



BTC Report

BUDGET & TAX CENTER

September 2018

ENJOY READING THESE REPORTS?

Please consider making a donation to support the Budget & Tax Center at www.ncjustice.org

MEDIA CONTACT:

ALEXANDRA F. SIROTA
919/861-1468
alexandra@ncjustice.org

BUDGET & TAX CENTER

a project of the

north carolina
JUSTICE CENTER

P.O. Box 28068
Raleigh, NC 27611-8068

www.ncjustice.org

The Cost of Creating Barriers to Vote

A preliminary analysis of the Constitutional amendment requiring photo identification at the polls

By **Alexandra Forter Sirota**, Budget & Tax Center Director, and **Luis Toledo**, BTC Analyst, with BTC Analysts **William Munn & Patrick McHugh**

Six state Constitutional amendments will be on the ballot this fall, and none received an official fiscal note in the 2018 legislative process to assess the costs of implementation to the state. Given the broader fiscal context for North Carolina, where recent tax cuts have reduced available revenue for public schools, health, and community well-being, a full assessment of the cost of changing the state Constitution — including the necessity and trade-offs associated with implementing these changes — should be a consideration.

Of particular interest is the proposal to require a photo identification at the voting booth. Laws like this have been well-documented as harmful to voters with low incomes and poor voters of all races, while specifically targeting Black and Latinx voters.¹ A previous attempt to limit the participation of poor white voters and voters of color in North Carolina that was struck down by the courts has been costly for the state, which makes a discussion of the costs of changing the constitution to require photo identification critical to our understanding of what is at stake in November.²

This BTC report provides preliminary estimates of the costs to state and local governments and, thus, to all taxpayers, as well as the specific costs to individuals who currently don't have identification.

To be clear, the costs could be far greater than this preliminary estimate suggests given the lack of clear language in the ballot and the resulting need for additional action by the legislature to define implementation of the change, should voters approve it in November. The uncertainties include whether the state will provide an identification card with no fee, the types of acceptable identification that will be allowed, the ability for North Carolina voters to receive an identification by providing necessary supporting documents without paying a fee, and the degree to which North Carolina will commit to educating voters, providing staffing to address wait times, and printing and processing provisional ballots for voters without identification.

Moreover, this report does not attempt to quantify the broader costs to society and the economy of erecting barriers to voting. Historically, across the country, certain politicians have attempted to use restrictive voting laws to rig the system for the

- 1 Gaskins, Keesha and Sundeep Iyer, July 18, 2012. The Challenge of Obtaining Voter Identification. Brennan Center for Justice, Accessed at: <http://www.brennancenter.org/publication/challenge-obtaining-voter-identification>. A full list of literature on these issues can be found here: <https://www.brennancenter.org/analysis/research-and-publications-voter-id>
- 2 Democracy NC, Voter ID: Harmful, Unnecessary, and Racist. Accessed at: <https://democracync.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/2018VoterIDOne-Pgr-6.18.pdf>

wealthy few while cutting funds for our public education, health care, and disaster response. Barriers to full participation in the democratic process could deter the ability of communities' to quickly and effectively identify and address their own needs and have been demonstrated to reduce economic mobility.³ It could erode trust and further divide people in ways that worsen our state's ability to reach its full civic and economic potential.

Preliminary estimates of those costs that can be readily measured suggest that they are real for the state and local communities — these costs to all North Carolinians would be approximately \$12 million. These costs come at a time when austerity provides little ability to absorb additional costs without raising taxes and fees or cutting other services.

These costs will therefore necessitate trade-offs with other priorities of the state such as providing support for children's early years and education, families' health, and communities' well-being. Regarding the issue of election protection and security, the state will not be able to make investments that have been identified and needed to protect the electoral process and fund free and fair elections.

For the more than 218,000 individuals in North Carolina who are currently estimated to not have acceptable identification, the costs of securing one could be a hit to family's weekly budgets and detract from the dollars that would otherwise be circulating more broadly in local economies. A preliminary estimate of these additional costs to individuals is between \$18.9 million and \$25.2 million. These costs will be disproportionately borne by people of color, and, while individuals without identification live in communities across the state, costs are also higher for individuals in rural communities, thereby compounding existing barriers to opportunities that exist for these communities.

These costs will be disproportionately borne by people of color, and, while individuals without identification live in communities across the state, costs are also higher for individuals in rural communities, thereby compounding existing barriers to opportunities that exist for these communities.

Voting and civic participation are critical components of a thriving democracy and economy. Free, fair and accessible elections that expand participation in the democratic process can help North Carolina achieve our broader fiscal and economic goals by ensuring everyone regardless of where they live or their color has a vote and a voice in the democratic process.

Rather than erecting new unnecessary barriers, North Carolina could pursue smart public investments to protect the vote and ensure fuller participation in the democratic process for all North Carolinians regardless of where they live, what they look like or how they worship.

Estimating universal and potential costs

There are costs associated with the implementation of strict voter identification laws that include producing voter identification cards, conducting voter education and public outreach, revising and providing additional election materials, and training poll workers, as well as expanding staffing for election administration and the processing of identification.⁴ Additional possible expenses include litigation, particularly once the details of the implementation are made clear by legislators after November, and the costs of staffing additional agencies such as at the Register of Deeds that would provide the supporting documents for the identification.⁵

-
- 3 Chetty, Raj, Nathaniel Hendren, Patrick Kline and Emmanuel Saez, June 2014. Where is the Land of Opportunity? The Geography of Intergenerational Mobility in the United States, Accessed at: http://obs.rc.fas.harvard.edu/chetty/mobility_geo.pdf and Berenson, Jodi Rose, February 2015. Civic Engagement as a Pathway toward Economic Opportunity: A Multimethod Study of Low-income Individuals. Dissertation Presented to the Faculty of the Heller School for Social Policy and Management at Brandeis University, MA. Accessed at: http://mcstudy.norc.org/publications/files/Benenson%20Dissertation_Final.pdf
 - 4 Shanton, Karen and Wendy Underhill, June 2014. Costs of Voter Identification. National Conference of State Legislatures. Accessed at: http://www.ncsl.org/documents/legismgt/elect/Voter_ID_Costs_June2014.pdf
 - 5 Note: Due to the lack of clarity around the language and the historic precedent of legislative efforts to restrict the vote, we include these "possible" costs as existing costs.

To implement North Carolina's previous law requiring photo identification (H589), the State Board of Elections spent upwards of \$3 million on voter outreach staff, printed materials for polling places and training, a paid media campaign, and related expenses.⁶ County election boards spent millions more, including printing their own materials and placing additional staff at each of the 3,000-plus Election Day and Early Voting polling sites to facilitate administration of the law when it was in effect for the March 2016 primary.

A fiscal note from the state's Fiscal Research Division prior to the law passage estimated that the cost of staffing, printing and otherwise delivering the creation of a free identification card would cost between \$4.17 to \$6.54 per registered voter in need of identification.⁷

Litigation costs for that law have also been high. As of November 2016, the state has paid \$4.9 million in defending the voter identification litigation.⁸ The state has agreed to pay the successful plaintiff's lawyers \$5.9 million in fees after they waived an additional \$11.3 million in fees. In total, the voter identification law cost the state at least \$11 million.

⁶ Special data request to Democracy NC.

⁷ NC General Assembly, Fiscal Research Division, Fiscal Note House Bill 589. Accessed at: <https://www.ncleg.net/Sessions/2013/FiscalNotes/House/PDF/HFN0589v7.pdf>. Researchers at the Fiscal Research Division did not estimate the cost of voter education or polling location costs nor did they capture the staffing costs at agencies beyond the Division of Motor Vehicles.

⁸ Morrill, Jim, November 25, 2016. After passing laws, NC Republicans spent millions defending them. News & Observer, Raleigh, NC. Accessed at: <https://www.newsobserver.com/news/politics-government/state-politics/article116795423.html> and Joint Motion on Fees, Civil Action No. 1:13-CV-658, North Carolina State Conference of the NAACP et al, Plaintiffs v. Patrick Lloyd McCrory, in his official capacity as the Governor of North Carolina, et al., Defendants.

