

New Hanover County Board of Elections  
Meeting: August 18, 2016, 3pm

#### LWV-LCF Comment

My name is Meredith Glicksman and I am representing the League of Women Voters of the Lower Cape Fear. The focus of my comment is on the 6 Absentee one stop voting implementation plans prepared by Derek Bowen, Election Director for New Hanover County. I will begin by placing the current early voting options in the context of the prior national election. In 2012 59% of all ballots cast in New Hanover County occurred at an early voting site. In 2012 the hours of operation for all sites were 9 to 5, with the last sat 9 to 1. Given the hours, if one were working it would likely be difficult to take advantage of the early voting option.

Now, we come to 2016 and change is in evidence. House Bill 589 effective 2014 reduced the number of days from 15 to 10 however it required the same number of hours for voting as in the 2012 election which, for New Hanover County was 580. Our New Hanover County Board for the 2016 primary election in March elected to extend the number of hours each day and in a break with the past included Sunday hours at the Gov't Center. 612 ballots were cast at the Gov't Center. Clearly voters availed themselves of this addition. On July 12<sup>th</sup> the New Hanover Board of Elections did not unanimously approve one of the 5 options presented by Mr. Bowen. Subsequent to this vote the US Court of Appeals for the 4<sup>th</sup> district struck down North Carolinas voter ID law. In response, Mr. Bowen provides 6 options for the absentee one stop implementation plans. 2 options (option 4 and 5) have Sunday hours for the gov't site. The League is advocating either option. From our perspective option 5 is preferable but either provides the greater possibility for an individual to exercise their right to vote.