

Rep. Carla Cunningham's 2015 Newsletter
Rep. Carla D. Cunningham [carlapolk=bellsouth.net@mail22.wdc03.rgs.v.net] on behalf of Rep. Carla D. Cunningham [carlapolk@bellsouth.net]

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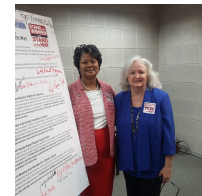
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[Tempers Shorten as Budget Deadline Gets 3rd Extension](#)

Fuses are getting shorter in the Senate these days, and that frustration was in sharp relief as lawmakers approved their third budget deadline extension. The continuing resolution, House Bill 18, gives lawmakers until September 18th to complete work on a compromise \$21.74 billion spending for the current fiscal year. Introducing the measure in Senate Appropriations last Thursday. Senate Majority Leader Harry Brown said he believes "the budget process is beginning to gather a little stream," referencing agreements last Wednesday between House and Senate leaders on spending targets and bonuses for state employees.

Read more here: <http://www.wral.com/tempers-shorten-as-budget-deadline-lengthens/14857726/>

[Price Tag Rising for Extending Legislative Session](#)

While the prolonged budget stalemate has idled most lawmakers, the administrative cost of the stay in Raleigh continues to rise. According to Legislative Services Controller Wesley Taylor, each extra week of session adds \$210,000 in expenses over and above the basic operating cost for the legislative complex. Lawmakers on last Tuesday completed their eighth extra week of session since the end of the 2014-15 fiscal year on June 30. Subtracting a week of vacation lawmakers took in early July, that comes out to an additional \$1.47 million for the extended session...Rep. Nelson Dollar, R-Wake, the chief budget writer for the House, said the General Assembly's third continuing resolution to keep state spending going until a new budget is in place will probably run through Sept. 15, which will bring the total cost of the delay to \$2.1 million.

Read more here: <http://www.wral.com/price-tag-rising-for-extended-legislative-session/14853466/>

[Budget Talks Making Little Progress](#)

Nearly a month after the state budget expired, and with their extension deadline looming, House and Senate budget negotiators are talking to the public more than to each other. The House budget committee held yet another public meeting to discuss the differences between the House and Senate spending plans. House leaders said top budget writers are still trying to impact the massive Senate proposal, which was nearly as much a policy document as a budget proposal. According to House Senior Budget Chairman Rep. Nelson Dollar, R-Wake, the dollar difference between the two plans is \$685 million, most of that in education, salaries and benefits.

Read more here: <http://www.wral.com/budget-talks-making-little-progress/14800995/>

[NCGA Hold Final Public Hearing on Budget](#)

Wake County Superintendent James Merrill attended the hearing. He told the finance committee that any cuts to education in the state budget would cause a huge impact, especially in a district

NC Celebrates First Women's Equality Day
August 26, 2015 marked the 95th anniversary of passage of the constitutional amendment that granted women the right to vote.

Women, workers, advocates and state legislators gathered on this day in Raleigh, North Carolina, to host a press conference, to urge the General Assembly to stand with women and families and support legislation that gives women more economic stability. Legislators in attendance publicly signed onto the Women's Equality platform.

Despite recent efforts to level the playing field in the workplace, such as passage of the federal Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act in 2009, women are still disproportionately affected by discriminatory practices that limit their ability to succeed in a rigged economy. "The average median income for women in North Carolina is \$35,000 annually, which works out to approximately 83% of what men earn," said Gloria De Los Santos, Durham Director of Action NC. "At the current rate, North Carolina's gender wage gap won't close until 2064. This is not only bad for the individual women, but for all working families throughout the state. We must do better."

"We know that women account for a considerable portion of the workforce, and the same is true for our members," said Carolyn Smith, who serves as the North Carolina state director at Working America. "What they tell us at their door bears out in the statistics: that women can't afford unfair pay discrimination. It's a huge drag on their ability to build a better life for their kids, and this hurts everyone."

The event coincided with Women's Equality Day, an annual observance celebrating the anniversary of the constitutional amendment giving women the right to vote. Working American was joined in this effort by Action NC, NC National Organization for Women, WomenNC, NC Women United, NC Women Matter, NC4ERA, Women AdvanCE-Durham Chapter, NC Black Women's Roundtable, and the NC AFL-CIO.

