

*****SPAM*** Latest Updates from the NCGA**



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NC Senate District 41 Newsletter

October 6, 2023

Governor's Vetoes and Override Votes



Over the past two weeks, Governor Cooper vetoed the following bills:

- **SB678, Clean Energy/Other Changes.** This bill attempts to prioritize the profits of utility companies over decarbonization, energy efficiency, and affordability by refusing to raise the cap on solar energy leasing, thereby discouraging large companies from entering the solar energy market in NC and by favoring nuclear energy and the construction of traditional power plants over wind and solar energy. I will vote to uphold the Governor's veto. Read more [here](#).
- **SB749, No Partisan Advantage in Elections.** This bill threatens the integrity of North Carolina elections, democracy, and the North Carolina Constitution. It gives the majority party an unfair partisan advantage in election decisions and could result in a severe restriction on early voting sites in certain counties. It also creates the concern that the results of an election could be changed if those in charge did not like the outcome. I will vote to uphold the Governor's veto. Read more [here](#).
- **HB600, Regulatory Reform Act of 2023.** This bill contains several rollbacks of environmental protections for North Carolina's natural resources and vulnerable populations. It diminishes watershed protections, allows groundwater, streams, and wetlands to be contaminated with pathogens from decomposing livestock, prevents the NC Department of Environmental Quality from denying hog waste lagoon and swine gas projects on civil rights grounds, and opens the door for diminished testing of our water for toxins such as PFAS chemicals and 1,4-Dioxane, which is a probable carcinogen. I will vote to uphold the Governor's veto. Read more [here](#).

We expect the majority party to schedule votes to override these and other vetoes next week, probably on Tuesday.

Monday, October 9: Mecklenburg Delegation Bipartisan Virtual Listening Session



REGISTER
TO ATTEND!



MECKLENBURG DELEGATION

BIPARTISAN VIRTUAL LISTENING SESSION

Register to Zoom with your local NC Senate and House members! Share your thoughts with them on schools, health care, taxes, or any issue you'd like to see the General Assembly address.

OCTOBER 9, 6PM

REGISTER TO ATTEND:

<https://t.ly/00Uzt>

The Mecklenburg County Delegation to the NC General Assembly is hosting our first virtual listening session of the year. The listening session is scheduled for October 9 at 6:00 PM. The Delegation wants to hear from you about what is on your mind, what you would like us to know about your community, and what you would like us to work on. **This is your opportunity to talk to us and for us to listen.** Attendees must sign up in advance [here](#).

Budget Aftershock



Prior to the budget's reveal, I spoke with NC Newsline about Medicaid expansion, the attempted casino scam, the lack of respect for teachers and state employees, gun violence, and legislators' refusal to listen to students who came to Raleigh. You can listen to that interview [here](#).

I voted NO on the Republicans' budget. The process was secretive, delayed and then rushed after the budget was made public, and fraught with unfairness. Democrats were not included in the negotiations and Democratic priorities were ignored. In addition to the components of the bill which my colleagues and I were able to dissect and debate on the floor, several other dangerous provisions have come to light, including:

- **Creation of an appointed State Fire Marshal role** that must be confirmed by the NCGA, removing the responsibility from the position of North Carolina Insurance Commissioner. This change came without any input from the NC Department of Insurance, the State Firefighters Association, county fire marshals, or fire chiefs. **The State Firefighters Association is against this provision and advocated for its removal from the final budget.** In addition to these changes, the budget also changes the Firefighters' Health Benefits program, which was piloted to help firefighters diagnosed with cancer. These modifications are highly concerning, as they could leave firefighters diagnosed with cancer waiting to receive care. Read more [here](#).
- **Prevents the State Board of Elections from joining the [Electronic Registration Information Center](#) (ERIC)**, a multi-state organization that helps states keep voting rolls clear of duplications and errors. Read more [here](#).
- **Bans attorneys who work for the nonprofit Legal Aid of North Carolina from receiving loan repayment assistance through the state foundation [NC LEAF](#)**, the Legal Education Assistance Foundation. Legal Aid of North Carolina provides low-cost legal assistance to people in need, so the inclusion of this targeted language concerns me. Read more [here](#).
- **Establishment of a cap on special education funding.** School systems are limited in how many children with special needs they may enroll. By state law, they will no longer receive commensurate additional funding if children with special needs make up more than 13% of total enrollment.
- **Restricts local governments from banning the use of plastic bags at grocery stores and prevents local officials from enacting a fee on plastic bags.** Reducing the use of plastic bags historically has had strong support along the North Carolina coast due to the ways in which plastic bags impact marine life, especially the dangers they pose to sea turtles, who can mistake the bags for jellyfish. The bill also blocks municipalities from requiring grocery stores to retrieve scattered carts. Read more [here](#).
- **Prevents state regulators from requiring utilities to offset their carbon emissions through cap-and-trade programs** and blocks North Carolina from joining the [Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative](#), an initiative supported by a number of East Coast states to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from power plants by offering cap-and-invest options.
- Increases fees paid by electric and hybrid vehicle owners.
- **Eliminates vehicle emissions inspections in 19 more North Carolina counties, leaving only Mecklenburg.**
- Blocks state agencies from prioritizing electric cars, trucks, and buses.
- Adds a "deemed approved" provision for stormwater permits that have been in process for more than 70 days, **speeding up development at the expense of drinking water safety.**

