

FCNCL ACTION ALERT IMPROVING MAIL IN BALLOTS DURING COVID-19

To All Participants in the Friends Committee on North Carolina Legislation:

FCNCL Policy Statement: We support electoral reform, led by the Quaker testimonies of Equality and Integrity and in support of our FCNCL minute on anti-racism.

Throughout the country, states are responding to address the challenges that COVID-19 presents to full participation of voters in the 2020 election. A bipartisan bill passed the North Carolina House of Representatives on May 28, [HB 1169](#) to address electoral issues raised by the ongoing COVID-19 epidemic. The bill reduces the witness requirement to the signature of only one witness instead of two. It also allows ballots to be requested via fax or email, rather than being sent through the mail.

FCNCL applauds the bipartisan effort to make it easier to request and return an absentee voter ballot. However, in solidarity with the League of Women Voters and the Justice Center of North Carolina, we believe that it does not go far enough. **We are asking Friends to contact their senator to request that the Senate amend the bill to include the following two propositions.**

1. Make it easier and less expensive to return absentee ballots by providing funding for counties to set up secure drop boxes for local absentee voters. This reduces risks associated with going to a polling place or to buy a stamp, and it eliminates lag time between mailing a ballot and its arrival at the Election Board office.
2. To ensure that voters are reminded about the requirement for only one witness signature, clearly indicate this on the Absentee Ballot Container Envelope.

We encourage you to email us at info@fcncl.org and let us know you have contacted your senator. Also, if you have any questions about this message or why you are receiving it, please contact us at the same address.

Our suggested script for an email or phone call follows:

"Hello, my name is _____ and I'm from (town) and am a member of Friends Committee on North Carolina Legislation, an organization created to advocate for legislation and good government practices that embody the Quaker testimonies of peace, simplicity, equality, community, integrity and stewardship.

I am contacting your office because it is my belief, based on the Quaker testimonies of Equality and Integrity, that electoral reform in the face of the Covid-19 epidemic is essential. I applaud the bipartisan effort in the NC House to modify voting during the COVID-19 crisis. Every eligible person deserves to have their vote counted, and we should make it as safe as possible to vote in order to encourage voter participation in the 2020 election.

While HB 1169 does make it easier to vote by absentee ballot, I would like to encourage you to propose and support two important amendments. First, make it easier and less expensive to return absentee ballots by funding counties to provide secure drop boxes for local absentee voters. This reduces risks associated with going to a polling place or purchasing a stamp. Second, to ensure that voters are reminded about the requirement for only one witness signature, the Absentee Ballot Container Envelope should clearly indicate this.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter. Please help our state's voters participate safely in our coming election!"

FCNCL