



AUG 07 2026

NORTH CAROLINA

NC STATE BOARD OF ELECTIONS

STATE BOARD OF ELECTIONS

COMPLAINT AGAINST
COUNTY BOARD OF
ELECTIONS MEMBER

P.O. Box 27255
Raleigh, NC
27611-7255
Mailing Address

legal
@ncsbe.gov
E-mail

(919) 814-0700 or
(866) 522-4723
Phone

(919) 715-0135
Fax

*Submitting fraudulently or falsely
completed declarations is a Class I
felony under Chapter 163 of the
General Statutes.*

**Instructions
(08 NCAC
03 .0101)**

Any voter desiring to bring charges of a violation of the North Carolina Administrative Code or of Chapter 163 of the North Carolina General Statutes with the State Board of Elections against a member of any county board of elections may do so by filing with the Board a written statement, signed and sworn under oath or affirmation of the voter. The statement must contain:

- 1) the name, residence address, and county of the member against whom the charges are brought;
- 2) a statement of the facts constituting the violation alleged, with a reference to the date and place of such misconduct; and
- 3) the names and addresses of persons who have knowledge or information of the matters referred to in the charges as filed.

Visit <https://bit.ly/2Z89VtS> for all requirements.

**1
Information
About Person
Filing Complaint****Shamike Bethea****Cumberland***Name**County**Address***Hope Mills****NC****28348***City**State**Zip Code**E-Mail Address**Telephone Number***2
Information
about County
Board Member
Against Whom
You are Filing a
Complaint****Irene Grimes****Cumberland***Name**County**Address***Hope Mills****NC****24348***City**State**Zip Code***Date the alleged violation occurred:****April 18, 2026 initial violation****Place the alleged violation occurred:****Social Media, Facebook**



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Description of Violation

Provide a statement of the facts constituting the violation alleged.

Be as specific as you can, providing all relevant facts and circumstances of the potential violations.

You should also include a citation to the applicable rule, law, or duty you believe has been violated. 08 NCAC 03 .0102 states that the State Board shall set a hearing if the charges preferred include prima facie evidence of any of the following: “(1) a violation of these Rules or of any election law under Chapter 163 of the North Carolina General Statutes; (2) a breach of a duty imposed by Chapter 163; or (3) participation in irregularities, incapacity, or incompetency to discharge the duties of the office.” **Attach additional pages if needed.**

Please see the six-page attachment - Description of Violation continuation pages, including support documentation.



Please see the six-page attachment - Description of Violation continuation pages, including support documentation.



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4

Names &
Addresses of
Persons who
Have Knowledge
Related to the
Charges Filed

Provide the names and addresses, so far as you know, of persons who have knowledge or information of the matters referred to in the charges as filed.
Attach additional pages if necessary.

n/a

Name #1

Address

City

State

Zip Code

Name #2

3918 COLORADO DR

Address

Hope Mills

NC

24348

City

State

Zip Code

5

Attestation

I hereby swear or affirm, under penalty of perjury and other penalties established by North Carolina law, that the information provided in this complaint is true, correct, complete, and of my own personal knowledge, or if not, I believe the information to be true based upon the following:

Shamike Bethea

X

Signature of Complainant

08-03-2026

Date

6

Notarization

State of North Carolina, County of CUMBERLAND

Sworn to (or affirmed) and subscribed before me,

This 7 day of AUGUST, 2026

Signature of Notary Public:

Printed Name of Notary Public:

JAMES S. ELLINGTONMy Commission Expires 21 OCTOBER 2030

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Description of Violations (continued)

I am a registered voter and resident of Cumberland County, North Carolina. As President of the Cumberland County Republican Women's Club, I am dedicated to fostering informed civic engagement and ensuring that public officials are held accountable to the law, their official duties, and the public trust, irrespective of political affiliation.

I submit this complaint in my individual capacity as a Cumberland County voter. I reference my role as President to demonstrate my ongoing civic involvement, my commitment to promoting public accountability, and my vested interest in the lawful and impartial administration of elections.

My purpose in filing this complaint is not to advocate specific personnel action, retaliate against any individual, or engage in partisan dispute. Instead, I respectfully request a neutral, fact-based investigation to determine whether a member of the Cumberland County Board of Elections has complied with all applicable laws, duties, confidentiality requirements, and standards of conduct.

