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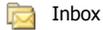
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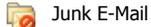
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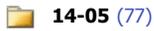
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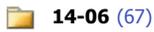
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**FW: Raleigh Roundup - June, 13, 2014**

JAYE MAXX ALEXANDER [JAYEALEXANDER@AOL.COM]

Sent: Wednesday, June 18, 2014 6:19 AM

To: [sjohnston@tueforumclt.org](mailto:sjohnston@tueforumclt.org)**Jaye Maxx Alexander II ,MBA,BBA****Commercial Mortgage Banker ,Residential Mortgage Specialist,Licensed & Enrolled IRS Specialist.****NMLS # 70466****980-318-3326 - cell****704-372-5990- office****J.M.Alexander,LLC****Charlotte.NC 28205*****Fear of Failure is followed by the Panic of Success.***<http://www.linkedin.com/in/jayemaxxalexander>

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**From:** Rep. Ruth Samuelson [mailto:Rep.\_Ruth\_Samuelson@mail.vresp.com]**Sent:** 06/13/2014 2:43 PM**To:** [jayealexander@aol.com](mailto:jayealexander@aol.com)**Subject:** Raleigh Roundup - June, 13, 2014

# Capitol Commentary

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June 13, 2014

Raleigh Roundup

Raleigh, NC

The NC House this week approved its \$21.09 billion budget for the 2014-2015 fiscal years. The budget includes a previously announced starting salary increase for entry-level teachers to \$33,000 annually as well as unfreezing the step salary schedule that will increase teacher salaries an average of five percent. It will now be sent to the Senate and if as expected they do not concur with our changes, which is very typical, then a conference committee from each legislative chamber will be appointed to begin working out the differences next week.

State employees will receive an annual \$1000 salary increase, an average increase of 2.3 percent. Highway Patrol Troopers, who are step-eligible will also receive an increase between five and six percent.

The House budget plan protects core services of government while setting priorities in education. K-12 expansion includes allocating \$18.7 million to restore Master's and other advanced degree supplements for teachers, preserving teaching assistants in early education classrooms and fully funding the new Career Pathways pilot program.

“When Republicans took over the legislature a few years ago, the state faced double-digit unemployment and a \$2.5 billion budget deficit,” said House Speaker Thom Tillis (R-Mecklenburg). “Today, because of the hard work we have put into turning our economy around and efficiencies we have made in our state budget throughout the year, North Carolina is finally in a position to meaningfully address our priorities including increased teacher and state employee salaries.”

The House budget also funds many core services and focuses on responsible stewardship of taxpayer dollars. The proposed budget does not change Medicaid eligibility, cut provider rates or reduce school nurses. It provides an additional \$9 million in funding for Pre-K, an increase of nearly 13 percent, \$5 million to expand crisis services for mental health and additional funding to the state medical examiner's office.

“The House budget proposal provides the services our citizens need and promotes North Carolina's ability to grow our economy and create more jobs,” said Rep. Nelson Dollar (R-Wake), the Senior Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee. “This plan reflects North Carolina's improving fiscal picture which has enabled us to make teacher and state employee raises a top priority.”

The House budget increases spending by 2.3 percent from the current year's budget, keeping pace with inflation.

*Some of the other budget highlights that I wanted to pass along include:*

- Continues the process of giving low-income families school choice options
- Provides \$1.8 million and 25 positions to implement long-term coal ash management and clean up statewide
- Provides an additional \$9 million in Pre-K funding
- Fully funds the Career Pathways pilot program to provide differentiated pay to teachers demonstrating effectiveness or assuming additional responsibilities
- Maintains Medicaid eligibility
- Adds an additional \$117.8 million to the State Risk Reserve for the Medicaid program
- Increases state funding to expand and enhance Child Protective Services by 101 percent to \$27 million including funding to reduce county department of social

*Over the course of three days of debate, several key amendments were made to the House budget. These included:*

- Adding five additional days of special leave for state employees
- Restoring funding for the state's family courts
- Adding another \$12 million money toward textbooks
- Defined “puppy mills” in an effort to stop the practice statewide

*In addition to budget work we also were busy with some other things that I thought may be of interest:*

- The House gave final approval this week to HB 1031 “NC Economic Development Partnership Modifications” that allows the Department of Commerce to partner with a non-profit corporation in collaboration for economic development. It now is sent to the Senate.
- The House also voted in favor of HR 1069 “Unemployment Insurance Law Changes” which

includes clarifications to confidentiality of unemployment insurances information and ties the duration of benefits to the NC

### **NC House moves to protect NC residents against possible toxic contamination**

The North Carolina House of Representatives passed legislation on Friday that would clarify its intent that residents may pursue lawsuits in certain cases related to injuries arising from exposure to toxic contamination.

The legislative action was needed after the United States Supreme Court issued an opinion on Monday halting homeowners in the south Asheville area from pursuing a lawsuit against CTS Corporation. The U.S. Supreme Court concluded that federal law did not preempt state law, which currently limits contamination suits to 10 years.

The same day of the U.S. Supreme Court ruling, the Obama Administration's U.S. Justice Department filed a motion to dismiss a similar case involving a group of North Carolina homeowners over water contamination at Camp Lejeune. The lawsuit includes claims related to exposure to contaminated water at the U.S. Marine Corps base that potentially resulted in birth defects, childhood cancers and other illnesses.

"The legislature is going to do what we can to ensure that the citizens of North Carolina are able to pursue lawsuits against possible contamination – even when it's the U.S. Government that's being sued," said Speaker Thom Tillis (R-Mecklenburg). "Now that the U.S. Supreme Court has clarified the law in this area, we will move swiftly to ensure that state law reflects the Legislature's intent to protect the public health of our citizens."

The General Assembly's legislative action is needed at this time to clarify the intent of the law following Monday's U.S. Supreme Court decision and will allow for plaintiffs in cases related to injuries arising from exposure in and around Asheville and Camp Lejeune – and other communities

throughout the state – to pursue legal claims against possible contamination with no time constraints. Without this legislative action, citizens would be left without a remedy against entities, including the United States, currently acting to dismiss their claim, which might have committed acts or omissions that led to their injuries.

"We are confident that this updated law will allow local residents in cases related to injuries arising from the exposure around Asheville and Camp Lejeune will have the opportunity to make their case based on the merits," said Reps. Rick Catlin (R-New Hanover), Tim Moffitt (R-Buncombe), Chuck McGrady (R-Buncombe) and Nathan Ramsey (R-Buncombe). "This legislation is fair to our citizens and the North Carolina General Assembly will not join the ranks of those who have failed these citizens."

As always don't hesitate to contact me in Raleigh with your questions or comments, either by emailing me at [ruths@ncleg.net](mailto:ruths@ncleg.net) or [samuelsonla@ncleg.net](mailto:samuelsonla@ncleg.net) , or calling me at my legislative office at (919) 715-3009.

In your service,

Ruth

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