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Senator Waddell's June 2015, Week 4, Newsletter

Jyrita Moore (Sen. Joyce Waddell) [Waddelljla@ncleg.net]

Sent: Monday, June 29, 2015 6:22 PM

Senator Waddell's June 2015, Week 4, Newsletter

Senator Joyce Waddell

NC Senate

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Raleigh, NC 27603-5925

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NCGA Information



The Waddell Bulletin



Vol. I Ed. 7

June, 2015

Dear Friends:

The North Carolina State Senate submitted and passed their version of the budget plan for the upcoming biennium in a span of four days. This rushed and incomplete passage leaves a lot of citizens and Senators both asking what just passed through our doors.

What we do know is that this budget does not do enough for the citizens of North Carolina and for the growth of our state. We are faced with the best economic forecast in years and the tepid response has been less than appealing. The term, "Carolina Comeback," is thrown around here in Raleigh, and it is about time that the middle class start seeing some of these rejuvenating benefits we keep hearing about.

The North Carolina Senate budget now must be reconciled with the House of Representatives budget in a joint committee that looks to take several weeks due to the vast difference between the two plans. With the fiscal year starting anew on July 1, the two houses will most likely implement a short term budget plan that will cover the time period that will elapse until the budget is finalized.

Please continue to refer to the North Carolina General Assembly website www.ncleg.net. You will be able to track legislation, sign up for committee notices and review the in depth citizen's guide.

I encourage you to contact us with your thoughts, comments, or suggestions. Please feel free to have others join in on conversation by sending contact information to Joyce.Waddell@ncleg.net.

I look forward to hearing from you!

Budget Analysis and Session News

1. **Raising the Teacher Salary-** The Senate budget proposal will raise the starting wages for teachers in North Carolina to thirty-five thousand dollars a year, in concurrence with the House of Representatives plan, and constitutes a six percent raise for the new teachers. This provision, while helpful, does little to help the veteran teachers of North Carolina that have been hard at work educating our children and their salary needs must be addressed as well. I filed Senate Bill 384, Increase Pay/Experienced Teachers, to support our veteran teachers.
2. **The Vanishing Act of Teacher Assistants** – A provision that has been suggested that must absolutely not be allowed to go into effect is the complete removal of state funding for our teacher assistants. Teacher assistants play an important role in the classroom as well. Eighty-five hundred people are set to lose their jobs without this funding and we simply cannot allow this to happen.
3. **Driver's Education Dries Up** – The Senate also plans to completely defund the state's Driver's Education program and instead place the burden of preparing children for the road on the backs of parents. In households where this is impossible, private driving schools are available but classes normally run between three hundred and four hundred dollars.
4. **Pre-K Education Peters Out** – North Carolina was once a national leader in early childhood education, the Head-Start program is still modeled nation-wide as a go to example for how Pre-K learning should be handled. Now we were forced to swallow a budget that will cut five hundred more spots for children in need and we will have a collective seven thousand less than we did in 2009 due to the majority party. We cannot continue to ignore the plight of students and teachers.
5. **The Taxing Issue of Revenues** - Currently in North Carolina sales tax that is taken in during a purchase is split two ways, seventy-five percent goes to the county of sale and twenty-five goes to a larger state fund that is then spread across the state. However, the new Senate plan calls for a drastic change. The suggested change will leave the county of sale with only twenty percent of the revenue while eighty percent goes to the state fund. This punishes the cities in North Carolina for helping develop local businesses and now must shoulder the burden.
6. **Total Spending** – For the years 2016-2017, North Carolina spending will have an increase specifically in the Senate and House budgets. The budget numbers from the last two years compared to the next two years are as follows: the House will spend about \$260 million more, the Senate will spend about \$50 million more, and the governor's budget has a decrease of about \$290 million. The most difficult part about this budget is our lawmakers cannot decide what they will spend this budget on until they see the amounts they will be working with. In the House, members believed the \$400 million surplus would be a way to make up for programs that lost funding during the recession in courts and public schools. On the other hand, the Senate members argued for the growth of the government spending to be kept under control no matter if the revenue projection goes down. Compared to the other budget's spending, the Senate budget will put more money into reserves and stop an annual transfer from the Highway fund to pay for the State Highway Patrol.
7. **N.C. Tax Cuts** – During the tax season, tax payers began to see how much taxes are affecting their pockets. After the passage of the recent budget, tax payers will continue to see a new set of taxes, fees, and cuts in the near future. The major cuts that will come into place include 8,500 teacher assistant positions that will be replaced with an increase in teacher positions. In addition, in the Senate and Governor's budget there has been a cut in the free driver's education class in public high schools which should save \$26 million. In the long run, this fails to save money because it will now affect the pockets of the parents of young drivers. Some drivers may wait until the age of 18 to get a license without taking a driving class which causes driving risks for others. Extra taxes that will take action will be on veterinary

