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[Legislature to delay city elections, method yet unknown](#)

Data from the U.S. census will not be available in time for many municipalities in North Carolina, including the state's largest cities, to run their elections in the fall.

As it stands, candidate filing for municipal elections is scheduled for July, but the U.S. Census Bureau announced Feb. 12 that the data cities and towns need to draw their districts will not be ready until the end of September, about six months later than usual. Then, it takes another two months to process that data, according to Karen Brinson Bell, the director of the N.C. State Board of Elections.

BELL SOT – That two month process is necessary for us to get the right filing districts as well as the correct voting districts for voters and their correct ballot styles.

There seems to be consensus among legislators, city attorneys and experts that at least 62 municipalities across 33 counties will have to delay their 2021 elections, which are currently scheduled across September, October and November.

But the stakeholders do not yet agree on a solution, and the biggest debate is whether to delay elections across all 552 municipalities in the state or to simply target changes to those local governments that rely on districts or wards for candidate filing or electing candidates.

Mooneyham – The key question for everybody in this, whether it's people at the state level or at the local level, is what solutions offer the least disruption and confusion for voters.

Scott Mooneyham is the director of political communication and coordination for the N.C. League of Municipalities, which represents cities and towns around the state.

Bell – We are suggesting that it is there is reason to actually consider moving all municipal elections into 2022, so that we can address the redistricting or possible new districts to reduce voter confusion because of having varying dates, and so forth.

That's the suggestion **Brinson Bell** made a suggestion to the General Assembly. But the idea faces opposition from local leaders whose municipalities do not use districts in their elections.

But directly and indirectly, many of the state's smaller towns will be drawn into the delay, either because they vote by districts, share a county with a large city that votes by district, or the General Assembly decides to delay all municipal elections uniformly.

The state's largest cities, including Charlotte, Durham, Greensboro, Fayetteville and Raleigh, will have to reschedule their municipal elections, and that action will have to be taken by the General Assembly, [per state law](#).

The delay would create a ripple effect by having current elected officials serve for an additional year while the officials elected in 2022 would have a year cut off their terms. Taken together, the actions could disrupt a city's regular pattern of having staggered elections, instead putting them in a position to elect an entirely new city council and mayor in the same year.

SHORTENED SCRIPT -

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