

Rep. Carla Cunningham July 2015 Newsletter

Rep. Carla D. Cunningham [carlacunningham2012@gmail.com@mail73.atl51.rsgsv.net] on behalf of Rep. Carla D. Cunningham [carlacunningham2012@gmail.com]

Sent: Monday, July 13, 2015 2:42 PM
To: Steve Johnston

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 Carla.Cunningham@ncleg.net



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 conferences LIVE on the General Assembly's website at www.ncleg.net

NC gets a F Grade for Public School Funding

Two national reports released this week find that North Carolina is failing to adequately fund its public schools, mirroring a years-long trend of state disinvestment in public education. In documenting the massive resource disparities in public schools nationwide, reports issued by the Education Law Center (ELC) and the Leadership Conference Education Fund gave North Carolina an F for how much money it spends on public education relative to its gross state product. "Compared to other states, North Carolina has a pretty good fiscal capacity for spending—but it isn't spending its money on public schools," said Molly Hunter, director of the ELC's Education Justice program, noting that the Tar Heel state was very last in terms of the 'effort' it put into school funding.

Read more here: <http://www.ncpolicywatch.com/2015/06/10/north-carolina-gets-an-f-on-its-effort-to-fund-public-schools/>

Senate Bill 2
North Carolina Overrides Governor's Veto of Anti-Gay Marriage Religious Freedom Bill

Lawmakers in both chambers pushed into law a bill that effectively allows magistrates to refuse to marry same-sex couples.

On Thursday, June 11, 2015, the North Carolina House voted to override Governor Pat McCrory's veto of legislation that allows magistrates to refuse to marry same-sex couples based on their claim of a sincerely held religious belief. Lawmakers during debate of SB 2 were exceptionally clear that this bill was designed to "protect" magistrates, who, like county clerks in other states, are charged with giving out marriage licenses and marrying couples in civil ceremonies.

The North Carolina Senate voted for the bill in February, and the House passed it in May. Very quickly, Republican Governor Pat McCrory, citing the U.S. Constitution, vetoed the bill.

In a 32-16 vote, the Senate on June 1 overrode Gov. McCrory's veto, and on June 11th the House did also, in a 69-41 vote.

The bill, when it becomes effective, requires magistrates to opt out of officiating all marriage ceremonies, to avoid the appearance of anti-gay discrimination.

"Senate Bill 2 is unconstitutional, and will undoubtedly be challenged in

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Representative Cunningham and Miss Statesville.

Miss Statesville's platform is Mental Illness Awareness.

#ChangeTheStory



Girl Scout Troop 23 of the Hornets' Nest Council of Charlotte, NC - Mecklenburg, visited the North Carolina General Assembly on Wednesday, June 17. The young ladies will receive their badges for Government and Citizenship. It was a honor to speak with the young ladies and too wish them well in all their endeavors.

House Prepares to Take on Medicaid Reform

The plan, which would shift much of the financial risk of growing Medicaid costs to provider-led entities, was approved after more than two hours of heated debate in the

House of Representatives health committee. The bill is expected to be scheduled for a hearing in the appropriations committee this week. The debate is the beginning of what will likely be weeks of negotiations between the House and Senate on how to overhaul the state-financed medical

court, "Rev. Jasmine Beach-Ferrara, executive director of the Campaign for Southern Equality said in a statement. " This bill, which will now become law, is discriminatory and treats gay and lesbian couples as second class citizens. We are more determined than ever to achieve full equality for LGBT people in North Carolina and to ensure that LGBT youth know that they are not alone.



North Carolina Democratic Lawmakers who opposed Senate Bill 2

Governor McCrory Press Release Statement on Senate Bill 2
Press Release
Governor McCrory Releases Statement on
Senate Bill 2

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
2100

919-814-

Thursday, June 11, 2015
govpress@nc.gov

Raleigh, N.C.— Governor Pat McCrory released the following statement regarding Senate Bill 2:

"It's a disappointing day for the rule of law and the process of passing legislation in North Carolina. I will continue to stand up for conservative principles that respect and obey the oath of office for public officials across our state and nation. While some people inside the beltline are focusing on symbolic issues, I remain focused on the issues that are going to have the greatest impact on the next generation such as creating jobs, building roads, strengthening education and improving our quality of life."