While these provisions generate a significant amount of concern, the budget also contained this positive section that I didn't highlight in the last newsletter: **Going forward, teachers who switch districts will not lose their right to get paid parental leave**, as long as they've been teaching in North Carolina K-12 public schools or public higher education for at least 12 consecutive months before having a baby or adopting a child. After a teacher reached out to Queen City News, myself, and other legislators, language that addresses her situation was included in the budget. Watch the investigative report [here](#), and read about the resolution [here](#).

31 **CLARIFY MINIMUM SERVICE REQUIREMENTS FOR PAID PARENTAL LEAVE**
 32 **SECTION 7.83.(a)** G.S. 126-8.6(c1) reads as rewritten:
 33 "(c1) The State Human Resources Commission shall adopt rules and policies providing for
 34 a period of minimum service before an employee becomes eligible for parental leave, the
 35 maximum number of uses of paid parental leave within a 12-month period, and how much leave
 36 is to be provided in the event of miscarriage or the death of a child during birth. The rules shall
 37 provide that the period of minimum service may be met by aggregating employment at any of
 38 the following:
 39 (1) State agencies, departments, and institutions, including The University of
 40 North Carolina.
 41 (2) Public school units that provide paid parental leave in accordance with this
 42 section.
 43 (3) Community colleges located in this State."
 44 **SECTION 7.83.(b)** G.S. 115C-218.90(a)(6) reads as rewritten:
 45 "(6) A board of directors may provide paid parental leave consistent with the
 46 requirements of G.S. 126-8.6. If the board provides paid parental leave, it shall
 47 be eligible to receive funds as provided in G.S. 115C-336.i(b). If the board
 48 does not provide paid parental leave, it shall provide written notice to
 49 individuals upon offering employment. The notice shall state that employment
 50 with the charter school will not count toward any minimum period of service
 51 established pursuant to G.S. 126-8.6(c1)."

The budget went into effect on October 3, which brings [several changes](#) including:

- **Expansion of Medicaid coverage to about 600,000 low-income individuals, set to go live December 1.**
- Pay raises for teachers, retroactive to July 1st. Though the paltry raise of about 7% over 2 years will hardly address the more than 3,500 teaching vacancies or North Carolina's national ranking as 46th in beginning teacher pay and 34th in average teacher pay, the budget prioritized the raises for newer teachers to encourage them into the profession. Starting teacher pay will increase over the biennium by almost 11%, but teachers with 15 or more years of experience will only see a 3.6% increase. When adjusted for inflation, teachers with 16 or more years of experience will see their pay fall in the next two years. Read more [here](#).
- Pay raises for state employees, retroactive to July 1st, matching the average pay raise for educators of 7% over 2 years.
- School voucher program expansion, which will benefit the private school industry while stripping funding from public schools.
- Changes to the state's open records laws, making state lawmakers exempt from those requirements. In addition, the budget specifically makes documents in the redistricting process exempt from the open records laws.

Redistricting Public Hearings



I was present to hear public comments at the Joint Redistricting and Elections Committee hearing held in Raleigh on September 27. The hearing lasted over three hours as people traveled from all over the state to echo similar requests and comments. Here are some of the highlights:

- A high school student from Huntersville, Eric Willoughby, came all the way to Raleigh and delivered a powerful call for fair maps in order to allow citizens to demand policies like gun safety laws and reproductive freedom. He was one of only two people so far from Mecklenburg County. You can listen to Eric's remarks and learn more about his activism [here](#).
- A woman calling what happens in the NCGA "politricks" - in a poem she wrote and drove from Wilmington to read, speaking about her need for fair representation to address systemic racism.
- Many people calling for more transparency in the process and for more public hearings, at times and in locations that would allow working people from around the state to attend.
- Many people calling for an independent redistricting commission, instead of allowing legislators to draw their own districts.
- A woman who wants our districts to reflect our purple state. She noted that the public's trust in elected leaders is waning, and that's especially true after the way the budget was passed and the provision that cloaked legislators' records from public view.
- Several people used colorful language to describe how their communities were sliced and diced by Republicans, using phrases such as "giving our county the hooziewhatszie."
- A member of the Trump team, Jim Womack, was one of the handful of speakers who praised the Republicans' past map drawing and even suggested that they go further than they did in 2021. The other speakers who spoke in support of the past process were employees of the John Locke Foundation, so no surprise there.
- A man from Wilmington noted that white supremacists used surrounding counties to overthrow Black elected leaders in Wilmington in the late 1800s and said that is what is happening now with gerrymandering of urban/blue areas. Maps are rigged to allow rural Republican voters to flood out the votes of urban Democratic voters.
- Several moms noted that we want a responsive and representative NCGA, which requires fair maps. They mentioned wanting gun safety laws, public education investments, reproductive freedom, and other policies that are being ignored by the current, unresponsive NCGA.
- A woman discussed how her child's classroom demonstrated the power of gerrymandering in an exercise using favorite ice cream flavors as proxies for political parties. The kids understood how unfair it is, and legislators should too.
- A man who was fired up reminding the committee that SCOTUS ruled against Speaker Moore and the Republican legislators in *Moore v. Harper*, and again in Alabama this week, holding that state legislators do not have total authority over elections and that state legislatures cannot use racial gerrymandering to deny Black voters the opportunity to elect the candidate of their choice.
- A pastor who invoked a Biblical reference and implored the NCGA to not "split the baby," using the analogy of the United States of America being like a baby in our arms. We have the power and should use it wisely, not cut up communities for political advantage.
- Several people representing various minority groups – Asian Americans, Hispanics, Latinx, African Americans, Muslims, and immigrants – all asking for fair representation in the NCGA and noting how few people from their groups can be elected under gerrymandered maps.
- Several people mentioned how ridiculous it is to hold public hearings BEFORE the maps are presented to the public and BEFORE the committee says anything about what factors and procedures it will use to draw the new maps. They asked that public hearings be held AFTER the maps are made public.

I noticed that the Chair seemed disinterested in the speakers' comments and shortened the time each person was permitted to speak from three minutes to only two minutes each. I asked the Chair if additional hearings would be held, such as in Mecklenburg, Guilford, or other populated areas, and he refused. He also told reporters after the hearing that his colleagues are already drawing maps and will present them to the public when they "reach agreement" among themselves. Apparently, there won't be public map drawing this year, and the public comments will likely fall on deaf ears. Read more [here](#).

If you were unable to attend any of the three public hearings, **you may provide comment on redistricting using [this online portal](#)**. **Since the portal opened, we've received 201 comments from North Carolinians**, many of whom shared their frustrations with the lack of transparency in the process, a wish for more widespread opportunities for in-person comment across the state, support for an independent, nonpartisan redistricting commission, a desire for actual representation reflected by districts, and the fear of gerrymandering.

I had the opportunity to speak to Michael Hyland with CBS17 News & Queen City News regarding redistricting and the changes to election laws, such as the aforementioned lack of transparency and the potential for the boards to deadlock on important issues like certifying election results or establishing early voting sites. You can watch that story [here](#).



Senator Marcus in Raleigh and the Community



Today I toured the Meadows at Plato Price, **Habitat Charlotte Region's** new 39-home development project at the former site of the historically significant Plato Price School (where Congressman Mel Watt once attended school). This is located in the Southwest section of SD41 and I'm excited for all the folks who will benefit from it. I also had the opportunity to meet Jonathan Reckford (pictured above in the hard hat), the chief executive officer of Habitat for Humanity International, who is a native North Carolinian. This is the first Carter Build that happened without the Carters in attendance and the organizers were ecstatic that the build was accelerated by over a year, so all families will be able to move in by the end of 2024. Did you know that the home ownership rate in this area of Charlotte is only about half of the rate in the rest of the city? Home ownership is a huge factor in improving socio-economic mobility, security and the wealth gap.



I attended a ceremony to remember and recognize the impact Jessica Boesmiller had at the Lake Norman YMCA. We lost her to ocular melanoma in April of 2022. I was honored to know Jessica and will keep pushing to get state funding approved for research into the cause of ocular melanoma in the area.



I attended the National Night Out event in Davidson. The Davidson Police Department, the Fire Department, and many local service organizations participated, including my former employer, the Ada Jenkins Center. The beautiful weather led to a fantastic turnout and folks really enjoyed the dunk tank and the scavenger hunt.