The League of Women Voters (LWV) of Asheville-Buncombe County joined nearly 800 fellow local and state chapters in honoring this milestone. Suffragette Carrie Chapman Catt said that the vote is "a tool to build a better nation, to provide for the common welfare, and to help humanity upward." Catt believed that obtaining the right to vote was only the first step for women's full participation in

that serves more than 156,000 students. He also said it would affect schools already in session. "About 50,000 students in our district attend school on staggered year-round schedules, primarily to make better use of public facilities in a rapidly growing metro area. Those teachers, teaching assistants, supplies and classroom needs are in place today, right now. Our students cannot wait for the various levels of government to conclude a budget negotiation, let me be clear about this," continued Merrill. "This means you are currently debating whether to provide money that has already been spent on tens of thousands of students, we simply can't unspend money once negotiations end and the final budget has been decided."

Read more here: <http://abc11.com/education/educators-debate-state-budget-at-last-public-hearing/891968/>

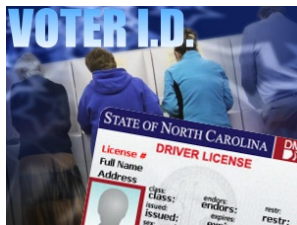
Gun Bill Goes to Governor



A bill changing gun laws in North Carolina is headed to Governor Pat McCrory's desk. The bill alters part of the background check process, and expands where people can carry fire arms. The senate passed the bill Monday, on the heels of recent mass shootings and renewed debate over gun control. House Bill 562 give a green light for district attorneys, assistant district attorneys, and investigators with the DA's office to bring firearms to court as they have concealed carry permits. Gun store owner Larry Hyatt knows that laws regarding firearms are always in a state flux. He's supportive of the latest changes in many ways, but wants to see tougher background check that may not provide a customer's relevant history.

Read more here: <http://www.wbtv.com/story/29654780/new-bill-to-allow-nc-officials-to-pack-heat-in-court>:

Voter ID Law Back in Court



Lawyers who challenged North Carolina's voter identification law in state court say their case should be continue even though the legislature added exceptions to the mandate a couple months ago. George Eppsteiner is representing groups and voters who sued in state court and argue that voter ID law is unconstitutional. He asked Judge Michael Morgan, to deny the request of state attorneys to dismiss the litigation because of the recent changes. The original law required someone showing a qualifying photo identification card before voting in person. Now people with a "reasonable impediment" to getting a qualified ID can sign forms and present information and still vote. State attorney Alec Peters says that renders the lawsuit moot.

Read more here: http://www.greensboro.com/news/amended-voter-id-law-back-in-north-carolina-state-court/article_fd95fd5d-d0de-5044-8556-d3fafda9bbfc.html

POTUS Calls for Restoration of Voting Rights Act



President Obama marked the 50th anniversary of the Voting Rights Act by calling on Congress to restore the law and urging people to register to vote. President Obama will discussed the landmark voting law at a national teleconference with Attorney General Loretta Lynch and Rep. John Lewis, D-Ga., and voting rights advocates. In a civil rights speech in Selma, Ala. in March, Obama called the Voting Rights Act "one of the crowning achievement of our democracy." But he also said the law "stands weakened, its future subject to political rancor." The Supreme Court

our democracy, and she founded the LWV in 1920 to create a better-informed electorate so that women could use their votes wisely.

Read more here: <http://www.citizen-times.com/story/opinion/contributors/2015/08/25/guest-columnist-celebrating-years-womens-right-vote/32323885/>



World Suicide Prevention Day

On September 10th, join with me and others around the world who are working towards the common goal of preventing suicide. Check in on someone you may be concerned about, listen to what they say, how they say it and show them Kindness and support.

According to the recently released World Health Organization (WHO) report: Preventing Suicide: A Global Imperative, over 800,000 people die by suicide across the world each year. The report notes that this estimate is conservative, with the real figure likely to be higher because of the stigma associated with suicide, lack of reliable death recording procedures, and religious or legal sanctions against suicide in some countries.

