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**Subject:** REPRESENTATIVE RODNEY W. MOORE'S RALEIGH REPORT - November 21, 2013

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Mecklenburg County



For Immediate Release

November 21, 2013

## **REPRESENTATIVE RODNEY W. MOORE'S RALEIGH REPORT**

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The General Assembly has officially completed its business for the 2013 long session. The 2014 short session will begin on Wednesday, May 14, 2014.

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District News:

The NC Black Legislative Caucus has been holding Town Hall meetings in various cities around the state during the interim. The next one will be in Salisbury, Thursday, November 21 at 6:30pm for Rowan, Cabarrus and Davidson Counties. The event will be held at 130 W. Innes Street on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor County Commissioners Office. If you are available and have questions please be sure to attend.

North Carolina Fund

Last week marked the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the North Carolina Fund, one of our states greatest achievements in combating poverty and improving the quality of life for millions of North Carolinians. Since its creation in 1963, the NC Fund has been a blue print for many other anti-poverty programs in other states and the federal government. The successes of the past should be on our minds as we confront the challenges of the future. Unfortunately, the recent policies put in place by the Republican legislature and signed into law by the governor are helping to undo a half-century of progress in North Carolina. Rather than focusing on

building, these new laws are centered on cutting: cutting aid to impoverished families, cutting aid to teachers and students, cutting aid for research, cutting time for voting-- and cutting taxes for the wealthiest North Carolinians. These policies are not what the state needs to move forward; just look to the stagnant economy, slipping test scores, and stubborn unemployment rate for proof. This is why I will continue to stand for policies that help North Carolina grow, by focusing on advancing and building a middle class centered on secure employment and fairness for all citizens. That is the way to move the state forward, and not back.

In the News

### **[Fiftieth Anniversary of North Carolina Fund](#)**

In July 1963, the North Carolina Fund began its work as a non-profit organization charged with fighting poverty statewide. Its 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary couldn't provide a timelier reminder of our past successes at addressing poverty and serve as a call to focus on once again on eliminating poverty in our state. This week in Durham there will be a series of events to commemorate the anniversary including with various screenings of the film Change Comes Knocking. For those who can't make the screenings, [here](#) is a short video on the background of Fund from the Institute for Emerging Issues.

### **[The Rise and Fall of N.C. Poverty](#)**

Fifty years ago, North Carolina declared war on poverty and did a pretty fair job of beating it back. But now it's on the rise again. Under the leadership of Democratic Gov. Terry Sanford, the North Carolina Fund was created to address poverty and segregation in the state in 1963. The Durham-based fund developed ground-breaking programs in education, health, job training, housing and economic development that served as models a few years later for the Head Start and VISTA programs that were part of Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty. Since 2000, North Carolina has been marching in reverse.

### **[Study Shows NC Ranks Among Highest in Early Voting](#)**

A study by the Brennan Center for Justice at New York University School of Law showed North Carolina had one of the highest rates of early voting in the country. The study showed 55.8 percent of voters used early voting in 2008 and 56.3 used it in 2012, making it one of the top nine states for early voting.

### **[N.C. Should Undo it's Cut to Early Voting](#)**

During what now feels like a lost golden age, most North Carolina lawmakers once thought it was a good thing if more people voted. North Carolina was among the nation's leaders in making it easier to register and allowing a generous window of time for early voting. The effects of fostering better voter turnout showed in 2008 when Barack Obama became the first black president in part because of North Carolina's surprising support from new voters.

### **[Elected Officials Organize on Gay Rights Issue](#)**

Equality North Carolina announced Tuesday it's created what's called "NC Electeds for Equality." There are initially more than 30 local and state officials such as Attorney General Roy Cooper, State Treasurer Janet Cowell, mayors and legislators. Equality NC says the group will help officials learn more about issues affecting gays and lesbians and bisexual and transgendered people. Equality NC unveiled the "NC Electeds" group at its annual fundraising gala last weekend.

### **Education Proves Salient in Rural Counties**

Last month, the consensus was that Wake County's school bond had few statewide implications. Just because a solidly Democratic county endorsed education didn't mean the idea would catch on elsewhere. Just over the county line, another school bond referendum proved the consensus wrong.

### **N.C. Judge Weighs Performance on School Improvements**

A North Carolina judge is checking what taxpayers are getting for almost \$8 billion being spent on public schools this year. Superior Court Judge Howard Manning Jr. heard testimony Wednesday in Raleigh on whether state officials are meeting their duty to give every child a chance at a sound, basic education. Manning is taking stock on whether officials are obeying state Supreme Court rulings requiring more help for children in the lowest-performing and poorest counties.

### **Asheville Allows Conceal-Carry on Playgrounds**

Asheville City Council has approved an ordinance to allow people with concealed weapons permits to carry guns at city playgrounds. The move brings Asheville's ordinances into compliance with a new North Carolina law. Council member Jan Davis said it was tempting to refuse to comply with the state law, but that would have risked losing the city's ability to ban guns in other areas.

