

## Latest Updates from the NCGA



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**Date** 2024-09-27 17:01



## NC Senate District 41 Newsletter

September 27, 2024

### Updates on Noteworthy Votes



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

#### Key bills on which I voted NO:

- **HB10, Require ICE Cooperation & Budget Adjustments.** This bill was amended to put an additional \$463 million (\$215 million of that is recurring funds) into the Opportunity Scholarship Program, the school voucher program for private schools, to give to the top income tiers. This is a significant expansion of the funding already spent this biennium and draws resources away from public schools in order to help the wealthiest families pay their children's private tuition. This bill also requires all North Carolina sheriffs to do the work of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) for detainer requests. While current state law requires sheriffs to try and determine the legal status of people they arrest and inform ICE, it does not require them to honor ICE detainer requests. These detainer requests place a significant burden on local sheriffs, will lead to decreased justice for victims by deporting perpetrators before they can be brought to justice, will increase racial profiling of Hispanic drivers, and will discourage undocumented immigrants from contacting the police. Learn more [here](#).

### Governor's Vetoes and Overrides




Over the past few weeks, Governor Cooper vetoed the following bills. Additionally, the NCGA has overridden several vetoes that were made during short session:

- **SB166, 2024 Building Code Regulatory Reform.** While I voted to uphold the Governor's veto, it was unfortunately overridden on a party-line vote. I spoke out during the floor debate, explaining that this bill further weakens North Carolina building codes by prohibiting public water utilities and operators from requiring back-flow preventers, prohibiting the state from requiring elevation of hot water heaters to decrease the potential for damage in a flood event, changing the requirements for insulation in some homes, mandating short timelines for inspections and the approval process for permit reviews, restricting the access building code inspectors have to construction sites, allowing the automatic approval of sewer system permits, and eliminating the two positions on the Building Code Council that architects hold. In addition, the bill limits options for energy efficiency and electric vehicles. All of these changes are designed to push the cost from home builders onto consumers and pose significant dangers to North Carolinians. It's irresponsible to remove the architects from the Building Code Council, and we should not allow politics to be more important than the public's safety. Learn more [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#).
- **SB445, Recording of Court-Filed Documents.** While I voted to uphold the Governor's veto, it was unfortunately overridden on a party line vote. This bill creates legal ambiguity as to when eviction orders become effective and makes it more difficult for low-income families to appeal evictions in small claims court. It makes housing less accessible for our most vulnerable populations. Learn more [here](#).
- **HB10, Require ICE Cooperation & Budget Adjustments.** See Section "Updates on Noteworthy Votes." Should this veto come to an override vote, **I will vote to uphold the Governor's veto.** Learn more [here](#).
- **HB155, Titles for Off-Road Vehicles /Low Speed Vehicle Inspection.** This bill allows certain off-road vehicles to operate on four-lane highways at speeds up to 55 MPH. I voted "NO" when this bill was on the floor because these vehicles lack many of the safety features of the vehicles currently allowed to operate and unnecessarily increase risk for motorists. While I voted to uphold the Governor's veto, it was overridden. Learn more [here](#).
- **HB556, Tenancy in Common/E-Notary/Small Claims Changes.** While I voted to uphold the Governor's veto, it was overridden. This bill makes it more difficult for low-income families, people with disabilities, and the elderly to access housing, creates ambiguity regarding when eviction orders become effective, and prevents local governments from protecting against rent discrimination. Everyone deserves housing, and this bill makes it significantly harder for our most vulnerable populations to access affordable spaces. Learn more [here](#).
- **HB690, No Central Bank Digital Currency Permits to State.** While I voted in favor of the bill when it was on the floor, Governor Cooper advised that North Carolina wait to see how standards and regulations at the federal level work to protect consumers before prohibiting digital transactions and monetary decisions that have not yet taken place. I voted to uphold the Governor's veto, but it was overridden. Learn more [here](#).

