

Republicans Seek to Suppress Voting

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It always startles me when there are blatant attempts at voter suppression, given that it is the opposite of what we, in a democracy, should want. Now, it's happening right here in Brunswick County. Sunday voting was available and widely used in both the 2018 and 2020 elections. Even so, at the July meeting of Brunswick County's five-member Board of Elections (BOE), the two Republican members voted to end Sunday voting for the upcoming November elections.

Six persons spoke in favor of Sunday voting. **No one** spoke against it, yet the motion to have early voting include two Sundays (from 12 pm to 4 pm), in addition to two Saturdays (from 9 am to 3 pm) failed because of those two Republican votes.

BOE rules require a unanimous vote to pass. The three Democratic members, Boyd Williamson, Paula Clarity and Ed Lewis voted in favor. Republicans Randy Pelton and Stuart Smith voted against. Now, the State Board of Elections will make the final decision.

Statistics show that during the early voting period in Brunswick County, we actually had more voters per hour casting ballots on Sunday than on weekdays. Given that the BOE members know this, it's hard to see the Republican "No" votes as anything but voter suppression.

Speakers on behalf of the Sunday voting measure included two local mayors, a representative of the League of Women Voters, and the Acting chairman of the Brunswick County Democratic Party, Shelley Allen, who summarized well the case for Sunday voting: "The goal in our democracy, should always be to **expand access** to the polls for all eligible voters, and Sundays are the best option for some of our citizens."

Fortunately, the State BOE has the final say on this issue and is expected, as it did in 2020, to rule in favor of Sunday voting.

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