



[Representative Rodney W. Moore](#)

N. C. House Of Representatives

Legislative Office Building

Raleigh, NC 27603-5925

(919) 733-5606

Rodney.Moore@ncleg.net

Mecklenburg County



For Immediate Release

June 30, 2014

REPRESENTATIVE RODNEY W. MOORE'S RALEIGH REPORT

-

NC House Spending Plan

Last week, the North Carolina House unanimously passed a limited spending plan that, most importantly, included a 5% pay raise for teachers and a raise for state employees. I was happy to see that because of the efforts of House Democrats, the spending plan no longer included over-projected and deceptive lottery money from a proposal to increase lottery advertising. However, I remain concerned over the funding and its heavy reliance on Medicaid revenues that are in controversy. Democrats reminded our Republican colleagues that we need more than a "political Band-Aid" and that they will be held accountable for presenting a balanced budget that truly addresses the teacher pay crisis in North Carolina and is more than an election year gimmick. As the budget continues to be debated in the House and Senate, I will continue to demand that the process be open to the public, so that tough questions can be asked and answered, and to ensure that raising teacher pay remains the top priority. Our teachers deserve a real plan that raises teacher pay to the national average so that we can attract and retain the best teachers for our students.

Bills of Note

The Senate passed [S 729](#), a coal ash management plan. This bill takes steps in cleaning up the state's coal ash ponds after the horrible Dan River coal ash spill, but leaves in place a loophole that would allow Duke Energy to charge customers for part of the cost incurred for

cleaning up and shutting down its 16 coal ash sites across the state. Unfortunately, Republican Senators voted down an amendment that would have ensured that the rate payers would not have been responsible for any cost associated with closing coal ash ponds in North Carolina. As this bill moves through the House I will continue to fight to ensure that the costs of dealing with coal ash are paid by Duke Energy and not by the rate payers.

The House & Senate passed nearly unanimous legislation, [H 1220](#) - Hope4Haley and Friends; a bill that would help children with intractable epilepsy receive the care they need without having to leave North Carolina. This bill is now on the Governor's desk awaiting his signature.

Major Spending Differences Drive a Wedge Between House and Senate

It's an annual ritual at the General Assembly, the budget hyperbole replaced by conflicting hyperbole with no one blinking an eye. That may eventually happen this year, but it is going to take a while. The House and Senate have seriously flawed and diametrically opposed ideas about how to give teachers a raise, how to "reform" Medicaid and how much funding public schools should receive. There are dozens of other differences in the two budgets and working some of them out may be difficult, but it's fundamentally conflicting approaches on teacher pay, education funding, and Medicaid that are holding up the budget agreement and there are few signs this week that the two sides are anywhere close to resolving those big issues.

NCAE Rallies at Legislators for Teacher Pay

Educators from across North Carolina voiced their concerns over the state budget and how it will impact teacher salaries during a rally in Raleigh on Wednesday. On Tuesday, House and Senate budget negotiators met behind closed doors to try to come to an agreement on a revised state budget ahead of the July 1 deadline. Teachers are waiting on a final budget to see what kind of raises they will get.

Medicaid Remains a Major Point of Contention

The state House, Senate and governors are in the midst of negotiating a \$21 billion annual budget for North Carolina that is due to take effect July 1. Although they all agree on priorities, there are deep divisions over the Medicaid health insurance program for the poor and disabled. In particular, senators project that the state will need between \$200 million to \$300 million more than that either the House or Senate would set aside as the state's roughly \$4 billion share of the program. Federal tax dollars pick up another \$10 billion in spending. Although all three groups cite a lot of numbers in their argument over Medicaid spending, there are three basic ways in which the budget estimates differ:

- The enrollment backlog: A computer system known as NC FAST was supposed to quickly evaluate eligible Medicaid applicants and enroll them in the system. That computer system is not yet working as promised, so there is a difference in opinion as to the actual backlog.
- The claims backlog: A computer system known as NCTracks is supposed to pay claims made by providers who treat or provide equipment and medication to Medicaid patients. That system is not yet giving the real-time information promised by its design, meaning that budget-writers are in the dark about how much hospitals and doctors are owed for treatment provided this year.
- Medicaid growth: Medicaid spending has grown generally over the past decade, at roughly 5 percent per year according to some projections. Pope told senators that the growth rate has slowed somewhat, but senators are less sure.

Governor Vetoes Unemployment Bill Over Control of Appointments

The legislation adds to unemployment reforms established in 2013 and would require the unemployed to show they have made at least five contacts with potential employers in one week. The current requirement includes two job searches in a week's time. The bill would also make it mandatory for people to present photo identification within the first four weeks of receiving unemployment benefits and it increases the confidentiality of unemployment records in accordance with federal law. The bill would also make it mandatory for people to present a photo identification within the first four weeks of receiving unemployment benefits

Republican Lawmaker Publicly Compares Homosexuality to Pedophilia; Bestiality

Some lawmakers are still outraged over comments made by Rep. Paul Stam Tuesday, comparing homosexuality with pedophilia. The comments came during a debate between lawmakers over a proposal to ban charter schools from discriminating based on sexual orientation or gender identity. Stam handed out a two-page list of definitions of sexual orientation, comparing it to incest and pedophilia among other things. Rep. Marcus Brandon (D) for Guilford County is openly gay and says Stam's comments were painful. "It's hurtful that you would compare me personally to a pedophile," Brandon said.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Senate Agriculture/Environment/Natural Resources

The Committee met on Tuesday, June 24. The Committee took up [H 366](#), the NC Farm Act of 2014, H 379, Amend Veterinary Practice Act/Fees, and [H 1139](#), State Nature and Historic Preserve Adds & Deletes. H 366 contains a host of agriculture related law changes including provisions that would prohibit local governments from regulating the use or sale of fertilizer, landscape contractors would have to be licensed by the state and illegal trespassing on farm property could be a felony if a person intends to disrupt the operation. [H 379](#) seeks to authorize the NC Veterinary Medical Board to change the Board's laws pertaining to licensure fees and license reinstatement. H 1139 seeks to accept and remove certain properties as part of the State Nature and Historic Preserve. All three bills passed the Committee. H 366 and H 379 have been referred to the Senate Finance Committee for further consideration.

