

# Facts About The State Board Of Elections

## **An independent agency**

The elections board is unlike any other part of North Carolina government. No other state agency has its combination of independence and powers. The elections board is not part of any larger department of state government.

In addition to its obvious administrative functions, it also has some powers usually found in the judicial system: it may conduct investigations, can require that papers and records be turned over, and can compel people to give testimony under oath.

It's also the only state government board whose members are required to come from more than one political party.

## **Five-member board**

State law gives the governor power to appoint all five members of the state elections board. No more than three members can be members of the same political party. Current members are:

Chairman Larry Leake, Asheville - Democrat.

Robert Cordle, Charlotte - Democrat.

Lorraine Shinn, Greenville - Republican.

Genevieve Sims, Raleigh - Democrat.

Charles Winfree, Greensboro - Republican.

## **Basic duties**

The board's basic work is to run the state's elections. It makes rules for the registration of voters, the design of ballots, the selection of voting machines and other related topics. It aids and oversees local elections boards.

It also debates and settles election disputes, some of which come to it after getting a hearing by a local board. In recent years, the board has dealt with questions of whether voters may cast ballots outside their assigned precincts and whether a candidate had established residency in a district.

## **Campaign finance**

Another broad function of the board is to maintain North Carolina's system for disclosing the money in political campaigns. Political committees that send money to candidates, and candidate committees for prosecutorial, judicial, legislative and statewide offices, must report what they receive.

The board receives the forms, posts them online for public inspection and conducts audits to see that rules and regulations are followed.

The forms have been a source of official complaints that have launched board investigations into how campaigns and candidates raise money. Thirteen members of the board staff are dedicated to overseeing and managing the state's campaign finance reporting system.

## **Professional staff**

The board staff directory lists nearly 60 workers who manage the elections system from its headquarters, a nondescript brick building on an industrial block in downtown Raleigh. Last year, lawmakers enlarged the staff to provide more workers with computer and auditing experience. The staff is led by an executive director, Gary O. Bartlett, who has broad powers to execute state laws and look into allegations of election fraud and other violations.

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