### **NC Domestic Violence Programs Fall Victim to Budget Cuts**

For Phipps agency, the big hit came in June 2012, which she found out the \$13,000 in TANF Domestic Violence it had received would not be coming in the 2012-13 fiscal year. TANF, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, is commonly understood as the replacement for welfare created under the Clinton administration. TANF provides assistance to families facing various crises, including domestic violence – at least it did, until 2012. That's when North Carolina leaders decided to cut the amount of TANF that went to domestic-violence services from \$2.2 million to \$900. (No, that is not a typo.)

### **Immigration Vital to Economic Success**

North Carolina benefits greatly from the economic contributions of its immigrant populations who play a vital role as workers, entrepreneurs, consumers and taxpayers. Immigrants are not only present in communities throughout the Tar Heel state, but they represent a growing share of the state's total population. And in the coming decades, the economic benefits of immigration will continue to loom large as North Carolina faces workforce and budget challenges resulting from a rapidly aging population.

## COMMITTEE MEETINGS

### **Joint Legislative Commission on Energy Policy**

On November 5th, the Joint Legislative Commission on Energy Policy met in Raleigh. Representative Mike Hager (R-Burke, Rutherford) presided over the meeting. The first portion of the meeting focused on the modernization of oil and gas statutes. Ben Norris, Counsel for the American Petroleum Institute, and James Rankin, an attorney with Perkins and Trotter, gave presentations on options for modernizing the state's oil and gas statutes. Theodore Feitshans, an Extension Associate Professor with the Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics at NC State University gave a presentation on issues associated with ancient mineral rights.

Following that discussion, representatives from Blu and Clean energy Fuels gave presentations on how compressed natural gas (CNG) and liquefied natural gas (LNG) can be used for transportation purposes.

Finally, Ken Valentine, Vice President of Business Development and Technology Services for Piedmont Natural Gas, and George Ratchford, Vice President of Gas Operations for PSNC, gave presentations on current natural gas utilities and services in North Carolina.

### **Administrative Procedure Oversight Committee**

The Joint Legislative Administrative Procedure Oversight Committee met on Tuesday, November 5. The meeting began with an overview of the rulemaking process. Next, staff to the Committee provided an update on legislative actions affecting administrative procedures during the 2013 Regular Session. The highlight of the meeting was a presentation given to the Committee by Molly Masich, the Codifier of Rules. Ms. Masich described the process that agencies will follow in reviewing all existing rules as required by legislation enacted during 2013. Ms. Masich anticipates that the initial review will proceed over a five-year period with approximately 5,000 of the 23,000 rules reviewed annually. The Rules Division of the Office of Administrative Hearings has been working closely with the various agencies and licensing boards to develop a schedule. In particular, the Division has worked with the three agencies with the most rules – the Department of Health and Human Services (which has about 5,500 rules), the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (which has about 2,500 rules), and the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.

### **Workforce Development System Reform Oversight Committee**

The Joint Legislative Workforce Development System Reform Oversight Committee met on Tuesday, November 5. The meeting focused on an overview of current State and local efforts with respect to workforce development. Several presentations highlighted how the State has begun to streamline the process of providing workforce development services – for example, by reducing the number of State agencies involved in providing services. Representatives of local workforce development boards gave presentations highlighting some of the successes and challenges of these boards in diverse areas of the State.

### **Revenue Laws Study Committee**

The Revenue Laws Study Committee met on Tuesday, November 12. The Committee took up three items. First, staff presented a draft bill containing clarifying changes related to 2013 tax reform efforts. The intent of the bill was to address issues that have arisen with respect to some of the changes enacted this past session. Items included in the draft legislation deal

with the sales tax on meal plans, newspapers, service contracts and admissions; the repeal of income tax credits related to land conservation and property tax paid on farm machinery; the personal income tax deduction for mortgage interest expense and real property taxes; and the income tax deduction for certain equipment purchases. The changes with respect to sales tax on admissions were recommended by a subcommittee of the Committee. Staff provided a report on the application of the sales tax to tangible personal property used in performance contracts. Performance contracts involve the permanent installation or attachment of tangible personal property to real estate. Finally, staff also provided a report on State revenue distributions to local governments and the history of those distributions.

### **Emergency Management Oversight Committee**

The Joint Legislative Emergency Management Oversight Committee held its first meeting on Thursday, November 14. The Committee heard presentations from the Division of Emergency Management with the Department of Public Safety, the North Carolina National Guard, and the State Highway Patrol on the different responsibilities of each of those agencies with respect to preparing for and responding to emergencies locally, regionally, Statewide, and nationally. The meeting concluded with a tour of the facilities at the Joint Force Headquarters, which houses both the North Carolina National Guard and the Division of Emergency Management.

