



NORTH CAROLINA

State Board of Elections

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KIM WESTBROOK STRACH
Executive Director

January 14, 2016

Reverend Doctor William J. Barber II
forwardtogether@naacpnc.org

Dear Reverend Barber,

Our agency has been and remains committed not only to ensuring every eligible voter can cast a ballot, but also that every eligible voter's ballot counts. I believe you share this commitment, but I am concerned that statements you made on Tuesday, along with a flyer the NAACP is distributing, may cause voters to believe mistakenly that photo identification requirements are no longer in effect.

If an eligible voter is able to obtain acceptable photo ID, that voter must present that identification at the poll or at the county elections office before canvass. Our agency's review of the voter rolls indicate that the vast majority of North Carolina's voters have acceptable photo ID.

For the far narrower group of voters who are prevented from obtaining acceptable photo ID, the General Assembly provided an exception in the form of a Reasonable Impediment Declaration coupled with alternative identification. A voter who simply does not wish to bring photo ID is not able truthfully to sign the required declaration. That is why our materials emphasize the general rule that voters present acceptable photo ID and *then* note that exceptions are available.

Overbroad statements that cast photo ID requirements as merely optional are both counterproductive and damaging to the elections process. I am concerned that individuals who hear the message that they don't need a photo ID to vote may not bring that photo ID and will be unable to truthfully sign the Reasonable Impediment Declaration. This could result in the disenfranchisement of voters we both serve.

Ensuring that all eligible North Carolina voters have the opportunity to cast their ballot and have that ballot counted is the mission of our agency and my personal commitment to the voters in our state. I support your efforts to encourage voters to make their voices heard by voting. I hope you see that we are just as committed to ensuring that voter's ballot counts.

I welcome the opportunity to discuss any concerns or questions. My direct line is 919-715-2334.

Most sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kim Westbrook Strach".

Kim Strach, Executive Director

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