



GUILFORD COUNTY
BOARD OF ELECTIONS

TO: Candidates and Political Committees

FROM: George Gilbert, Director of Elections *George Gilbert*

RE: Political signs at the polls (Especially at church based polling facilities)

Presently eighty-eight (98) churches and other houses of worship in Guilford County graciously host polling places at their facilities. This represents more than half the 165 polling places required to conduct elections in our county. Without the voluntary support and cooperation of these, often irreplaceable, churches, the process of conducting elections in Guilford County would be extremely difficult.

For the most part our churches have recognized and respected the important role political signs play in heightening voter awareness on election day. Almost all have allowed candidates to place political signs on or in front of their property... some with a few restrictions requested. Without exception, churches have requested that these political signs be removed from their property as quickly as possible following an election. In the view of most churches, "as quickly as possible" means no later than the next morning. Activities and events regarding the work and worship of the church quickly regain their priority status after election day and Wednesday evening services are, as you know, common.

It has been my observation that most political signs appear at the polling places overnight the night before the election. It does not seem unreasonable to ask that they disappear with equal speed the following night in only half the polling locations.

For those of you who will be participating in future elections, please plan ahead for the early and prompt removal as well as distribution of your political signs. Working together we can all preserve access to our political traditions as well as access to our polling places.

Thank you for your cooperation. If you have any questions, concerns or suggestions, please feel free to contact me at 336-641-3836.

COPY

Littering Statutes for Political Candidates in North Carolina

§ 14-156. Injuring fixtures and other property of electric-power companies.

It shall be unlawful for any person willfully and wantonly, and without the consent of the owner, to take down, remove, injure, obstruct, displace or destroy any line erected or constructed for the transmission of electrical current, or any poles, towers, wires, conduits, cables, insulators or any support upon which wires or cables may be suspended, or any part of any such line or appurtenances or apparatus connected therewith, or to sever any wire or cable thereof, or in any manner to interrupt the transmission of electrical current over and along any such line, or to take down, remove, injure or destroy any house, shop, building or other structure or machinery connected with or necessary to the use of any line erected or constructed for the transmission of electrical current, or to wantonly or willfully cause injury to any of the property mentioned in this section by means of fire. Any person violating any of the provisions of this section shall be guilty of a Class 2 misdemeanor. (1907, c. 919; C.S., s. 4328; 1993, c. 539, s. 94; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c).)

§ 136-32. Other than official signs prohibited.

No unauthorized person shall erect or maintain upon any highway any warning or direction sign, marker, signal or light or imitation of any official sign, marker, signal or light erected under the provisions of G.S. 136-30, except in cases of emergency. No person shall erect or maintain upon any highway any traffic or highway sign or signal bearing thereon any commercial advertising: Provided, nothing in this section shall be construed to prohibit the erection or maintenance of signs, markers, or signals bearing thereon the name of an organization authorized to erect the same by the Department of Transportation or by any local authority referred to in G.S. 136-31. Any person who shall violate any of the provisions of this section shall be guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor. The Department of Transportation may remove any signs erected without authority. (1921, c. 2, s. 9(b); C.S., s. 3846(r); 1927, c. 148, ss. 56, 58; 1933, c. 172, s. 17; 1957, c. 65, s. 11; 1973, c. 507, s. 5; 1977, c. 464, s. 7.1; 1991 (Reg. Sess., 1992), c. 1030, s. 39; 1993, c. 539, s. 981; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c).)

19A NCAC 02E .0415 Advertising signs within right of way.

It shall be unlawful for any person, firm or corporation to erect or place any advertising or other sign, except regulation traffic and warning signs approved by the Department of Transportation, on any highway or the right of way thereof, or so as to overhang the right of way, or to permit the erection or placing of any advertising or other sign, as herein prohibited, on any highway right of way which is situated over any land owned, rented, leased or claimed by such person, firm or corporation. It shall be unlawful for any person, firm or other corporation that has erected, or placed, or permitted to be erected or placed, any advertising or other sign, as herein prohibited, or for any person, firm or corporation owning, renting, leasing or claiming any land over which a highway or highway right of way is situated, and on which highway or highway right of way any advertising or other sign has been erected or placed, to allow such advertising or other signs to remain on state highway or right of way thereof.

History Note: Authority G.S. 136-18(10); 136-30;

Eff. July 1, 1978.