Each individual suicide is a tragic loss of life. It is hard to imagine the extreme psychological pain that leads someone to decide that suicide is the only course of action. Reaching out to someone who is struggling can make a difference.

Suicide prevention can - and should - take place in many settings. Almost anyone can take action to help prevent suicide. Teachers can observe students' behavior and seek help when they suspect a student may be at risk of self-harm. Workplace managers can offer gatekeeper trainings to their employees. Teens can talk to their friend, and go to their parents or other trusted adults, if they think someone they know may be at risk of suicide.

The Suicide Prevention Resource Center (SPRC) offers resources to help you play a role in suicide prevention.

For Professionals:

SPRC's Customized Information Sheets on Roles in Suicide Prevention can help professionals in a variety of roles take action to prevent suicide. These resources are available free of charge for you to reproduce and distribute in your workplace or community.

- The Role of [High School Teachers](#) in Preventing Suicide
- The Role of [High School Mental Health Providers](#) in Preventing Suicide
- The Role of [Managers](#) in Preventing Suicide
- The Role of [Co-Workers](#) in Preventing Suicide
- The Role of [Faith Community Leaders](#) in Preventing Suicide
- The Role of [Emergency Medical Services Providers](#) in Preventing Suicide
- The Role of [Law Enforcement Officers](#) in Preventing Suicide
- The Role [Adult Correctional Officers](#) in Preventing Suicide
- The Role of [Senior Living Community Professionals](#) in Preventing Suicide

For the Public:

Some people have a special relationship to suicide prevention through their personal experience or their connections to loved ones who are or have been at risk for suicide. SPRC's Suicide Prevention Resource Sheets can connect you with organizations and resources to help you in your particular role:

- Suicide Prevention Resources for [Parents/Guardians/Families](#)
- Suicide Prevention Resources for [Teens](#)
- Suicide Prevention Resources for [Survivors of Suicide Loss](#)

struck down a key provision of that law two years ago, ruling that jurisdictions with a history of discrimination are no longer required to have voting changes pre-approved by the Justice Department. Efforts to pass a fix to that provision have stalled in Congress.

Read more here:

<http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2015/08/06/obama-calls-restoration-voting-rights-act/31199889/>

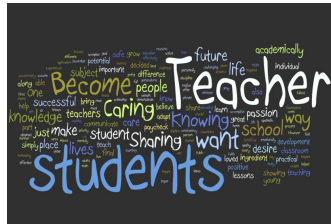
What's Left of the Voting Rights Act?



The court arguments came to a close on Friday, July 31, 2015. The federal judge overseeing the case, Thomas D. Schroeder, will need weeks if not months to come to a decision, but the betting in the Winston-Salem courthouse was that Schroeder - a George W. Bush appointee - would rule in favor of the state. That's hardly the end of the process; appeals are almost certain to follow regardless of what his judgment is. But the final verdict on the law, whenever it comes, could answer a significant question: The Voting Rights Act may still stand as federal law, but after years of legal challenges eroding its scoop, how much power does it still have?

Read more here: <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/08/04/magazine/whats-left-of-the-voting-rights-act.html>

ATTACK ON PUBLIC EDUCATION: Without a budget, schools start year in limbo



A new school year began for many students across North Carolina on Monday, August 24, 2015. But what their actual school year looks like, from their teachers to their classes, is a big question mark.

Lawmakers extended the budget negotiation to August 31st, which was 61 days after the original budget deadline. Major differences persist between House and Senate proposals, and it remains unclear whether the final budget, regardless of when it is reached, will reflect the priorities of North Carolina, particularly when it comes to education.

The Continuing Resolution funds current programs and services at existing levels, with very few significant exceptions. The school systems receive additional funds to cover the costs of student enrollment growth but there is not additional for Teacher Assistants or reduced classroom sizes. Some local school system already implemented layoffs amidst the budget uncertainty. Additionally, while beginning teachers receive another boost in pay, the deal freezes pay for the remaining teachers and all state employees.

As reported by NC Policy Watch's Lindsay Wagner, without a firm budget in place, teaching assistants have seen their hours cut, with no promise of having a job beyond September if the state budget does not allocate enough money for their positions. Other districts have shut down driver's education programs, uncertain if the money will be available to teach teenager drivers.