Interactions Between Photo ID and Income Tax Rate Cap Amendments Could Compound Costs

At the same time that North Carolina could change the state constitution to require a photo identification to vote, voters could approve another costly change that would cap the maximum income tax rate that is allowed in the state constitution. Limits on state income tax rates will not guarantee taxes remain low. Instead, it will mean the tax load on middle- and low-income taxpayers would increase as fewer dollars are available to invest in public schools and aid local governments in meeting their responsibilities.

The income tax rate cap is proposed at a time when lawmakers have persistently cut taxes for the wealthy and profitable corporations such that the state has fewer dollars to meet existing needs in classrooms and communities. Specifically, North Carolina has an estimated \$3.5 billion fewer dollars than would have been collected under the tax code that was in place in 2013. By 2019, the state tax code is projected to be unable to keep up with the growth in student populations in K-12 and the number of people receiving health care and community services.¹

Additional costs from the implementation of a mandatory photo identification will make it more difficult to meet needs in communities and more likely that other fees and taxes will be raised that ask more from low- and middle-income taxpayers.

Already, fees for identification issued by the Department of Motor Vehicles have increased for all North Carolinians by 6 percent since the start of the recovery in 2009. Fees for other services and supporting documentation have also increased as state support to these agencies has failed to keep up with demand from a growing population or has gotten cut back due to income tax cuts.

Additional services and requirements without the availability of other general revenue sources could further put pressure on policymakers to increase fees in order to contribute to the efficient delivery of quality services to all.

¹ Sirota, Alexandra and Luis, Toledo, August 2018. 2019 Budget Fails to Effectively Address NC's Existing and Emerging Needs. Budget & Tax Center Report: North Carolina Justice Center, Raleigh, NC.

Based on special data requests this summer to state and county agencies by Democracy North Carolina, conservative estimates of the constitutional amendment proposal are \$9 million for the cost to implement a new photo identification requirement including hiring more workers at election sites and Division of Motor Vehicles stations, conducting voter education and outreach, printing materials, and processing provisional voting ballots in 100 counties. Additional estimated costs to taxpayers include litigation expenses associated with challenges to the voter identification likely to surface given the successful litigation of the legislative proposal but are estimated more conservatively here at \$3 million.

The total potential cost of implementing the photo identification requirement for state and county governments is \$12 million. In North Carolina's recent budget, \$12 million is roughly equivalent to the state's investment this fiscal year in⁹:

- \$2 million in telemedicine to reach people with barriers to accessing health care providers and \$10 million in school safety programming and grants
- \$3.7 million in landslide mapping, \$2.8 million for acquiring and installing flood monitoring systems and assessing inundation zones, \$2.3 million for the North Carolina Search and Rescue services, and \$700,000 to support Forest Service emergency response vehicles
- Making college affordable through the NC Promise Tuition Plan (\$11 million)

Directing \$12 million in taxpayer dollars to erect barriers to voting that are unnecessary could instead be used to make progress on these priorities of North Carolinians:

- Fund 1,400 pre-Kindergarten slots to prepare each child for school
- Provide 14,000 meals to seniors in their homes so that they can stay in their communities and not be institutionalized

These dollars could also be used to advance election integrity and accessibility for example through the replacement of touch-screen voting technology with optical scan technology (\$10.9 million) or the adoption of automated, secure on-line voter registration systems (\$2 million).¹⁰

The potential expenses for North Carolina are in line with what other states have found when they have implemented photo identification requirements. In Indiana and Texas, voter identification cards did not have a fee for individuals to obtain identification — instead the cost was paid by the state. For Indiana, the resulting costs to the state over four years was \$1.3 million to print cards but a total of \$10 million for the full administration of the law.¹¹ Estimates of such photo identification policies in Pennsylvania, South Carolina and Texas find that the cost ranges from \$2 to \$6 per registered voter.¹²

Researchers put the estimated cost for Minnesota at \$10 million to \$13.5 million at the state level, and costs of \$26.5 million to \$63.6 million at the county level.¹³ In the end, Minnesota voters rejected the proposed change at the ballot and the state did not implement an identification requirement at the polls.

Unlike an expensive voter ID scheme, which will cost the state, localities, and individuals a great deal without clear benefits, all North Carolinians share the benefits of well-planned investments in schools, high-quality health care, robust disaster recovery plans, modern and accessible elections, and other public goods that form the foundation of thriving communities.

9 North Carolina Final State Budget, Fiscal Year 2018-2019.

10 Social Science Research Council, December 2013 (updated February 2015). The Costs of Modernizing Voter Registration Systems: A Case Study of California and Arizona. ACLU. Accessed at: https://www.aclu.org/sites/default/files/field_document/022415-aclu-voterregcostsonline_0.pdf

11 Sobel, Richard. June 2014. The High Cost of "Free" Photo Voter Identification Cards. Charles Hamilton Houston Institute for Race & Justice: Harvard University Law School, Cambridge, MA.

12 Sobel, June 2014.

13 Bonnifield, Kathy and David A. Schultz, September 2012. The Costs of the Proposed Elections Amendment and Anhut, Nicholas, April 2012. Voter Identification: The True Costs. Accessed at: https://conservancy.umn.edu/bitstream/handle/11299/123582/1/Anhut_Voter%20Identification%20The%20True%20Costs%20An%20Analysis%20of%20Minnesota's%20Voter%20Identification%20Amendment.pdf

How Photo Identification for Voting Generally Works

Precedent in litigating photo identification suggests that photo identification laws will require the provision of a free identification card to all those who do not have one to vote. Some case law has noted as well that the cost of obtaining the supporting documents, such as birth and marriage certificates, to secure that identification can place an undue burden on the voter.¹

The proposed change to the North Carolina Constitution to require photo identification does not detail the kinds of photo identification that will be required. Given legal precedent, it would be reasonable to assume that the state legislature will fund free photo identification cards for those who do not have one. However, it should be noted that the current language of the amendment does not make clear that the state will provide free identification to those who lack one. The current cost of a driver's license in North Carolina is \$40 for four years.

In its 2013 photo identification law, the General Assembly included a provision for the Division of Motor Vehicles to provide free identification cards for the purpose of voting to eligible voters who provided adequate identifying documents. However, persistent reports revealed that DMV frequently denied eligible voter the free cards and DMV examiners inconsistently and erroneously interpreted the law. As a result, on the eve of the trial about the legality of the law, the General Assembly added another back-up provision for voters who did not have an acceptable identification; it involved voters completing a sworn "reasonable impediment declaration" at the polls.²



Across the country, other states with photo identification laws provide a range of options for voters who arrive at the polls without acceptable identification. Some states allow the voter to show a non-photo form of identification and cast a regular ballot. In other cases, the state may allow the person to vote provisionally with the stipulation that the vote would not be counted without further follow-up from the voter. In North Carolina, nearly 2,400 voters in the March 2016 primary took the trouble to fill out extra paperwork and cast provisional ballots that were coded "No Acceptable ID"; election officials ultimately rejected and did not count over half of those ballots.³ (Stories illustrating the real-life situations of the effectively disenfranchised voters and the sometimes illogical way their provisional ballots were evaluated are detailed in an amicus brief filed during litigation over the ID requirement. The disproportionate harm to voters of color caused by the identification requirement is also documented in that brief.)⁴

In some states, voters voting provisionally are mailed materials to certify their identity or are required to visit a local county elections office to do so. These additional costs would represent an ongoing operational cost pressure on local boards of election that staff polling sites each year.