### **Justice and Public Safety Oversight Committee**

The Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Justice and Public Safety met on Thursday, November 14. The first part of the meeting focused on issues related to alcohol regulation and included presentations from the Division of Alcohol Law Enforcement and the Alcoholic Beverage Control Commission. Particular areas of concern addressed in both presentations were the prevention of underage drinking and the regulation of private clubs within the State. Next the Committee heard a presentation on the use of technology to facilitate communications between inmates and their attorneys. The technology allows for secure, encrypted remote communication between inmates and counsel. It allows counsel to effectively share evidence (such as surveillance video or video taken from dashboard cameras) with inmates, which may encourage plea bargains in some cases. It also may improve efficiency as lawyers are not required to travel to detention centers and submit to security procedures, thus saving time and allowing attorneys to focus more on legal representation. Finally, the committee heard reports on the use of motor vehicles by the Department of Public Safety. The report focused on issues faced by probation and parole officers. Vehicles used by these officers are managed by the State's Motor Fleet Division within in the Department of Administration. The Department of Public Safety has argued that these vehicles should be treated more like law enforcement vehicles which are not managed by the Motor Fleet Division because of special needs associated with these vehicles (for example, the installation of cages, firearm or ammunition boxes, and specialized computer or telecommunications equipment).

### **Joint Legislative Economic Development & Global Engagement Oversight Committee**

The oversight committee met Thursday, November 7 to hear updates from the Department of Commerce as well as review North Carolinas competitive outlook. Commerce Secretary Sharon Decker and Assistant Secretary Dr. Patricia Mitchell each gave brief updates regarding the department as well as the Rural Economic Development Division. Governor McCrory's senior advisor Tony Almeida gave a quick update regarding the Commerce Department's continued strategic planning of the reorganization effort.

## **Environmental Review Commission**

The Environmental Review Commission met Wednesday, November 13. The commission heard from UNC-Chapel Hill academics regarding models for establishing, operating and financing of organizations that provide water and sewer services in North Carolina. The commission also heard from DENR division director Tracy Davis regarding the state's stormwater programs, including the annual report on the implementation of water runoff rules and programs.

DENR Assistant Secretary of the Environment Mitch Gillespie, Mining and Energy Commission (MEC) Chairman James Womack, MEC Vice-Chair Dr. Ray Covington and other MEC staff spoke at length about the activity of DENR related to development of a modern regulatory program for the management of oil and gas exploration and development activities in the state, including the use of fracking for that purpose. Other fracking topics discussed were the activity of the MEC concerning the rule development process for the management of oil and gas exploration, the state's current laws on the issue of integration/compulsory pooling of citizen's land for fracking, levels and sources of state funding for management of oil and gas exploration, local government regulations on exploration, and finally, the development of a coordinated permitting program for oil and gas exploration. The commission will not meet in December.

## **Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Information Technology**

The Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Information Technology held its second meeting of the interim on Thursday, November 7. The committee heard from staff and the state's Chief Information Officer Chris Estes on IT funding and strategic planning. Estes highlighted his agencies efforts to streamline and improve the efficiency of IT in state government and ran through a list of current projects. Following the meeting, members and staff toured they recently opened Innovation Center that is designed to showcase the latest technologies and allow the state to test-drive products. The committee will hold its next meeting on December 2.

## **Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Education**

The Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Education held its first meeting of the interim on Tuesday, November 5. In addition to a committee overview by staff, members heard reports on various programs and licensure changes. Among the topics discussed were the North Carolina Center for the Advancement of Teaching, the Advanced Placement program and Career and Technical Education. The committee will continue its work when it meets again on December 3.

## **CALENDAR**

**Thu, November 21, 2013**

10:00 AM [House Committee on Judicial Efficiency and Effective](#)

544 LOB

Administration of Justice (LRC)(2013)

**Mon, December 02, 2013**

9:00 AM Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Information Technology 544 LOB

**Tue, December 03, 2013**

10:00 AM Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee 643 LOB

**Mon, December 09, 2013**

10:00 AM Intentional Death Prevention Committee 1027/1128 LB

10:00 AM Joint Legislative Committee on Local Government 643 LOB

**Mon, January 06, 2014**

10:00 AM Perinatal Health Committee 1027/1128 LB

**Wed, January 15, 2014**

9:30 AM Environmental Review Commission 643 LOB

9:30 AM Environmental Review Commission 643 LOB

**Mon, February 03, 2014**

10:00 AM Child Fatality Task Force 1027/1128 LB

**Mon, February 10, 2014**

10:00 AM Perinatal Health Committee 1027/1128 LB

**Mon, February 24, 2014**

10:00 AM Intentional Death Health Committee 1027/1128 LB

*Please remember that you can listen to committee meetings and press conferences on the General Assembly's website at [www.ncleg.net](http://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

