

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2019

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HOUSE BILL 743

Short Title: Require Prepaid Envelope/Absentee Ballots. (Public)

Sponsors: Representatives Gailliard and Insko (Primary Sponsors).

*For a complete list of sponsors, refer to the North Carolina General Assembly web site.*

Referred to: Elections and Ethics Law, if favorable, Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House

April 16, 2019

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT TO PROVIDE FOR THE SUBMISSION OF VOTED ABSENTEE BALLOTS BY  
PRE-ADDRESSED ENVELOPES, POSTAGE PAID UPON RETURN.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

**SECTION 1.** G.S. 163A-1307(b), as amended by Section 1.2(d) of S.L. 2018-144,  
reads as rewritten:

"(b) Application on Container-Return Envelope. – In time for use not later than 60 days before a statewide general election in an even-numbered year, and not later than 50 days before a statewide primary, other general election or county bond election, the county board of elections shall print a sufficient number of envelopes in which persons casting absentee ballots may transmit their marked ballots to the county board of elections. However, in the case of municipal elections, sufficient container-return envelopes shall be made available no later than 30 days before an election. Each container-return envelope shall be in the form of a pre-addressed envelope, postage paid upon return, and shall have printed on it an application which shall be designed and prescribed by the State Board, providing for all of the following:

- (1) The voter's certification of eligibility to vote the enclosed ballot and of having voted the enclosed ballot in accordance with this Part.
- (2) A space for identification of the envelope with the voter and the voter's signature.
- (3) A space for the identification of the two persons witnessing the casting of the absentee ballot in accordance with G.S. 163A-1310, those persons' signatures, and those persons' addresses.
- (4) A space for the name and address of any person who, as permitted under G.S. 163A-1298(a), assisted the voter if the voter is unable to complete and sign the certification and that individual's signature.
- (5) A space for approval by the county board of elections.
- (6) A space to allow reporting of a change of name as provided by G.S. 163A-880.
- (7) A prominent display of the unlawful acts under G.S. 163A-1298 and G.S. 163A-1389, except if there is not room on the envelope, the State Board may provide for that disclosure to be made on a separate piece of paper to be included along with the container-return envelope.
- (8) An area to attach additional documentation necessary to comply with the identification requirements in accordance with State Board rules, as provided in G.S. 163A-1309.



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1           (9)    The following statement written in a prominent place on the enclosed ballot:  
2                   "Return absentee ballot in the enclosed prepaid envelope, or you, a near  
3                   relative, or verifiable legal guardian may deliver the ballot in person to your  
4                   county board of elections." For purposes of this subdivision, "near relative"  
5                   means the same as it is defined under G.S. 163A-1308(h) and "verifiable legal  
6                   guardian" means the same as it is defined under G.S. 163A-1295.

7           The container-return envelope shall be printed in accordance with the instructions of the State  
8 Board."

9           **SECTION 2.** G.S. 163A-1310(b)(1) reads as rewritten:

10          "(b)    Transmitting Executed Absentee Ballots to County Board of Elections. – The sealed  
11 container-return envelope in which executed absentee ballots have been placed shall be  
12 transmitted to the county board of elections who issued those ballots as follows:

13          (1)    All ballots issued under the provisions of this Part and Part 2 of Article 21 of  
14 this Chapter shall be transmitted by mail in the pre-addressed envelopes,  
15 postage paid upon return, provided with the ballot or by commercial courier  
16 service, at the voter's expense, service or delivered in ~~person,~~ person by the  
17 voter, or by the voter's near relative or verifiable legal guardian and received  
18 by the county board not later than 5:00 p.m. on the day of the statewide  
19 primary or general election or county bond election. Ballots issued under the  
20 provisions of Part 2 of Article 21 of this Chapter may also be electronically  
21 transmitted."

22          **SECTION 3.** This act is effective when it becomes law and applies to elections held  
23 on or after that date.