

Western North Carolina Lay Organization
Social Action
“Are You Prepared for the November 2018 General Election?”
Please Vote

During its first decades of struggle, the AME church community became known as a haven to people of color, in addition to its reputation for victory over white oppression in the courts. The church was a voice of protest against the troubling and violent shift back from Reconstruction to bitter segregation. In 1894, Frederick Douglass gave his last great speech, “The Lesson of the Hour,” at Metropolitan A.M.E. Church in Washington, D.C. on the injustice of lynching.

The A.M.E. Church continues to be an advocate for voting rights, especially for minorities and the disadvantaged. In 2012, one way this has taken shape has been ensuring the fair application of voting laws for those released from prison. Just as the AME church ministers and members were active in the civil rights movement in the United States in the 1950s and 60s. Rosa Parks, who triggered civil rights demonstrations and boycotts in Montgomery, Alabama by refusing to go to the back of a city bus, was a lifelong member and deaconess in the AME Church.

Today, we are thankful to our Bishop for the information he provides to us as we continue to fight the battle of life.

Do you know ...

- the number of registered voters in your county and of those registered, how many voted in 2016 and 2017 – either way, we must work to increase those numbers
- Talking circles are a means of educating your family, friends and the community
- Canvassing church and community – informs the community of activities related to the process early voting for those who are not registered or need to update voter information
- “Souls to the Poll” is an organized means of family, friends and the community going together to the Polls to vote

Some may ask, “Why should I vote, it doesn’t matter.” We say you should vote because...

- Voting is an important right in our society. With a government elected by its citizens that effects every aspect of our lives from schools, to healthcare, to homeland security, it is critical that we exercise our right to vote and let our voices be heard.
- Many fought, and some died so that you could have the right to vote. Please don’t disrespect their legacy.
- You render your opinion on how you think government should operate when you vote.
- Voters play a central role in shaping the government and our future.
- Voting is an important responsibility of citizenship.
- There is no need to complain, if you don’t vote.
- Every vote counts.

Others may say, “I don’t have time to stand in line to vote.” We say...

Outcomes of elections can impact your personal freedoms, taxes and other aspects of daily life that are often taken for granted. So, it is **IMPORTANT** that you vote by any means necessary.

- Early voting---October 17-November 3, 2018
- By absentee ballot---Visit ncvoter.org to request a form and rules by October 30, 2018.
- On election day---November 6, 2018

Proposed Constitutional Amendments...A Closer Look

Please Research for Yourself

The N.C. General Assembly has approved a slate of constitutional amendments to appear at the end of the 2018 General Election ballot. Each will include a short caption (“constitutional amendment”) and ballot language set by lawmakers. Voters will be asked to vote **‘FOR’** or **‘AGAINST’** each amendment.

The six amendments — written by politicians — would make sweeping and permanent changes to our state’s most important legal document. A growing number of bipartisan voices are criticizing the amendments as a political power grab and a bad deal for working North Carolinians. Dozens of constitutional experts and media outlets have already editorialized about them, and a grassroots movement is building statewide to educate voters about the proposed amendments.

While the amendments might sound good at first, it’s important to dig deeper before you vote.

Western North Carolina Conference Lay Organization. invites you to take a closer look at these six proposed amendments.

Proposed Amendment	A Closer Look
<p>#1 Right to Hunt and Fish Amendment Constitutional amendment protecting the right of people to hunt, fish and harvest wildlife.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Proposal supported by the corporate gun lobby. It could be used to challenge gun laws, including restrictions on guns in public parks and schools. 2. 3. There are no known threats to the right to hunt, fish or harvest. Proposal designed to make voters think their rights to hunt, fish and harvest are under attack.
<p>#2 Victims Rights Amendment Constitutional amendment to strengthen protections for victims of crime, to establish certain, absolute basic rights for victims and ensure the enforcement of these rights.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Our state already has a constitutional amendment addressing victim’s rights that has existed since 1996, and victims already have robust rights and protections under our existing laws. 2. This proposed amendment threatens to create delays to justice for everyone because it is designed to create a two-tiered system of justice. 3. It could cost tens of millions of dollars per year to implement.
<p>#3 Income Tax Rate Amendment Constitutional amendment to reduce the income tax rate in North Carolina to a maximum allowable rate of seven percent (7%). Maximum currently 10%.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The current income tax rate in our state is around 5.5%. 2. The proposed amendment asks you to put a permanent cap on that income tax rate in the state constitution so that it can never go above 7%.
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Over time, this permanent income tax cap will benefit wealthy taxpayers at the expense of people of color and the poor.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. To make up for this tax cut for the wealthy, historical evidence shows that the state will be forced to increase other taxes, such as property and sales taxes, which often impact working class families. 5. The tax cap threatens to create budget cuts that hurt public needs, like public health and public education.
<p>#4 Photo ID to Vote Constitutional amendment to require voters to produce photo identification before voting in person.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Voter photo ID laws are racially discriminatory, unnecessary, unjustified and expensive to taxpayers. 2. This proposal allows legislators to exclude any voters they wish. 3. This proposal has already been struck down by the federal courts as intentionally racially discriminatory, because it required photo IDs that the General Assembly knew black voters disproportionately lacked. 4. This amendment could possibly give legislators the green light to disenfranchise more than 200,000 voters.
<p>#5 Filling judicial vacancies Constitutional amendment for filling judicial vacancies that occur between judicial elections from the current process in which the governor has sole appointment power, to a process in which the people of the state nominate individuals to fill vacancies by way of a commission comprised of appointees made by the judicial, executive, and legislative branches charged with making recommendations to the governor via legislative action not subject to gubernatorial veto; and the governor will appoint judges from among these nominees.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In this amendment, the General Assembly grabs the power to fill judicial vacancies from the governor and gives it to themselves. 2. This amendment opens the door for legislators to pick judges who will rubber stamp their agendas.
<p>#6 Establish eight-member Board of Ethics Constitutional amendment to establish an eight-member bipartisan Board of Ethics and Elections Enforcement in the constitution to administer ethics and elections law.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The current bipartisan Board of Ethics and Elections Enforcement consists of nine (9) members (four Republicans, four democrats and one Independent), who are chosen by the governor from lists submitted by the two parties and the board members themselves. 2. The ballot language does not reveal that the current board would reduce from nine to eight members which could possibly create a partisan gridlock and delays on election related questions. 3. The ballot language does not reveal the fact that the amendment gives legislators power to appoint board members who will vote in favor of special interests.