

§ 163-166.4. Limitation on activity in the voting place and in a buffer zone around it.

(a) **Buffer Zone.** – No person or group of persons shall hinder access, harass others, distribute campaign literature, place political advertising, solicit votes, or otherwise engage in election-related activity in the voting place or in a buffer zone which shall be prescribed by the county board of elections around the voting place. In determining the dimensions of that buffer zone for each voting place, the county board of elections shall, where practical, set the limit at 50 feet from the door of entrance to the voting place, measured when that door is closed, but in no event shall it set the limit at more than 50 feet or at less than 25 feet.

(b) **Area for Election-Related Activity.** – Except as provided in subsection (c) of this section, the county board of elections shall also provide an area adjacent to the buffer zone for each voting place in which persons or groups of persons may distribute campaign literature, place political advertising, solicit votes, or otherwise engage in election-related activity.

(c) **Special Agreements About Election-Related Activity.** – The Executive Director of the State Board of Elections may grant special permission for a county board of elections to enter into an agreement with the owners or managers of a nonpublic building to use the building as a voting place on the condition that election-related activity as described in subsection (b) of this section not be permitted on their property adjacent to the buffer zone, if the Executive Director finds all of the following:

- (1) That no other suitable voting place can be secured for the precinct.
- (2) That the county board will require the chief judge of the precinct to monitor the grounds around the voting place to ensure that the restriction on election-related activity shall apply to all candidates and parties equally.
- (3) That the pattern of voting places subject to agreements under this subsection does not disproportionately favor any party, racial or ethnic group, or candidate.
- (4) That the county board has attempted to secure as a term of the agreement at least 36 hours prior to the opening of the voting place and at least 36 hours after the close of the voting place, as provided in G.S. 163-166.25, for candidates to place and retrieve political advertising. The agreement may also provide that any political advertising placed outside the times specified in this subsection may be removed by the property owner.

An agreement under this subsection shall be valid for as long as the nonpublic building is used as a voting place.

(d) **Notice About Buffer Zone and Area for Election-Related Activity.** – No later than 30 days before each election, the county board of elections shall make available to the public the following information concerning each voting place:

- (1) The door from which the buffer zone is measured.
- (2) The distance the buffer zone extends from that door.
- (3) Any available information concerning where political activity, including sign placement, is permitted beyond the buffer zone.

(e) **Buffer Zone and Area for Election-Related Activity at Early Voting Sites.** – Except as modified in this subsection, the provisions of this section shall apply to early voting sites under Part 5 of Article 14A of this Chapter.

- (1) Subsection (c) of this section shall not apply.
- (2) The notice in subsection (d) of this section shall be provided no later than 10 days before the opening of early voting at the site. (2001-460, s. 3; 2003-365, s. 1; 2007-391, s. 13; 2008-187, s. 33(a); 2009-541, s. 22(a); 2017-6, s. 3; 2018-144, s. 3.4(c); 2018-146, s. 3.1(a), (b); 2019-119, s. 1.5(b); 2023-140, s. 22.)