For now, students and school systems sit and wait to see what kind of support will be given to public education. The final decision just doesn't matter for the educational future of our children, but also our economy. Funding may not solve every challenge in public education, but it certainly can make a difference in ensuring that every child is given access to a quality education.

Fewer in North Carolina Want Teaching Jobs

Fewer people are applying for teaching jobs, and some Western North Carolina educators worry a teacher shortage in larger North Carolina school districts this year will make it harder to find qualified teachers. "If I were a parent with children of school age, I'd be concerned," said Dale Carpenter, dean of Western Carolina University's College of Education and Allied Professions. The decline in the number of potential teachers is part of a national trend. The New York Times reported earlier this month that some large school systems across the country were struggling to find teachers. In North Carolina, low teacher pay as compared to the other states, and fallout

Recent Developments and Legislation in North Carolina on Suicide Prevention 2015:

On March 31, 2015, Primary sponsors Representatives Carla Cunningham, Craig Horn, Beverly Earle and Chris Whitmire, filed **House Bill 451 (LRC/Study Suicide Prevention)**, entitled: **AN ACT DIRECTING THE LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH COMMISSION TO EXAMINE WAYS TO PREVENT SUICIDE AMONG MINORS, VETERANS, AND EMERGENCY RESPONDERS IN NORTH CAROLINA.**

The Legislative Research Commission (LRC) shall study the role of health care providers and other key gatekeepers in suicide prevention, particularly among individuals under age 25, firefighters, law enforcement officers, emergency medical services personnel as defined in G.S. 131E-155, and veterans. The study shall include an examination of at least all of the following:

(1) The effect of evidence-based suicide assessment, treatment, and management training on the ability of a licensed health care provider to identify, refer, treat, and manage patients with suicidal ideation. In conducting this examination, the Commission shall, at a minimum:

a. Review available research and literature regarding (i) best practices in assessing, treating, and managing patients with suicidal ideation and (ii) the relationship between completion of training in these best 30 practices and patient suicide rates.

b. Assess which licensed health care providers are best situated to positively influence the mental health behavior of individuals with suicidal ideation.

c. Evaluate the impact of suicide assessment, treatment, and management training on veterans with suicidal ideation.

d. Review curricula of health care profession programs offered at the State institutions of higher education regarding suicide prevention.

(2) The categories of licensed health care providers in this State that should be required to complete training in suicide assessment, treatment, and management as part of their continuing education requirements.

(3) For each category of health care providers identified pursuant to sub-subdivision (1)b. of this section, (i) the minimum number of required 43 hours and the specific elements of any suicide prevention training the Department determines would be beneficial and (ii) any recommended exemptions from the proposed minimum training requirements.

(4) The feasibility and effectiveness of providing training to school personnel, clergy, and law enforcement personnel on how to recognize at-risk behavior and how to make appropriate referrals for treatment.

(5) Methods for credentialing and identifying, through a badge or other form of 1 identification, all persons trained in recognizing at-risk behavior and how to 2 make appropriate referrals for treatment.

(6) Methods for ensuring that nonidentifying information derived from suicide investigations is shared for statistical, research, and other purposes consistent with State and federal confidentiality laws with relevant stakeholders, including health care providers; educational institutions; organizations representing firefighters, law enforcement officers, emergency medical services personnel, and veterans; and community-based organizations that provide mental health services to individuals with suicidal ideation; State agencies, including the Department of Health and Human Services; and the Child Fatality Task Force.

(7) Any other issues the Commission deems necessary to complete its report.

SECTION 3. The Legislative Research Commission may make an interim report to the 2015 General Assembly when it reconvenes in 2016 and shall make its final report, including any proposed legislation, to the 2017 General Assembly when it convenes.

SECTION 4. This act is effective when it becomes law.

Division of Public Health-Injury and Violence Prevention Branch

The 2015 N.C. Suicide Prevention Plan is the result of a collaborative 16-month process among staff members from IVPB, the University of North Carolina Gillings School of Global Public Health's Department of Health Behavior, and the Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Substance Abuse Services (DMH/DD/SAS).

