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From: **Joel Ford** <joeldford@gmail.com>

To: Jill Santuccio <jill.santuccio@gmail.com>

Subject: **Fwd: Special Legislative News from Sen. Joel Ford**

Date: Fri, 2 Aug 2013 21:14:23 -0400

Attachments:

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Thanks,

Joel D. M. Ford  
Sent from my iPhone



Vol. I, Ed. 6

## LEGISLATIVE NEWS

**Senator Joel D. M. Ford**  
**North Carolina Senate**  
**District 38** – Mecklenburg County  
*Joel.Ford@ncleg.net*



July 31, 2013

Greetings Constituents and Friends,

The 2013 legislative session has come to a close, and a very expansive state budget was voted in place. This \$20.6 billion budget, passed by the Republican-led legislature, and signed into law by the governor on 7-26-13, will keep the State of North Carolina fiscally running – but at what cost? There was an end-of-session push with a flurry of bills, and amendments to bills, being passed- some with little notice, special provisions and much contention. Notably, ten House Republicans voted against their party’s \$20.6 billion spending plan – including one of the House chief budget writers.

This 2013-2014 biennium budget will significantly impact North Carolinians – laws are enacted concerning abortion, airport operations, economic development, education, elections, guns, healthcare, Medicaid, tax reform, transportation, unemployment benefits, voting rights,

etc. There are no provisions in the state budget for pay raises for state employees, teachers, or highway patrol officers. North Carolinians need to be very concerned and keenly attentive as to how this budget comes into play.

I urge you to continue to be diligently informed about issues of importance involving your state government. Please refer to the North Carolina General Assembly website, [www.ncleg.net](http://www.ncleg.net), to track information on interim committee meetings, legislative updates, and budget/tax information. The North Carolina state government website, [www.ncgov.com](http://www.ncgov.com), is helpful for in-depth information regarding our state resources.

### \*\*\*SESSION ACCOMPLISHMENTS\*\*\*

#### SB 159- Require Certain General Reappraisals

I co-sponsored this legislation as it corrects general reappraisals resulting in property values that do not comply with the requirements of North Carolina law by setting forth steps required to bring general reappraisals into compliance with applicable property tax mandates. The governor signed SB 159 into law on 7-26-13.

#### HB 636-Creek Name Change

I advocated this legislation on the Senate floor. It essentially directs the North Carolina Geographic Information Coordinating Council to change the name of Negro Head Creek in Union County to Salem Creek. This legislation was long overdue and signed into law by the governor on 7-23-13.

#### HB 74- Regulatory Reform Act of 2013

I sponsored an amendment to HB 174 as a common sense approach to limit the stockpiling of recycled materials, except when such facilities are located on lots within 200 yards of residential districts. HB 74 was presented to the governor on 7-26-13 for signature.

#### SB 372- Omnibus County Legislation

I sponsored an amendment to SB 372 to increase the participation of women-owned and disadvantaged minority-owned businesses as it relates to informal bidding procedures with the NC Department of Transportation (DOT). This legislation increases the threshold amount for contracts from \$1.2 million to \$2.5 million. The governor signed SB 372 into law on 7-23-13.

#### WT Harris Blvd. and IBM/Medical Plaza Dr. Intersection Project-

In March 2013, state DOT officials approved plans for improvement of the intersection of WT Harris Blvd. and IBM/Medical Plaza Dr. This improvement will be completed under TIP project U-2507A and is designed to allow more traffic to get through the intersection and improve overall efficiency.

Mt. Holly-Huntersville Rd. and Brookshire Blvd./NC Hwy 16 Project-

The City of Charlotte Transportation Department in conjunction with the state DOT is working towards improvements to the intersection of Mt. Holly-Huntersville Rd. and Brookshire Blvd. As soon as details are finalized, I will be glad to let you know.

\*\*\*LEGISLATION HIGHLIGHTS\*\*\*

ABORTION/WOMEN'S RIGHTS (SB 353)

The House tried to tack anti-abortion provisions to a motorcycle safety bill as if no one would notice. Despite heavy protests by women's rights advocates, SB 353 was signed into law by the governor on 7-29-13. The legislation limits abortion coverage under certain health insurance plans, prohibits a person from performing an abortion when the sex of the unborn child is a factor, directs the NC Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to amend rules and conduct studies which affects 16 clinics in North Carolina, many which offer women's health services, to conform to certification standards as medical surgical centers.

