

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2019

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SENATE BILL DRS45449-LU-173

Short Title: Absentee Ballot Equality/2020 Election.

(Public)

Sponsors: Senator Clark (Primary Sponsor).

Referred to:

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
2 AN ACT TO PROVIDE EQUAL ACCESS AND TREATMENT FOR ALL IN SUBMITTING
3 ABSENTEE BALLOTS FOR THE 2020 GENERAL ELECTION IN RESPONSE TO THE
4 COVID-19 PANDEMIC.

5 Whereas, in-person voting during the 2020 general election poses increased personal
6 health risks due to the COVID-19 pandemic; and

7 Whereas, the North Carolina State Board of Elections projects that approximately
8 30% to 40% of voters will vote by mail-in absentee ballot for the upcoming 2020 general election;
9 and

10 Whereas, Article 21A of Chapter 163 of the General Statutes, cited as the Uniform
11 Military and Overseas Voters Act, provides for absentee registration and voting in primary and
12 general elections for certain military personnel and families and civilians living overseas in
13 compliance with the federal Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA),
14 42 U.S.C. § 1973ff, et seq.; and

15 Whereas, those individual voters have the option to vote by mail-in absentee ballot
16 without having to obtain a signature from two witnesses or one notary attesting that the voter
17 completed the ballot; and

18 Whereas, those individual voters covered by Article 21A of Chapter 163 of the
19 General Statutes may submit their ballots with a declaration signed by the voter, affirming the
20 voter's identity eligibility; and

21 Whereas, all eligible voters should be given the same option as military personnel for
22 absentee voting; Now, therefore,
23 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

24 **SECTION 1.** Notwithstanding G.S. 163-231(a) or any other provision of law to the
25 contrary, for the 2020 general election, the State Board of Elections shall provide all eligible
26 voters in this State the option of submitting their mail-in absentee ballots with a declaration
27 signed by the voter similar to the option afforded to covered citizens through special programs
28 under Article 21A of Chapter 163 of the General Statutes. Voters are not required to comply with
29 requirements more stringent than those required for submitting mail-in absentee ballots under
30 Article 21A of the Chapter 163 of the General Statutes for the 2020 general election.

31 **SECTION 2.** This act is effective when it becomes law and applies to elections held
32 on or after that date and expires upon certification of the 2020 general election.