1 National Conference of State Legislatures, June 2014.
 2 McCloskey, Sharon, June 24, 2015. Lessons learned on Voter ID. NC Policy Watch, NC Justice Center: Raleigh, NC. Accessed at: <http://www.ncpolicywatch.com/2015/06/24/lessons-learned-on-voter-id/> and Binker, Mark and Matthew Burns, June 18, 2015. Lawmakers agree to allow affidavit at polls in lieu of photo ID. WRAL, Raleigh, NC. Accessed at: <https://www.wral.com/lawmakers-agree-to-allow-affidavit-at-polls-in-lieu-of-photo-id/14724244/>
 3 Analysis of provisional ballot database for the March 15, 2016 primary from FTP site of State Board of Elections and Ethic Enforcement, downloaded September 15, 2018: https://dl.ncsbe.gov/index.html?prefix=ENRS/2016_03_15/
 4 Democracy NC Amicus Brief, Record No. 16-1468. Accessed at: <https://democracync.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/May-2016-Amicus-Brief.pdf>

Current state funding of elections is below pre-Recession levels for a mid-term election

In 2006, the last year before the Great Recession and the year of a mid-term election, there were 5.4 million registered voters in North Carolina. While the number of people over the age of 18 has increased by 1.3 million since 2006, the number of registered voters in the state has increased by 1.6 million during that same period. As of Sept. 8, 2018, there are 7,005,682 people registered to vote, and it is estimated that there are 8 million people in the state over the age of 18.

As the number of registered voters in N.C. has increased, funding to administer elections in the state has decreased. The NC State Board of Elections budget for election administration, not including campaign finance administration¹⁴, has decreased by 8 percent between the 2006 and 2017 fiscal years; meanwhile, the number of registered voters in North Carolina has increased by 24.7 percent during the same period (See Figure 1).

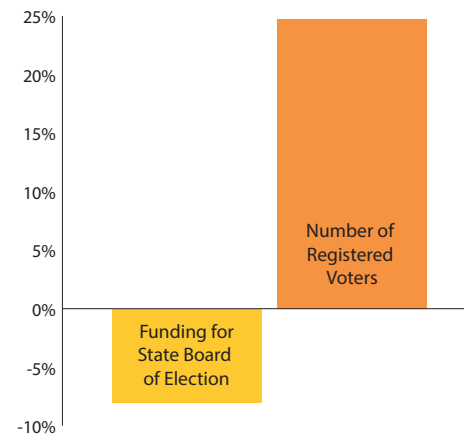
While North Carolina has benefited from federal funds to support various upgrades to election technology and security, the state still falls short of benchmarks for election security.¹⁵ Furthermore, election administration staffing levels at the State Board of Elections have not changed since 2014.

Public investments in the State Board of Elections to administer elections in a secure, fair and efficient way are needed even without the photo identification requirement. States across the country are upgrading their technology, staffing at higher levels and adopting innovations to reduce costs to individuals by streamlining registration and voting processes through technology, for example.¹⁶ These potential investments continue to be further shortchanged as limited resources that are available are directed to barriers to opportunity like a photo identification requirement.

Local governments in North Carolina share in the cost of administering state and local elections each year and as such appropriate dollars for that work. The State Board of Election provided estimates of the cost for all 100 counties but the actual cost for each county will vary across North Carolina as barriers to staffing and technology exist and the number of voters without identification varies.

Differences are mostly driven by the availability of technology, staffing and geographic distances that make shipping voting equipment or transmitting ballots more expensive.¹⁷ North Carolina counties with less than 10,000 people spend double in election operating expenses per person than counties with over 200,000 people (See Figure 2). The nine counties in the state with less than 10,000 people (Gates, Clay, Washington, Alleghany, Jones, Camden, Graham, Hyde, Tyrrell) spend on average \$18.24 for every registered voter in the county. Meanwhile, the seven counties with populations over 200,000 (Mecklenburg, Wake, Guilford, Forsyth, Cumberland, Durham, Buncombe) spend on

Figure 1: Funding for the state board of elections is falling behind of the growth in registered voters



Sources: NC State Board of Elections & Ethics Enforcement; NC Office of State Budget & Management

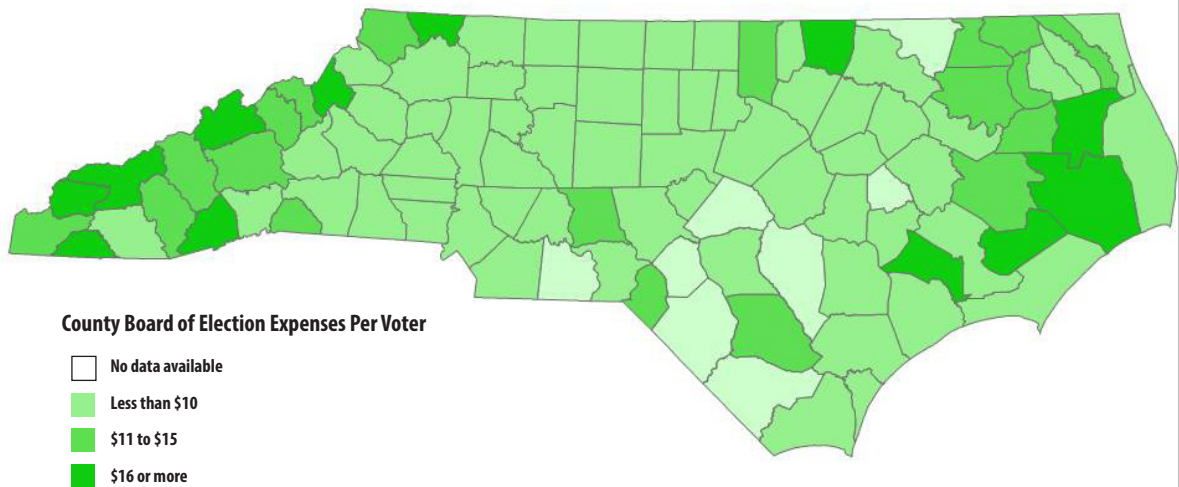
14 In 2018, the state's Board of Ethics was shifted to the Board of Elections and thus the prior fiscal year of budget data was analyzed.

15 State Board of Elections and Ethics Enforcement Memo, July 16, 2018. 2018 HAVA Election Security Grant Budget Narrative. Accessed at: https://www.eac.gov/havadocuments/NC_Narrative_Budget.pdf State Board of Elections and Ethics Enforcement Correspondence to the Election Oversight Committee of the North Carolina General Assembly, February 2018. Accessed at: <http://pulse.ncpolicywatch.org/2018/02/28/board-elections-ethics-asks-ncga-help-beef-election-security-measures/> and Government Technology: 'Most States' Voting Tech is Outdated, Without Replacement Funding'. Accessed at: <http://www.govtech.com/security/Most-States-Voting-Tech-is-Outdated-Without-Replacement-Funding.html>

16 National Conference of State Legislatures, Election Security Measures. Accessed at: <http://www.ncsl.org/research/elections-and-campaigns/election-security-state-policies.aspx> and Root, Danielle, Liz Kennedy and Michael Sozan, April 2, 2018. State Election Security Spending Guidance for 2018 Omnibus. Center for American Progress: Washington, DC and Democracy Fund, September 2016. Progress Report on the Presidential Commission on Election Administration: Improving the Efficiency of Elections, Increasing Access to Voting. Accessed at: https://www.democracyfund.org/media/uploaded/Progress_Report_on_the_PCEA_September_2016.pdf and Center for American Progress: Election Security in all 50 States. Accessed at https://cdn.americanprogress.org/content/uploads/2018/02/21105338/020118_ElectionSecurity-report11.pdf

17 National Conference of State Legislatures, October 2014. Worlds Apart: Urban and Rural Voting. Accessed at: http://www.ncsl.org/Documents/legismgt/elect/Canvass_Oct_2014_No_52.pdf; US Election Assistance Commission Urban-Rural Study, Accessed at: https://www.eac.gov/assets/1/28/EAC%20Urban_Rural%20Study%20Final%20Report%205_17_13.pdf and Rabinowitz, Kate, February 20, 2018. Election Security a Priority, Until it Comes to Paying for New Voting Machines. Pro Publica.

Figure 2: Administering elections costs more in rural counties.



Source: State Board of Elections and Ethics Enforcement, August 2018.

average \$7.52 for every registered voter in the county.

