Administrator

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The NC Senate released Senate Bill 326 the first election integrity reform of the 2021 session that includes enough significant improvements that we're likely to see a Cooper veto and a protracted override fight. The primary sponsors Senators Warren Daniel, Paul Newton, and Ralph Hise, called their bill, "the Election Integrity Act," but at only five pages, we can be sure to see more provisions added through committee mark-ups and amendments.

Here are the key features of the bill:

Prohibits county election boards from receiving private funding from groups like Mark Zuckerberg's Center for Technology and Civic Life, which targeted money to increase voter turnout only in heavily Democrat cities and nearly doubled the entire election budget for Philadelphia in 2020's election;

Establishes a \$5 million fund to ensure the availability of voter ID cards that "shall include a mobile component to visit voters identified as needing photo identification to ensure photo identification is created for those voters.;" Rolls back the absentee ballot request deadline by one week, from the Tuesday before Election Day to the second Tuesday before Election Day;

Moved the ballot receipt deadline from three days after Election Day to on Election Day, which is more in line with many other states. In a measure that will be sure to draw fire from the other side, the deadline changes (numbers 3 & 4 above) were not mentioned in the bill's long title, but those deadline changes are critical, given the increased pressure for election officials to include prepaid postage on the ballot-return envelopes.

Voter Integrity Project earlier reported on how prepaid postage envelopes are seldom (if ever) postmarked by the US Postal Service and rolling back the deadlines will ensure that non-postmarked envelopes are not flooding into election offices (and being counted) days after the election results are announced.

Bottom line: Senate Bill 326 is a reasonable bill that would garner widespread bipartisan support in a sane world . . . and there's the catch.

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