

# North Carolina Voter List Maintenance: 2025 Update

Since the 2020 election, SCSJ has been tracking North Carolina’s voter list maintenance, and specifically the large voter removals that occur every odd year under North Carolina’s “no-contact” process. In 2021 and 2023,<sup>1</sup> we found North Carolina’s removal of hundreds of thousands of voters disproportionately impacted Black and Brown voters, and that these removals may have been too aggressive by removing still-eligible voters. North Carolina changed some of its list maintenance practices in 2023, and an updated description of the process can be found in our explainer Understanding Voter List Maintenance.<sup>2</sup>

*The data for 2025 is in, and it shows the same disproportionate impact as before. We also found that still-eligible voters may have been previously removed in list maintenance practices that remain overly-aggressive. The full analysis is below, as well as recommendations for how we can, and must, do better to allow all eligible voters to get and stay registered in North Carolina.*

## How many voters were removed in North Carolina’s most recent List Maintenance?

In January/February 2025, North Carolina removed 421,429 “no-contact” voters, i.e., voters who did not have a record of casting a ballot in the 2022 or 2024 elections, and who did not otherwise make contact with their county boards of elections during this time. This large-scale removal brought North Carolina’s total registered voters down to 7.5 million from about 7.9 million voters in the beginning of 2025.

Importantly, the removal of “no-contact” voters every odd year after a general election happens in addition to other periodic removals that occur each year. Periodic removals include removing the old registrations for voters who have moved and reregistered in another county in the state, removing deceased voters, removing voters who reported a move out of the state, and removing voters who have a felony conviction rendering them ineligible to vote while they serve their sentence.

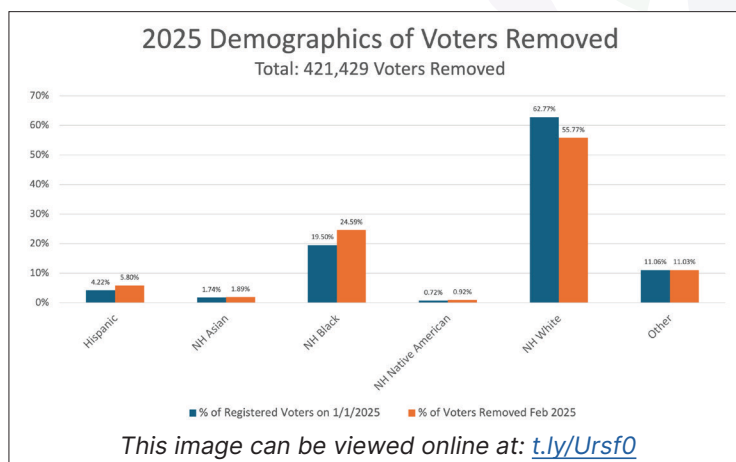
The table on the right shows that, from January 2023 to August 2024, North Carolina removed nearly 750,000 total registrations across all possible removal reasons, both periodic and in its biennial no-contact process.<sup>3</sup>

Count of Removals From Registration Database by Reason (Jan. 2023 Through Aug. 2024)	
Reason for Removal	Count
Moved within state (Duplicate)	289,902
Two federal elections in inactive status	246,311
Deceased	130,688
Moved from state	31,242
Duplicate/Merged duplicate	26,939
Felony conviction	18,883
Request from voter	2,329
Other	980
Total	747,274

As this table shows, no-contact removals (categorized as “Two federal elections in inactive status”) constitute one of the largest groups of voters flagged for removal in each two-year cycle, second only to voters removed because they re-registered at a new address within North Carolina. Accordingly, any disparate impact or overly aggressive practices within the no-contact process can significantly impact who remains on North Carolina’s voter rolls overall.