Senate Finance Committee

The Committee met on Wednesday, June 25 and approved five bills. H 366, NC Farm Act of 2014, would make numerous changes with respect to laws regarding agricultural operations, including provisions that would allow for the confidentiality of environmental investigations of agricultural operations, allow the Commissioner of Agriculture to appoint limited-jurisdiction law enforcement officers, rewrite the landscape contractor licensing statutes, classify trespassing on an agricultural facility as first degree trespass, and clarify the inspection authority of the North Carolina Housing Finance Agency. H 379, Amend Veterinary Practice Act/Fees, would allow the Veterinary Medicine Board to change some licensing fees and would amend the laws with respect to license reinstatement. [H 1052](#), Adjust the Utility Regulatory Fee, would allow the General Assembly to establish a different utility regulatory fee for the retail services of telecommunications providers that have elected an alternative method of regulation. [H 1067](#), Murphy Deannexation, is a local bill that would remove certain land from the Town of Murphy. [H 1182](#), UNC Nonappropriated Capital Projects, would authorize various capital projects in the University system to be paid for by receipts other than State appropriations.

Senate Appropriations/Base Budget Committee

The Committee met on Thursday, June 27. Office of State Budget and Management (OSBM) Director Art Pope and OSBM staff presented the Administration's Medicaid spending projections. Fiscal Research staff and members of the committee asked questions to Administration staff regarding projections. No legislation was taken up during this committee meeting.

House Regulatory Reform Committee

The Committee met on Tuesday, June 25. Two regulatory reform bills were considered and passed out of Committee during this meeting. [S 493](#), Health and Safety Regulatory Reform, was modified to include only health and safety related regulatory reform issues. [S 734](#),

Regulatory Reform Act of 2014, was modified to include a host of business and government related regulatory reform issues. The bill next goes to the full House for consideration.

House Finance Committee

The Committee met three times this past week – on Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday. All but three of the bills taken up by the Committee were local bills. [H 1033](#), Special Assessment/Dam Repair, (which was approved by the Committee on Wednesday) began as a local bill for Richmond County but was converted into a public bill due to concerns about whether a local bill on the subject matter would be constitutional. The bill would allow a county to impose a special assessment on property contiguous to a lake for the purpose of repairing the dam of that lake. [S 105](#), Political Signs/Add Towns to SHP, (which was approved by the Committee on Thursday) would clarify that a municipal political sign ordinance may apply to State highways within the municipality and would authorize the towns of Elizabethtown and Matthews to enroll their employees in the State Health Plan. [S 871](#), Raleigh/Durham/Deannexation/Annexation, (which was approved by the Committee on Thursday) would shift certain property from the corporate limits of the City of Raleigh to the City of Durham and amends a bill enacted in 2013 regarding the annexation of other specific property into the City of Durham.

The local bills that passed were: [H 1054](#), Spindale/Cape Fear Sewer Fee Collection; [H 1151](#), Fayetteville Red Light Changes; [H 1245](#), Pleasant Garden Annex/Watha Deannex; [S 523](#), Wrightsville Beach Deannex/Wilmington Annex.; [S 848](#), Infrastructure Reimbursement Agmts.; and [S 870](#), Durham/Payments for On-Street Parking.

House Judiciary B Subcommittee

The Subcommittee met on Wednesday, June 25, and approved two bills. [H 1099](#), Unmanned Aircraft Regulation, would regulate the use of unmanned aircraft systems (commonly referred to as 'drones') within the State. [S 648](#), NC Commerce Protection Act of 2014, would regulate contracts between the Attorney General and private outside counsel and would establish procedures intended to reduce frivolous claims with respect to patent infringement. The Committee heard, but took no action on, a proposed committee substitute for [S 853](#), Business Court Modernization.

House Appropriations Committee

The Committee met twice last week to address their new budget bill and an omnibus Justice and Public Safety bill. On Wednesday, June 25, the House Committee approved a PCS to [S 3](#) that addresses teacher and state employee raises, teacher career development, in state tuition for veterans and funding for new coal ash regulators. S 3 received a favorable report in Committee and was approved on the House floor by a vote of 117-0. On Thursday, June 26, the Committee met again to take up [S 594](#), Omnibus Justice Amendments. The bill makes numerous criminal justice changes including a provision that moves the SBI out of the

Attorney General's office and into the Department of Public Safety. S 594 received a favorable report in Committee and passed second reading in the House by a vote of 75-39.

-

Please remember that you can listen to committee meetings and press conferences on the General Assembly's website at www.ncleg.net. Once on the site, select "Audio," and then make your selection – House Chamber, Senate Chamber, Appropriations Committee Room or Press Conference Room. A schedule of committee meetings and other events is also available on the website.

2 Attached Images