The plan provides community-based strategies to prevent suicide and is a complement to the clinically focused 2012 Suicide Prevention and Intervention Plan: A Report of the

from tumultuous General Assembly debate over funding for public education could be exacerbating the problem, administrators say. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools and Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools had open positions with the start of school.

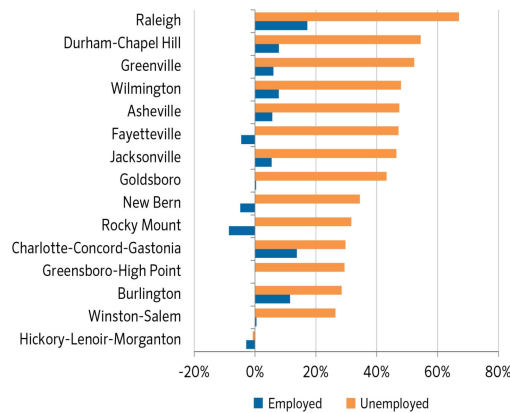
Read more here: <http://www.citizen-times.com/story/news/local/2015/08/25/fewer-people-want-nc-teaching-jobs/32325891/>

Prosperity Watch Issue 52, No 1: Even in Metro Centers, Unemployment Grew Faster than Employment since the Start of the Great Recession

The conversation about our state's economic landscape often starts from the assumption that several urban centers are doing extremely well, while much of rural North Carolina is still mired in recession. When you really look at the data, however, the picture is not so cut and dried. Even in comparative bright spots like Raleigh, Durham, Charlotte, Asheville, and Wilmington, the number of people looking for work has shot up much faster than the number of jobs since the start of the Great Recession.



Unemployment Growing Faster than Employment in Every Metro Area since Start of the Recession



SOURCE: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics.

@ncbudgetandtax @ncjustice

As shown above, unemployment has outpaced employment in every metropolitan area in North Carolina since December 2007. Raleigh has posted the strongest job creation performance since December of 2007 at 17.2 percent, but the ranks of the unemployed have swelled by 67 percent. That means that, even in our state's capital, the number of people looking for work has grown almost 4 times faster than the number of people with a job.

A similar pattern holds (unemployment outpacing job growth since 2007) for the other cities that are generally held up as examples of economic vitality:

- unemployment grew roughly 9 times faster than employment in Durham-Chapel Hill
- unemployment grew roughly 8 times faster than employment in Asheville
- unemployment grew roughly 6 times faster than employment in Wilmington
- unemployment grew roughly 2 times faster than employment in Charlotte.

Of the cities that have at least gotten back to pre-recession levels of employment, Goldsboro saw the most outsized increase in joblessness, with unemployment growing 118 times faster than employment. In one third of North Carolina's metro areas, employment is still below where it stood before the recession, while all but one of these areas have seen unemployment increase over the same period.

Unfortunately, many rural communities are faring even worse. Only 18 counties now have more jobs than before the recession (mostly in the more populous parts of the state) and 63 counties have more people looking for work today than in 2007.

It has become too easy in recent years for analysts, elected representatives, and reporters to simply divide North Carolina into urban and rural camps and assume that some of the urban areas are doing just fine. The unfortunate truth is that nowhere in North Carolina can really lay claim to an economy that works for everyone.

**SB 15
Unemployment Changes Heading to Governor**



NCIOM task force on Suicide Prevention and intervention produced by the NC Institute of Medicine in collaboration with DMH/DD/SAS.

The development of a new plan provided an opportunity to bring together a diverse group of more than 180 suicide prevention stakeholders to contribute to its creation. Stakeholders representing the following groups offered invaluable input: governmental agencies (federal, state, local); tribal governments; health care systems, insurers, and clinicians; businesses, employers, and professional associations; primary and secondary schools; colleges and universities; nonprofit, community, and faith-based organizations; research organizations; individuals, families, and concerned citizens; and military entities.

The primary purpose of the 2015 N.C. Suicide Prevention Plan is to empower all North Carolinians with knowledge and to highlight specific actions that they can take to reduce suicide. To that end, the plan features more than 500 examples of what various groups, collectively and individually, can do to address suicide in their communities.

