



HOUSE BILL 836: Election Reform

2015-2016 General Assembly

Committee:	Rules and Operations of the Senate	Date:	June 10, 2015
Introduced by:	Reps. Robinson, Bishop, Fraley	Prepared by:	R. Erika Churchill and Kelly Q. Tornow, Staff Attorneys
Analysis of:	PCS to Second Edition H836-CSTH		

SUMMARY: *The proposed committee substitute for House Bill 836 would: (1) authorize electronic submission of absentee ballot lists by county boards of election; (2) authorize the use of new technology for paper ballots; (3) extend the time frame to implement the requirement for paper ballots from January 1, 2018, to September 1, 2019, for counties that currently use direct record electronic (DRE) voting machines; and (4) authorize certain municipalities to conduct malt beverage and unfortified wine elections.*

CURRENT LAW & BILL ANALYSIS:

Section 1. Each county board of elections, by 10:00 a.m. on Election Day, must submit, by regular US Postal mail, one copy of the list of executed absentee ballots, either as a countywide list or a separate list for each precinct, to the State Board of Elections. The PCS would authorize the lists to be submitted electronically in a manner approved by the State Board of Elections.

Section 2. North Carolina currently uses two types of electronic voting systems, optical scan machines and direct record electronic machines. Optical scan machines tabulate paper ballots that have been hand-marked by the voter. Direct record electronic (DRE) touchscreen voting machines allow voters to mark and submit their votes electronically and do not produce paper ballots. Effective January 1, 2018, S.L. 2013-381, requires that all voting systems must generate an individual paper ballot marked by the voter. (See Section 3 for changes to this provision.) New technology in voting systems would allow for a touchscreen selection of choices by a voter shown all the options for that race, with a printed ballot of only that voter's choices. The PCS would amend the current statutes governing contents of official ballots to allow for the use of the new technology, if those voting systems are certified by the State Board of Elections for purchase by the counties to be used in North Carolina elections.

Section 3. Effective January 1, 2018, S.L. 2013-381, requires that all voting systems must generate an individual paper ballot marked by the voter. The PCS would amend that session law to extend the effective date to September 1, 2019, for counties that use direct record electronic voting machines on election day as of January 1, 2015. All other counties would still be required to generate individual paper ballots marked by the voter by the original effective date of January 1, 2018.

Section 4. G.S. 18B-600(c) currently authorizes a city to hold a malt beverage or unfortified wine election only if the following criteria are met:

- The county in which the city is located has already held such an election and the vote in the last county election was against the sale of that kind of alcoholic beverage.
- The city either has a population of 500 or more OR operates an ABC store.

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The PCS would add an alternative procedure so that a city may hold a malt beverage or unfortified wine election only if the following criteria are met:

- The county in which the city is located has already held such an election and the vote in the last county election was against the sale of that kind of alcoholic beverage.
- The city has a population of 200 or more.
- The county in which the city is located also contains three or more other cities that have previously voted to allow malt beverage and unfortified wine sales.

EFFECTIVE DATE: This act is effective when it becomes law.