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Senator Joyce Waddell's June 10, 2016 Newsletter

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

Sent: Friday, June 10, 2016 10:04 AM

Senator Joyce Waddell's June 10, 2016 Newsletter

Senator Joyce Waddell

NC Senate

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The Waddell Weekly Bulletin

Vol. 2 Ed. 8 June 10, 2016



Dear Friends:

This past week at the General Assembly has been bustling as the Senate convened on Thursday, June 3, 2016, to debate House Bill 1030, the state's budget appropriations for the 2016-2017 fiscal year. After more than two hours of Session and seven amendments to the bill, the Senate concluded its second reading on Thursday then met slightly after midnight on Friday, June 4, for the third reading and final vote on the budget. The proposed legislation includes several environmental and education changes, among many more for the state of North Carolina. The highlights of the Senate budget proposal can be found in the "Session News" section of the newsletter. With all the Democrats opposing the bill and Republicans supporting it, the bill passed the Senate and will make its way to the Budget Conference Committee.

Legislation has come before the General Assembly that affects the education system in North Carolina. [House Bill 657, Math Standard Course of Study Revisions](#), was discussed by the Senate Committee on Education/Higher Education on Wednesday, June 8. This legislation would provide a choice for students and parents within the public school system of which math curriculum the student will pursue throughout their high-school career. The students could either follow the new, integrated math curriculum or the traditional sequential manner (Algebra I, Geometry, then Algebra II). Several concerns were raised about which system is more effective for students who want to pursue higher education, student math performance on standardized tests, such as the ACT and SAT, and teacher professional development. Within the next weeks, we expect to see more conversation on this bill.

I cannot achieve anything without the support of my constituents. Thank you very much for your continued support!

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 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!

Session News

- [**Achievement School District \(House Bill 1080\)**](#) - This bill proposes the creation of a North Carolina Achievement School District (ASD) made up of low-performing schools seized by the state from their local education administrators (LEAs). Five elementary schools would be chosen by the State Board of Education and placed in an ASD with a superintendent who would oversee the schools' development for the duration of a five-year contract. It also includes two other provisions. First, the LEAs from which a school was taken would accordingly receive permission and extra funding to install "innovation zones" in up to three of its other struggling schools. Secondly, the bill would allow the LEAs the option to partake in the "principal turn-around model" which would fire the principals of struggling schools and replace them with principals that have a more successful track record. This legislation passed the House and is currently in the Committee on Rules and Operations of the Senate.
- [**Protect Students in Schools \(Senate Bill 867\)**](#) - This legislation would require criminal background checks for teacher licensure and school personnel employment with the intent to ensure the safety of students in schools. Any applicant for a teaching license must undergo a background check of criminal history. The applicant must also demonstrate academic and professional preparation by achieving a prescribed minimum score on a standard exam given for the purpose of the position. The bill also would provide set fee amounts for the application process for teacher licensure and administrative changes. Senate Bill 867 passed the third reading in the Senate and is currently under review in the House.
- [**Senate Budget Highlights \(House Bill 1030\)**](#) - This past week, the Senate debated and approved its changes to the new budget plan for the 2016-2017 fiscal year. Here is a summary of the Senate's budget proposal:
 - Education
 - The budget lays the foundation to dramatically increase average teacher salary to over \$54,000 over two years while setting aside monies for \$2,000 bonuses for exemplary principals. The new budget also establishes a remediation plan for principals at low-performing schools.
 - It outlines a plan for improving low-performing schools around the state through the establishment of laboratory schools.
 - Provides \$500,000 for School Risk Management Plans to be developed in public schools across the state to keep children and teachers safer.
 - Requires the licensing of teachers through local alternative preparation programs (LATP programs).
 - Establishes a class size ratio for kindergarten through third-grade teachers to students.
 - Rewards third-grade teachers for student excellence by allocating funding for bonuses.
 - Fixed UNC system schools tuition.
 - Tuition capped at \$500 per semester for in-state students and \$2,500 for out-of-state students at UNC-Pembroke and Western Carolina University.
 - Taxes
 - The budget contains a tax break that would benefit lower income families by increasing the zero tax bracket.
 - Invests \$12 million toward software to simplify tax filing.
 - Medical
 - Funds \$500,000 for Zika virus prevention research.
 - Provides \$250,000 to digitize mental health records to help streamline background checks for gun sales.
 - Provides \$1.3 million to get Western Crime Lab back running and \$640,000 for equipment in the state's other two crime labs; also provides \$2.1 million to help close out backlog at the State Crime Lab for good.
 - Reinstate eye-care benefits to Medicaid recipients.
 - Transit
 - Allocates \$3 million to increase DMV efficiency.
 - \$14 million to improve railway system.
 - Increases state assistance for urban and rural transit systems by \$4 million and also appropriates \$15 million to general aviation airports.
 - Workers in other agencies will receive pay increases. State Highway Patrol officers, court clerks, correctional officers, and magistrates will get their annual step-increases.

