

Fwd: Legislative News from Senator Joel Ford

Joel Ford [joelford@gmail.com]

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Greetings Constituents and Friends,

The General Assembly is still in session and there is still no budget in sight. The Legislature passed its third budget continuing resolution that would keep the state running until September 18th. Schools have started their academic year with no prime budget for them to plan their academic year expenses. State government agencies are left without an idea as to how to run their agencies without knowing how much they can spend.

The Republican controlled legislature and the Governor promised to run an efficient government, but instead it has governed in a manner that they criticized when they were in the minority. We as a state can do better than this and we owe it to the citizens of North Carolina a better functioning government that works for everybody. As we move into September, I can only hope that we get a finalized budget sooner rather than later.

Please feel free to forward this letter to your family and friends so they can stay in the loop as to what is going on in Raleigh. Send us their contact information so we can add them to our Newsletter listserv!

As always, please continue to refer to the North Carolina General Assembly website at www.ncleg.com, to track information on committee meetings, bill status, legislative updates, etc. The North Carolina state government www.ncgov.com is helpful for in-depth information regarding our state resources.

*****MAIN STREET DEMOCRATS*****

Check out our new [Main St Democrats video](#) where I highlight how we as Democrats are ready to lead North Carolina. With an election coming up in 2016, we are eager to recruit pro-business Democratic candidates in order to build a better future.



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

HB 117- The Senate took up a bill that would redistribute sales tax revenue from urban counties like Mecklenburg and allocate it to rural counties. Mecklenburg County would lose millions of dollars in revenue if this becomes law, which is why I voted against it.

HB 372- The Senate took on a bill that would revamp our state's Medicaid program. This bill would allow out of state managed care companies and provider led entities to manage our state's Medicaid program. HB 372 would also create a new department to oversee Medicaid, promoting the General Assembly to confirm the department head. I amended the bill that would require equal terms of participation for small Medicaid providers. I supported this bill because in hindsight, its end goal is keep Medicaid cost under control while continuing to insure that Medicaid recipients receive their healthcare services.

HB 792- This legislation would create a new criminal offense for the disclosure of private images within the context of a personal relationship. A person would be subject to a Class H Felony if the intent of posting images online is to coerce, harass, intimidate, demean, humiliate, or cause financial loss to the depicted person. Additionally, with the help of Senator Brent Jackson, I proposed an amendment to the bill that would make it illegal for an individual to be on their property naked with the intent of being seen by the public. This comes in response to the naked man incident in Charlotte earlier this year. SB 792 passed the Senate, which included the proposed amendment.

Constitutional Amendment- The Senate unveiled a Constitutional amendment that would limit taxes and spending for the state. It would cap spending at no more than inflation plus population changes over time. The legislation would also cap the maximum income tax rate at 5 percent and require that 12.5 percent of the budget be allocated to the rainy day fund. This budget restraint could potentially hurt our states ability to invest in infrastructure, education, and other economic incentives to grow our state's economy. I voted against the legislation. If passed by the House, the Constitutional amendment will go to the people for final approval on November 8, 2016.

Budget- On August 12th, the General Assembly passed its second budget continuing resolution set to expire August 30th. However, budget writers expressed that they wouldn't be able to meet that deadline prompting them to move forward with a third continuing resolution (HB 18) on August 27th. This continuing resolution contained an additional \$100,000 which would be appropriated for K-12 growth for LEAs. Nonetheless, We are now two months overdue without a budget with various state government agencies left with uncertainty as to how to manage their financial obligations. When Democrats controlled the legislature, the minority party criticized the Democrats budget process time after time. Here we are in 2015 with a Republican legislature doing exactly the same thing they criticized when they were in the minority. Enough is enough; let's get a deal done for the benefit of North Carolina.

DISTRICT RELATED NEWS

Taking a Different Course: Last month I was interviewed by the NC League of Municipalities with regards to my work at the legislature and how I have always intended to direct North Carolina on a course that works for every North Carolinian. As a former business owner and as an active member in my community, I will always put my district first above the politics, even if it means breaking ranks with my party. [Click on this link](#) to read the full interview on page 14.

Charlotte Intersection Construction: The NC Department of Transportation has started making changes to the N.C 16/Brookshire Blvd and Mt. Holly-Huntersville Rd intersection. The improvement will help traffic flow more smoothly. Crews are expected to complete the project by the end of September. Lane closures for the duration of the project are restricted from 6-9 am and from 4-6 pm Monday through Fridays.



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.

Committees

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

Senator Joel D. M. Ford
North Carolina State Senate
Legislative Building
16 West Jones Street, Room 1119
Raleigh, NC 27601
(919) 733-5955 phone
(919) 754-3254 fax
Joel.Ford@ncleg.net

Paid for by the Joel Ford Committee

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