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Press Release Statement
OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER
Rep. Tim Moore
Speaker of the House
Thursday – June 11, 2015

House Votes to Uphold Magistrate Recusal
Overrides Governor's Veto

Raleigh, NC – Today the North Carolina House of Representatives voted to reaffirm its support for [SB-2: Magistrates Recusal for Civil Ceremonies](#), a bill that allows official magistrates to recuse themselves from performing any

lawful marriages for six months if they feel they are being forced to perform duties that compromise sincerely held religious objections.

After Governor McCrory vetoed the bill, the Senate voted to override the veto on June 1st. Today's override vote in the House now solidifies SB-2 as law in North Carolina.

"The General Assembly has reaffirmed that SB-2 protects sincerely held religious beliefs while also ensuring that magistrates are available in all jurisdictions to perform lawful marriages," Speaker Tim Moore (R-Cleveland) stated after the vote on Thursday.

###



program for low-income children and low-income pregnant women. Lawmakers have wanted to reform Medicaid because it represents about \$3.5 billion in expenses, or roughly 20 percent of the state's budget, and has consistently overrun projected costs each year. Medicaid matters because it is one of the four major services - along with K-12 education, higher education, and the prison system - that account for the vast majority of the state budget.

Medicaid also matters because it delivers services to a large and growing population of the disabled, the elderly, and low-income families with children.

Read more here: <http://wunc.org/post/medicaid-s-financial-risks-would-shift-medical-providers-under-nc-house-plan>

SCOUTS Brings Medicaid Expansion Back into Focus

The U.S. Supreme Court decision to uphold a key provision of the federal Affordable Care Act means Gov. Pat McCrory has a big health care decision of his own to make: whether to expand North Carolina's Medicaid program. McCrory's administration has been mulling expansion since last year but has declined to stake a position on what path North Carolina would take until the ACA case was settled.

McCrory told reporters Thursday that his administration is studying the experiences other states that have decided to expand. "I don't want a Washington plan. I want a North Carolina plan," he said. "We must give doctors, hospitals and all health care providers the flexibility to provide their patients the highest quality care possible." Like many Republican leaders, McCrory says he does not want to simply expand the fee-for-service system that covers those already on Medicaid but would like to look at changing how the program might work for newly covered patients.

Read more here: <http://www.wral.com/supreme-court-ruling-brings-medicaid-expansion-for-nc-into-focus/14737591/#VSJxOJR4XshWyY71.99>

[INTERACTIVE MAP: Medicaid Refusal-County by County Stats](#)

Lawmakers Allow Affidavit Instead of ID at Elections Polls

Voters who do not have photo identification would be able to sign a affidavit and present alternate forms of identification in order to cast a ballot under a last-minute addition to an elections law bill that passed the Senate on Thursday morning. House members were poised to hear the bill. After that, the measure would go to Gov. Pat McCrory for his



Governor McCrory breaks his campaign promise...again HB 465

On Wednesday evening, Governor McCrory stated that he planned on signing the controversial [HB 465](#) when it reached his desk. The Governor's statement came hours after the House voted 71 to 43 to make the bill, which includes a 72-hour abortion waiting period, law in North Carolina.

The Governor's decision came as a shock to those who had trusted him to stay true to his word. During his 2012 campaign, McCrory promised he would not sign any additional restrictions on abortions into law. However in 2013, he signed a bill creating unnecessary regulations for abortion clinics and further restricting insurance coverage of abortions. Giving him the benefit of the doubt, it was expected that when faced with a blatant abortion restriction, the Governor would veto the bill. It is clear now that McCrory has no intention of keeping his campaign promise. He is happy with the revised version of the bill; he has declared that it will positively protect women's health.

The HB 465 that the Governor plans to sign looks nothing like the bill that was first introduced in April, with one exception: the mandated 72-hour waiting period.

