

**Fwd: Newsletter from Senator Joel Ford**

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**Committees**[Agriculture/Env./Natural Resources](#)[Appropriations/Base Budget](#)[Appropriations on Dept. of Transportation](#)[Commerce](#)[Finance](#)[Insurance](#)[Rules and Operations of the Senate](#)[Transportation](#)

Greetings Constituents and Friends,

The North Carolina General Assembly (NCGA) Legislative Long Session is moving forward in Raleigh. As the NCGA continues to work toward legislative bills that address our state's economy, I will continue to voice the importance of putting North Carolinians back to work. It is crucial that we, as lawmakers, put forth common sense solutions that allow job creation to prosper.

During the recession, North Carolina public schools took a hit with regards to funding in order for the state of North Carolina to maintain stability as our economy dipped. However, now that the recession is behind us, the NCGA leadership has yet to act on properly investing in our schools to pre-recession levels. It is crucial for us to invest in education so North Carolina can provide our children with the tools to succeed in our 21<sup>st</sup> century economy.

As always, please continue to refer to the North Carolina General Assembly [www.ncleg.net](http://www.ncleg.net), to track information on committee meetings, bill status, legislative updates, etc. The North Carolina state government [www.ncgov.com](http://www.ncgov.com) is helpful for in-depth information regarding our state resources.

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**\*\*\*LEGISLATIVE UPDATE\*\*\***

**A tax "cut":** In 2013, the NCGA passed a historic tax reform, which was geared towards creating jobs and putting more money in people's pockets. However, this reform has allowed for revenue projections to fall by over \$200 million while many North Carolinians are facing a tax increase instead of a tax cut. To top things off, this tax reform has not created enough jobs to keep up with the workforce growth.

The tax “cut”

- Senior citizens are facing a tax increase due to the elimination of the medical expense deduction
- The NC Earned Income Tax Credit was eliminated, which raised taxes on low income families
- North Carolinians earning under \$67,000 in income will see a tax increase
- Tax burden could hit low income earners the hardest

Despite these reforms, poverty is on the rise and jobs are still scarce for many North Carolinians looking for work. The 2013 tax reform has only made it harder for working families to provide for their children. The NCGA needs to address this pressing issue in order to make sure that North Carolina does not continue to fall behind as economies recover. I am confident that we can address this economic issue during this session in a responsible manner.

**Sales Tax Reallocation:** Last week, SB 369 was filed which would allow the state to redistribute county sales tax revenue. In other words, this is a redistribution of wealth legislation. Mecklenburg county would lose 29 million dollars in sales tax revenue in order to offset another county’s low revenue performance. Supporters of the bill claim that poor counties have inadequate resources to fund county needs. Those same supporters have previously voted to cut county revenue and now they want urban counties to subsidize their mistakes. I oppose this bill because there are other resources to help counties in need, but taking money from other counties should not be an option.

Issue #	Description	FY 2016 (General Fund, Pay-Go & Debt Service)	
		\$ Impact	Property Tax Rate Equivalent Impact
1	Impact of not replacing Business Privilege License Tax	\$18 m loss	2 cents
2	Revise Assessed Valuation Estimates Memo from Mecklenburg County Dated March 17, 2015	\$14 m loss	1.6 cents
3	Redistribution of Local Sales Tax Revenue		
	<b>-Potential</b> transition from current distribution methods to per capita for all general sales tax revenues (December 19, 2014 memo to Delegation)	\$29 m loss	3.2 cents
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$61 m loss</b>	<b>6.8 cents</b>

*(Charlotte could lose \$29 million from sales tax redistribution on top of other county revenue loss from previous cuts. To compensate for revenue loss, Charlotte would move forward to increase property tax rates as indicated above.)*

**Gerrymandering:** I opposed SB 36 and SB 181, which would gerrymander Greensboro and Wake County local elections. I believe that local citizens should be in charge of their local governments not the state government. These bills are meant to secure more partisan representation rather than letting the people decide who they want to elect. Instead of controlling local governments, we should focus on creating jobs and bringing economic relief to working families.

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**\*\*\*DISTRICT/RELATED NEWS\*\*\***

**Education:** The National Education Association has ranked North Carolina 42<sup>nd</sup> in teacher pay and 46<sup>th</sup> in per pupil spending in a newly released report. The NCGA leadership promised to raise teacher pay to the national average, but failed to raise teacher pay for 2/3 of North Carolina teachers. Schools throughout the state continue to be underfunded and we are losing teachers to other states like Texas

throughout the state continue to be undertaken and we are losing teachers to other states and Texas. North Carolina needs to prioritize funding our public education.

**I-77 Construction Project:** The I-77 express lane construction project is scheduled to begin in or around summer 2015. All lanes will remain open during most of the construction phase. The project is expected to be completed by 2018. Express lanes will benefit drivers as it will provide drivers an alternative based on their needs. Toll booths will be set in place and toll rates will fluctuate based on traffic patterns.

**“Four state lawmakers from Mecklenburg County are the new order”** – Several of my colleagues and I were mentioned in an article written by Creative Loafing Charlotte. We were recognized as a group of lawmakers ready to bring about middle ground solutions to the issues that face North Carolina. Click on the image below to read the full article.



Photo by Justin Driscoll

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

Thank you for voicing your issues, thoughts, and concerns through your many e-mails, phone calls, and office visits. I appreciate receiving input from you and am honored to be serving you in the 2015 Long Legislative Session. Please feel free to contact me, or my office.

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