

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



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NC Senate District 41 Newsletter

June 14, 2024

Right to Access Public Records



Last week, I co-sponsored [SB911](#), **Constitutional Amendment/Right to Access Public Records**. The public's right to access state lawmakers' records was eliminated as part of the 2023-24 State Budget and lawmakers were authorized to keep secret, sell or destroy any records. I opposed that change. This constitutional amendment would allow voters to decide who gets to have access to those records. **Communications regarding decisions and legislation that affect all North Carolinians should be made accessible to all North Carolinians, and this amendment would make that access a right.** Unfortunately, we do not expect the majority party to allow the proposed Constitutional Amendment to be on the ballot.

Learn more [here](#).

Updates on Noteworthy Votes



Below are the noteworthy bills I voted on over the past two weeks. You can find a complete list of bills I voted on [here](#).

Key bills on which I voted YES:

- [SB124](#), **Predatory Roofing/Insurance Rebate Reform**. This bill protects homeowners from predatory practices involving roof repair by requiring all roof replacement or repair contracts to have a five-day cancellation period in the event that an insurance company denies a repair claim, and by placing a cap on insurance referral fees paid to non-licensed individuals.
- [HB223](#), **OSHR/Various SHRA Changes**. While the Senate majority tabled my amendment to improve this bill by increasing teacher and state employee salaries (the true root of the problem), this bill will help address the vacancies in public schools and state government jobs by making information regarding employment opportunities in state departments more accessible, and the hiring process more fluid by eliminating the 21-day listing period requirement.
- [HB495](#), **Revise Money Laundering/Retail Crime**. Addresses retail theft by permitting the aggregation of multiple convictions of financial crimes for sentencing, as well as creating new offenses for intentionally attempting to purchase goods with false price tags. Provides jurisdiction to the court of each county where one of the financial crimes occurred.

Key bills on which I voted NO:

- [SB565](#), **Amend Expunction**. When the bill left the Senate, it carried with it recommendations made by district attorneys and clerks to address the challenges presented by 2020's [Second Chance Act](#), which allows the automated expunction of "not guilty" and "dismissed" criminal charges. This bill has changed a lot since its first edition (when I actually co-sponsored and supported it). The name even changed. As it left the House and returned to the Senate, the new version instead repeals automatic expungement all together. **That is a significant rollback of the Second Chance Act, so I voted no** on the motion to concur this week, and I won't support the current version. Learn more [here](#) and [here](#).

Update on HB237: Mask Ban and Campaign Finance Changes



When [HB237](#), **Various Criminal and Election Law Changes**, was first introduced in the Senate, it was not shared with Democratic Senators until it was on the Senate floor, and it was introduced using a method that cut off the option to offer amendments. In response, [my Senate Democratic colleagues and I walked out during the vote last week in protest](#).

After passage in the Senate of the original version of HB237, there was loud outcry from the public in opposition and the House promised they would fix it before they passed it. But the House amendments fell short and did not address immunocompromised individuals, other high-risk individuals and their families, or other valid reasons for wearing a mask. The bill still empowers anti-mask activists to force people to remove their masks, which will create havoc and risk. The provisions designed to silence protestors and alter campaign finance laws are also unacceptable.

There are many unanswered questions about how its language will be interpreted, including important details necessary to ensure we don't make careful people into criminals and don't empower anti-maskers to harass immunocompromised and other vulnerable people by forcing them to remove their masks in public. It will also lead to a [massive influx of dark money into state races](#).

The House of Representatives voted on the bill this week; it passed. It will now go to the Governor's desk to be signed or vetoed. **If Governor Cooper vetoes this law, I will vote to uphold his veto.** Learn more [here](#).

Senate Judiciary Committee Updates



The following noteworthy bills were discussed in the Senate Judiciary Committee over the past two weeks:

- **SB802, C-PACE Program.** Establishes the commercial property assessed capital expenditure program ("C-PACE Program") to be administered by the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina ("EDPNC") under the supervision of the Department of Commerce. Under the C-PACE Program, owners of qualifying commercial property could apply to EDPNC to be approved for long-term financing provided by private lenders to pay for property improvements that would include **energy efficiency, water conservation, renewable energy, and resilience measures**. I am a co-sponsor of this bill.
- **HB98, Right to Try Individualized Treatments.** This week, the committee approved a PCS/amendment that removed all language in the original bill and replaced it language from **SB871**, which would allow eligible patients with life-threatening or severely debilitating illnesses the right to try individualized investigational drugs, biological products, and devices. I'm inclined to support the bill, but it will go through some amendments before it's ready.
- **HB199, DMV Proposed Legislative Changes.** Authorizes and studies issuance of a digital version of a drivers license that can be displayed on a mobile device as a supplement to a traditional drivers license. Requires ignition interlock as a condition for restoration of a drivers license when revocation was based on a conviction of death by motor vehicle when impaired driving is an element of the offense. Updates statutory odometer disclosure, all headlamps modified or installed on a motor vehicle, and statutes related to commercial drivers licensing to conform to federal standards. Increases the penalties for littering. Modernizes a variety of other registration and transaction-based statutes involving vehicles to account for changing technologies.
- **HB250, ME/IDS/Driving Privileges/Xylazine Changes.** The problematic changes to this bill discussed last week that would limit the public's access to autopsy reports, were dropped from the version of this bill that passed through the committee. Instead, the bill includes training regarding sudden unexpected death in epilepsy for medical examiners, clarifies the authority of medical examiners and district attorneys in regard to decedents whose deaths are under criminal investigation, provides the eligibility requirements for granting a limited driving privilege to a person whose drivers license is revoked because of a conviction for an offense of impaired driving, and creates the new offense of death by distribution of xylazine. Compromises were also made on the changes in the membership of the Indigent Defense Services Commission.
- **HB495, Revise Money Laundering/Retail Crime.** See "*Updates on Noteworthy Votes.*"
- **HB563, Hemp-Derived Consumables/Con Sub Changes.** Prohibit the sale to and purchase of hemp and hemp-derived products by people under 21 years old. Requires sellers to have a license to sell and for manufacturers to test products before distribution. Adds child-resistant and labeling requirements to packaging for these products, among other regulations. Add kratom, xylazine, and tianeptine to North Carolina's list of controlled substances. Learn more [here](#) and [here](#).

Senate Redistricting and Elections Committee Updates



The following noteworthy bills were discussed in the Senate Redistricting and Elections Committee over the past two weeks:

- **SB912, Elections Changes for Watauga Education & County Boards.** Redraws electoral districts for the Watauga County Board of Education to eliminate all at-large members and instead have districts that align with the County Board of Commissioners' districts. Prohibits the Watauga County Board of Commissioners from changing its method of election or electoral districts before the return of the next federal decennial census. This change that will give a partisan advantage to Republicans and was done without the input of the local elected Board. Watauga County voters have let me know that they oppose this bill, and I raised issues during the committee meeting. But it's a local bill, so the NCGA will defer to that county's legislators.

Senate Education Committee Updates



The following noteworthy bills were discussed in the Senate Education Committee over the past two weeks:

- **HB97, Various Education Changes.** Requires the State Board of Community Colleges to create a program to provide mathematics, reading, and English remediation to high school seniors. Allows students to receive the remediation during the summer prior to their senior year. Increases the number of classroom hours required for massage therapy licensure from 500 to 650. Changes the requirements of proprietary schools regarding student protections and tuition to be in line with federal requirements, and increases the catastrophic loss amount of the Student Protection Fund from \$1,000,000 to \$1,500,000 and the cap amount from \$1,500,00 to \$2,000,000. This fund is used to compensate students enrolled in a proprietary school when it ceases operation.
- **HB207, Discipline Changes.** Gives more due process rights to students who receive suspensions. Requires principals to accept a detailed, written eyewitness account of an incident that could result in a short-term or long-term suspension within 24 hours of the incident. Requires the principal or the principal's designee to provide the student with detailed, written documentation of the specific section of the public school unit's Code of Student Conduct that the student's conduct violated and how the conduct violated it. Revises short-term suspension procedures to allow for appeals and expungements.