The [initial version](#) of the bill included strong restrictions on the ability of doctors and UNC system hospitals to perform safe abortions. The final version leaves out the restrictions on UNC but adds in tougher laws against statutory rape and sex offenses. It also adds protections for victims of domestic violence. With the [second edition](#) of the bill, it appeared that the Legislature had realized the error of their ways and the absurdity of preventing one of the best ob-gyn programs in the country from teaching this family planning skill. Unfortunately, that clarity did not last long. Within weeks, without providing a reason, the Republican-controlled Senate decided to dump unrelated criminal justice provisions into the bill.

Throughout all these revisions, the 3-day waiting period has remained unaltered in any way. The Governor's expression of satisfaction makes it clear that he has no comprehension of the dangerous effects of a waiting period. Not only do they have no medical benefit and will do nothing to protect women's health, but in fact waiting can have a negative impact on women, both physically and emotionally. Not to mention, that imposing a waiting period on women implies that they are overly emotional and incapable of making life-impacting decisions without being forced to have extra time to think about it. It is insulting that McCrory and the legislators who voted for the bill believe that North Carolina women are too irrational to make decisions about their own bodies without government hand-holding.

Women around the State of North Carolina have sent the Governor a message loud and clear. "Well, Governor, fortunately we haven't yet been considered too irrational to make our own voting decisions, and we will remember this when we go to the polls in 2016."

Written by NARAL Pro-Choice North Carolina

Governor McCrory Press Release Statement on HB 465 -

signature or veto, The agreement to allow for a "reasonable impediment declaration" in lieu of photo ID creates a small but significant exception to the 2013 voter ID law that requires virtually all voters have photo identification starting next year. That law allowed poor voters to get free identity cards from the state Division of Motor Vehicles, but voting rights advocates say that hurdles in obtaining the cards - obtaining long-lost birth records, travel time and time away from work - effectively excluded some voters from the polls.

Read more here: <http://www.wral.com/lawmakers-agree-to-allow-affidavit-at-polls-in-lieu-of-photo-id/14724244/>

Advocacy Groups Up the Ante

The group, Americans for Responsible Solutions, came out swinging with a television ad against a gun reform bill, HB 562, currently in the state House's Rules, Calendar, and Operations committee that would end the current process of obtaining a Pistol Purchase Permit (PPP), from their local sheriff before one could buy a handgun. Critics of the scheme contend that it is an outdated process and that current federal background checks more than replace the antiquated system. They further argue that the permit law has racist origins from the Jim Crow-era and was originally designed to deprive African Americans of the right to keep and bear arms. However, gun control groups would disagree, calling the proposed change dangerous. They have joined with the North Carolina Sheriffs' Association, a former member of which appears in the ARS ad.

Read more here: <http://www.guns.com/2015/06/11/gun-control-groups-up-the-ante-against-nc-legislation-video>

NC House Passes Overhauled Gun Bill

In its original form, the bill would have repealed the state's

requirement that handgun buyers obtain a pistol purchase permit from his or her county sheriff. House lawmakers overwhelmingly voted in favor of amendments to restore the permit requirement. While purchasers who go through federally licensed dealers must undergo a background check through the federal system known as NICS, people who buy and sell guns privately are not subject to the federal check. The pistol purchase permit provides a background check for those sales as well. Under an amendment by Rep. Allen McNeil, (R-Randolph), the permits would be restored but with some changes...

Read more here: <http://www.wral.com/house-gives-initial-ok-to-overhauled-gun-bill/14714700/>

Bill to Grant Licenses to Immigrants Could

Women and Children's Protection Act of 2015

Press Release

Governor McCrory releases statement on recent legislation

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, June 3, 2015

govpress@nc.gov

Raleigh, N.C. - Governor Pat McCrory released the following statement on recent legislation.

"Regarding HB 465, some very positive progress was made during the last several days to protect women's health. Working with House and Senate members, we ensured that contact, including a simple phone call, would start a reasonable process that protects women's health, and we also more clearly and rationally defined medical training and qualifications to ensure there will be no further restrictions on access. In addition, there are other provisions that protect children in the bill, something my administration sought. Therefore, I will sign this bill.

