

Elections & Voting Vocabulary

BALLOT – Printed form or other item used in voting; marked ballots are put into the BALLOT BOX

BOARD OF EDUCATION – The governing body of the public school district is led by the Board of Education, or “school board”

BOND - A bond referendum is a voting process that gives voters the power to decide if a municipality should be authorized to raise funds through the sale of bonds

CAMPAIGN – A planned action to influence voters in a election

CANDIDATE – Person who seeks political office

CITIZEN – Person who was born in or chooses to live in and become a member of a country. A RESIDENT is a person who lives in a specific place

CITY OR TOWN – An incorporated place or municipality, usually governed by a MAYOR and COUNCIL.

CONGRESS – Legislative group consisting of the House of Representatives and the Senate

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT – A political subdivision for the purpose of electing U.S. representatives

CONSTITUENCY – All the voters of a particular district

COUNCIL - The governing body of a city or town

COUNTY COMMISSION - The governing body of a county, led by COMMISSIONERS

COUNTY – A major unit of local government in a state – 100 counties in N.C.

DELEGATE – A person given power or authority to vote for others; a representative

DEMOCRACY – Government that is run by the people in it

DEMOCRAT – A member of the Democratic party, one of the two major political parties

ECONOMY – The way a country, state, or community produces, divides up and uses its money and goods

ELECT – To choose by voting

ELECTION CAMPAIGN – Series of operations designed to win votes for a certain candidate, party or proposal

ELECTORATE – Those eligible to vote

GENERAL ELECTION – Statewide elections held each November so that registered voters can decide the officials who will head the government

GERRYMANDERING – The drawing up of voting districts in unusual shapes in order to benefit a certain group

GOVERNMENT – The group of people in charge of ruling or managing a country, state, city or other place

GOVERNOR – The person elected to be head of the government of a United States state

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES – The lower house of the Congress consisting of 435 members who each serve two-year terms (and can be re-elected)

INCUMBENT – A person currently holding office

INDEPENDENT VOTER – A voter who does not belong to a political party

ISSUES – Problems and ideas to be talked about, questioned, decided upon and voted on

MAJOR PARTY – The Democratic or Republican Party (sometimes there is a Third Party, such as Libertarian)

MAYOR - The elected leader and spokesperson of a city or town

MUNICIPALITY – An incorporated city or town

NOMINATE – To propose or offer the name of someone for political office

NOMINEE – The person that a political party names, or nominates, to represent it in a general election

NONPARTISAN – Not associated with a particular political party.

NONPARTISAN ELECTIONS – Elections usually held at the state or local level: the candidate's party membership is not given on the ballot

OFFICE – A political position

PARTISAN – Associated with a particular political party

PARTY – An organization working to gain political power or control

PARTY PLATFORM – Statement of the principles or beliefs of a political group

PLANK – A stand on an issue by a political party; planks comprise a party platform

POLITICAL AFFILIATION – The party in which a voter is registered

POLITICAL CARTOON – A cartoon developed to represent a particular view through humor

POLITICAL PARTY – A group of people who join together because they share many ideas about what government should do

POLLSTER – Person or company that researches public opinion

POLL – To collect opinions about important issues or happenings

POLLING PLACE – Place where votes are cast

POLLS – A place where votes are cast

PRIMARY ELECTION – Preliminary elections in which voters choose party candidates to run for office on their party ticket in general elections

PROPAGANDA – Ideas or information that a group of people deliberately spread to try to influence the thinking of other people

REGISTER – The process by which a persons' name is added to the list of eligible voters

REPUBLICAN – Member of the Republican political party, one of the two major political parties

SENATE – The upper house of the Congress, with two members from each state (100 members total) who each serve six-year terms

STATE HOUSE, SENATE AND LEGISLATURE - In NC, the state legislature meets biennially; state house members and state senators represent counties and districts and each serve 2-year terms

SUFFRAGE – The right to vote

VOTE – A method by which people choose their leaders and decide public issues. To count the votes, you TALLY the votes to find out the RETURNS, or the overall results of a vote