ARTS Day Recap

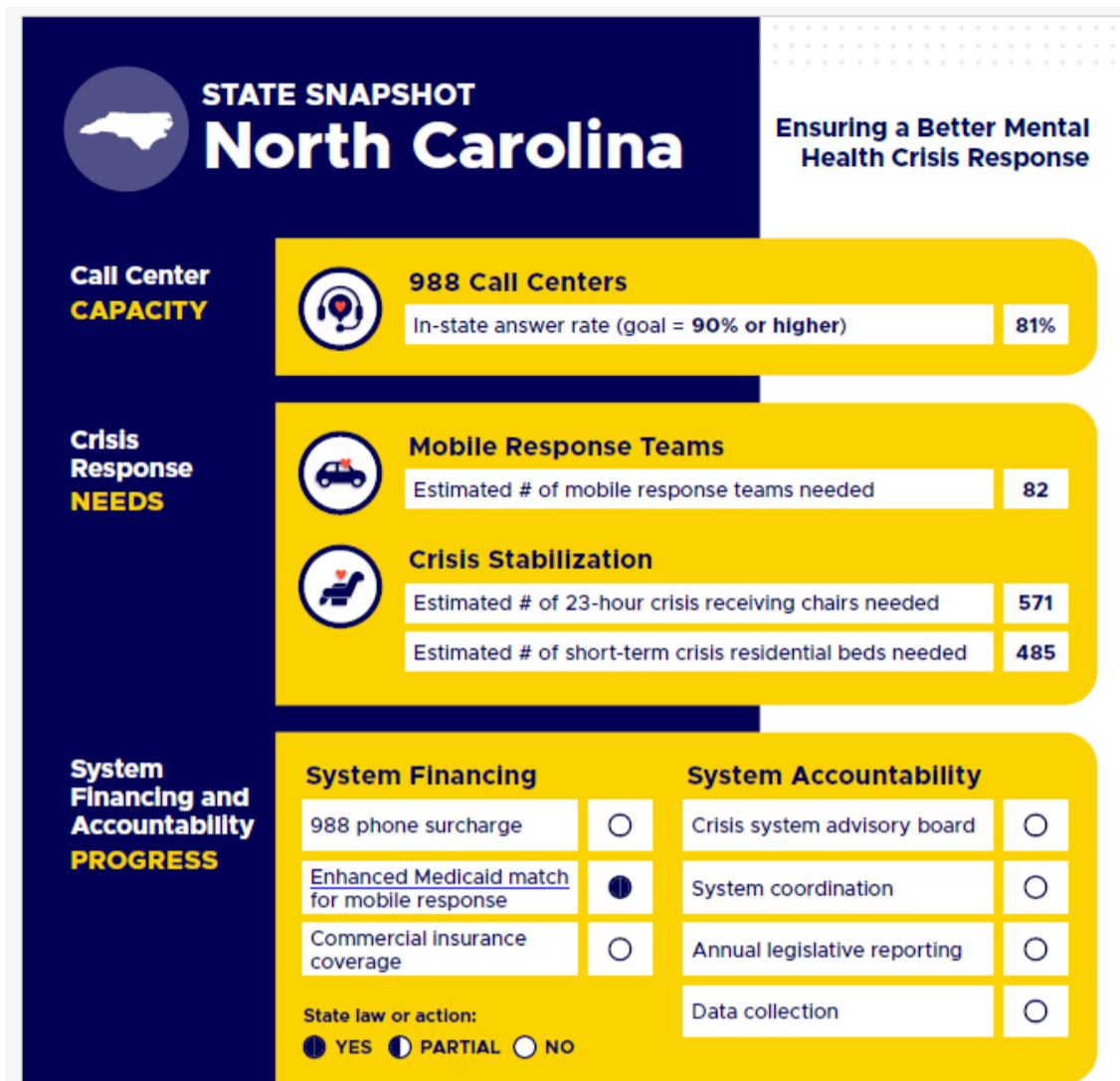


Last month, **ARTS North Carolina** hosted their annual ARTS Day at the North Carolina General Assembly. On this day, art advocates join together to show support for professional development, performances, celebration, and action in the arts, as well as to make the following requests of state legislators as part of the organization's 2024 legislative agenda:

- \$1,000,000 recurring increase for NC Arts Council General Grants.
- Make recurring the current A+ Schools funding.
- Provide all K-5 public school students with Performing & Visual Art instruction.

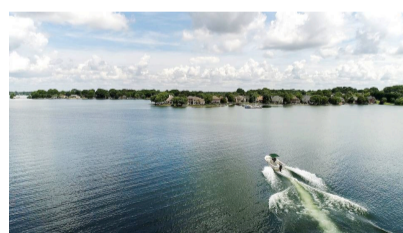
Learn more about the events that were hosted at the NCGA, such as the bipartisan sing-along, [here](#) and [here](#).