October 6: Huntersville Parks and Recreation Hosts Adult Recess



Join Huntersville Parks and Recreation for an Adult Recess event from 6:00 - 9:00 PM this evening at the Huntersville Athletic Park. Dodgeball, kickball, capture the flag, and more will be played, and free pizza will be offered. This event is restricted to adults over the age of 21. Read more [here](#).

October 7: Historic Hoskins Community Parade

2nd Annual HISTORIC HOSKINS COMMUNITY PARADE
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 7TH

9 AM LINE-UP
 10 AM START
 PARADE END 12 NOON

FESTIVAL SETUP 11 AM
 FESTIVAL START 12 NOON

PARADE START LOCATION:
 511 S HOSKINS RD.
 CHARLOTTE, NC 28208

PARADE END:
 EVA B. BARBER PARK
 3801 COSSETT AVENUE
 CHARLOTTE, NC 28208

FESTIVAL:
 EVA B. BARBER PARK
 3801 COSSETT AVENUE
 CHARLOTTE, NC 28208

PARADE AMBASSADOR:
FRANKIE KNOX, SR 704-363-7875

PARADE/FESTIVAL CHAIR: **BEVERLY KNOX (DAVIS)** 704-612-6390
 PARADE/FESTIVAL CO-CHAIR: **MELANIE STROUD** 704-942-8623

FOR QUESTIONS: HHPARADEANDFESTIVAL@GMAIL.COM

ORGANIZING COLLABORATIVE PARTNERS

A BRIGHTER DAY Outreach
 HISTORIC HOSKINS COALITION GROUP
 CAROLINA GOLF CARS
 A Brighter Day Ministries
 CAROLINA FARM TRUST

I'm looking forward to participating in the Second Annual Historic Hoskins Community Parade & Festival tomorrow. The parade starts at 10am and the Festival starts at noon at Eva B. Barber Park. I hope to see you there!

October 7: Cornelius Festival of Cultures



This Saturday, the Town of Cornelius will host its first Festival of Cultures! This event will be a great opportunity for people to experience the many cultures that make up Cornelius and the surrounding areas. It will be held from 3:00 - 6:00 PM in Cain Park (21336 Catawba Avenue). The event will include art and craft vendors, concessions, and live performances. It's free to attend. Learn more [here](#).

Davidson Food Waste Reduction Program



The Town of Davidson has allocated funds for the continuation of its food waste reduction program, Davidson Composts, following the successful six-month program piloted last fall. Three additional drop-off sites have been established since the pilot's start at Beaty Park, River Run Athletic Park, and Caldwell Green Tot Lot.

Davidson's food waste drop-off locations are open 24 hours, seven days per week:

- Davidson Town Hall & Community Center: 251 South Street
- Davidson Pumphouse: 865 South Street (former Parks & Recreation Office)
- Ada Jenkins Center: 212 Gamble Street
- Gethsemane Church: 565 Jetton Street
- Davidson Farmers Market: 120 South Main Street (near Farmers Market shed)
- Beaty Park: 832 Beaty Street
- Caldwell Green Tot Lot: 320 Caldwell Lane
- River Run Athletic Park: 13007 Robert Walker Drive

In order to participate, please complete [this online enrollment form](#) and select whether you would prefer to receive a complimentary 3.5-gallon bin or use your own. Additional details are provided after enrollment.

For questions and additional information regarding Davidson Composts, including what materials can be composted, please call the Davidson Parks & Recreation Department at **704-892-3349**, [email them](#), or visit the town's [website](#).

COVID Updates and Information



As a reminder, every U.S. household can now place an order to receive four free COVID-19 rapid tests delivered to their home. The U.S. government will continue to make COVID-19 tests available to uninsured individuals and under-served communities through existing programs. Please contact a [HRSA health center](#), [Test to Treat site](#), or [ICATT location](#) near you to learn how to access low- or no-cost COVID-19 tests. Learn more [here](#).

The updated vaccines are available now. I got mine this week. I hope you will too! For updated vaccine-related recommendations depending on health and age, click [here](#). To find a vaccine near you, click [here](#).

Links to Helpful Information

Domestic Violence Hotline: If you or someone you know is experiencing domestic violence or partner abuse, please call [Safe Alliance](#) at **704-332-2513** and they can help you.

Mecklenburg's County Bar [website](#) provides a list of pro bono resources for those unable to afford legal counsel.