###

SCOTUS Curbs Abortion Restrictions

The U.S. Supreme Court refused to revive a North Carolina law that would have allowed abortions only after the doctor first showed the woman an ultrasound and described the fetus in detail. Rejecting the state's appeal, the justices left intact a federal appeals court ruling that said the measure violated doctors' speech rights. Justice Antonin Scalia dissented without giving reason. The 2011 law, which never took effect, required an ultrasound presentation even if the woman objected. The measure said women could avert their eyes and refuse to listen. In striking down the measure in December, a federal appeals court said it imposed a "virtually unprecedented burden on the right of professional speech."

Read more here: <http://www.bloomberg.com/politics/articles/2015-06-15/abortion-curbs-voided-as-u-s-high-court-rejects-north-carolina>

State Budget

IN FOCUS: Budget Toolkit

The NC General Assembly will embark on setting the biennial budget for FY 15-17 this session. The state budget is a reflection of the priorities of the state and an opportunity to invest for current and future opportunities.

Check out the choices policymakers need to make to build a sustainable state budget that supports an economy that works for all: [Raising the Bar](#).

Check out our fact sheet on the last two-year budget here: [2013-2015 Budget Factsheet](#).

For more tools to talk about the state budget and use this research and analysis, visit the Together NC's Budget Toolkit [here](#).

Here are some of our issue-specific fact sheets from the first year of the biennial budget.

- [2013-2015 Budget Factsheet](#)
- [K-12 Education Factsheet](#)
- [Higher Education Factsheet](#)
- [Women & the Budget Factsheet](#)
- [Economic development in rural areas and communities of color factsheet](#)
- [Spending Cuts infographic](#)
- [The 2013-2015 Final Budget](#)

ABOUT OUR STATE BUDGET WORK

The state budget is a reflection of North Carolina's values and commitment to supporting economic opportunity and investing in the state's future. The Budget and Tax Center produces rigorous analysis of state budget proposals to determine if they adequately fund public structures and services, particularly those that promote shared prosperity, quality education, and healthy communities.

Public Investments – Every year, the Budget and Tax Center produces a report on each of the state budget proposals—from the governor, the NC House and the NC Senate—and one on the final budget. We analyze the budgets to determine if they make adequate investments in education, health and human services, the courts and public safety, transportation and the environment. Legislators often refer to our analyses during budget debates, and public officials and progressive organizations throughout the state rely on our reports to help them understand the state budget and what it means for their communities and issue areas.

Lower Insurance Costs

A bill passed by a N.C. House panel Tuesday, June 9, which would grant limited driving privileges to those living in the country illegally, could lower the cost of auto insurance in the state, industry experts say, H>B. 328 cleared the House Finance Committee by a vote of 22-11. The legislation would allow undocumented residents to obtain a restricted identification card that resembles other state issued drivers' licenses, only it would have "Legal Presence No Lawful Status" printed on it. To obtain the restricted ID, undocumented residents would have to submit to background check and fingerprinting. They would also have to pass a driving test and obtain liability insurance.

Read more

here: <http://www.bizjournals.com/triangle/news/2015/06/11/n-c-bill-to-grant-driver-licenses-to-immigrants.html>

Sales Tax Changes Could Take a Bite Out of Pet Owner's Wallets

Pet owners could soon be paying more for veterinary bills and grooming services. The Senate gave initial approval to a budget package that calls for collecting sales tax on variety of previously untaxed services and cutting personal and corporate income taxes. "It seems unfair for a lot of working folks," said Bod Rodriguez, who owns seven cats.

"It doesn't seem like much to some, but it can be the difference between getting that rabies vaccine and not getting that rabies vaccine," said Dr. Chessie Green, a vet in

Raleigh, North Carolina.

Read more here: <http://www.wral.com/proposed-sales-tax-expansion-could-take-bite-out-of-pet-owners-wallets/14722503/>

Undocumented Students From Across the State Rally

Undocumented students and allies from around the state rallied at the General Assembly in Raleigh, N.C. The rally was to expose the thousands of undocumented students that graduate each year from North Carolina high schools, but are unable to go to college due to the extreme costs of out-of-state tuition. The group highlighted the recent introduction of Senate Bill 463 which would grant in-state tuition to undocumented and DACA students. "Most of the students have been here for many, many years, they went through the school system, K-12, and now they are walking across the stage but they have no hope for the future," said Yazmin Garcia, Rally Organizer.

