

For Immediate Release



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From the Office of Sen. Joyce Waddell, NC Senate
Mecklenburg County

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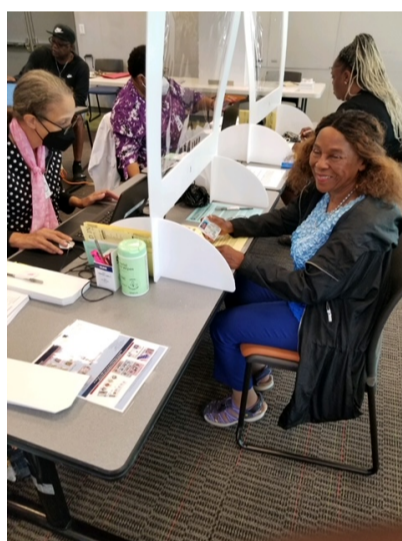


Greetings:

At the General Assembly
For the Week

Last week we voted on redistricting. This was difficult because of how badly the state of North Carolina has been divided up. The maps are severely gerrymandered. We must fight for true and fair democracy.

Joyce Waddell



Early Voting

*Senator Waddell casts her
vote during early voting.*

*Early voting is a great way
to eliminate long waits. If
you have not voted, please
take this opportunity to do
so.*

Community Colleges

The new state budget, passed on Sept. 22 and effective on Oct. 3, includes about \$1.5 billion in both years of the spending plan for the NCCCS. The total includes a 7% raise over two years for most community college personnel, along with significant investments in student programs and individual college allocations.

On Friday, the Board approved an initial budget allocation package that contained the 4% salary increase in 2023-24 and other employee benefit increases, funds for enrollment growth, and additional funds for basic skills and child care grants. In a separate item, the Board also approved allocations for up to \$14.2 million to complete the rural broadband project.

In November, the Board is set to approve funding for faculty recruitment and retention, nursing faculty salary increases, and capital improvements.

The budget includes \$100 million nonrecurring in each year of the biennium for new construction and repairs of facilities at nearly two-thirds of the state's community colleges.

The system's legislative ask was for \$232 million, which included a 7% raise for faculty and staff over the biennium. While the budget does not include the flexible student investment fund of \$145.88 million the system requested, it does include an unprecedented amount of allocations to individual colleges for workforce and health care programs.

The budget's new selection process for local boards of trustees will now include eight trustees appointed by the General Assembly, and four trustees elected by the board of commissioners of the county in which the main campus of the college is located.



Democratic Leaders Summit 2023

Senator Waddell participates at the 2023 Democratic Leaders Summit held in Raleigh on this past Friday and Saturday.

The Summit covered topics such as Women's Health, Gun Violence and Voting.



Education Bills

The “Protect Our Students Act” elevates it to a Class G felony for a school employee who is convicted of sexual activity with a student or taking indecent liberties with a student. The new law also raises it to a Class I felony for school leaders who fail to promptly report teacher misconduct to the State Board of Education. School employees could be charged with a crime if they start a sexual relationship within six months of a student leaving school.

In addition, the law requires the N.C. Center for Safer Schools to produce and distribute an age-appropriate video for grades 6-12 to identify acceptable and unacceptable student-teacher interactions.

House Bill 8 makes North Carolina the eighth state to require a computer science course to graduate from high school. This new requirement would apply beginning with students who enter ninth-grade next school year. The legislation does not increase the number of credits students need to complete to graduate. Instead, it requires the State Board of Education to reduce the number of required elective courses.

An earlier version of the bill would have required the state board to eliminate the earth science requirement. It was dropped after science teachers complained. The state is training more teachers to teach computer science. Due to the potential shortage, school districts will not have to begin offering computer science classes until the 2026-27 school year.

The bill was amended to add several unrelated items, including a requirement that porn websites set up age verification to try to keep minors from viewing the content.

Vaccines

Ask your healthcare provider for recent vaccines for COVID, Influenza, and RSV. Many who have underlying conditions are vulnerable and need to be extra cautious.



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