It is therefore likely that the additional cost of administering photo identification will be more costly in more rural parts of the state. Such a finding would be consistent with national studies that find higher costs for rural and less dense counties for everything from processing provisional ballots to providing educational materials.¹⁸

North Carolinians across the state will be affected by a photo identification requirement

Estimates from 2015 of the number of North Carolina registered voters who do not have a Division of Motor Vehicles identification find that 218,733 people could be affected by a change to the state Constitution that requires photo identification in order to vote.¹⁹

A review of North Carolinians affected further shows that people of color and women are less likely to have photo identification.²⁰ Figure 3 shows that while the percent of registered voters statewide who are Black is 22 percent, 36 percent of voters without identification are Black. Women represent 54 percent of registered voters and 57 percent of those without identification.

Looking at the county level, there are 32 counties of North Carolina’s 100 counties where more than half of the voters without identification are Black (see Figure 4). Notably, in 31 of North Carolina’s 100 counties, the percent of voters without DMV identification who are Black is at least 2 times their share of the registered voters in the county.

The number and percent of people without identification is greater in urban counties. Across the state, 3 percent of the voting population does not have a DMV identification, while that percent is

Figure 3: Voters of color are more likely to lack a DMV identification.

	Black	Latinx	White
Percent without identification	36%	4%	48%
Percent of registered voters	22%	2%	71%

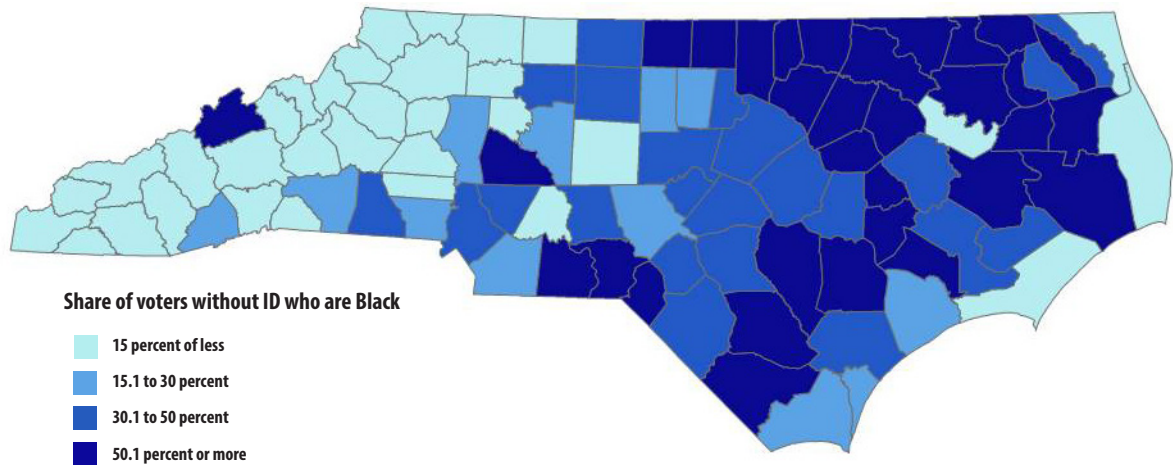
Source: State Board of Elections and Ethics Enforcement, August 2018.

18 <http://results.caceoelectioncosts.org/#/county>

19 Data downloaded August 15, 2018, from State Board of Elections and Ethics Enforcement’s website: <https://dl.ncsbe.gov/index.html?prefix=data/voterid/>

20 State Board of Elections and Ethics Data, August 15, 2018.

Figure 4: Voters of color are more likely to lack identification.



Source: State Board of Elections and Ethics Enforcement, August 2018.

4.2 percent in urban counties with densely settled populations (750 people per square mile), such as Wake, Mecklenburg and Forsyth counties.²¹ Despite the greater share of voters in urban counties lacking identification, the costs of identification are greater for voters in rural counties as detailed below. And it is important to note that there are still 17 rural counties that have similarly high shares of their voting population without identification (4 percent or more).

Costs to individuals are real and force trade-offs for families

Assessing the cost of acquiring identification to meet a new requirement at the polls requires estimating the travel time to offices and wait times at the DMV as well as the potential fees for supporting documentation to get an official identification.

Estimates across the country find that the costs to individuals range from \$75 to \$175.²²

A preliminary and conservative analysis of the North Carolina context suggest that the cost to an individual could range from \$86 to \$115. This estimate captures the major cost categories and assumes that there would be no fee for the identification card itself even though the ballot language is unclear on that point (See Appendix A for Methodology). The variance in these measures depends on travel costs and the length of wait times at the DMV. The latter has been a significant concern in recent months as the

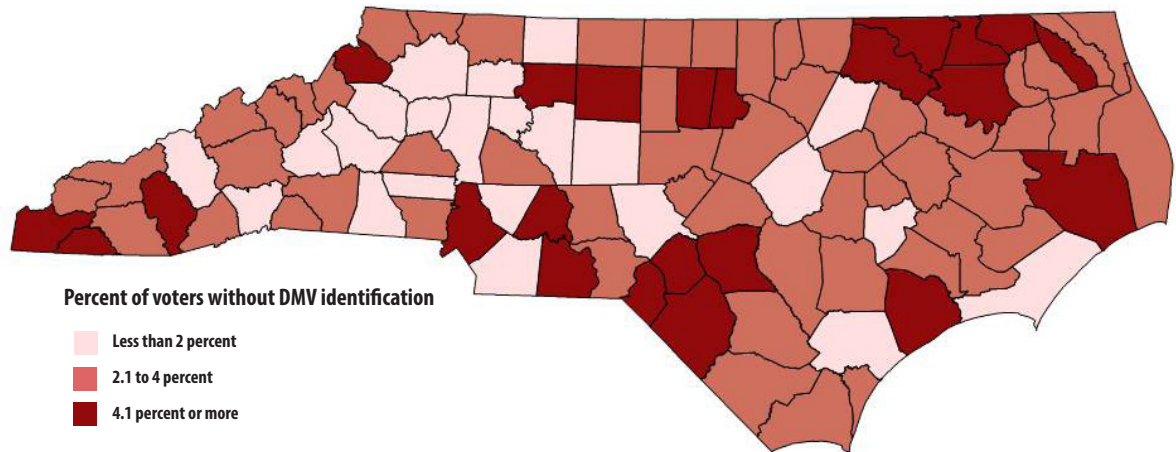
Figure 5: 17 rural counties have high percentages of people without identification.

County	Total Without DMV ID	% Without DMV ID
Anson	791	5%
Bertie	881	6%
Cherokee	984	4%
Clay	367	4%
Gates	383	5%
Halifax	1,878	5%
Hertford	1,036	7%
Hoke	1,581	5%
Hyde	163	5%
Jackson	1,103	4%
Northampton	866	6%
Onslow	4,898	5%
Pasquotank	1,184	4%
Robeson	4,347	6%
Scotland	931	4%
Stanly	1,628	4%
Watauga	2,056	5%

Source: State Board of Elections and Ethics Enforcement, August 2018.

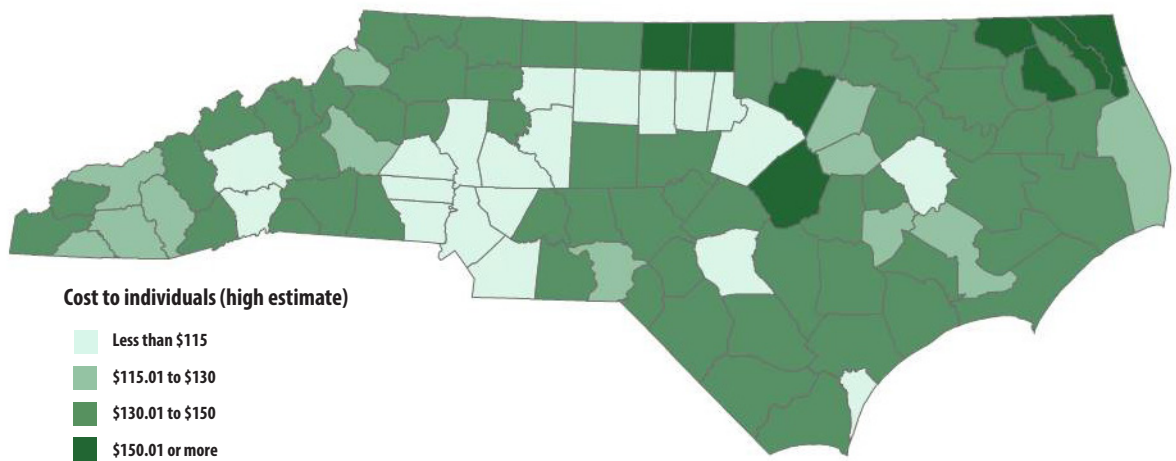
21 NC Department of Commerce, NC Rural Center expands its classification of North Carolina counties. Accessed at: <https://www.nccommerce.com/lead/research-publications/the-lead-feed/artmid/11056/articleid/123/rural-center-expands-its-classification-of-north-carolina-counties>
 22 Sobel, Richard, June 2014.