Mecklenburg's Department of Community Resources provides individuals and families with [immediate access](#) to a diverse range of Mecklenburg County Health and Human Services programs and community partner services in Community Resources Centers throughout the County.

Mecklenburg's Energy Assistance Programs: Do you need help paying your heating or cooling bills? Mecklenburg offers [two different programs](#) to help eligible low-income households with their immediate energy needs.

Property Tax values and histories in Mecklenburg County can be searched on [this site](#) that includes links to Polaris and information about past assessments. You can find more detailed information on real estate values on the [Mecklenburg](#) site.

Suicide Prevention: If you have thoughts of harming yourself, **please call or text 988**, the Suicide Prevention Hotline for help.

Unclaimed Cash! Visit [NCCash.com](#) today to see if you have unclaimed property under the supervision of the NC Treasurer's office.

Voter Information: You can find your current information on the [NC Voter Lookup page](#).

Free Property Tax Assistance Services



Do you need help with your property taxes? The [Charlotte Center for Legal Advocacy](#) is providing free assistance to help homeowners prepare their NC property tax relief applications. Call **980-256-7952** or visit their website to learn more [here](#).

Financial Update on the State's General Fund

Beginning Cash, Friday, September 22	17,495,767,373.24
Add Receipts:	
Tax and Non-Tax Receipts	369,669,533.18
Coronavirus Relief Receipts	0.00
Other Receipts	791,748,157.81
Less Disbursements:	
Payroll	1,697,773,833.39
State Aid	143,143,375.15
Medicaid/Other Provider Payments	225,310,919.59
Tax Refunds/Distributions	514,747,964.94
Debt Service	0.00
Coronavirus Relief Transfers Out	0.00
General Operating	746,402,604.65
Ending Cash, Friday, September 29	15,329,806,366.51
Less Reserved Cash:	
Due to Local Governments – Sales and Use Tax Payable	444,427,202.82
Other Reserves	15,548,345.80
American Recovery Plan Act Reserve	103,076,693.32
Carry Forward Reserve	280,128,803.32
Clean Water Drinking Water Reserve	0.00
Coronavirus Capital Projects Reserve	0.00
Coronavirus Relief Reserve	0.00
Earthquake Disaster Recovery Reserve	0.00
Economic Development Project Reserve	596,900,000.00
Federal Infrastructure Match Reserve	95,328,642.00
Housing Reserve	0.00
Hurricane Florence Disaster Recovery Reserve	58,948,863.10
Information Technology Reserve	108,943,174.00
Local Fiscal Recovery Reserve-ARPA	0.00
Local Govt Coronavirus Relief Reserve	0.00
Local Project Reserve	0.00
Medicaid Contingency Reserve	326,512,736.00
Medicaid Transformation Reserve	155,642,170.00
NC GREAT Reserve	0.00
Opioid Abatement Reserve	8,380,211.23
Public School Contingency Reserve	0.00
Public School Need Based Capital Reserve	0.00
Repairs and Renovations Reserve	0.00
Retiree Supplement Reserve	0.00
SCIF General Fund Reserve	0.00
Savings Reserve	4,750,001,113.98
Stabilization and Inflation Reserve	1,000,000,000.00
State Emergency Response/Disaster Reserve	872,402,573.43
Unfunded Liability Solvency Reserve	10,000,000.00
Wilmington Harbor Enhancements Reserve	283,800,000.00
World University Games Reserve	25,000,000.00
Unreserved Cash Balance, Friday, September 29	6,194,765,837.51

The Office of the State Controller (OSC) released the General Fund Cash Watch numbers for the week ending Friday, September 29. OSC provides a weekly update on the State’s General Fund cash position which can be found at osc.nc.gov. **The current unreserved cash balance in state coffers is \$6.194 billion.**

The State Controller is North Carolina’s chief fiscal officer and serves as an independent resource to ensure the financial integrity of the State.

Contact Our Office

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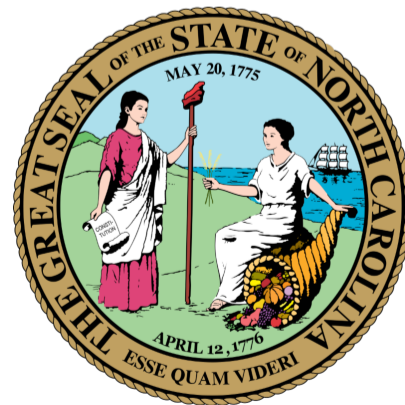
Sara

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How can we help you? Let us know and **reach out** to our office! We want to hear from you.



Sen. Natasha Marcus, District 41 | 300 N. Salisbury Street, Raleigh, NC 27603

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