A Better Response: Policies to Improve America's Mental Health Crisis System



[Inseparable](#) released a new report, A Better Response: Improving America's Mental Health Crisis System, which analyzes mental health crisis response across the country and provides policy recommendations to improve it. Part of this study included State Snapshots targeted at each individual state's needs and policies. This snapshot found that only 81% of Suicide & Crisis Lifeline calls routed to the state are answered by an in-state call center. In addition to identifying crisis response needs, the report also encourages specific policy measures to improve the system, such as system financing and accountability measures. In particular, North Carolina could benefit from a 988 phone surcharge, like 911 surcharges on phone bills, and state insurance code requirements that qualified mobile response and crisis stabilization services must be covered in the same manner as physical health emergency services. The report also found the state in need of a complete overhaul in regard to accountability. Read the full report [here](#).

UNC Researchers Launch Study of Thyroid Cancer Incidence in North Carolina



The North Carolina General Assembly has funded a new investigation by UNC Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center that will **study the relationship between thyroid cancer cases statewide and specific environmental exposures**. This study will focus on all new thyroid cancer cases diagnosed in North Carolina from 1995 to 2021. Members of the research team will include researchers from UNC Lineberger, UNC Institute for the Environment, UNC Gillings, Duke University, North Carolina State University, the National Cancer Institute, and the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services. While the study will examine cases statewide, there will be a **particular focus on Iredell County, as reports of thyroid cancer cases around Lake Norman have been noticeably higher there than anywhere else in the state**. Learn more [here](#).

Charlotte Douglas Opens New, Expanded Airport Overlook



A new, free amenity has just opened in Senate District 41: Charlotte Douglas International Airport's expanded airport overlook, located at **5130 Airport Overlook Drive, Charlotte 28208**. In addition to allowing visitors to watch planes fly overhead, the new overlook allows visitors to watch planes fly overhead, among the following additional features:

- A view of the city skyline
- A retired F4 Phantom military fighter jet
- A playground
- A paved parking lot

The overlook will be open seven days a week from 8:00 AM - 10:00 PM Learn more [here](#).

Juneteenth Observances Set Across the State



Also known as "Freedom Day," Juneteenth commemorates the June 19, 1865 announcement that slavery would be abolished in Texas. Below are some of the celebratory events that will be held throughout the state:

- June 14, 7:30 PM, North Carolina Museum of Art — Juneteenth Joy: A Celebration of Freedom & Gospel Music
- **June 15, 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM, Central Piedmont Community College Cato Campus — Queen City Juneteenth Parade and Cultural Celebration. I plan to march in the parade and hope to see you there.**
- June 15, 5:00 - 11:00 PM, North Carolina Museum of Art — Juneteenth Joy: A Celebration of Black Women, Resilience and Sisterhood
- June 19, 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM, Lake Norman State Park — Juneteenth Storywalk and Make Your Own Flag
- June 22, 11:00 AM, President James K. Polk State Historic Site — The History of Juneteenth in North Carolina

Learn more about Juneteenth, as well as receive updates and information on the events listed [here](#). For a full list of Juneteenth events happening in and around Mecklenburg County, click [here](#).

Senator Marcus in Raleigh and the Community



I sponsored a Senate Page for the week, Bennett McCaskill. Bennett is a junior at Pine Lake Preparatory in Mooresville and lives in SD41. Bennett is interested in majoring in Political Science with the goal of becoming a diplomat and has a passion for African history.



Last week, I stood with the gun violence prevention movement to commemorate National Gun Violence Awareness Day at the General Assembly. Firearms are the leading cause of death for children and teens across America, and every day, more than 120 Americans are killed with guns. My colleagues at the General Assembly and I wore orange to show our commitment to advocate for common sense gun reform.

#WearOrange



I attended the [North Carolina Forestry Association's](#) Legislative Reception. They shared their legislative agenda to preserve our great natural resources, including support for reinstatement of the land conservation tax credit.



I attended the **Mecklenburg County Advocacy Reception**, where the county shared its **need for state funding to keep childcare centers open** and to help low-income families pay for childcare. It's a necessary investment needed to enable parents to work and children to be safe. They also shared the need for **more robust public school funding**, support for **transportation initiatives**, and other Mecklenburg priorities.

I also attended the dinner hosted by the **NC Association of County Commissioners**. Sen. Phil Berger and Speaker Tim Moore were the guest speakers. Unfortunately, they did not indicate support for addressing the needs that the counties have, like higher teacher pay and childcare stabilization funding.



I met with constituents Virginia (who also works with Planned Parenthood) and Sarah on [Equality NC's](#) Advocacy Day. We discussed the rise of anti-LGBT legislation in North Carolina, including the ban on gender-affirming care for transgender youth ([HB808](#)), the prohibition of trans women and girls from participating in public sports teams ([HB574](#)), and the ban on early education about LGBT identities in public schools ([SB49](#)).

