HOPE MILLS, N.C. — Alberta Currie’s great-grandparents were slaves. She was born in a farmhouse in the middle of tobacco and cotton fields. Her mother gave birth to her 78 years ago at home with just a midwife’s help.

No birth certificate was recorded. There was just a handwritten birth announcement entered into the Currie family Bible.

This is causing problems today. It may force Currie to miss her first election since 1956. A new North Carolina law says people need to get an ID with a picture from the state to be allowed to vote. People will need the ID for the 2016 election.

Voters do not have to pay for the ID. But they have to show documents that many voters do not have. They need an original or certified birth certificate. They also need an original Social Security card.
"Two IDs To Get The ID I Need"

Republicans backed the law. They say the new measure stops voter fraud or other types of illegal voting. But civil rights groups say Republicans have a different reason. They want to make it difficult for Democratic-leaning voters to get the IDs needed to vote, the groups claim. They say the law targets African-Americans, students and senior citizens.

Currie has spent three years trying to persuade officials to give her a birth certificate. Now, because of the new law, she must locate several other documents. For someone her age, it’s a challenge.

“It takes two IDs to get the ID I need, but how can I get it if I don’t have those two IDs?” Currie asked at her home. She lives in farm country.

Republicans have voted in similar laws in at least 11 states since 2011. One is Texas. The Justice Department has filed suit against the Texas law. Attorney General Eric H. Holder Jr. has threatened lawsuits against other states, including North Carolina.

Three civil rights groups have filed lawsuits in North Carolina. They say that the law is unfair to African-Americans. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People said the ID law is a new form of taxes black voters had to pay in the South. Those taxes were part of the Jim Crow segregation laws.

“Today James Crow wears a suit and tie and is much more sophisticated,” Jeremy Collins told Currie’s family. Collins is a lawyer with the Southern Coalition.

Students Scrambling For Documents To Vote

Student ID cards cannot be used as identification. This forces North Carolina’s 300,000 college students to scramble for documents. Barack Obama won the youth vote by two-thirds in 2012.

Cassandra Perkins is a student at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She said she voted in 2012 by simply providing her on-campus address. But now she’s struggling to obtain documents required by the new law.

“It’s a slap in the face,” Perkins said of the law.

The law also cuts early voting by a week. People also cannot sign up to vote the day that they vote.

North Carolina rose from 47th in voter participation in 1991 to 11th in 2012, according to Christensen. Two reasons were early voting and same-day registration, he said.

Republicans have produced no evidence of voter fraud. Nor have they explained how cutting early voting and registration combats fraud.
Gov. Pat McCrory, a Republican who signed the voter ID bill into law Aug. 12, said it requires the same number of early voting hours as in 2012. They are just compressed into a shorter period. McCrory’s office says 34 states require or will soon require some form of voter ID.

McCrory said people do not know that voter fraud is not a problem in the state. This is because the state has never required a picture ID before, he said.

More than 600,000 registered voters do not have a state driver’s license or state-issued ID, according to a state survey. Many are young, poor, African-American or elderly.

Rosanell Eaton, 92, an African-American, has voted in every election for 70 years. She rode a mule-drawn wagon to register to vote in 1939. White election workers in North Carolina required her to recite the preamble to the U.S. Constitution. Eaton, the top student of her high school, recited it perfectly. The workers allowed her to register. They were not happy.

“It's the same old thing,” she said of the ID law. “They know if they make it hard enough for African-American folks to vote, we won't have enough people voting.”
Quiz

1 Which of the following states the reason why Currie will not be able to get a state-issued ID card?

(A) Her great-grandparents were slaves.
(B) Her birth was recorded only in the family Bible.
(C) She was not born under proper medical supervision.
(D) Her birth place was a farmhouse surrounded by agricultural land.

2 According to the information given in the section “ID Law Hits 600,000 Registered Voters,” which of the following statements is FALSE?

(A) Photo IDs have never been in use in North Carolina.
(B) Voter scams are not an issue that needs attention in North Carolina.
(C) In the late 1930s, reciting the preamble was optional for voter registration.
(D) More than 30 states require or soon will require some form of voter ID.

3 What is the purpose of paragraph 3 of the section “ID Law Hits 600,000 Registered Voters”?

More than 600,000 registered voters do not have a state driver’s license or state-issued ID, according to a state survey. Many are young, poor, African-American or elderly.

(A) It shows that many people in America do not have a driver’s license.
(B) It shows the groups of people who are most affected by the law.
(C) It estimates the number of African-Americans who cannot vote.
(D) It predicts how the new law will affect the coming elections.

4 Which of the following BEST describes the structure of the article?

(A) order of events
(B) cause and effect
(C) problem and solution
(D) compare and contrast