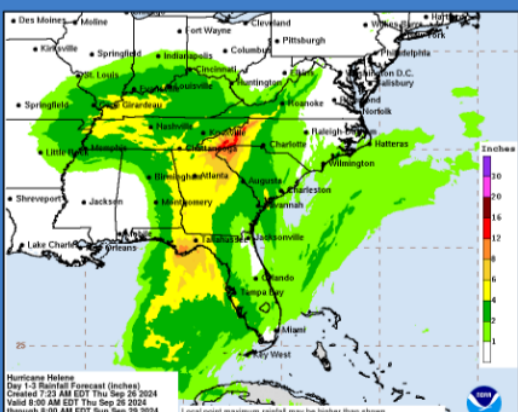
## Tropical Storm Helene Legislative Briefing

**DPS** Emergency Management  
NC DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

**EMAP**





### Tropical Storm Helene Rainfall Forecast



- The heaviest rainfall both ahead of a tropical system and associated with a tropical system is forecast across the mountains and foothills Thursday through Friday.
- Total rainfall amounts Thursday morning through Friday of 9-14" with locally higher amounts up to 20" will be possible across the west.
- With significant rainfall amounts and rates, confidence is high that numerous landslides across the NC mountains, especially the Blue Ridge escarpment will develop.
- Several large, damaging debris flows and slope failures are likely.

Hurricane Helene  
Day 1-3 Rainfall Forecast (inches)  
Created: 7:23 AM EDT Thu Sep 26 2024  
Valid: 8:00 AM EDT Thu Sep 26 2024  
Revised: 9:49 AM EDT Thu Sep 26 2024  
DOC: NOAA/NWS/NCEP/WWP

The Governor declared a State of Emergency in advance of Tropical Storm Helene's arrival in North Carolina. Yesterday, I attended an online briefing held by the Department of Public Safety's Office of Emergency Management to be aware of what to expect. Hurricane Helene brought heavy rainfall, flash floods, strong winds, and tornadoes into North Carolina. Flooding and heavy rainfall were especially bad in Western NC, as expected. I know that there will be a lot of clean up and rebuilding to come. Fortunately, the weather should be mostly dry by Saturday, with some light showers as Helene moves eastward next week. If you need help, feel free to reach out to my office for relevant information or contact ReadyNC.gov. You can also sign up for alerts at [CharMeck Alerts](#) and get information by calling 311.

 					
<b>Hazard Summary – Hurricane Helene</b> 5AM Thursday, September 26, 2024					
HAZARD	DETAILS	IMPACTS	THREAT		
Heavy Rainfall / Flooding	Storm total rainfall amounts of 9-14" inches are forecast across the mountains with locally higher totals up to 20" possible across portions of the Blue Ridge Escarpment Wednesday through Friday.  Lesser rainfall amounts of 1-4" are forecast across central and eastern NC through Friday.	Extensive rainfall totals could result in <b>catastrophic life-threatening flash flooding</b> in areas along and near the Blue Ridge Escarpment. Numerous landslides, and several large, damaging debris flows and slope failures are likely across the mountain, especially the Blue Ridge Escarpment.  <b>Significant to catastrophic flooding of larger streams and mainstem rivers</b> is likely with flooding in some areas persisting into at least Saturday. <b>Major to Record River flooding is possible for rivers with headwaters near the Blue Ridge.</b>	<b>Extreme</b>		
Damaging Winds	Winds will increase Thursday evening and continue through Friday, with wind gusts 45-60mph likely for the west, with the strongest gusts up to 70mph across the mountains. Wind gusts 25-40mph will be possible across central and eastern NC.	Tropical storm force winds across the mountains and gusty winds across central and eastern NC will increase the threat for <b>numerous to widespread downed trees and power lines, with the most widespread across the west.</b>	<b>High</b>		
Tornadoes	Isolated tornadoes remain possible across much of the state Thursday afternoon into Friday. Tornadoes associated with tropical systems are quick to spin up but are usually brief.		<b>Low</b>		
Marine & Coastal	NC beaches will experience rough surf and strong rip currents Thursday afternoon through Friday. Localized minor coastal flooding is possible Thursday night into Friday, especially for poor drainage areas.		<b>Low</b>		
<b>Threat Levels:</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>Moderate</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>Extreme</b>