Figure 6: Many rural counties have high percentages of people without identification.



Source: State Board of Elections and Ethics Enforcement, August 2018.

Figure 7: Estimate of costs to obtain an identification are higher in rural counties.



Source: State Board of Elections and Ethics Enforcement, August 2018.

North Carolina Division of Motor Vehicles has worked to process applications for REAL IDs.²³ In rural counties where there are not five-day DMV offices and, or where mobile offices are operating, we estimate additional costs for travel and time.

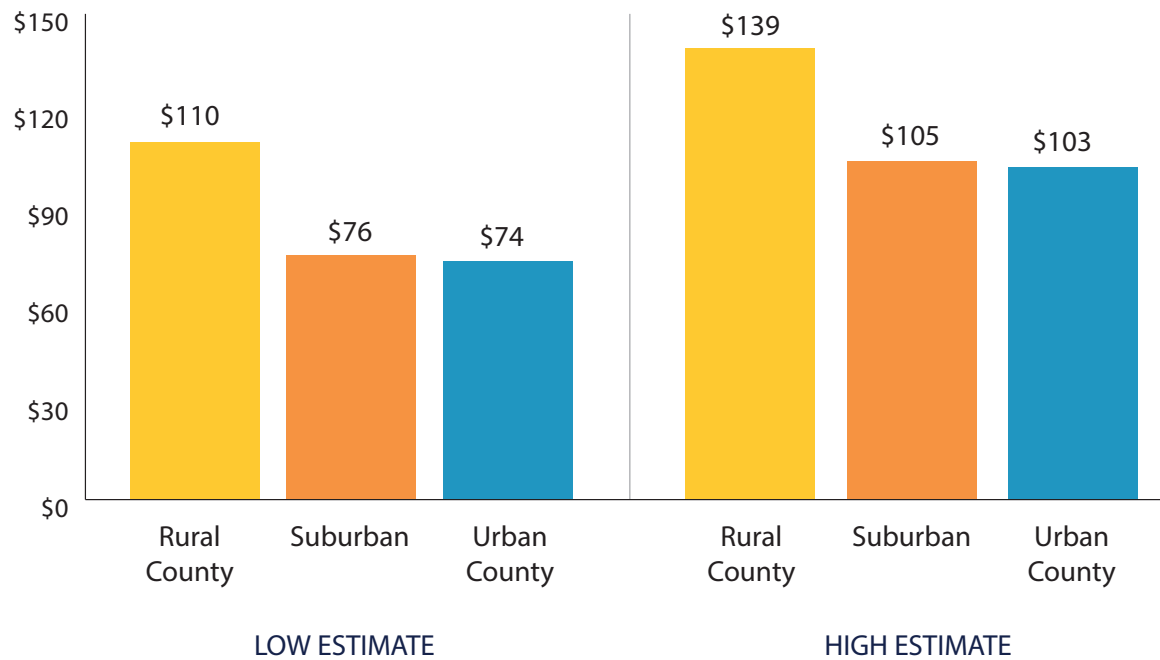
These costs are a hit to household budgets for those living in poverty and earning low wages. For a family of four with poverty-level income, \$115 would represent the loss of nearly one quarter of their weekly income, forcing difficult decisions between food, utility bills and child care expenses and potentially disrupting their annual budget with higher borrowing costs or unpaid bills. A minimum wage worker in North Carolina would have to work 15 hours to cover the cost of the identification.²⁴

At the upper-end cost of \$115 on average, the cost of securing identification for a voter with one child

23 Tribune News Service, August 19, 2018. DMV wait times get worse, state may look at staffing. Accessed at: https://www.greensboro.com/news/local_news/dmv-wait-times-get-worse-state-may-look-at-staffing/article_59592dd9-20fc-5f28-aa80-472d952b7490.html and West, William F. August 15, 2018. DMV making changes to address crowded offices, long wait times. Accessed at: <http://www.dailyadvance.com/News/2018/08/15/DMV.html>

24 Author's calculation using a \$7.25 per hour.

Figure 8: Low and high estimates of average cost of identification by county type.



Source: Author's calculation of State Board of Elections and Ethics Enforcement, August 2018

in their household is equivalent to:

- Two weeks of groceries for a family of four on a thrifty food budget.
- One week of child care.
- Half of a families' monthly health care costs.²⁵

For those North Carolinians working in low-wage industries, the costs could be even higher. First, the median wage in most counties is more than the state minimum wage, which means that lost work hours and time spent has a higher value than the \$7.25 per hour calculated in this analysis. Second, many low-wage jobs do not provide paid time off, which could limit the ability of workers to secure the necessary documentation without risking the loss of their job.

Rural communities will face higher costs as a result of a change to voting requirements.

The cost of securing identification is higher in rural places. In rural counties, the average cost per voter at the high end is \$139 while for urban counties the average is \$102 (See Figure 8).²⁶

Travel times are often longer due to mountains and bodies of water. Costs are also higher with the lack of direct routes or public transit options. Rural residents are less likely than urban residents to own a car and thus are often also dependent on other modes of transportation that are less reliable or more costly.²⁷ In many rural places across North Carolina, there is no public transportation option or affordable car service thus leaving some North Carolinians with no viable way to reach a DMV office or the offices to secure a birth certificate for identification.

²⁵ Kennedy, Brian, 2016 Living Income Standard. North Carolina Justice Center, Raleigh, NC.

²⁶ The low-end estimates show costs in rural counties average \$110 and \$73 in urban counties. Note these aren't weighted averages.

²⁷ Sirota et al, September 2018. State of Working North Carolina 2018: Connecting Communities. North Carolina Justice Center, Raleigh, NC.

The reality of these costs is sometimes difficult to fully quantify. Here are some scenarios based on data from specific counties that demonstrate the ways in which costs can mount for voters, particularly in rural places.

Scenario 1: A single father of two in Halifax County

In rural Halifax County, Jon is one of the 1,878 voters who do not have a DMV ID. He is 28 years old and a single father of two. His driver's license was revoked three years ago due to a failure to pay a speeding ticket and he discarded it. Jon carpools to work at Resers Fine Foods Manufacturing, and his shifts do not provide the flexibility or adequate disposable income for him to easily obtain an ID. Jon works an average of 40 hours a week at \$16.75 an hour, earning Halifax's average weekly wage of \$670 at the manufacturing plant.²⁸ After rent, child care, and other essentials, Jon has very little disposable income to spare.

First, it would be hard for him to find time to make it to the mobile DMV unit in Scotland Neck as it is only open once a month. From his home in south Enfield to the DMV office in Roanoke Rapids, if more flexible hours were possible, it would take 45 minutes round trip and his shift does not end until 4 p.m. Jon takes the Choanoke Public Transportation Authority van to the Roanoke Rapids DMV office on time that he has taken off from work. The ride costs him \$13.32 round trip, and he loses the nearly \$34 dollars he would have earned had he not left work two hours early.