Description of Violation and Statement of Facts

I respectfully submit this complaint against **Irene Grimes, a member of the Cumberland County Board of Elections**, based on conduct that may constitute a violation of election law, a breach of the duties of office, participation in an irregularity, or evidence of an inability or incompetency to discharge the duties of the office within the meaning of 08 NCAC 03 .0102.

On or about April 18, 2026, Ms. Grimes published a post on her publicly accessible Facebook account concerning an active personnel matter involving Cumberland County [REDACTED]

In that post, Ms. Grimes publicly stated that three Republican members of the Cumberland County Board of Elections had petitioned the State Board's Executive Director to terminate [REDACTED] Ms. Grimes also stated that the action was, in her opinion, "unwarranted and unjustified," asserted that there had been "no motion, no second, and no vote," and stated that she learned of the petition only after [REDACTED] contacted her. The post encouraged members of the public to "pay attention, stay informed, and speak up" and used hashtags including "#PartisanPolitics." The attached exhibit also appears to display portions of the petition or related correspondence concerning the proposed termination.

The post therefore disclosed, at a minimum:

1. The existence of a pending petition seeking the termination of a specifically identified public employee;
2. The identity and political affiliation of the Board members allegedly responsible for the petition;
3. Ms. Grimes's characterization of the petition as unwarranted, unjustified, nontransparent, and politically motivated;
4. Information concerning how and when Ms. Grimes allegedly learned of the petition;

5. Portions of documents associated with the pending personnel process; and
6. A public call for citizens to become involved while the personnel matter was still pending.

I do not ask the State Board to accept Ms. Grimes's statements as proof that the other Board members acted improperly. In fact, **G.S. 163-35.1 expressly provides a process under which a majority of a county board may sign a petition recommending termination of a county director of elections.** The issue presented by this complaint is Ms. Grimes's own conduct: whether she obtained, disclosed, characterized, or used information relating to that pending statutory process in a manner inconsistent with her duties as a county Board of Elections member.

1. Possible Disclosure of Nonpublic or Confidential Information

The post publicly revealed the existence and substance of a pending employment action against a named County Director of Elections before the statutory process had been completed.

The State Board should determine:

- How Ms. Grimes obtained the petition and related documents;
- Whether she received the information because of her official position;
- Whether the petition, its supporting reasons, or related communications contained protected personnel information;
- Whether any information was obtained from a closed session, personnel file, internal Board communication, or communication from the State Board;
- Whether Ms. Grimes had authority to publish or reproduce the information;
- Whether she disclosed the reasons supporting the petition, directly or through the documents displayed in her post; and
- Whether she disclosed information before all legally required notices had been provided to the affected employee.

The attached research materials identify confidentiality and personnel-record concerns surrounding the public disclosure of employee performance, disciplinary, and termination information. Those materials should be treated as supporting research rather than conclusive proof of a violation; the State Board should obtain the original petition, communications, personnel records, and social-media post to determine what information was disclosed and whether it was legally protected.

2. Possible Interference With or Politicization of a Pending Statutory Process

Ms. Grimes did more than report that a petition existed. She publicly characterized the pending action as unjustified, identified the political affiliation of the members involved, used the hashtag

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“#PartisanPolitics,” defended the employee whose continued employment was under review, and encouraged public involvement before the statutory process had concluded.

This conduct raises a legitimate question as to whether Ms. Grimes attempted to subject a pending personnel determination to outside political pressure rather than allowing the statutory decision-making process to proceed on the evidence and through the officials authorized by law.

The State Board should determine whether this public campaign:

- Interfered with the orderly administration of the process established by G.S. 163-35.1;
- Placed inappropriate public pressure on the Executive Director, State Board, County Board members, witnesses, or employee involved;
- Undermined the fairness or perceived fairness of the pending personnel proceeding;
- Created actual or apparent prejudgment by a Board member;
- Disrupted the operations of the Cumberland County elections office; or
- Damaged public confidence in the Board’s ability to administer elections and personnel matters impartially.

3. Possible Breach of the Oath and Duties of Office

Under G.S. 163-30(e), a county Board of Elections member takes an oath to “well and truly execute the duties” of the office to the best of the member’s knowledge and ability and “according to law.”