## NC Governor Reduced Medical Debt



Less than a week ago, all 99 hospitals in North Carolina agreed to relieve patient debt in exchange for federal money. As a result, billions of dollars of patient debt will be wiped out, and hospitals in North Carolina will adopt new regulations to prevent patients from incurring massive amounts of debt in the future. North Carolina has had one of the highest rates of medical debt in the country, and North Carolina hospitals are aggressive in their collections. In our state, medical debt judgments can last up to 20 years, medical debts accrue 8% interest annually, and hospitals automatically place liens against patients' homes. Last Thursday, one health organization, Advocate Health, announced the cancellation of more than 11,000 liens placed on homes due to the Governor's initiative. Atrium Health will also wipe out all existing judgments and liens against patients for unpaid medical bills. Learn more [here](#) and [here](#).

## Child Care Centers Closing Statewide



According to data from the Department of Health and Human Services, 16 child care centers in North Carolina have closed in the last two months. More than 100 have closed in the last year. This is the result of the end of pandemic-era federal funding, which has been sustaining the industry for the last several years, and the failure of the North Carolina General Assembly to adequately respond to the cliff created by the end of the grant program. While \$67.5 million was approved before the end of the short session, that amount does very little to cushion the \$300 million in federal funding that ran out at the end of June. Learn more [here](#).

## North Carolina Chosen to Participate in Medicaid and Corrections Policy Academy



North Carolina was one of six states selected by the [Council of State Governments Justice Center](#) and the [Center for Health Care Strategies](#) to participate in a six-month Medicaid and Corrections Policy Academy. This program is designed to improve reentry outcomes for incarcerated individuals with complex health needs. Transition back into a community for a previously incarcerated person is already challenging, and those who struggle with substance use disorder and other mental health challenges face additional difficulties in reentry. This program allows leaders in Medicaid and the fields of public safety and behavioral health to work together and improve health coverage, quality of care, and reentry and to make society safer for everyone. Learn more [here](#).

## Updates on the Red Line



Earlier this month, the City of Charlotte finalized its purchase of the O-Line Railroad from Norfolk Southern Corporation, furthering the progress of the Red Line Commuter Rail Project. This project would allow a 25-mile commuter rail to run from central Charlotte to Lake Norman. When the project is completed, the commuter rail will provide as many as 42 one-way trips daily.

A week before the purchase, Charlotte City Council voted to approve both the purchase of property rights and track improvements for \$74 million, as well as 1.6 acres of property near the Charlotte Gateway Station for \$17 million. The council also voted to ask the General Assembly to pass legislation allowing for a one-cent sales tax referendum that would allow for further investment in roadway and transportation improvements.

The Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS) plans to host three public meetings regarding the updated design of the rail. Each meeting will begin with a short presentation, followed by the opportunity for attendees to have one-on-one conversations with CATS staff. Doors for these meetings will open at 5:30 PM, the presentation will begin at 6:00 PM, and they are expected to conclude by 7:30 PM. Dates and locations are below:

- **Monday, September 30, at Camp North End Junior Achievement Reveal Room, Keswick District (1701 N. Graham St., Suite 100, Charlotte)**
- **Thursday, October 3, at Cornelius Town Hall (21445 Catawba Ave., Cornelius)**
- **Thursday, October 10, at David B. Waymer Recreation Center (14008 Holbrooks Rd., Huntersville)**

There will also be a virtual meeting on Tuesday, October 8, via [CATS YouTube](#).

Learn more about the Red Line, funding for the project, and Charlotte's Strategic Mobility Plan [here](#) and [here](#).

## Measles Case In Mecklenburg County



The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Safety (DHHS) is urging North Carolina residents to ensure that they and their loved ones are vaccinated for measles in the wake of the first confirmed case of the disease in the state since 2018. The child likely contracted the disease while traveling outside the country, but their parents took all necessary precautions upon re-entry to the United States to avoid spreading the virus. It was detected and reported on September 9 in Mecklenburg County.

Measles is a highly contagious, airborne disease spread through coughing and sneezing. An individual may contract the illness simply by existing in a room where an infected individual has been, even up to two hours after that person has exited. **Measles is particularly dangerous for children who are younger than five years old.**

Symptoms begin with a fever, followed by a cough, runny nose, and pink eye. A rash also develops on the face, spreading down the neck, back, and appendages. If you suspect you are sick, stay home. Please call ahead before seeking medical attention to help prevent further spread of the disease.