Second, once there, he waits for a modest one hour. Once he arrives at the counter, he realizes that in the rush of leaving home that he forgot his proof of identity, his birth certificate. Luckily, the courthouse and the vital records office is a block away, so he pays \$15 dollars to get a birth certificate. He is very lucky to have been born in Halifax County for if that was not the case, his process of getting a birth certificate would have been much more difficult. After getting the birth certificate, Jon realizes that the DMV office closes at 5 p.m., which is not enough time for him to get back there before closing. Jon has spent \$62 dollars today and still not gotten his ID.

Scenario 2: A family trying to make ends meet in Jackson County

In Jackson County, in Western N.C., there are 1,103 registered voters without a DMV identification. One of them is a Sarah, a grandmother caring for two young grandchildren, who works as an early education teacher in a nearby child care center. Sarah's husband receives a modest disability check each month; he occasionally drives but is unable to work due to an injury that occurred on the job a few years ago. To make ends meet in Jackson County, their family needs \$2,782 each month. Given Sarah's job provides about \$1,600 each month, they have decided to keep their young children home to be cared for by their dad and family members, and to access food assistance through SNAP and support from their church. Getting an identification would be a significant challenge for Sarah since she has a set schedule at work, no paid leave, and moved from Virginia to her husband's childhood home without a copy of her birth certificate. A birth certificate copy in Virginia costs \$12. Since her maiden name is on the birth certificate, she will also need a marriage certificate from Virginia, where she married her husband. This would be an additional \$12.

Should she be able to secure marriage and birth certificates, the drive to the DMV office from her home outside of Wolf Mountain would be 27 miles and take roughly 50 minutes with no traffic. She would need to take time off work to make the trip but would likely have to wait in the office for more than an hour. Her costs for the out-of-state copy of her birth and marriage certificate, travel and wait time, and lost wages would be at least \$82. This doesn't account for the possibility that securing the certificates by mail could be a problem and require travel to Virginia, a more than \$300 cost.

A road map forward

The state of North Carolina is a place where we believe in everyone having a full chance to participate in the democratic process. A photo identification requirement goes against our democratic values, is unnecessary and costly to North Carolinians, and targets Black and Latinx voters as well

28 Bureau of Labor Statistics, Covered employment and wages in the US and all counties in NC, Fourth Quarter 2017. Accessed at: https://www.bls.gov/regions/southeast/news-release/countyemploymentandwages_northcarolina.htm#ro4qcew-northcarolina

as voters of all races living in rural communities across the state. It will divert our collective ability to prioritize our state's well-being such as educating every child and providing for the health of neighbors. Furthermore, by targeting Black and Latinx voters to keep them from full participation, the voter ID amendment will undermine our state's democratic process and ability to govern for all.

Instead, North Carolina should be advancing efforts to ensure the full participation of eligible voters by enhancing voter registration systems and expanding early voting opportunities in every community, for example. The state can further protect the vote by monitoring intimidation at the polls, adopting the latest technologies and systems for promoting election integrity, and funding the operations of the Board of Election adequately at the state and county level.

The benefits of increasing voter participation and strengthening the connection that North Carolinians have to the democratic process will be broad-based. It can improve economic and fiscal outcomes for the state and remove barriers to well-being that have persisted. It can ensure that the policy process is pursued with the goal of serving all, not just the wealthy few.

APPENDIX A: Details on Methods to Estimate Individual Costs

Our methodology builds on that developed by other states, namely Bonniefield et al and Sobel, to quantify some of the costs facing voters who need to acquire an ID to exercise their franchise. The methodology used for this report does not capture every cost entailed, and so the real cost to individuals is likely even higher.

We used data acquired through special data requests on the number of voters without a DMV identification by county and publicly available data from the American Community Survey on commute times and Internal Revenue Services on the recommended standard for mileage reimbursement based on highway miles driven.

Our methodology is based on estimating the average cost facing voters in each county. The costs estimated here include:

Cost of travel: Recognizing that voters in different counties have to travel different distances to the nearest DMV office, we used average commute time for each county as a proxy for how many miles voters would likely have to travel. The average commute time was multiplied by two to reflect a round-trip to the DMV, and then that value was multiplied by the federal millage reimbursement rate (53.5 cents) to capture the cost of travel. Because many rural counties have far fewer DMV offices, the travel distance is likely larger than the average commute time would reflect, so travel costs for rural counties were doubled.

Lost Wages: Our methodology estimates the lost wages that individuals would incur by taking time during business hours to obtain an ID. Time lost in travel was estimated in the same way as direct travel costs described above, using commute times by county and doubling the time for rural counties. Two estimates of wait time at the DMV were used, a low estimate of 4 hours and a high estimate of 8 hours. DMV offices have experienced extremely long wait times this year as many North Carolinians move to real ID, so these wait times are consistent with what has been reported in many parts of the state. The total travel and wait time for an individuals in each county was then multiplied by the state's minimum wage of \$7.25. Of course, many workers earn above minimum wage, so the lost income would be substantially greater than \$7.25 per hour. As such, the real cost in lost wages is likely higher than is estimated here.

Birth Certificate: Because many voters who lack an ID do not possess their birth certificate, our methodology included the \$15 fee charged in North Carolina for a replacement birth certificate. While not every voter without identification will have to pay the \$15 fee for a copy of their birth certificate, many will or may incur far greater costs because they were born out of the state, need to wait in lines at various offices beyond the DMV and, or need to acquire other documents to prove their birth or identity like marriage licenses. This is another area where the real cost of obtaining an ID to vote is likely higher than the conservative estimate produced here.

Once this average cost facing voters was calculated, that average cost was multiplied by the number of voters who lack an ID in each county, creating an estimated total cost facing individuals in each county.

As noted already, this methodology was intentionally designed to be conservative, and the real costs of obtaining an ID are likely significantly higher. Costs not estimated here include obtaining childcare or elder care, using public transit instead of a personal vehicle, wait times to obtain a replacement birth certificate, making multiple trips to the DMV if additional paperwork is required, and time required to learn about how to obtain an ID.

APPENDIX B: The Cost of North Carolina's Proposed Constitutional Amendment to Require Photo ID to Vote