Ms. Grimes’s public disclosure and partisan characterization of an unresolved personnel matter raise questions about whether she acted consistently with that oath and with the judgment, discretion, confidentiality, and professionalism reasonably required of a county Board of Elections member.

The concern is not simply that Ms. Grimes expressed an opinion. The concern is that she allegedly used information connected to her public position to discuss and mobilize public pressure regarding an active matter involving a named employee and fellow Board members before the responsible officials completed their review.

4. Possible Participation in an Irregularity or Evidence of Incompetency to Discharge the Duties of Office

Under 08 NCAC 03 .0102, the State Board must set a hearing when charges properly filed by a voter include prima facie evidence of:

1. A violation of the election rules or an election law under Chapter 163;
2. A breach of a duty imposed by Chapter 163; or
3. Participation in irregularities, incapacity, or incompetency to discharge the duties of office.

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The conduct described above warrants review under those standards. Publicly releasing or displaying information associated with an unresolved personnel proceeding, characterizing fellow Board members' conduct as partisan, and encouraging public intervention may constitute evidence of an irregularity, a failure to exercise appropriate judgment, or an inability to discharge the responsibilities of the office in a manner that protects the integrity of Board proceedings.

In addition, G.S. 163-22(c) authorizes the State Board to hear and act on complaints and to remove a county Board member for incompetency, neglect or failure to perform duties, fraud, or other satisfactory cause, after providing the affected member notice and an opportunity to be heard.

Requested Action

Consistent with my responsibilities as a voter, community leader, and President of the Cumberland County Republican Women's Club, I respectfully request that the North Carolina State Board of Elections:

1. Accept this complaint for preliminary consideration;
2. Determine that the complaint and exhibits present sufficient prima facie evidence to warrant a hearing under 08 NCAC 03 .0102;
3. Preserve and obtain the original Facebook post, including its text, images, attachments, comments, edits, deletion history, publication settings, and metadata;
4. Determine how Ms. Grimes obtained the petition and related personnel information;
5. Obtain the original petition, related correspondence, notices, emails, text messages, meeting records, and communications involving Ms. Grimes;
6. Determine whether Ms. Grimes disclosed confidential, protected, or nonpublic information acquired through her official position;
7. Determine whether her public statements interfered with, politicized, or undermined the process prescribed by G.S. 163-35.1;
8. Determine whether the conduct constituted a violation of Chapter 163, a breach of duty, participation in an irregularity, incompetency, neglect, failure to perform official duties, or other satisfactory cause under G.S. 163-22(c); and
9. Impose any corrective or disciplinary action the State Board finds appropriate after notice, investigation, and an opportunity for all affected persons to be heard.

This complaint is submitted to protect public confidence in Cumberland County's election administration and to ensure that every person who serves in public office is held to the same legal and ethical standards, regardless of political party or personal viewpoint.

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Supporting Documentation, NC STATE BOARD OF ELECTIONS
Exhibits of Irene Grimes' Violation

Irene's Post

X



Irene Grimes

April 18 · 3

...

■ I want to make you all aware of a SERIOUS development ■

The three Republican members of the Board of Elections have petitioned Sam Hayes (State BOE Director) to terminate [REDACTED] here in Cumberland County.

This action is not only, in my view, unwarranted and unjustified—it was also done without transparency: no motion, no second, and no vote. I learned of it only after [REDACTED] contacted me upon receiving notice from the state.

[REDACTED] election professional who has served this county with dedication, impartiality, and a steadfast commitment to fair elections.

We need to pay attention, stay informed, and speak up in support of experienced, nonpartisan election administration.

#Boardofelections #cumberlandcountync #elections #PartisanPolitics

RE: Petition for Removal [REDACTED]

CUMBERLAND COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS

Formal Petition to the North Carolina State Board of Elections

Recommendation for Removal [REDACTED]

(N.C. Gen. Stat. § 163-35.1)

April 2021, 2026

Linda Devore, Chair

Cumberland County Board of Elections

On behalf of: Linda Devore (Chair), Ryan Johnson
(Members), Brian Eldridge (Secretary)

On 4/18/2026, I received a petition from the Cumberland County Board of Elections to terminate your employment as [REDACTED] Cumberland County, pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. § 163-35.1(a). A copy of the petition and the statute are enclosed with this letter.