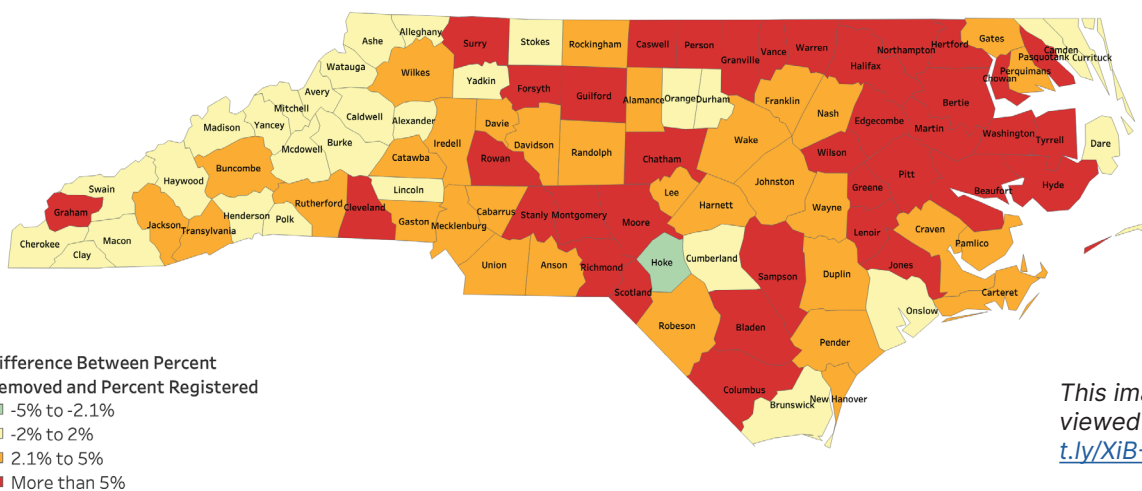
## Who was impacted by the most recent 2025 “no-contact” removals?

Once again in 2025, Black voters were disproportionately impacted by the no-contact removal process, comprising 24.59% of removals but just 19.50% of all registered voters. Latino voters were also disproportionately impacted, representing 5.8% of removals but just 4.22% of the registered voting population.



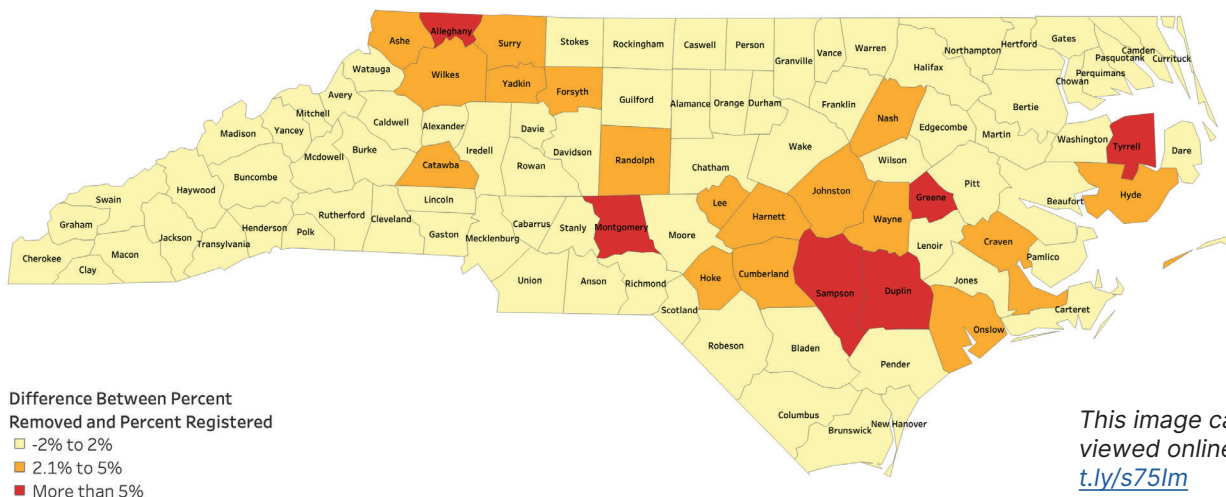
This is the same trend we saw in 2021 and 2023. This disparate impact on Black and African American voters occurred across the state, but remained concentrated in North Carolina’s “Black Belt” in the state’s center-eastern region:

### 2024 List Maintenance / Percent Removed – Percent Registered (NH Black Voters)

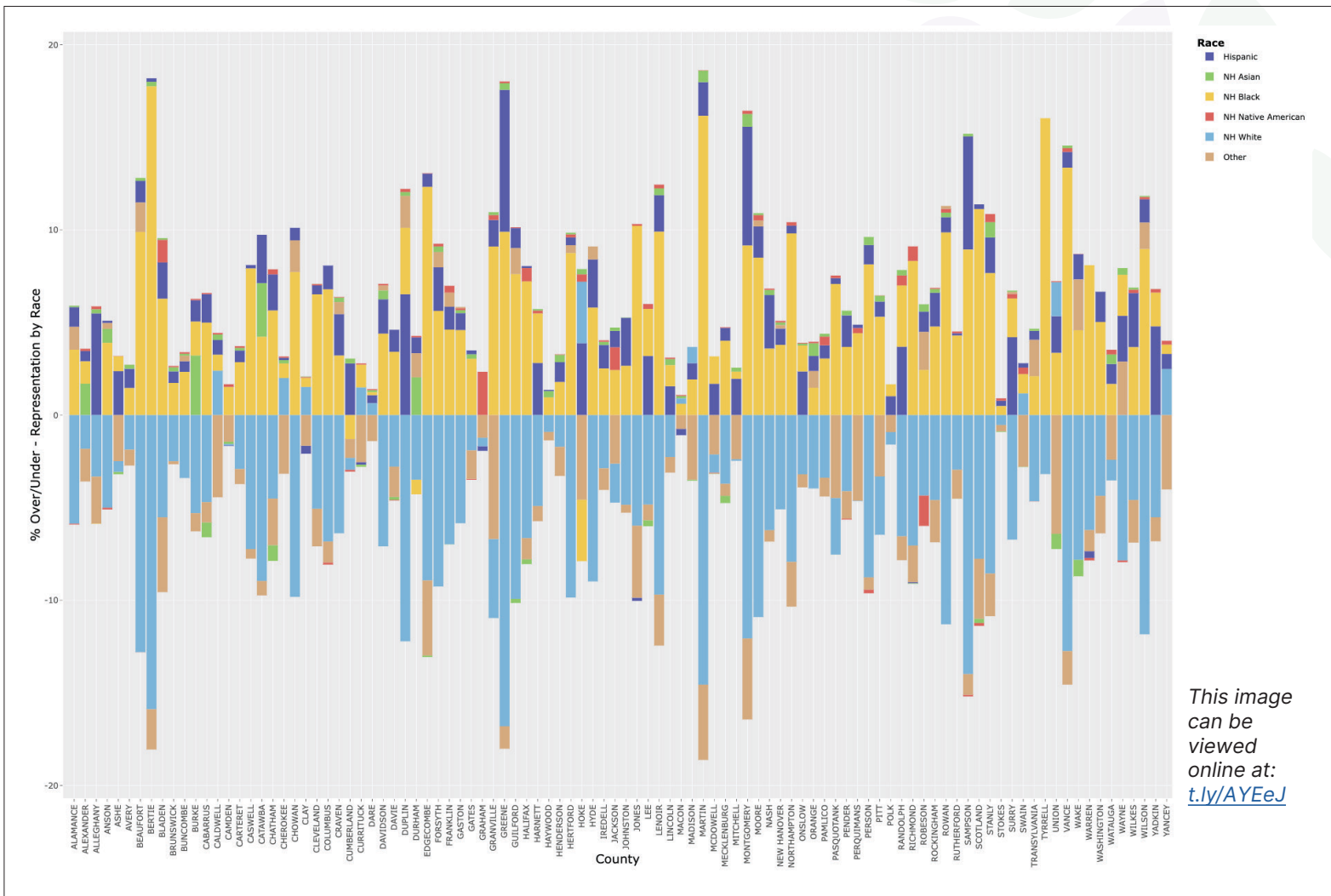


Similarly, disproportionate removals of Latino voters occurred throughout the state but were concentrated in specific areas in the southeast and the northwest:

### 2024 List Maintenance / Percent Removed – Percent Registered (Hispanic Voters)



Overall, the disparate impact of removals on Black and Brown voters was consistent in the vast majority of North Carolina's counties:



Overall, the following ten counties removed the largest portions of inactive voters from their voter rolls in the 2025 biennial no-contact process:

County	Number Removed	Percent Registered Voters Removed
Onslow	15,957	11.59%
Pasquotank	3,351	10.33%
Dare	3,074	8.9%
Craven	6,927	8.55%
Camden	748	8.42%
Cumberland	19,330	8.33%
Currituck	2,090	8.24%
Perquimans	861	7.85%
Scotland	1,786	7.73%
Hoke	2,843	7.64%

### Where did SCSJ get this data?

We calculated no-contact removals data using a list of removals provided by the State Board of Elections.<sup>4</sup>

### How do we know removals likely include eligible voters who should stay on the voter rolls?

Analysis on provisional ballots cast in North Carolina provides evidence that our list maintenance removals are likely too aggressive and capture at least some voters who were still eligible to vote in their counties.

Provisional ballots are used as a “fail safe” for voters who have an issue with their registration status when they go to vote. In practice, provisional ballots are cumbersome and time-intensive for county boards to administer, and there are documented mistakes where lawful provisional votes that should count by law are mistakenly rejected. It is also impossible to tell how many voters simply walk away without voting a provisional ballot when they are told they are not registered, but we know (at least anecdotally) this happens.

As we previously reported, an analysis of the 2020 general election showed at least 2,280 of the voters removed in 2019 tried to cast a provisional ballot in 2020, and over 300 of those were not counted. Similarly, in 2022 we identified provisional voters who were coded as “previously removed” in their county (~1,770), and those who were reported as having “no record of registration” but did have a voter registration number (~1,000) or matched the full name and address of voters currently or previously registered (~140).

In the 2024 general election, we identified similar issues among the 65,230 provisional ballots cast:

- **5,608 provisional voters were coded as “previously removed” voters**, indicating they were previously registered in the same county. Of these, 2,676 (48%) were not counted in the election.
- **6,275 provisional voters were coded as having “no record of registration” despite the fact that they had a voter registration number on file**, indicating a history of being registered in the county. Of these, 1,400 (22%) were not counted.
- **1,009 provisional voters were coded as having “no record of registration” but matched removed voters found in previous list maintenance removal files** (2017, 2019, 2021, and 2023) using first name, last name, county, and street address. Of these, 164 (16%) were not counted.

While individual circumstances may have influenced whether specific provisional ballots were or were not counted, overall this data indicates that voters are returning to cast a ballot in counties

where they were recently registered but removed during list maintenance. This tends to support that our list maintenance removals are likely overly aggressive by capturing voters who are still eligible to vote and should stay on the voter rolls.

**Data also indicates more than half a million eligible voters in North Carolina are not even registered to vote.** According to Carolina Demography, a demographic research center with the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, North Carolina had about 8 million voting-eligible adults as of September 28, 2024.<sup>5</sup> But as noted above, following the no-contact removals, the number of registered voters was reduced to about 7.5 million in March 2025.

In contrast to this established data, the persistent and baseless allegations that North Carolina’s voter rolls are somehow overinflated and susceptible to fraud lack evidence and are repeatedly rejected by courts of law.<sup>6</sup>

## Why are removals of likely still-eligible voters happening?

SCSJ is dedicated to continuing its research and monitoring to identify all the ways North Carolina’s list maintenance can be improved.