Questions about suicide prevention in North Carolina contact:

Jane Miller
Public Health Program Consultant
Department of Health and Human Services
1915 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699
Email: Jane.Miller@dhs.nc.gov or Phone: (919) 707-5430



Round Three of Redistricting at State Supreme Court

It took nearly a decade for North Carolina's 2001 redistricting plan to wind its way through the courts, resolved finally in 2009, just in time for the next census. The plans signed into law in 2011 don't look to be faring much better, as the parties in the legal challenge head back to state Supreme Court for a third time, this time on remand from the U.S. Supreme Court. The question for the justices now is whether the 2011 plan survives constitutional scrutiny under the high court's recent decision in Alabama Legislative Black Caucus v. Alabama, in which the justices

held that lawmakers should not apply mechanical racial formulas when drawing voting lines.

Read more here: <http://www.ncpolicywatch.com/2015/08/27/redistricting-redux-round-three-opens-at-the-supreme-court/>

Death Penalty Secrecy Bill Headed to Governor's Desk



Secret and swift. That's what execution in North Carolina would become under a bill headed to the governor's desk for signature. Despite recent examples of botched prosecution here that sent innocent men to death row - Henry McCollum comes to mind - and botched executions elsewhere in the country, state lawmakers adopted HB774 with a House final vote of 74-34, the bill which eliminates obstacles that have kept the state from carrying out the death penalty since 2006.

Rep. Leo Daughtry, R-Johnston, told colleagues that "Passing this bill is a step toward enforcing a law that's already on the books." Although it passed by a wide margin, my colleagues argued the bill would not serve its purpose. "The majority seeks to ease this bill to restrict executions



Legislation increasing how much North Carolina's unemployed must look for work to retain jobless benefits and lowering a state tax on businesses sooner appears headed to Gov. Pat McCrory's desk after the Senate voted for the measure on Wednesday, August 26, 2015. The bill makes additional adjustments to the state's unemployment insurance system, which underwent a broad rewrite in 2013 to accelerate that repayment of \$2.5 billion owed to the federal government on benefits paid out during the Great Recession. That law lowered benefit maximums by one-third and led to some higher federal and state unemployment taxes. Senate members concurred on 2nd and 3rd reading on August 27th with a final vote of 36-7. SB 15 was presented to the Gov. on September 1, 2015.

Rep. Carla Cunningham: House Committee Assignments 2015-2016 Session

- Aging
- Banking
- Children, Youth, and Families
- Education - Community Colleges
- Finance
- Public Utilities - Vice-Chair
- Regulatory Reform

Select Committee Assignments

Chair of Democratic House Caucus
(Women's Issues Work Group)

Counsel of State Government
(Vice-Chair of the Health Public Policy)

Joint Legislative Women's Caucus
(1st Vice Chair)

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. We are here to serve you.

You can listen to legislative sessions, committee meetings, and press conferences on the General Assembly's website at www.ncleg.net. Once on the site, select "Audio" and then make your selection for the House Chamber, Senate Chamber, Press Conference Room or Appropriations Committee Room.

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This will not do it," Rep. Rick Glazier, D-Cumberland, said, adding that the measure is "inherently flawed and ultimately doomed to failure." Attempts to shield specifics of execution drugs and procedures from public scrutiny, Rep. Glazier said, would merely bring more lawsuits that would further delay executions.

The bill cuts off public debate by exempting the Department of Public Safety from rule-making requirements when execution are involved, eases restrictions on the type of drug used for lethal injections, and allows medical professionals other than doctors to monitor the process.

Read more here: <http://www.wral.com/death-penalty-bill-headed-to-mccrory/14800694/>

North Carolina Has Will for Prison Reform

A group of civil rights organizations wrote the U.S. Department of Justice requesting a federal investigation of North Carolina's prison system, their language was blunt. In recounting the experience of several inmates held in solitary confinement, the groups described "a system blinking red" and state leaders that had neither "the wherewithal or the will to solve this problem." Every day that the status quo endures without intervention, North Carolina's system for housing inmates in solitary confinement claims more victims to needless suffering and death, " the letter to the DOJ's Civil Rights Division read.

Read more here: <http://www.wral.com/solitary-confinement-reform-coming-too-slowly-for-many/14827155/>