County	Type	Total Registered Voters	Total Without DMV ID	Percent without DMV ID	Percent of Voters who are Black	Percent of Voters without DMV ID who are Black	Individual Cost Per Person (Low Estimate)	Total Cost (Low Estimate)	Individual Cost per Person (High Estimate)	Total Cost (High Estimate)	Poverty Rate	Median Wage
ALAMANCE	Suburban	92,673	3,176	3%	20%	22%	\$74.82	\$237,641.55	\$103.82	\$329,745.55	16.1	\$14.43
ALEXANDER	Rural County	23,616	318	1%	4%	8%	\$110.37	\$35,097.77	\$139.37	\$44,319.77	15.0	\$13.86
ALLEGHANY	Rural County	7,076	226	3%	1%	1%	\$112.47	\$25,417.99	\$141.47	\$31,971.99	20.6	\$13.88
ANSON	Rural County	17,374	791	5%	44%	54%	\$117.45	\$92,905.59	\$146.45	\$115,844.59	25.1	\$14.67
ASHE	Rural County	18,660	549	3%	1%	1%	\$114.31	\$62,753.63	\$143.31	\$78,674.63	16.1	\$15.46
AVERY	Rural County	12,182	465	4%	1%	7%	\$102.50	\$47,662.66	\$131.50	\$61,147.66	19.7	\$13.13
BEAUFORT	Rural County	32,801	725	2%	26%	54%	\$107.75	\$78,116.58	\$136.75	\$99,141.58	19.0	\$14.56
BERTIE	Rural County	14,143	881	6%	60%	72%	\$107.22	\$94,462.88	\$136.22	\$120,011.88	24.4	\$12.01
BLADEN	Rural County	22,281	645	3%	37%	56%	\$110.63	\$71,358.07	\$139.63	\$90,063.07	26.4	\$12.58
BRUNSWICK	Rural County	83,684	1,903	2%	10%	25%	\$107.75	\$205,042.54	\$136.75	\$260,229.54	13.8	\$14.28
BUNCOMBE	Suburban	188,057	5,405	3%	6%	10%	\$70.50	\$381,029.08	\$99.50	\$537,774.08	13.5	\$15.75
BURKE	Rural County	55,887	1,038	2%	6%	12%	\$100.14	\$103,944.63	\$129.14	\$134,046.63	17.7	\$14.98
CABARRUS	Suburban	118,854	2,141	2%	17%	33%	\$80.07	\$171,431.65	\$109.07	\$233,520.65	11.0	\$15.28
CALDWELL	Rural County	53,799	921	2%	5%	12%	\$105.12	\$96,818.90	\$134.12	\$123,527.90	17.1	\$14.85
CAMDEN	Rural County	7,115	196	3%	15%	37%	\$133.19	\$26,105.89	\$162.19	\$31,789.89	8.7	\$15.87
CARTERET	Rural County	51,275	967	2%	5%	13%	\$105.91	\$102,415.61	\$134.91	\$130,458.61	12.3	\$14.27
CASWELL	Rural County	15,555	465	3%	35%	59%	\$128.47	\$59,739.17	\$157.47	\$73,224.17	19.7	\$12.11
CATAWBA	Suburban	102,348	2,644	3%	9%	14%	\$74.04	\$195,754.27	\$103.04	\$272,430.27	12.7	\$15.54
CHATHAM	Rural County	47,516	1,279	3%	13%	32%	\$118.50	\$151,564.91	\$147.50	\$188,655.91	11.7	\$14.27
CHEROKEE	Rural County	22,051	984	4%	1%	1%	\$104.60	\$102,925.42	\$133.60	\$131,461.42	18.4	\$14.14
CHOWAN	Rural County	10,144	245	2%	31%	58%	\$112.73	\$27,619.18	\$141.73	\$34,724.18	18.9	\$14.59
CLAY	Rural County	8,980	367	4%	0%	1%	\$97.52	\$35,788.37	\$126.52	\$46,431.37	15.3	\$15.48
CLEVELAND	Rural County	62,246	1,171	2%	22%	35%	\$105.39	\$123,407.01	\$134.39	\$157,366.01	20.6	\$15.68
COLUMBUS	Rural County	37,182	1,265	3%	32%	54%	\$111.68	\$141,277.73	\$140.68	\$177,962.73	24.6	\$15.08
CRAVEN	Rural County	69,922	2,364	3%	23%	35%	\$100.40	\$237,349.54	\$129.40	\$305,905.54	15.3	\$16.54
CUMBERLAND	Suburban	189,553	11,479	6%	42%	44%	\$71.28	\$818,253.73	\$100.28	\$1,151,144.73	18.8	\$15.73
CURRITUCK	Rural County	17,850	396	2%	6%	12%	\$138.44	\$54,822.24	\$167.44	\$66,306.24	10.2	\$14.71

APPENDIX B: The Cost of North Carolina's Proposed Constitutional Amendment to Require Photo ID to Vote (CONT.)

County	Type	Total Registered Voters	Total Without DMV ID	Percent without DMV ID	Percent of Voters who are Black	Percent of Voters without DMV ID who are Black	Individual Cost Per Person (Low Estimate)	Total Cost (Low Estimate)	Individual Cost per Person (High Estimate)	Total Cost (High Estimate)	Poverty Rate	Median Wage
DARE	Rural County	27,197	572	2%	2%	3%	\$94.89	\$54,278.61	\$123.89	\$70,866.61	10.9	\$13.69
DAVIDSON	Suburban	99,363	1,148	1%	9%	23%	\$75.87	\$87,102.78	\$104.87	\$120,394.78	15.4	\$14.55
DAVIE	Rural County	28,075	467	2%	7%	15%	\$115.09	\$53,748.12	\$144.09	\$67,291.12	11.6	\$15.24
DUPLIN	Rural County	29,532	973	3%	31%	52%	\$114.31	\$111,219.09	\$143.31	\$139,436.09	21.3	\$13.98
DURHAM	Urban County	210,620	16,917	8%	39%	34%	\$73.91	\$1,250,267.80	\$102.91	\$1,740,860.80	16.1	\$22.41
EDGECOMBE	Rural County	37,967	1,370	4%	61%	77%	\$101.19	\$138,628.47	\$130.19	\$178,358.47	23.9	\$14.07
FORSYTH	Urban County	232,140	10,961	5%	28%	35%	\$71.68	\$785,642.46	\$100.68	\$1,103,511.46	17.5	\$17.33
FRANKLIN	Rural County	40,905	1,001	2%	27%	58%	\$125.85	\$125,973.85	\$154.85	\$155,002.85	15.3	\$16.73
GASTON	Suburban	134,501	4,392	3%	16%	22%	\$76.53	\$336,116.83	\$105.53	\$463,484.83	15.7	\$15.83
GATES	Rural County	8,456	383	5%	35%	57%	\$140.28	\$53,725.84	\$169.28	\$64,832.84	15.2	\$15.15
GRAHAM	Rural County	6,660	264	4%	0%	0%	\$109.06	\$28,791.49	\$138.06	\$36,447.49	19.9	\$15.05
GRANVILLE	Rural County	35,206	906	3%	34%	55%	\$119.29	\$108,076.44	\$148.29	\$134,350.44	15.2	\$15.99
GREENE	Rural County	11,023	265	2%	38%	54%	\$106.96	\$28,344.40	\$135.96	\$36,029.40	23.7	\$15.84
GUILFORD	Urban County	357,747	14,506	4%	34%	49%	\$71.94	\$1,043,539.88	\$100.94	\$1,464,213.88	18.3	\$16.97
HALIFAX	Rural County	38,255	1,878	5%	54%	65%	\$109.32	\$205,304.84	\$138.32	\$259,766.84	27.0	\$13.23
HARNETT	Rural County	70,298	2,724	4%	23%	33%	\$120.08	\$327,088.84	\$149.08	\$406,084.84	16.1	\$14.04
HAYWOOD	Rural County	40,850	812	2%	1%	3%	\$104.07	\$84,508.36	\$133.07	\$108,056.36	15.9	\$13.41
HENDERSON	Suburban	75,670	1,446	2%	3%	7%	\$72.59	\$104,971.41	\$101.59	\$146,905.41	12.2	\$15.73
HERTFORD	Rural County	14,640	1,036	7%	63%	75%	\$105.65	\$109,451.67	\$134.65	\$139,495.67	26.1	\$14.67
HOKE	Rural County	28,899	1,581	5%	40%	41%	\$112.21	\$177,398.74	\$141.21	\$223,247.74	19.5	\$13.61
HYDE	Rural County	3,433	163	5%	25%	53%	\$105.12	\$17,135.16	\$134.12	\$21,862.16	22.3	\$12.93
IREDELL	Suburban	112,453	1,422	1%	12%	24%	\$77.05	\$109,570.79	\$106.05	\$150,808.79	10.6	\$16.30
JACKSON	Rural County	26,785	1,103	4%	2%	5%	\$94.63	\$104,377.26	\$123.63	\$136,364.26	20.9	\$15.29
JOHNSTON	Rural County	112,250	2,230	2%	16%	31%	\$121.13	\$270,110.98	\$150.13	\$334,780.98	13.2	\$15.36
JONES	Rural County	7,474	296	4%	34%	60%	\$113.52	\$33,601.43	\$142.52	\$42,185.43	21.5	\$15.17
LEE	Rural County	34,481	741	2%	22%	33%	\$105.65	\$78,285.42	\$134.65	\$99,774.42	16.9	\$15.09
LENOIR	Rural County	39,206	761	2%	43%	65%	\$100.14	\$76,206.03	\$129.14	\$98,275.03	20.6	\$14.27

APPENDIX B: The Cost of North Carolina's Proposed Constitutional Amendment to Require Photo ID to Vote (CONT.)

