



HOUSE BILL 504: City of Lincolnton/Even-Yr Elect'n/Mayor Term.

2017-2018 General Assembly

Committee:		Date:	June 27, 2017
Introduced by:	Rep. Saine	Prepared by:	Erika Churchill and Jessica Sammons, Staff Attorneys
Analysis of:	Fourth Edition		

OVERVIEW: *House Bill 504 would:*

- *Change the City of Lincolnton's regular municipal election cycle from odd-numbered years to even-numbered years, extending the terms of current elected City officers one year to implement the new election schedule.*
- *Increase the mayor's term of office from two years to four years.*
- *Allow the Lincoln County board of elections to set the date and time completed petitions must be submitted by unaffiliated candidates seeking to be listed on the ballot for a municipal office in advance of the Lincolnton city election.*

CURRENT LAW: Generally, municipal elections are held in odd-numbered years. G.S. 163-279. In the City of Lincolnton, officers consist of a mayor and four City Council members. The mayor serves a two-year term, and Council members serve staggered four-year terms. The Council members are each elected from single-member residency wards by a city-wide vote. To be a candidate or be elected for a Council member seat, a person must reside in the ward he or she seeks to represent, but a member may continue to serve his or her remaining term of office upon moving to another ward within the city.

Elections in the City of Lincolnton are conducted according to the partisan primary and election method. G.S. 163-291. Partisan municipal elections are held on Tuesday after the first Monday in November, with the first primary held on the second Tuesday after Labor Day, and the second primary, if required, held on the fourth Tuesday before the election. G.S. 163-279.

Because the City of Lincolnton conducts partisan municipal elections, G.S. 163-296 dictates the requirements for an individual to be listed on the ballot for a municipal office as an unaffiliated candidate. A written petition indicating support for the individual's candidacy for a specified municipal office must be signed by at least 4% of all voters qualified to vote in the municipal election. The petition must be filed with the Lincoln County board of elections by noon on the Friday preceding the seventh Saturday before the election.

BILL ANALYSIS: House Bill 504 would do the following:

- Provide that regular municipal elections for officers for the City of Lincolnton must be held in even-numbered years at the time for primaries and elections for county officers, beginning in 2018.
- Increase the term of office for Mayor of the City of Lincolnton from two years to four years, effective in 2018.

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- Implement changes to the election schedule for the City of Lincoln, by eliminating elections in 2017.
 - The current mayor would serve until 2018. The next mayor would be elected in 2018, and stand for election for a four-year term.
 - The current Council members from Wards 1 and 3 would serve until 2018, and stand for election for a four-year term.
 - The current Council members from Wards 2 and 4 would serve until 2020, and stand for election for a four-year term.
- Allow the Lincoln County board of elections to set the date and time completed petitions must be submitted for verification by those seeking to be listed on the ballot for a municipal office as an unaffiliated candidate in advance of the Lincoln city election.

EFFECTIVE DATE: This act would be effective when it becomes law, and apply to elections held on or after that day.

BACKGROUND: The City of Lincoln is located in Lincoln County, and has a population of 10,558. Regular municipal elections in most municipalities are held in odd-numbered years. The following municipalities hold regular municipal elections in even-numbered years:

- Albemarle, Badin, Locust, Misenheimer, New London, Norwood, Oakboro, Red Cross, Richfield, Stanfield (*all municipalities in Stanly County*) (S.L. 2015-253)
- Archdale (*Randolph, Guilford Counties*) (S.L. 2007-41)
- Dobson (*Surry County*) (S.L. 2012-47)
- Elkin (*Surry, Wilkes Counties*) (S.L. 2014-35)
- Pilot Mountain (*Surry County*) (S.L. 2012-47)
- Winston-Salem (*Forsyth County*) (S.L. 2011-141)
- High Point (*Guilford, Davidson, Randolph, Forsyth Counties*) (S.L. 2006-171) – However, S.L. 2013-261 changed the method of election for municipal elections back to odd-numbered years, beginning with the 2017 election.
- Troy, Star (*Montgomery County*) (S.L. 2017-12) – Even-year municipal elections will begin in 2018.