June 15: Davidson's Annual Cone With A Cop Event



On Saturday, June 15, from 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM, the Town of Davidson Police Department will host its sixth annual **Cone with a Cop** event at **Whit's Frozen Custard** (428 S. Main St., Davidson, NC 28036). At the event, members of the public will be able to enjoy frozen vanilla or chocolate custard while learning crucial safety skills and building community ties with DPD officers. Learn more [here](#).

North Carolina Summer Meals Programs for Kids

The logo for NC Summer Nutrition Programs features the letters 'NC' in a large, bold, black font at the top. Below 'NC' are six colorful squares (red, blue, green, purple, yellow, orange) each containing a white letter: 'S', 'U', 'M', 'M', 'E', 'R'. Above these squares are silhouettes of various people: a child running, a person pushing a stroller, a person in a wheelchair, a person sitting on the ground, a person jumping, and a person standing. Below the squares, the words 'Nutrition Programs' are written in a black, sans-serif font, with a small orange slice icon above the 'o' in 'Nutrition' and a small green leaf icon above the 'o' in 'Programs'.

More than 900,000 North Carolina students rely on the nutritious meals and snacks served during the school year through the School Breakfast, School Lunch and Afterschool Snack Programs. When school is out, those low-income children lose access to meals. Summer Meals Programs provide nutritious meals at no cost for children and adolescents ages 18 and younger to help close that gap.

To find nutritious summer meals at no-cost near you for kids and teens:

- Text "Food" to 304-304 for information in English or "COMIDA" to 304-304 for information in Spanish.
- Use the [N.C. Site Finder Map](#)
- Check your local school district website, social media or other communications.
- Learn more [here](#).

As part of these programs, there will be fitness, fun, and farm-to-summer activities across the state that encourage program operators to serve local food as part of meals and snacks and teach about agriculture. Learn more and sign up for the Farm to Summer challenge [here](#).

Sun Bucks Update

The Sun Bucks logo consists of the word 'SUN' in large, bold, orange letters above the word 'BUCKS' in large, bold, blue letters. To the right of the text is a stylized sun icon with rays, and inside the sun is a white fork and knife icon.

The USDA has launched a permanent program to provide food assistance to children and families during the summer. SUN Bucks will provide grocery-buying benefits to qualifying families with school-aged children during the summer months when schools are on summer break. SUN Bucks will be issued to EBT cards that families can use to purchase nutritious food. Beginning in summer 2024, families will receive \$120 per eligible child for the summer period. Some families will have to apply for the program, but many students will automatically qualify. Children will automatically qualify if they already participate in any of the following programs:

- Free or Reduced-Price (FRP) meals at school because they have an approved FRP application at school, or
- Food and Nutrition Services (FNS, food stamps), or
- Work First (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), cash assistance), or
- Medicaid with household income below 185% of the federal poverty level, or
- Foster care.

Families will be able to use their EBT cards to buy food at grocery stores, farmers' markets, and [some online retailers](#). Find out if your child automatically qualifies or if you will need to apply for the program [here](#). View the Sun Bucks FAQ [here](#). Learn more [here](#), and receive information on the program as it becomes available [here](#).

Saturday Hours at Select DMV Offices This Summer



The North Carolina Department of Motor Vehicles has announced it is offering summer Saturday hours at 16 offices. These walk-in services will be provided on Saturdays from **June 8 through August 24 from 8:00 AM - 12:00 PM**. Services available during the Saturday hours include driver's licenses or ID cards, renewals or duplicate orders, address changes, REAL ID issuances, and road tests for customers who have already completed the knowledge and written tests. Among these 16 offices are the Charlotte North (9711 David Taylor Dr., Charlotte, NC 28262), Charlotte South (201 W. Arrowood Rd., Suite H, Charlotte, NC 28273), and Huntersville (12101 Mount Holly-Huntersville Rd., Huntersville, NC 28078) DMV locations.

Recently, DMV has faced a print production backlog as the result of the new photo ID requirement for voting, the impending requirement of a REAL ID to fly domestically beginning in May 2025, and a production glitch by the private contractor. According to NCDMV Commissioner Goodwin, this backlog will be resolved by the end of June. Learn more [here](#).