At the General Assembly



Senator Joyce Waddell participates in the Habitat Wall-Raising and Hammer Contest hosted by the Habitat for Humanity of North Carolina on Wednesday, June 1, 2016.



Senator Joyce Waddell meets with the NC Craft Brewers Guild and NoDa Brewing to discuss legislation that affects breweries on Wednesday, June 1, 2016.



Senator Joyce Waddell attends the HBCU Solidarity Rally in support of funding HBCU's and educational equality for all on Wednesday, June 1, 2016.



Senator Joyce Waddell celebrates the 25th anniversary of Women Build and helps build a new home for Leondra Garrett along with Habitat for Humanity of Charlotte on Friday, June 3, 2016.

The County News

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olina, and National.. **BRIEFS:**

From the desk of Senator Joyce Waddell

NC Senate considers increasing minimum wage


CHARLOTTE, NC – The North Carolina Senate is reconsidering the state minimum wage rate. North Carolina currently has a minimum wage of \$7.25, in accordance with the federal minimum wage; however, it is becoming increasingly more difficult for families to sustain this rate. Since the minimum wage was introduced in 2009, it has not been updated to keep up with inflation and the cost of living. The annual income of a full-time employee working the entire year at the federal minimum wage is \$15,080. Workers cannot afford basic necessities at such a low salary. Raising the minimum wage to a more realistic living wage will help North Carolina build an economy that works for everyone by putting more money into the pockets of consumers who will likely pump that money back into the economy by purchasing food, housing, and other goods and services thus creating more jobs simultaneously.

North Carolina seems to be lagging behind other states that have already taken the initiative by increasing their minimum wage. New York became the second state to pass a new law that would raise the minimum wage in New York City to \$15 per hour by the end of 2018. Twenty-nine states and the District of Columbia have raised their minimum wages higher than the current federal rate. Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina and Tennessee do not have minimum wage laws. In all of these states, employers are required to pay the higher amount of the

state minimum wage or the federal minimum wage.

"North Carolina should not be a follower but more assertive in doing what is necessary for its citizens. The current minimum wage is an economic setback for the state. More should be done to ensure that North Carolina families are leading quality lives, and increasing the minimum wage rate is a step in the right direction. Anyone that works 40 hours a week should be able to earn enough money to support themselves and their family. Hard-working citizens go to work every day and deserve to go home and be able to pay their bills. Increasing the minimum wage will not only benefit the North Carolina economy but our families as well," said Senator Joyce Waddell.

Senator Joyce Waddell held a news conference last Wednesday to discuss the bill she cosponsored, Senate Bill 864, Increase NC Minimum Wage/Set COLA. This legislation would raise the minimum wage to \$12 per hour and appropriate funds for increase. The Commissioner of Labor would calculate an adjustment using the Consumer Price Index to measure inflation.



Waddell

Senator Waddell's office is open Monday through Friday during Session. You may reach her office by calling her Legislative Assistant, Jyrta 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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