CHARLOTTE DOUGLASS INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT COMMISSION (SB 380)

This contentious legislation had much lively debate/discussion and replaced the previously filed Charlotte Regional Airport Authority bill (SB 81). House committee members tacked language in this bill to a landfill permit fee timing bill. SB 380 creates the Charlotte Douglas International Airport Commission to manage the Charlotte Douglas International Airport. This Commission will consist of 13-members: seven appointed by the City of Charlotte, at least two who are residents of the west side, and the remaining six members appointed by surrounding counties: Mecklenburg, Cabarrus, Gaston, Iredell, Lincoln, and Union. Just as SB 81, this bill is designed to acquire, administer, or otherwise regulate airports and/or landing fields for use by airplanes and other aircraft and all facilities incidental to their operation, within the limits of Mecklenburg County. This legislation also authorizes the Commission to acquire any real or personal property from Mecklenburg County or Charlotte, which may be necessary for the construction, operation, or maintenance of any airport or facilities located in Mecklenburg County. SB 380, being a local bill, was ratified and became law without the governor's signature on 7-26-13. Anticipated legal action against this bill has begun.

ELECTION REFORM

HB 589, Voter Information Verification Act, was presented to Governor McCrory for signature on 7-29-13. This bill will require North Carolinians to possess valid state-issued photo identification upon voting in any election beginning in 2016. Further, HB 589 will introduce unparalleled voting restrictions, and will add increased hours to the voting process for North Carolinians. Implementation of this legislation is estimated to cost the state \$2.3 million at a time when our economy is still struggling. Election reform measures include:

- Eliminating one week of early voting, same-day voter registration, and early voter registration of 16 and 17-year olds
- Disallowing college-issued IDs
- Banning paid voter registration drives
- Eliminating straight-party ticket voting

- Allowing unlimited corporate campaign contributions
- Decreasing financial disclosure requirements for campaigns

## TAX REFORM

After much debate and differing views between the House and Senate on how to restructure our state's outdated tax system, the Tax Simplification and Reduction Act, HB 998, was signed into law by the governor on 7-23-13. Although I believe in good sound tax reform to help bring much needed revenue to our struggling economy, tax reform should not be implemented on the shoulders of working class and poor families to benefit wealthy North Carolinians. HB 998 has many provisions that will affect individual, corporate and sales taxes.

## \*\*\*BUDGET INFORMATION\*\*\*

### EDUCATION

Unfortunately, the budget recently passed on 7-26-13 does not do enough to keep public education in North Carolina competitive with other states. Below are some provisions in the budget related to public education:

- Phases out teacher tenure and will no longer raise pay for teachers who earn advanced degrees
- Provides no pay raises for teachers or school administration personnel
- Eliminates 3,800 teacher assistants in FY 2013-14 and 3,500 in FY 2014-15
- Phases out the Teaching Fellows Program and the NC Center for Advancement of Teaching
- Increases tuition in the state's Community Colleges
- Cuts UNC need-based grants
- Removes NC Education Lottery funds dedicated to education and permanently puts them into the state's General Fund

### EUGENICS

A special provision was included in the final budget for compensation for victims of the North Carolina Eugenics Board program forced sterilization. Under the terms of the compromise budget, each verified victim of the state-sponsored eugenics program that ran between 1929-1974 will split an equal share of \$10 million. The amount of proposed payments to each victim will depend on the number of total victims that are verified. Information on eugenics payments should be addressed to:

N. C. Justice for Sterilization Victims Foundation

301 N. Wilmington Street, Suite 762, Raleigh, NC 27061 (physical address)

Telephone: (919) 807-4270

1-877-550-6013 (toll free in N.C.)

Fax: (919) 807-4275

Mailing Address:

1330 Mail Service Center

Raleigh, NC 27699-1330

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

The \$20.6 billion budget puts vital public health services at risk. Some provisions include:

- Reduction of funding for alcohol and substance abuse treatment centers
- Reduction of funding for early intervention-children's development services
- Reduction of funding for prescription drugs
- Cuts in services for inpatient hospital, dental, optical, podiatry, hearing aids, nursing homes, and adult care homes
- Reduction of the maximum number of doctor visits for Medicaid recipients from 22 to 10 per year
- Reduction of hospital outpatient payments to 70% from 80% of costs

If you have questions about any state health and human service issue, please contact the DHHS Customer Service Hotline at 1-800-662-7030 (toll free in N.C.)

OPPORTUNITY SCHOLARSHIPS

A special provision was added into the finalized budget for Opportunity Scholarship vouchers. The State Education Assistance Authority, beginning March 1<sup>st</sup>, shall begin awarding annually scholarship grants of up to \$4,200 to eligible students attending any private schools. The program's first scholarships will be awarded for the 2014-2015 school year. For additional information, including eligibility requirements, please refer to the State Education Assistance Authority's website: [www.ncseaa.edu](http://www.ncseaa.edu).

**\*\*\*SPECIAL THANKS\*\*\***

Thank you for voicing your issues, thoughts, and concerns through your many e-mails, phone calls, and office visits during this legislation session. I appreciate receiving input from you and am honored to have represented you here in Raleigh during this 2013 legislative session. Please feel free to contact me, or my office, during the interim. My legislative clerk, Jackie Ray, will be in Raleigh as I commit time to District 38.

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