Free Sports Camp For Middle School Students

A promotional poster for a free sports camp. The top half features the text 'www.center360.org' and 'CENTER 360 SPORTS CAMP' in large, bold, white letters on a dark blue background with orange splatters. Below this, it says 'FREE!' on both sides and 'IN PARTNERSHIP WITH ACE SKILL DEVELOPMENT' in red. The bottom half shows a group of diverse middle school students and staff posing in a gymnasium. At the bottom, there is a QR code, a 'Register' button, and contact information.

www.center360.org

CENTER 360
SPORTS CAMP

FREE! FREE!

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH ACE SKILL DEVELOPMENT

ACE

Date: June 24th - June 28th
Time: 10:00 am - 2:00 pm

Basketball
Flag Football
& More!

Boys & Girls
grades 5-8

Register

Location:
Francis Bradley Middle School
13345 Beatties Ford Rd,
Huntersville, NC 28078

More Information (330) 519-3046 swhite@center360.org

Center 360 partnered with **ACE Skill Development** to offer a free, one-week sports camp for middle school students. The camp will be hosted at Francis Bradley Middle School (**13345 Beatties Ford Rd, Huntersville, NC 28078**) from June 24th to June 28th, between the hours of 10:00 AM and 2:00 PM. It is available to all students in grades 5-8. Students will have the opportunity to play flag football, basketball, and soccer, among other sports, and snacks will be provided throughout the day.

How to Register:

1. Click here: [Sports Camp 2024 Registration](#)
2. Fill out the registration form with your child's details.
3. Submit the form and await a confirmation email.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please **email** or call Shanise White at **(330) 519-3046**.

Financial Update on the State's General Fund

Beginning Cash, Friday, May 31	12,939,235,815.15
Add Receipts:	
Tax and Non-Tax Receipts	498,300,083.47
Coronavirus Relief Receipts	0.00
Other Receipts	1,761,507,185.61
Less Disbursements:	
Payroll	325,741,104.54
State Aid	59,854,855.58
Medicaid/Other Provider Payments	1,404,328,418.52
Tax Refunds/Distributions	28,537,289.27
Debt Service	276,975.50
Coronavirus Relief Transfers Out	0.00
General Operating	1,185,982,692.62
Ending Cash, Friday, June 07	12,194,321,748.20
Less Reserved Cash:	
Due to Local Governments – Sales and Use Tax Payable	935,889,565.62
Other Reserves	0.00
American Recovery Plan Act Reserve	16,914,350.52
Carry Forward Reserve	242,137,404.20
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	735,832,000.00
Federal Infrastructure Match Reserve	121,758,723.00
Housing Reserve	0.00
Hurricane Florence Disaster Recovery Reserve	56,371,467.84
Information Technology Reserve	410,307,521.00
Local Fiscal Recovery Reserve-ARPA	0.00
Local Govt Coronavirus Relief Reserve	0.00
Local Project Reserve	0.00
Medicaid Contingency Reserve	726,512,736.00
Medicaid Transformation Reserve	60,642,170.00
NC GREAT Reserve	0.00
NC Innovation Reserve	0.00
Opioid Abatement Reserve	35,030,248.56
Public School Contingency Reserve	0.00
Public School Need Based Capital Reserve	0.00
Reg Economic Dev Reserve	4,650,000.00
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	669,444,758.49
Transportation Reserve	0.00
Unfunded Liability Solvency Reserve	0.00
Wilmington Harbor Enhancements Reserve	283,800,000.00
World University Games Reserve	0.00
Unreserved Cash Balance, Friday, June 07	2,145,029,688.99

The Office of the State Controller (OSC) released the General Fund Cash Watch numbers for the week ending Friday, June 7. 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 \$2.145 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.

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.

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](#).

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 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. More info [here](#).

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

Contact Our Office

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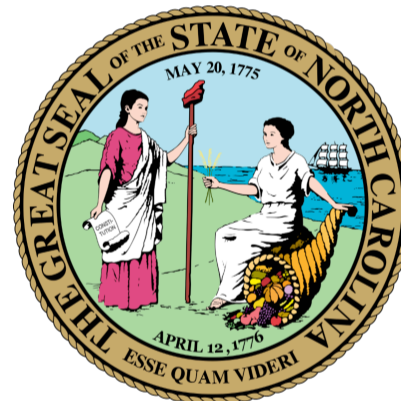
Sara

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How can we help you? Let us know and [reach out](#) to our office! We want to hear from you.

Senator Natasha Marcus | [Website](#)



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