

News

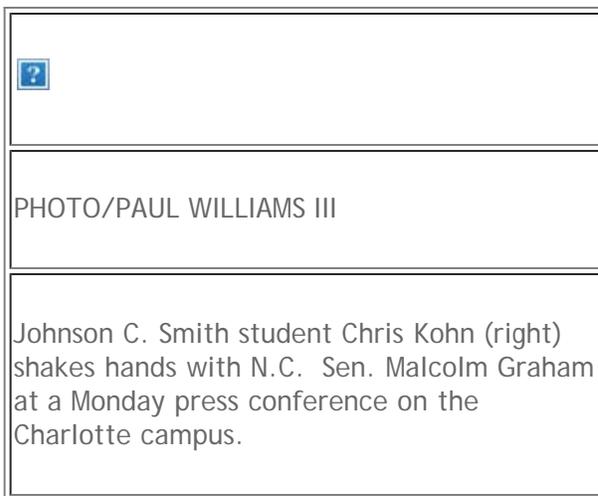
JCSU students protest voter ID legislation
 Opponents say bill would restrict access

Published Monday, March 21, 2011 1:58 pm
 by [Herbert L. White](#)

College students are protesting a bill that would require N.C. voters to show valid identification before casting a ballot.

Students at Johnson C. Smith University participated in a press conference to take issue with HB 351, which was introduced in the Republican-controlled House of Representatives. A companion bill, SB 352, is pending in the Senate. Opponents contend the legislation would deny ballot access to groups that would be less likely to have state-issued identification, such as students, the elderly and African Americans.

"This bill is extremely harmful," JCSU student government President Erica Hilton said. Not only will Johnson C. Smith University students not accept it, we will stand united with other institutions in speaking out against a bill that not only will inconvenience us, but a bill that violates our voting rights."



N.C. House Majority Whip Ruth Samuelson (R-Mecklenburg) contends the debate over voter ID "is more politically motivated than fact based." She contends that using government-issued identification will cut down the possibility of fraud.

"Showing a photo ID card has become an everyday part of modern life, and the bill gives voters several options regarding what type of ID they can use," Samuelson wrote Monday in an email. "For registered voters who need help getting a photo ID, the bill will ensure that there are ample resources available. Asking people to show identification when they vote is a fair and

reasonable measure to protect the integrity of our electoral process."

The state Board of Elections matched its database of 6.1 million registered voters with records at the N.C. Division of Motor Vehicles and found 1 million voters don't have a current driver's license or identification card with a matching name or address. The board found 460,500 active voters don't have state-issued identification, including 147,104 African Americans, or 32 percent of all voters without ID. Blacks account for 1.2 million active registered voters in the state, or 21.5 percent.

Seniors over age 65, who make up 1.1 million active registered voters, account for 148,988 without ID, or 13.4 percent.

“We have a \$2.4 billion deficit, we’re laying off teachers and counselors, raising tuition at public colleges and universities and yet the Republican Party would spend millions of dollars to require people to get voter IDs to solve a problem that doesn’t exist,” said N.C. Sen. Malcolm Graham, a Charlotte Democrat. “You have a better chance of getting hit by lightning in North Carolina than someone committing voter fraud.”

Voter fraud is a felony in North Carolina, and the state Board of Elections reported the referral of 43 cases of potential fraud to district attorneys in 2008 and 21 in 2010, according to its data. The data don’t include more than 230 cases since 2008 involving allegations of convicted felons serving active prison time or probation who sought to vote. The elections board doesn’t track convictions.

Students across the state have formed networks to protest the bills, Hilton said. Queens University, N.C. A&T State University in Greensboro and Fayetteville State University have launched initiatives to call attention to the legislation.

“It’s not just Johnson C. Smith,” she said. “We are all angry and we are all speaking out.”

The bills, Democrats allege, are an attempt by Republicans to solidify their grip on N.C. politics after wresting control of both chambers from Democrats. Eliminating voters who historically vote Democratic would go a long way to accomplishing that goal, Graham said.

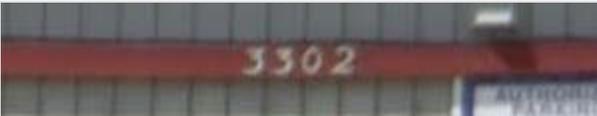
“It is partisan. We’ve got a major election coming up in 2012 in North Carolina – the governor’s race, the presidential race and the General Assembly again,” he said. “They want to hang on to the North Carolina General Assembly, and they’re doing everything they can to do that. This is an attempt to suppress Democratic votes so they can remain in control.”

Comments

Leave a Comment

Name:

E-Mail:






[Privacy & Terms](#)

[Submit Comment](#)

[Send this page to a friend](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS



[read all](#)

LATEST NEWS



[read all](#)

10 **Mysteries of the Unseen World @ The Charlotte Observer IMAX® Dome Theatre**

September 10, 2015

Narrated by Forest Whitaker, Mysteries of the

10 **Lupus Foundation Support Group**

September 10, 2015

This group meets the second Thursday of each

10 **2015 Fall Revival**

September 10, 2015

You are welcome at our 2015 Annual Fall Revival.

Howard, Peacock for mayor

Thursday, September 10, 2015

The Post's endorsements for 2015 primary

Jump and shout in the spirit of praise, music

Thursday, September 10, 2015

Clouds of Heaven celebrate 50th anniversary

Charlotte strengthens hold on first USL postseason berth

Wednesday, September 9, 2015

Independence rolls Toronto 4-1

RECENT PHOTOS



QUICK LINKS

- [Find a Copy](#)
- [Join the Community](#)
- [Event Calendar](#)
- [Connect with Us](#)

[Site Registration](#) | [Find a Copy](#) | [Event Calendar](#) | [Site Map](#) | [Search the Site](#)

Copyright © 2015 Charlotte Post