



North Carolina General Assembly
Senate Chamber
State Legislative Building
Raleigh 27601-2808

JOEL D.M. FORD
DISTRICT 38

2015 NORTH CAROLINA GENERAL ASSEMBLY LEGISLATIVE LONG SESSION

WHAT THE LEGISLATURE DID

N&O 9-30-15

Extended sales taxes to repairs, maintenance and installation of equipment on cars and other personal property, effective on March 1. Most of the revenue will be distributed to 70 suburban and rural counties.

Dropped the income tax rate from 5.75 percent to 5.499 percent in 2017. The standard deduction increases, meaning that a married couple filing jointly won't pay income tax on the first \$15,500 starting next year.

Put borrowing to a vote on the March ballot a referendum on borrowing \$2 billion for UNC and community college buildings, parks and water and sewer projects.

Entered same-sex marriage debate by letting magistrates and registers of deeds staff who oppose same-sex marriage opt out of performing marriage ceremonies or issuing licenses.

Overhauled Medicaid by launching the state on a path to privatizing the government health insurance for the poor, elderly and disabled. Changes to the plan are several years away. The state must come up with a plan, which the federal government must approve.

Eased voting requirements by diluting the stringent voting law it passed in 2013 to allow people without photo ID to cast provisional ballots.

Tried to lure companies by increasing the cap on Job Development Incentive Grants from \$15 million a year to \$20 million a year. The cap is \$35 million a year for companies that would add at least 1,750 jobs. \$30 million went into the film grant fund.

Changed Wake County elections by redrawing county commissioner districts to favor Republicans and end the current system under which each commissioner is elected countywide. By 2018, Wake residents will only be able to vote for two commissioners.

Ended the renewable energy tax credit. The state's 35 percent incentive was one of the most generous in the nation. It expires Dec. 31st.

Took on people in the country illegally by restricting the forms of valid ID used by noncitizens, and banning "sanctuary cities." Cities would no longer be allowed to direct law enforcement to not ask about immigration status or prevent law enforcement from sending immigration information to federal authorities.

Limited food stamp use by preventing the state from using federal waivers that allow non-working, healthy adults to qualify for food stamps.

Overhauled regulations, allowing companies to conduct voluntary internal environmental audits where results cannot be used in civil or administrative proceedings.



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Added a three-day waiting period for women seeking abortions and requires doctors to send ultrasounds to the state Department of Health and Human Services for abortions that occur after the 16th week of pregnancy.

WHAT THE LEGISLATURE DID NOT DO

Take power away from local governments to pass nondiscrimination ordinances, or require companies they contract with to pay a living wage to employees working under the contracts, or pass ordinances governing housing or rental practices. The late-appearing provisions crumbled under fierce opposition and questions about their scope.

Expand medicaid. Despite persistent calls for the legislature to expand Medicaid health insurance coverage to about 300,000 to 500,000 people, that idea never had a chance, with the leaders of both chambers opposed. Former state Health and Human Services Secretary Aldona Wos said last year that she was preparing an expansion plan for Gov. Pat McCrory, but the administration never presented one.

Pass TABOR, a proposed constitutional amendment to cap the personal income tax at 5 percent and tie budget growth to inflation and population increases. It passed the Senate, not the House.

Repeal Certificate of Need laws requiring hospitals to get state permission to expand or add certain types of new equipment remain intact.

Publicly debate The Religious Freedom Restoration Act, or RFRA. Supporters said it would allow people to exercise religious liberty, while opponents said it was a license to discriminate. Most of the debate over RFRA was kept behind closed doors in caucus meetings.

End state-supported driver's education. The state budget keeps funding it.

Curb businesses' misidentification of employees. An attempt to stop companies from treating employees as if they are independent contractor stalled. The bill got hung up on whether newspaper carriers should be considered employees.

Ensure transparency in UNC president search. Sidelined an attempt to make the finalists for UNC president known to the public.

Shift a portion of education dollars from traditional public schools, such as federal grants, to public charter schools.