Fiscal Responsibility – The Budget and Tax Center is the only research organization that looks not only at what investments the state is making but also how it pays for them. In addition to our [tax analysis](#), we look at how decisions about savings, fund transfers, and the use of one-time money affect the state's long-term fiscal health. The Budget and Tax Center also monitors the transparency and accountability of the budget process.

Human Impacts – The budget makes a difference in our everyday lives and the vibrancy of our communities. The Budget and Tax Center works to engage with communities on the budget and its impacts and monitor and document how it is affecting North Carolinians.

NC Senate Gives Approval to \$21.5 Billion Budget

The North Carolina Senate gave preliminary approval to a two-year budget that would cut funding for thousands of public school teaching assistant positions, and would make significant policy changes to the state's tax code and Medicaid program. The proposed \$21.5 billion budget, which represents an almost 2 percent increase from the current year and was approved by Republicans along a party-line vote of 30-19, is scheduled for a final vote. The House of Representatives has already approved a \$22.1 billion budget proposal, representing an overall 5 percent increase. Republican leaders will have to negotiate a compromise before they send the plan to Gov. McCrory.

Read more here: <http://wunc.org/post/nc-senate-gives-initial-nod-215b-state-budget>

Teachers Speak Out on Spending Plan

The Senate budget that was unveiled brought the fight over education to Raleigh. The Republican-driven budget offers raises to some teachers, and essentially trades more teachers for fewer teacher's assistants. "It's a big, big slap in the face," said Melanie Walker, a retired art teacher at Daniels Middle School. Walker says she loves teaching but hates what's happening to teachers in North Carolina. "No pay for veteran teachers," Walker asked. "It's really hard for me to believe that North Carolina Doesn't value veteran teachers. After teachers put their entire lives - their entire careers - given to the students."

Read more here: <http://abc11.com/education/teachers-speak-out-about-the-senates-budget-proposal/789021/>

Guts Teachers Assistants, DPA Flex Funding, Textbooks

Last year, teacher assistants' jobs were at the heart of the budget showdown. The Senate initially proposed laying off all teacher assistants in the second and third grades in order to pay for hefty teacher pay raises - but after intense negotiations, they backed off their proposal though the final budget resulted in a reduction of teacher assistant positions varying from district to district. And that came on top of several large cuts to teachers assistant funding over the past several years-the state already has 7,000 fewer TAs than it did in 2008. As with last year, the House's 2015-17 budget proposes saving TA jobs-and there is likely to be another showdown on this line item yet again.

Read more here: <http://www.ncpolicywatch.com/2015/06/16/nc-senate-unveils-education-budget-that-guts-teacher-assistants-rewards-less-experienced-teachers/>

JUST RELEASED: Comparing the House and Senate Budgets

The state Senate gave final approval to its two-year spending plan this week, which is nearly a month after the House approved its budget. Next, each chamber will select respective leaders to negotiate in "conference" to iron out differences between the two budget proposals. The final budget agreement will head back to each chamber for a final vote before it is sent off to the Governor's desk. **Click on the image below for comparison chart of how the House budget differs from the Senate budget** across core public priorities such as education, public health, public safety, and vibrant communities.

