



SENATE BILL 250: Remove Foreign Citizens from Voting Rolls.

2019-2020 General Assembly

Committee:		Date:	December 20, 2019
Introduced by:	Sens. Krawiec, Sanderson, Burgin	Prepared by:	Kara McCraw Staff Attorney
Analysis of:	Ratified		

OVERVIEW: *Senate Bill 250 would do the following:*

- *Codify the case law requirement that jurors be United States citizens.*
- *Allow a chief district court judge to delegate hearing jury excuses to the clerk of court.*
- *Require applications for excusals from jury duty be made on a form developed by the Administrative Office of the Courts.*
- *Require clerks to maintain records of persons asking to be excused from jury duty due to disqualification, and share those records with the State Board of Elections (State Board) if the disqualification is due to citizenship for use in voter list maintenance efforts.*
- *Create a process for voter list maintenance removal of non-citizens reported as disqualified from jury duty.*

Senate Bill 250 was ratified by the General Assembly on October 31, 2019, and vetoed by the Governor on November 6, 2019.

CURRENT LAW: Chapter 9 of the General Statutes governs the process of summoning prospective jurors for trials of cases in superior and district courts, including the compilation of a jury list and the selection of jurors. G.S. 9-6 allows a chief district court judge to delegate the authority to receive, hear, and pass on applications for excuses from jury duty, to another district court judge.

G.S. 163-82.14 provides the process for periodic removal of ineligible voters from the voter registration rolls, including removal of deceased voters, those convicted of a felony, and those who have moved out of the county.

BILL ANALYSIS:

Section 1 would codify the holding of the North Carolina Supreme Court in Hinton v. Hinton, 196 N.C. 341 (1928) requiring United States citizenship as a qualification for jury service.

Section 2 would require applications for excuses from jury duty to be made on a form developed and furnished by the Administrative Office of the Courts. It would allow a chief district court judge to delegate authority to the clerk of superior court to approve requests to be excused from jury service. It also would cite the newly created section in the statute requiring the clerk to keep a record of excusals from jury duty.

Section 3 would make conforming changes to reflect that the clerk is included in the list of possible designees to hear requests to be excused from jury duty.

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Section 4 would add a new section to Article 1 of Chapter 9 of the General Statutes. The provisions would address all of the following:

- The clerk of superior court would be required to retain the name and address provided by each person who requests to be excused from jury duty because the person is not qualified to serve as a juror, along with the reason for the request. The clerk would be required to maintain the records for the remainder of the biennium. The records retained by the clerk would not be public records.
- If a person is disqualified from jury duty because the person is not a citizen of the United States, the clerk of superior court would be required to record the name, address, date of birth, and other personal information from the master jury list, reason for the disqualification, and the date of disqualification. The clerk also would be required to report this information electronically to the State Board quarterly. The State Board would be required to use this information to conduct efforts to remove names from the list of registered voters. The records retained by the State Board would be public records, except as provided by federal statutes, and the State Board would be required to retain the records for four years.

Section 5 would create a process for removal of non-citizens excused from jury duty on that basis from voter registration roles as follows:

- Within 30 days of receipt of the report from the clerk of superior court, the State Board would be required to review the voter registration and citizenship status of persons identified in the report. Except for persons that the State Board determines have become United States citizens after the date of those persons' jury disqualification, the State Board would then distribute to the county boards of elections the list of those persons identified by the clerk of superior court who are registered to vote in that county. The report must include the information in the electronic file provided by the clerk of superior court, the voter registration number of each person, and the results of the State Board's review of each person's voter registration and citizenship status.
- Within 30 days of receiving the report from the State Board, the county board of elections would be required to do the following:
 - Give 30 days' written notice to the voter's registration address or mailing address if different from the voter's residential address.
 - If the voter does not object, the county board would remove the person's name from its registration records, and indicate within the statewide computerized voter registration system individuals removed on the basis on non-citizenship status.
 - If the voter objects within 30 days, the chair of the county board of elections would enter a challenge. The notice the county board received from the State Board would be prima facie evidence for the preliminary hearing that the person is not a citizen of the United States. This presumption could be rebutted by evidence as presented by the person of citizenship naturalization following the excusal from jury service or other federal documentation of citizenship.
- If the State Board determines a prospective juror voted prior to obtaining that person's United States citizenship status, the State Board must furnish the district attorney a copy of its investigation for prosecution of the violation.
- The related records would be public records, except as required by federal statutes, retained by the State Board and county boards for four years.

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Section 6 would direct the Administrative Office of the Courts to adopt rules to implement the provisions of the act.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Senate Bill 250 was ratified by the General Assembly on October 31, 2019, and was vetoed by the Governor on November 6, 2019.

BACKGROUND: Qualifications of prospective jurors under **G.S. 9-3** that overlap with qualifications to vote under **G. S. 163-55** are related to age, citizenship, residency, and criminal history.

G.S. 9-3. Qualifications of prospective jurors.

- Qualified jurors must:
 - Be a resident of the county where the summons was issued.
 - Be at least 18 years old.
 - Be physically and mentally competent.
 - Be able to understand English.
- Qualified jurors must NOT:
 - Have served as a juror during the previous two years.
 - Have served a full term as a grand juror in the last six years.
 - Have a felony conviction unless citizenship rights have been restored. (Citizenship and voting rights are automatically restored upon completion of the sentence. No special document is needed.)

G.S. 163-55. Qualifications to vote; exclusion from electoral franchise.

- Qualified voters must:
 - Be registered to vote.
 - Be a resident of the county, and prior to voting in an election, must have resided at his or her residential address for at least 30 days prior to the date of the election.
 - Be at least 18 years old, or will be at the time of the next general election, or be at least 16 years old and understand that you must be at least 18 years old on Election Day of the general election in order to vote.
 - Rescind any previous registration in another county or state.
- Qualified voters must NOT:
 - Be serving a sentence for a felony conviction (including probation or on parole).

**Jennifer Bedford and Jessica Sammons, Staff Attorneys for the Legislative Analysis Division, substantially contributed to this summary.*