**Remember: measles infections are preventable.** All U.S. residents older than six months without evidence of immunity should receive the MMR vaccine prior to international travel. **Any uninsured person 19 years old or younger can still be vaccinated at a reduced cost or for free through the [Vaccines for Children](#) program.** Learn more [here](#).

## September 28 - 29: Mecklenburg Audubon Society Bird Walks



The Mecklenburg Audubon Society has a few events scheduled this weekend. These outings allow participants to enjoy local scenery and bird watching. Walks are limited to 12 participants, in addition to the leaders, but more or less may be allowed at the leader's discretion. You must pre-register to participate in a bird walk or field trip (full-day walks) by 6:00 PM the day before the outing. The leader must confirm with you for your spot in the event to be held. If you cannot make the walk/trip, please let your leader know as soon as possible, as there may be a waiting list.

- **Saturday, September 28: Latta Nature Preserve, Sample Road, Huntersville, NC, USA**
  - 8:00 AM - 11:00 AM
  - Meet in the parking lot of the old Nature Center, just inside the second gate (not the Quest parking lot)
  - Bathrooms are available at the nature center and lake parking lot
  - Organizer: Angel Harris. Register via email: [hangelica88@gmail.com](mailto:hangelica88@gmail.com)
  - More information available [here](#)
- **Sunday, September 29: East Mecklenburg High School, Monroe Road, Charlotte, NC, USA**
  - 6:45 PM - 8:00 PM
  - Meet in the parking lot next to the school at 6:30 PM. There is a traffic light on Conference Drive and Monroe Road at the entrance to the parking lot
  - By 8:00 PM all the birds should be safely in the chimney and it will be dark
  - Organizer: Judy Walker. Register via email: [birdwalker@me.com](mailto:birdwalker@me.com)
  - More information available [here](#)

Learn more [here](#). Check before you go, to make sure the weather did not alter these plans.

## Community Updates: School Threats and Firearm Store Break-In



**Cornelius Police Department** 13h · 🌐

**\*\*Update to Hough High School Threat\*\*** As previously stated, detectives went to Texas last week to interview a suspect in the threats made to Hough High School on Wednesday, September 18th. The suspect is 13 years old so we are not able to release their identity. Detectives were able to gain a lot of valuable information for the several threat cases we are investigating as well as threats that have occurred in other jurisdictions. Electronics were seized and the investigation will continue as those electronics are analyzed. Please know, the safety and security of our staff and students remain our priority and we will keep working hard on these cases. We appreciate our communities support.  
[#FamilyStrong](#) [#CommunityFocused](#)



**Cornelius Police Department** 18h · 🌐

**\*\*Gun Store Break-In UPDATE\*\***  
On 09.23.2024, Cornelius Police detectives were notified by Charlotte Mecklenburg Police Department that they had located the suspect vehicle in our gun store break-in. Detectives responded and located two juveniles, 12 years old and 15 years old, who admitted their involvement in the break-in. Detectives were able to recover numerous guns that had been stolen in the break-in. The case is being referred to the Department of Juvenile Justice. The ATF is also assisting in this case. We are still looking to ID the 3rd suspect, so we ask that anyone with additional information call the Cornelius Police Department at 704-892-7773 or the [North Mecklenburg Crime Stoppers](#) at 704-896-7867. You can remain anonymous.

Our community experienced two school threats and a gun store break-in recently. The CPD has been working to solve these crimes and posted these updates midweek. Please follow the [Cornelius Police Department](#) if you would like access to urgent updates such as these.

## Mecklenburg County Homes Program Now Available for Homeowners in Charlotte and Davidson



The Helping Out Mecklenburg Homeowners with Economic Support (HOMES) Program has returned for another season. From **July 1 – Nov. 22, 2024**, Mecklenburg County is partnering with the City of Charlotte and the Town of Davidson to provide **grant funding to qualifying residential homeowners to help address the rising costs of retaining their homes**. Program recipients must apply for consideration annually.