services and advertising which will affect small businesses across North Carolina raising revenue. A U.S. department of Commerce analysis shows that North Carolina's economic growth rate slowed to 1.4 percent last year which is behind the national rate of 2.2 percent. With all of the taxes, fees, and cuts coming into place North Carolina will continue to struggle to reach the national rate.

8. **[Right to Try Act for Terminally Ill Patients \(HB 652\)](#)** – This act establishes a right to provide more access to investigational drugs, biological products, and devices for eligible patients diagnosed with terminal illnesses. The patient must sign an informed consent document to receive treatment. Manufacturers will receive some protection against any liability for any harm caused to the patient. In addition, HB 652 prohibits liability to the heirs of the eligible patient for any outstanding debt. I am in support of this bill. This bill was ratified on June 24, 2015, and presented to the Governor.
9. **[In-State Tuition For Certain Vets/Fed Prog \(HB 478\)](#)** – This act provides federal education benefits to veterans and others that have enrolled in any public institution of higher education. These individuals will be eligible for in-state tuition by waiving the twelve-month residency in North Carolina requirement. The veterans must meet specific criteria to be eligible for this program. In addition, after the expiration of the three year period following a veterans discharge or death, any enrolled veteran or recipient of transferred federal education benefits for whom the 12 month residency requirement was waived, would continue to be eligible for the in-state tuition rate so long as veterans or recipient remains continuously enrolled at that same institution or higher education. Funds will be appropriated from the General Fund to the UNC Board of Governors for the years 2016 and 2017. I am in support of this bill. HB 478 was ratified and signed by the Governor on June 24, 2015. This bill goes into effect on July 1, 2015.
10. **[Outdoor Heritage Act \(HB 640\)](#)** – This bill preserves North Carolina's outdoor heritage for future generations and amends wildlife resources commission laws. It allows landowners, a member of a landowner's family, or a person with the landowner's written permission, to hunt on their property using firearms on Sunday before noon. In order for firearms to be used on Sunday, one must hunt on a licensed controlled hunting preserve. Other hunting weapons are allowed on a Sunday except firearms. This bill provides an exemption for Mecklenburg County. I am in support of this bill.

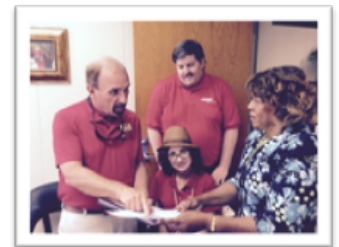
At the General Assembly



Senator Waddell discussed the Senate Budget on an Interview with WBTV News.



Senator Waddell welcomed the Charlotte Mecklenburg Association of Educators to the General Assembly on June 23, 2015, North Carolina Association of Educators Day, and discussed educational bills and concerns.



Senator Waddell meets with the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) to discuss the concerns and effects of the Senate Budget Proposal.

In Charlotte, NC



Senator Waddell welcomes the National Guards at the 621st Survey and Design Team, 505th Engineer Combat Battalion, North Carolina Army National Guard, on Friday, June 26, 2015.



Senator Waddell speaks at the Retirement Ceremony for Police Chief Rodney Monroe on Saturday, June 27, 2015.



Senator Waddell shows her support for saving teacher assistants at the press conference by Progress NC, on Sunday, June 28, 2015.

In the Media

[Click this link to view the video and read the News Article on how the Senate Budget affects Education](#)

Senator Waddell's office is open Monday through Friday during Session. You may reach her office by calling her Legislative Assistant Jyrita Moore at 919-733-5650 or by email at waddelljla@ncleg.net

All committee meetings and press conferences can be heard on the General Assembly's website at www.ncleg.net. Once on the site, select "[Audio](#)" and then make your selection: House Chamber, Senate Chamber, Committee Room or Press Conference Room. A schedule of committee meetings and other events is also available on the website.

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