County	Type	Total Registered Voters	Total Without DMV ID	Percent without DMV ID	Percent of Voters who are Black	Percent of Voters without DMV ID who are Black	Individual Cost Per Person (Low Estimate)	Total Cost (Low Estimate)	Individual Cost per Person (High Estimate)	Total Cost (High Estimate)	Poverty Rate	Median Wage
LINCOLN	Suburban	51,269	979	2%	6%	14%	\$83.09	\$81,342.83	\$112.09	\$109,733.83	12.7	\$16.68
MACON	Rural County	24,100	452	2%	1%	3%	\$105.65	\$47,753.05	\$134.65	\$60,861.05	18.4	\$14.47
MADISON	Rural County	15,728	550	3%	1%	8%	\$100.40	\$55,220.92	\$129.40	\$71,170.92	16.4	\$14.75
MARTIN	Rural County	17,464	551	3%	44%	63%	\$117.19	\$64,572.24	\$146.19	\$80,551.24	18.8	\$13.44
McDowell	Rural County	28,472	681	2%	3%	6%	\$105.91	\$72,125.16	\$134.91	\$91,874.16	22.5	\$15.08
MECKLENBURG	Urban County	630,802	29,129	5%	33%	50%	\$77.45	\$2,255,968.23	\$106.45	\$3,100,709.23	12.3	\$19.79
MITCHELL	Rural County	11,636	452	4%	0%	0%	\$113.78	\$51,428.86	\$142.78	\$64,536.86	16.4	\$16.08
MONTGOMERY	Rural County	15,609	623	4%	22%	48%	\$106.17	\$66,145.78	\$135.17	\$84,212.78	21.4	\$12.67
MOORE	Rural County	62,173	1,227	2%	13%	19%	\$106.17	\$130,274.27	\$135.17	\$165,857.27	11.4	\$15.12
NASH	Rural County	63,909	1,258	2%	39%	59%	\$99.88	\$125,645.27	\$128.88	\$162,127.27	16.5	\$14.88
NEW HANOVER	Urban County	160,025	4,831	3%	14%	24%	\$70.76	\$341,831.90	\$99.76	\$481,930.90	17.3	\$15.95
NORTHAMPTON	Rural County	15,373	866	6%	59%	77%	\$109.85	\$95,126.35	\$138.85	\$120,240.35	22.4	\$13.41
ONSLow	Rural County	97,735	4,898	5%	19%	25%	\$104.34	\$511,040.99	\$133.34	\$653,082.99	13.7	\$13.31
ORANGE	Suburban	104,754	6,051	6%	12%	17%	\$73.12	\$442,443.07	\$102.12	\$617,922.07	12.8	\$21.89
PAMLICO	Rural County	9,529	305	3%	19%	45%	\$117.19	\$35,743.26	\$146.19	\$44,588.26	18.5	\$13.94
PASQUOTANK	Rural County	26,696	1,184	4%	39%	65%	\$113.52	\$134,405.71	\$142.52	\$168,741.71	17.0	\$14.66
PENDER	Rural County	37,406	720	2%	18%	40%	\$117.45	\$84,566.40	\$146.45	\$105,446.40	15.0	\$14.25
PERQUIMANS	Rural County	9,621	238	2%	24%	48%	\$122.96	\$29,265.04	\$151.96	\$36,167.04	16.9	\$14.82
PITT	Suburban	111,491	3,648	3%	35%	38%	\$70.36	\$256,689.70	\$99.36	\$362,481.70	21.5	\$16.17
POLK	Rural County	14,939	517	3%	5%	13%	\$111.68	\$57,739.59	\$140.68	\$72,732.59	14.5	\$13.97
RANDOLPH	Rural County	90,519	1,777	2%	6%	10%	\$104.86	\$186,338.59	\$133.86	\$237,871.59	14.4	\$13.84
RICHMOND	Rural County	29,451	750	3%	33%	55%	\$100.40	\$75,301.25	\$129.40	\$97,051.25	24.9	\$13.75
ROBESON	Rural County	72,383	4,347	6%	29%	36%	\$106.96	\$464,955.12	\$135.96	\$591,018.12	27.8	\$13.38
ROCKINGHAM	Rural County	58,124	1,196	2%	20%	37%	\$112.21	\$134,199.17	\$141.21	\$168,883.17	18.1	\$15.00
ROWAN	Suburban	89,003	2,403	3%	17%	52%	\$76.00	\$182,639.21	\$105.00	\$252,326.21	16.5	\$16.10
RUTHERFORD	Rural County	42,832	928	2%	11%	17%	\$109.32	\$101,449.89	\$138.32	\$128,361.89	18.6	\$14.11
SAMPSON	Rural County	36,090	1,327	4%	32%	51%	\$111.94	\$148,550.13	\$140.94	\$187,033.13	19.6	\$13.47

APPENDIX B: The Cost of North Carolina's Proposed Constitutional Amendment to Require Photo ID to Vote (CONT.)

County	Type	Total Registered Voters	Total Without DMV ID	Percent without DMV ID	Percent of Voters who are Black	Percent of Voters without DMV ID who are Black	Individual Cost Per Person (Low Estimate)	Total Cost (Low Estimate)	Individual Cost per Person (High Estimate)	Total Cost (High Estimate)	Poverty Rate	Median Wage
SCOTLAND	Rural County	22,728	931	4%	40%	53%	\$101.98	\$94,939.35	\$130.98	\$121,938.35	27.6	\$15.28
STANLY	Rural County	38,845	1,628	4%	11%	10%	\$110.11	\$179,255.82	\$139.11	\$226,467.82	13.1	\$14.99
STOKES	Rural County	29,945	555	2%	4%	11%	\$118.77	\$65,914.58	\$147.77	\$82,009.58	12.4	\$14.08
SURRY	Rural County	42,791	921	2%	4%	8%	\$107.22	\$98,751.77	\$136.22	\$125,460.77	17.0	\$14.15
SWAIN	Rural County	9,962	326	3%	1%	4%	\$95.42	\$31,106.05	\$124.42	\$40,560.05	16.7	\$13.66
TRANSYLVANIA	Rural County	23,509	615	3%	4%	16%	\$110.90	\$68,200.43	\$139.90	\$86,035.43	16.6	\$13.83
TYRRELL	Rural County	2,437	67	3%	33%	58%	\$116.40	\$7,799.07	\$145.40	\$9,742.07	27.3	\$14.15
UNION	Suburban	143,346	2,011	1%	12%	29%	\$82.69	\$166,297.97	\$111.69	\$224,616.97	9.0	\$16.95
VANCE	Rural County	29,053	994	3%	52%	69%	\$103.81	\$103,189.13	\$132.81	\$132,015.13	24.2	\$12.99
WAKE	Urban County	674,500	16,772	2%	21%	39%	\$76.14	\$1,276,950.20	\$105.14	\$1,763,338.20	9.2	\$18.99
WARREN	Rural County	13,296	413	3%	53%	69%	\$119.55	\$49,374.98	\$148.55	\$61,351.98	26.4	\$13.57
WASHINGTON	Rural County	8,539	341	4%	51%	72%	\$109.58	\$37,367.92	\$138.58	\$47,256.92	26.1	\$14.93
WATAUGA	Rural County	42,130	2,056	5%	2%	4%	\$95.94	\$197,256.75	\$124.94	\$256,880.75	24.3	\$13.46
WAYNE	Rural County	71,514	2,015	3%	34%	44%	\$101.98	\$205,480.97	\$130.98	\$263,915.97	20.6	\$14.68
WILKES	Rural County	41,958	787	2%	4%	8%	\$105.65	\$83,145.24	\$134.65	\$105,968.24	16.8	\$13.66
WILSON	Rural County	54,041	1,503	3%	42%	59%	\$97.78	\$146,960.84	\$126.78	\$190,547.84	22.3	\$16.95
YADKIN	Rural County	23,342	415	2%	3%	8%	\$115.35	\$47,872.19	\$144.35	\$59,907.19	14.0	\$14.97
YANCEY	Rural County	13,362	509	4%	1%	1%	\$119.81	\$60,985.50	\$148.81	\$75,746.50	19.1	\$13.77

Sources: Data on Registered Voters, Voters without DMV Identification from State Board of Election and Ethics Administration, August 2018; Poverty Rate from SAIPE 2017 Estimates at County Level, US. Census Bureau; Median Wage by County from the NC Department of Commerce, Quarterly Survey of Employment and Wages, 2017.