



## INSTRUCTIONS TO CIVILIAN ABSENTEE VOTERS

Your request for an absentee ballot for the **2010 Primary Election** has been received and processed. Enclosed you will find the following materials that will help you successfully complete the mail-in absentee voting process:

- This instruction sheet for voting and submitting your absentee ballot
- Official blank ballot
- Absentee Ballot Return Envelope

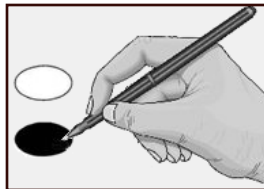
Please be sure to read the instructions carefully before marking and submitting your ballot. Failure to complete a necessary step may result in your ballot not being counted.

**Step 1 - Witness:** Before voting your ballot, you must have a witness present who is at least 18 years old. The witness must respect the secrecy of the ballot and the privacy of the absentee voter at all times. In the presence of the witness, proceed to Step 2.

**Step 2 – Mark Ballot:** **PLEASE USE BLACK BALL POINT PEN.** To mark your ballot, **completely fill in the oval** to the left of your choice (see example below). Mark the ballot, or instruct the person in your presence to mark it according to your instructions.

If you mark your ballot incorrectly, tear, deface or in any way spoil the ballot, contact us by phone and a replacement ballot will be mailed to you if time permits.

**Example:**



**PLEASE NOTE:** Once your voted ballot has been returned to the county board of elections office, you may not elect to withdraw your ballot; you have completed the act of voting.

**Step 3 – Seal:** Place the voted ballot in the envelope provided and SEAL it securely. Do not place anything else in the envelope. Ballots are not counted until election day and notes would not be found in time

**Step 4 - Sign/Witness:** COMPLETE and SIGN the certificate on the container-return envelope (a Power of Attorney's signature is NOT acceptable). Your witness must also sign the certificate and write his or her full address on the designated lines. **Important: As required by state law, if your ballot is returned without your signature or the signature and complete address of your witness on the absentee application and certificate, your ballot will not be counted.**

**Step 5 – Mail or Delivery In-Person:** RETURN the ballot promptly by mail with proper postage affixed to the return envelope. If you need to send the ballot using a service other than the United States Mail, our physical delivery address is: Cleveland County Board of Elections, P O Box 1299, Shelby, NC 28151.

You may elect to deliver the voted ballot in the container-return envelope in person to the county board of elections office. The ballot may be delivered by the voter, a legal guardian or by the voter's near relative (spouse, brother, sister, parent, grandparent, child, grandchild, mother-in-law, father-in-law, daughter-in-law, son-in-law, stepparent, or stepchild).

**Deadline:** TO BE COUNTED, the balloting materials must be *received* by the elections office by **May 3, 2010 (5:00 p.m.)**. Any ballot returned after that time will not be counted, unless the ballot is *postmarked* and *mailed* on or before election day (**May 4, 2010**) and received by the county board no later than three days following the election, **by 5:00 p.m., May 7, 2010**. Ballots received by mail after that time, or returned without the proper postmark, *will not* be counted.

**Follow-up:** To check the status of your returned ballot, please call **1-866-522-4723** or visit the NC State Board of Elections' website at **www.NCSBE.gov**. Please be sure to allow enough time for your ballot to be received and processed by your county board of elections.

## CIVILIAN ABSENTEE VOTING QUICK STEPS

### Step 1 - WITNESS

- Before voting your ballot, you need a witness present who is at least 18 years old.

### Step 2 - MARK YOUR BALLOT

- Use a black ball point pen and completely fill in the oval to the left of your choice
- Contact the county board of elections if you make a mistake.

### Step 3 - SEAL

- Place ballot in the envelope provided and seal it securely. Do not place anything else in the envelope.

### Step 4 - SIGN/WITNESS

- Sign the absentee application and certificate on the back of the container-return envelope.
- Your witness must also sign and write his or her complete address on the designated lines.

### Step 5 - SUBMIT BALLOT BY MAIL OR IN PERSON

- RETURN the ballot promptly by mail with proper postage affixed to the return envelope, or
- Deliver in person to county board of elections (only a voter, a legal guardian, or a near relative can hand-deliver absentee ballots)

#### Contact Information

Cleveland County Board of Elections  
1-704-484-4858

NC State Board of Elections  
1-866-522-4723  
elections.sboe@ncsbe.gov

#### ABSENTEE RETURN DEADLINE (May 4 Primary)

**Ballots must be returned to the Board of Elections by May 3, 2010 at 5:00 PM, or if returned by mail, the ballot must be postmarked by election day (May 4, 2010) and received no later than 5:00 PM on May 7, 2010.**

To check the status of your  
absentee ballot, please visit



**[www.ncsbe.gov](http://www.ncsbe.gov)**