From what we know, removals are likely over-inclusive for the following reasons:

### 1. Mail Deliverability is Not a Reliable Way to Assess Eligibility

According to the United States Postal Service, mail can be undeliverable for a host of reasons that have nothing to do with whether someone is eligible to vote.<sup>7</sup> There are also approximately 3 million addresses in the United States assigned to Carrier Route R777 by USPS, meaning they are not eligible for mail delivery. And postal workers have testified in court under oath about how using USPS to assess residency is not always reliable.<sup>8</sup> It is therefore entirely possible an eligible voter can list their residence without providing a valid mailing address, and then be removed from voter rolls despite being eligible to vote. A full explanation can be found in our Mail Returned as Undeliverable in List Maintenance memorandum.<sup>9</sup>



## 2. Counties Need to Do More Before Removing Voters

Since USPS is not reliable alone, counties need to reach out to voters using alternative means, including phone and email where the voter has provided this information. This is successfully used to help voters cure absentee ballots already, and would similarly be a better way to notify voters when they are slated for removal to allow them to stay registered.

## 3. Underfunding of State and County Boards of Elections Is Threatening Our Elections

County Boards will need more funding to execute these measures. And it is worth noting that election boards (especially underfunded ones) can and have made mistakes on mailers that cause voters to be inappropriately slated for removal.<sup>10</sup> **North Carolina can and must do better.**

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## About Southern Coalition for Social Justice

Southern Coalition for Social Justice partners with communities of color and economically disadvantaged communities in the South to defend and advance their political, social, and economic rights through the combination of legal advocacy, research, and communications.

[southerncoalition.org](https://southerncoalition.org)

## Endnotes

- 1 See <https://southerncoalition.org/resources/north-carolina-voter-list-maintenance-2023-update/>.
- 2 See <https://southerncoalition.org/resources/understanding-voter-registration-list-maintenance/>.
- 3 See <https://www.ncsbe.gov/news/press-releases/2024/09/26/nc-election-officials-removed-nearly-750000-ineligible-registrants-start-2023>.
- 4 This file is available here: [https://southerncoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/2025-02-26-Removed\\_After\\_2\\_Fed\\_Elections\\_OnAfter\\_20250101\\_Public.zip](https://southerncoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/2025-02-26-Removed_After_2_Fed_Elections_OnAfter_20250101_Public.zip).
- 5 Bhairavi Jayaraman and Emma Marshall, “Who are North Carolina’s 7.6 million registered voters? (2024),” CAROLINA DEMOGRAPHY (Oct. 10, 2024), <https://carolinademography.cpc.unc.edu/2024/10/10/who-are-north-carolinas-7-6-million-registered-voters-2024/> (relying on State Board of Elections data for its analysis).
- 6 For example, in the matter Judicial Watch, Inc. v. North Carolina State Board of Elections, No. 3:20-CV-211 (W.D.N.C.), a magistrate judge recommended full dismissal of claims alleging issues with North Carolina’s list maintenance practice. See <https://southerncoalition.org/voting-rights-groups-applaud-judges-recommendation-to-dismiss-lawsuit-to-purge-north-carolina-voters/>. The parties agreed to a dismissal of the matter.
- 7 See U.S. Postal Service, “507 Mailer Services,” <https://pe.usps.com/text/dmm300/507.htm>.
- 8 See, e.g., Voto Latino v. Hirsch, 712 F. Supp. 3d 637, 671 (M.D.N.C. 2024) (crediting declaration by “postman with forty years of experience that enumerates several reasons why mail may be returned as undeliverable, including faulty barcodes, illegible address information, lack of or damage to a mailbox or receptacle, sorting error, assignment to the wrong carrier for delivery, and temporary absence of the residence, none of which is pertinent to a voter’s qualification to vote in the precinct”); Common Cause/ New York v. Brehm, 432 F. Supp. 3d 285, 295 (S.D.N.Y. 2020) (Summarizing testimony of Executive Director Ryan, who described several issues of deliverability including that the USPS often returns mail as undeliverable even though the voter continues to reside at the same location, and that there was a “poor quality and ... lack of consistency of the post office.”).
- 9 See <https://southerncoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Returned-Mail-Memo-Final.pdf>.
- 10 See “Absentee ballot requests pile in at county elections office,” Statesboro Herald (Apr. 9, 2020), <https://www.statesboroherald.com/local/absentee-ballot-requests-pile-county-elections-office/> (describing how state elections office sent mailers to wrong addresses).