Smart, Economy-Boosting Investments Hampered By Tax Cuts in House and Senate Budget Plans		
Overall Reinvestment Fares Better Under the House Budget but Unmet Needs Would Persist Under Both Plans		
	HOUSE	SENATE
TAX CUTS HAMPER ABILITY TO REBUILD	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Reduces revenues by \$10.2 billion over two years, including corporate income tax cuts and various tax breaks for retired individuals and estates.Saves \$1.1 billion in FY16 and \$2.4 billion in FY17 - an increase over FY15 and higher than the Senate's savings of \$1.0 billion over two years.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Reduces revenues by \$10.0 billion over two years. Further across the corporate and personal income tax cuts and digital research and development.Saves \$1.0 billion in FY16 and \$2.2 billion in FY17 - a slight increase over FY15 but lower than the House's \$1.1 billion over two years.
EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Cuts NC Pre-K program by \$1.4 billion compared to FY15. Funds 14,000 fewer slots than in FY08.Reverses higher income eligibility threshold for children in grades K-2, and restricts co-pay for partial child care and expanding afternoon/school day care to the child care subsidy program. Does not include any increases to the subsidy market rate.Reduces money available for child care and subsidy funds for ECE programs (down up state dollars).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Cuts NC Pre-K program by \$1.0 billion compared to FY15. Funds 14,000 fewer slots than in FY08.Falls to restore higher income eligibility threshold and pre-paid co-pay for child care subsidy. Reverses expansion of afternoon/school day care and changes the market rate for child care subsidy to 1.2 times the "free" and "for-fee" market rates.Reduces money available for child care and subsidy funds for ECE programs (down up state dollars).Requires the development of a plan for meeting Smart Start NC Pre-K and Child Care Subsidies.
K-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Increases per pupil spending by \$1.00 from \$1,047 to \$1,147 but falls short of previous levels.Repeals cuts and the number of teacher assistants. The Senate's NC budget more than 7,000 fewer TAs than the House's.Reverses textbook and digital resource funding by \$11.8 million over two years higher than the Senate's cut over two years.Updates money away from public schools and books spending for private school vouchers with a one-time expenditure of \$4.0 million, ending spending by \$1.0 million for private school vouchers, ending total funding at \$1.0 million in both years of the biennium.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Increases per pupil spending by \$1.00 from \$1,047 to \$1,147 but falls short of previous levels.Increases K-12 spending for up to nearly 1,000 teacher assistants to cover the cuts. Despite previous steps to cut the budget.Reverses textbook and digital resource funding by \$10 million over two years. More than the House and more than the Senate.Updates money away from public schools and books spending for private school vouchers with a one-time expenditure of \$4.0 million, ending spending by \$1.0 million for private school vouchers, ending total funding at \$1.0 million in both years of the biennium.

Read more here: <http://www.twcnews.com/nc/triangle-sandhills/education/2015/06/17/undocumented-students-from-across-nc-rally-at-general-assembly.html>

Senate Republicans Dock UNC Law \$3 Million

Despite the fact that Republican Senate leaders have been working on the budget behind closed doors for nearly three weeks, Senate Rules Committee Chairman Tom Apodaca apparently forgot until the end of a floor debate - after Democrats had loudly criticized the GOP -penned budget for hours - that he wanted to take \$3 million from the law school in Chapel Hill and give it to the Mountain Area Health Education Center, or MAHEC, located in Asheville. The addition would increase MAHEC's state funding next year from \$5.9 million to \$8.9 million. The center serves a 16-county area, including Apodaca's district of Henderson County. Apodaca said the additional funds would help address the shortage of doctors in rural western North Carolina.

Read more here: <http://www.wral.com/senate-gop-docks-unc-law-3m/14722786/>

Heat Waves Cause Power Outages Across

North Carolina

The N.C. Department of Health and Human Services warns that these high temperatures put people - especially the elderly, the very young, and those on specific medications - at risk for heat stroke. A DHHA statement advises everyone to drink more fluids, reduce physical activity, and take frequent breaks in air conditioned spaces. But that critical mass of AC use poses a challenge to the power grid. Duke Energy Spokesman Jeff Brooks said that's when scattered blackouts tend to happen. "We tend to see that usage occurs late in the day, as people come home from work and use that air conditioner and those other high-usage devices. The air conditioner is the highest user of energy in your home."

Senate Votes on Moped Insurance Requirement

In a 39-9 vote, the Senate gave initial approval to legislation requiring moped owners to carry liability insurance. HB 168 Insurance Required for Mopeds is scheduled for a final vote in the Senate, and if it were to pass without amendments, would go to Gov. Pat McCrory to be signed into law. Last year, the General Assembly approved legislation that accomplished a NC League of Municipalities legislative goal by requiring that moped owners register their vehicles.