Under N.C. Gen. Stat. § 163-35.1(a), you may provide a written response to the petition to the State Board of Elections within 15 days of your receipt of this letter. Within 20 days after my receipt of your written response, or if I do not receive a response from you within 15 days after you receive this letter, I will make a decision on the termination petition. This decision will be final unless, within 10 days of my decision, the State Board of Elections defers the decision, in which case it will make a final decision.

Very truly,
[Signature]

Regional
Election Director

2026

13 25

2026

<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1SB9KWgV8k/>

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READ THE
E-EDITION

June 2026

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CityView

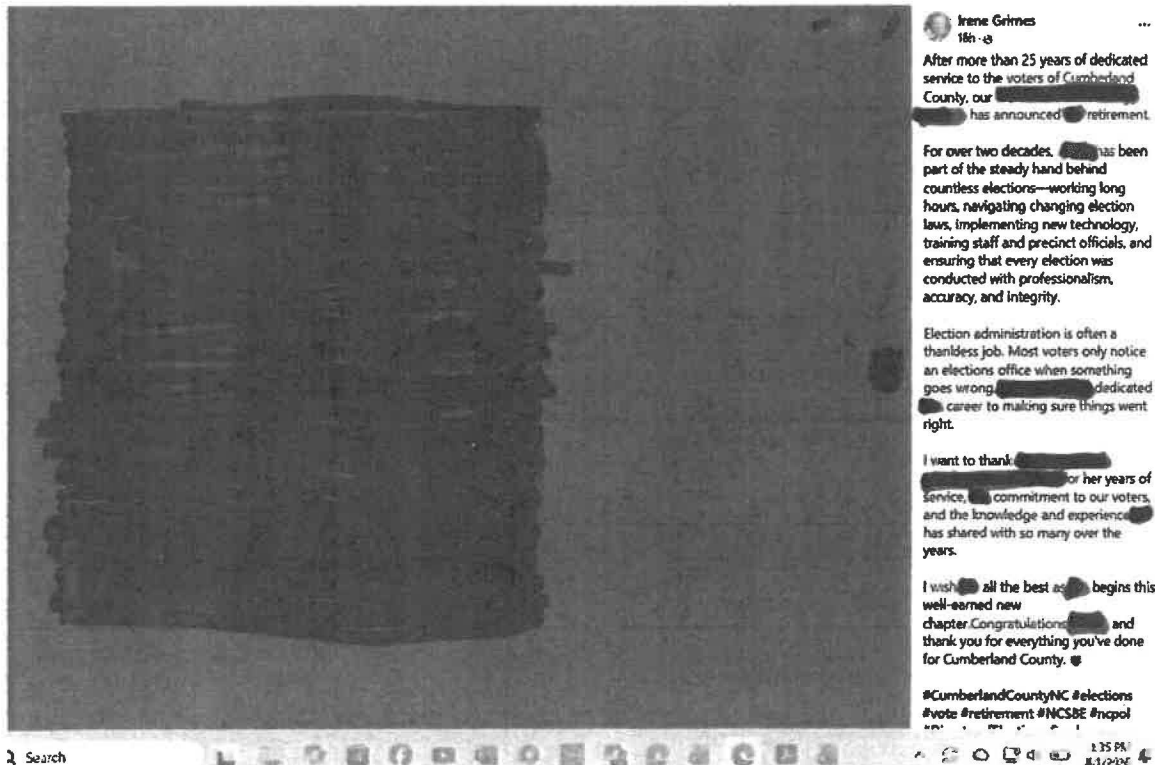
Under state law, such petitions are normally kept secret. Democratic elections board member Irene Grimes made it public on Sunday when she published a page from the petition on Facebook, as well as a letter that Hayes sent to [redacted] to notify [redacted] received the notice on Saturday, Grimes told CityView.

The Cumberland County elections office has eight full-time employees and a part-time worker, Devore said. During elections, the office hires hundreds of temporary workers to staff the county's 77 voting precincts. The county has more than 220,000 registered voters.

Devore told CityView that state law prevents her from commenting on personnel matters.

A document listing Devore's reasons was sent to Amaro.

PHOTO BY [redacted]



Search

<https://www.facebook.com/irene.grimes.9/posts/pfbid0ijucedxD79e17KTRkE26S288D3jc3w4gMTuhrDkKtGbuFP9uL3Rtm5YJYsXEvv6Jl>

Description of Violation - Grimes Page 6 of 6