Grant funds will be paid to the Mecklenburg County Tax Collector, **who will reduce the total amount of taxes due for qualifying recipients' primary residence**. The amount granted will equal 35% of the Mecklenburg County tax amount on the last available tax bill, rounded to the nearest dollar, not to exceed \$648.

**Applicants must not be participants in any of the following programs:**

- North Carolina Homestead Exclusion
- North Carolina Property Tax Homestead Circuit Breaker
- North Carolina Disabled Veterans Exclusion
- North Carolina Present Use Value (PUV) Program

To be eligible:

- The property must be located within Mecklenburg County, NC.
- The property must be the owner's legal primary residence at the time of application and consistently for the past three consecutive years, as verified by recorded legal documents.
- The resident grant recipient's name(s) must be on the recorded deed, title, or life estate.

Paper applications can also be obtained from:

- Department of Community Resources (**3205 Freedom Drive, Suite 1000, Charlotte, NC 28208**)
- County Assessor's Office (**3205 Freedom Drive, Suite 3500, Charlotte NC 28208**)
- Ella B. Scarborough Community Resource Center (**430 Stitt Road, Charlotte, NC 28213**)

Learn more about the program and complete the application [here](#). Contact the HOMES Program at **980-314-4663** or [4homes@mecknc.gov](mailto:4homes@mecknc.gov) for help with the application process.

## Get Free COVID-19 Home Tests



Free COVID tests are available again. [Here is the link to order yours](#). You may also find free tests available for pickup [here](#). Be safe!

## Financial Update on the State's General Fund



<b>Beginning Cash, Friday, September 13</b>	<b>13,472,434,218.52</b>
<b>Add Receipts:</b>	
Tax and Non-Tax Receipts	782,728,864.79
Coronavirus Relief Receipts	0.00
Other Receipts	2,903,645,775.65
<b>Less Disbursements:</b>	
Payroll	460,554,646.08
State Aid	87,345,291.47
Medicaid/Other Provider Payments	3,224,002,969.13
Tax Refunds/Distributions	51,533,721.61
Debt Service	0.00
Coronavirus Relief Transfers Out	0.00
General Operating	385,278,116.27
<b>Ending Cash, Friday, September 20</b>	<b>12,950,094,114.40</b>
<b>Less Reserved Cash:</b>	
Due to Local Governments – Sales and Use Tax Payable	568,671,363.26
Other Reserves	9,764,576.04
American Recovery Plan Act Reserve	4.99
Carry Forward Reserve	244,237,651.78
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	703,182,000.00
Federal Infrastructure Match Reserve	121,758,723.00
Housing Reserve	0.00
Hurricane Florence Disaster Recovery Reserve	27,618,718.91
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	48,571,688.89
Public School Contingency Reserve	0.00
Public School Need Based Capital Reserve	0.00
Reg Economic Dev 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	732,874,062.95
Transportation Reserve	0.00
Unfunded Liability Solvency Reserve	0.00
Wilmington Harbor Enhancements Reserve	283,800,000.00
World University Games Reserve	0.00
<b>Unreserved Cash Balance, Friday, September 20</b>	<b>3,262,151,783.60</b>

The Office of the State Controller (OSC) released the General Fund Cash Watch numbers for the week ending Friday, September 20. OSC provides a weekly update on the State's General Fund cash position, which can be found at [osc.nc.gov](https://osc.nc.gov). **The current unreserved cash balance in state coffers is \$3.262 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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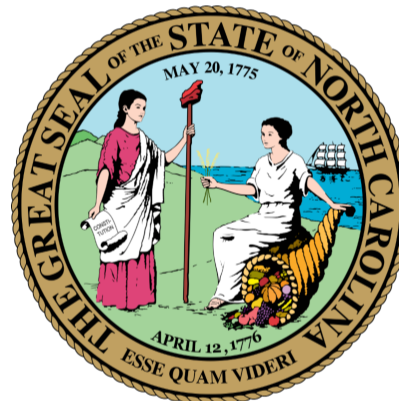
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How can we help you? Let us know and [reach out](#) to our office! We want to hear from you.

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