Prosperity Watch Issue 50, No. 4: Child care subsidies crucial to financial well-being of low income families

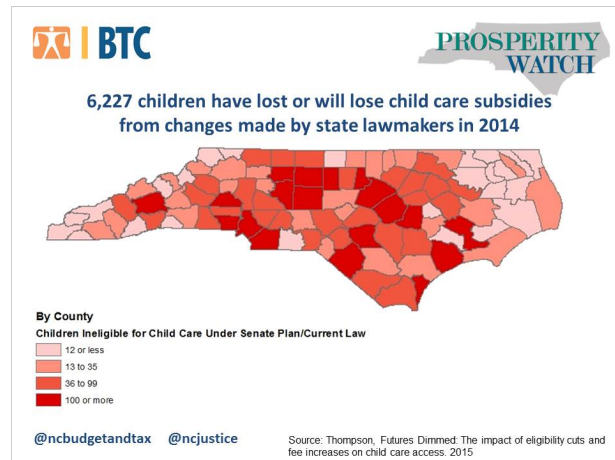
June 23, 2015

A report released this month by NC Child details the impact made by child care subsidy policy changes passed by North Carolina lawmakers last year. Child care subsidies provide low income families financial assistance to help pay for the high cost of child care while parents are working.

In 2014 several changes were made to the state's child care subsidy program which amounted to the loss of financial assistance for thousands of North Carolina families, including reducing income eligibility from 75% of the State Median Income (SMI) for families with children aged 0-12 (\$50,244 for a family of four) to 200% of the federal poverty level (FPL) for children aged 0-5 (\$47,700 for a family of four), and 133% of the FPL for children aged 6-12 (\$31,716 for a family of four). Other changes include the elimination of prorated fees for part-time child care meaning many families will no longer be able to afford care, as well as counting income of a non-parent relative caregiver like a grandparent against the child's eligibility for subsidies.

According to lawmakers, these changes were made so that funds could be targeted to more young children on the child care subsidy waiting list in North Carolina, which as of May 2015, sits at 31,359. Addressing the waiting list is critical given that North Carolina has the **third highest number of children on a waiting list nationally** of those that maintain lists at the state level and that research shows access to stable and affordable child care is critical to healthy development. The child care subsidy program is important to supporting family economic security on several levels. Parents are more likely to obtain and maintain work with child care subsidy assistance, young children are more likely to be placed in quality care settings which increase their future success and earning potential, and the child care industry which employs tens of thousands across our state is also supported by the subsidy system.

The map below provides a county by county breakdown of how many children have been or will be affected by the change to the income eligibility provision alone. In total, over 6,000 children have lost or will lose access to child care subsidies translating to thousands of parents who may have to quit their jobs or place children in undesirable care settings while at work.



The best way to address the waiting list would be simply to provide additional revenue to the child care subsidy system without cutting working families off who also desperately need assistance. Both the **House and Senate budget proposals address one or more of these changes**, although neither returns to the previous eligibility level of 75% of the SMI, meaning regardless of the provisions agreed upon in the final budget, there will be families who lose child care (i.e. a family of four earning between \$47,700 and \$50,244 will not be eligible under either plan and would have been eligible with 75% SMI). The SMI is generally a better eligibility guideline than the FPL because it is a more accurate estimate of regional income and costs. One provision both chambers agree on is to stop counting non-parent relative caregiver income against eligibility for the subsidy program. That is the only change in the Senate budget proposal, whereas the House allows the 200% FPL eligibility threshold for children aged 0-8 instead of just 0-5, and also brings back the prorated parent fees for part-time care.

Child care is a significant cost in a family budget. Many low income families simply would not be able to afford care without assistance, an issue not fully addressed in either proposal. If shouldering the full cost of child care for a pre-school and school age child, families could easily be paying \$1000 a month for care based on [North Carolina's most recent child care market rate study](#). For a family of four earning \$48,000 a year, that amounts to 25% of a family's yearly income, well above the recommended 10% [affordability guideline provided by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services](#).

[NC Child provides policy guidance](#) to reinstate income eligibility at 200% FPL for all children aged 0-13, to reinstate the prorated part-time co-pay rate and to exclude income of a nonparent relative caretaker. These recommendations will pave the way to a stronger child care subsidy system that supports working parents, children's learning potential and the child care workforce.

Please feel free to contact my Legislative Assistant Ms. Sherrie Burnette at 919-733-5807 (cunninghamla@ncleg.net) or me at 704-509-2939 (carla.cunningham@ncleg.net) if you have any questions.

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