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FW: September 18, 2013 Newsletter From Senator Bob Rucho

Jaye Maxx Alexander II [jayealexander@att.net]

Sent: Wednesday, September 18, 2013 2:10 PM**To:** sjohnston@tueforumclt.org*Jaye Maxx Alexander II ,MBA,BBA**J.M. Alexander,LLC**Commercial Mortgage Brokers ,Residential Mortgage Specialist{AL,LA,AK,NC} Licensed IRS Tax Prepares**NMLS # 70466**980-318-3326 - cell**704-372-5990- office**J.M.Alexander,LLC**216 Orange Street**Suite # 4**Charlotte.NC 28205**Fear of Failure is followed by the Panic of Success.**<http://www.linkedin.com/in/jayemaxxalexander/>*

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From: Sen. Bob Rucho [mailto:Robert.Rucho@ncleg.net]**Sent:** Wednesday, September 18, 2013 10:38 AM**To:** 'ncmortgageking@hotmail.com'**Subject:** September 18, 2013 Newsletter From Senator Bob Rucho

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September 18, 2013

Newsletter

Raleigh, NC

This newsletter is a reprint of an Op-Ed piece from the Charlotte Business Journal explaining the facts on changing the governance of the Charlotte International Airport and Intermodal Terminal.

Best regards

Bob Rucho

Viewpoint: Protect the CLT airport's revenue*By N.C. Senator Bob Rucho*

Charlotte Douglas International Airport is a critical component of the economic success of the city, region and state. Maintaining low operating costs is essential to keeping the US Airways hub in Charlotte. Our population density doesn't warrant 800 daily flights — it's the airport's low cost.

Past mayors and City Council members had a hands-off approach to airport operations. For the past 25 years, strategic and operational decisions have been made by the city's aviation director, Jerry Orr. He earned recognition as one of the top airport directors in the country. Local politicians have long recognized they had little knowledge in operating one of the busiest airports in the world and left the decisions to professional managers, including Orr. The airport's success came because the mayor and City Council did not try to micromanage it.

So what changed? When he was mayor, Anthony Foxx needed more money for the streetcar and other projects despite three straight years of raising property taxes. Today, Charlotte Douglas has \$450 million in cash; this didn't go unnoticed by the former mayor, the City Council and city management. Unfortunately for them, under federal law airport revenue can only be spent on airport projects. One planned raid on the piggy bank was city leadership's desire to locate streetcar facilities on airport property as a way to use its funds. When discovered in city documents, this idea was quickly labeled a mistake by the city and dropped.

Other critical points in this debate:

- Charlotte spends no city tax dollars on the airport. The airport is self-funded through revenue gained from landing/gate fees, concessions and parking.
- Airport bonds are not guaranteed by the city or city taxpayers. The bonds are guaranteed solely from the revenue generated from airlines and passengers.

The city has found a way around restrictions on revenue by charging the airport for services such as police/security, human resources, finance and information technology. All are billed at a higher cost to the airport, with potentially less quality, than those that could be determined by private competitive bids. The city replaced airport security with Charlotte police officers at an increased cost to the airport of \$3.6 million per year. Coincidentally, this transfer occurred when a three-year federal grant expired, and the city would have to absorb the additional cost.

Such actions increase the costs to the airlines, and we risk losing our most important economic engine.

The legislative action does not take the airport away from the people of Charlotte, nor does the state take one penny from the airport. The airport commission is a model of what was recommended by a city-funded consultant. The city, after paying \$150,000 for the consultant, criticized the report because it was not the answer it wanted.

The city has seven of the 13 board appointments, giving it a majority. The commission is required to be composed of members from the Charlotte region with expertise in airport operations, logistics, bond finance, business, etc. Members will provide responsible and experienced leadership to assure future airport growth. The bill helps guarantee Charlotte Douglas' economic success by keeping city politicians' hands out of the airport till.

The fact is, the regional authority and commission, passed by the N.C. legislature, aim to eliminate politics and patronage from airport operations and protect the financial integrity of the Charlotte Douglas and the new intermodal freight terminal.

You can verify these facts directly with Jerry Orr, as soon as the city's gag order is lifted and he is no longer prevented from speaking the truth.

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