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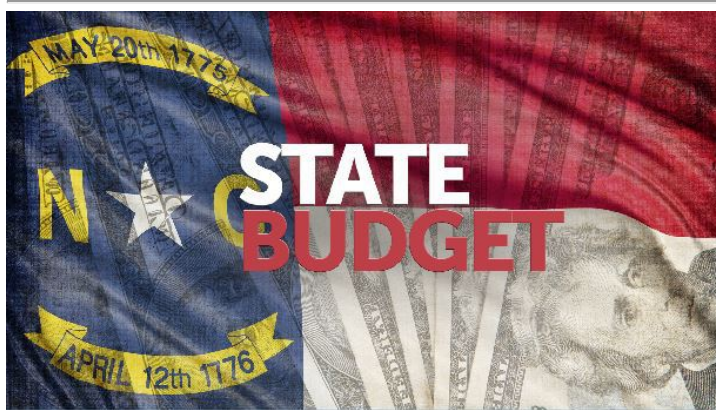


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Greetings,

On Monday, May 30, 2017 we honored those who gave their lives to serving our country and those who put their lives on the line today. Then Wednesday morning May 31st we had an all-day Appropriations meeting to consider the budget. Wednesday the budget was rushed through Finance and Pensions committees with no meaningful opportunity to amend or debate. Thursday and Friday morning after midnight the full House debated and voted on the budget. That's how we passed a \$22.9 billion budget.

[House OKs \\$22.9B budget in early morning vote](#)

WRAL

The State Budget: The Process

A state budget shows what is important to us and what are priorities are. Always keep that in mind as you hear and learn about the budget.

Passing a budget takes several steps.

- Step #1: Governor Cooper introduces his budget proposal.
- Step #2: The Senate passes its budget proposal.
- Step #3: The House passes its budget proposal. **[Step #3 finished after midnight on Friday.]**
- Step #4: The House and Senate agree on a common budget.
- Step #5: The Governor signs the budget or vetoes it. If he signs, it is law.
- Step #6: If the Governor vetoes, the House & Senate will try to override his veto.
- Step #7: If House & Senate override, their budget is law. If not, we start over.

Right now, we have three complete budget proposals: Governor Cooper's, House Republicans, and Senate Republicans.

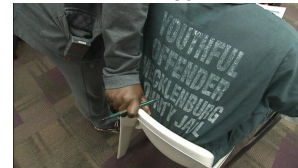
Check out the differences in this [handy chart](#).

[Editorial: Cooper's budget offers a better vision than House or Senate plans](#)



May 15, 2017 Chamberlain College of Nursing Grand Opening

HB 280



HB 280 Juvenile Justive Reinvestment Act or Raise the Age bill passes after debate on the House floor on May 15, 2017. The vote for House Bill 280 was 104 to 8. The Representatives who voted against it are Rep.'s James Boles, Mark Brody, George Cleveland, Jeff Collins, Elmore, Cal Ford, Larry Pittman and Sarah Stevens.

The bill raises the age of Juvenile prosecution from 16 and 17 years old to 18 years old for misdemeanors and low-level felonies, of F through I felonies. Juveniles who commit violent felonies or traffic violations would still automatically be transferred to the adult court system.

North Carolina is currently the only state in the nation that punishes 16 and 17 year olds as adults.

Click to here [HB280](#) as I explain that sometimes when juvenile commit crimes, there are a lot of other things in their life that are out of their control. Click this link to watch the full debate on the House floor <http://www.wral.com/news/state/nccapitol/video/16706119/>

Mental Illness Affects About 10 million Adults More than a third aren't getting help, federal study says

WebMD News from HealthDay
By Steven Reinberg
HealthDay Reporter

MONDAY, June 12, 2017 (HealthDay News) -- Nearly 10 million American adults have a serious **mental illness**, and a similar number have considered **suicide** during the past year, according to a new government report on the nation's behavioral ills.

The report also said that 15.7 million Americans abuse **alcohol** and 7.7 million abuse illicit drugs.

The nation's growing **opioid** epidemic was also a focus in the report. The researchers found that 12.5 million people are estimated to have misused prescription painkillers such as **oxycodone** (OxyContin, Percocet) or **hydrocodone** (Vicprofen).

The House Budget: K-12 Education

Budgets are about priorities. Politicians like to talk about public education. A budget shows you how serious you are. Governor Cooper's budget invests \$755 million more in our schools without raising taxes or fees. The House budget has only a \$406 million increase. After years of budgets where per pupil spending fell, Governor Cooper's budget increases per pupil spending by \$337 compared to \$202 for the Senate budget and \$215 for the House budget.

Where do we see the differences in the classroom?

	Governor Cooper	House Budget
Overall teacher pay raise (over 2 years)	More than a 10% raise	Less than a 10% raise
New teachers	5% raise	Less than 1% raise
Veteran teachers (25+)	3.4% to 5.3% raise range	Less than 1% raise
Supply stipend for teachers	\$150 per classroom teacher	\$0
Local funding to hire more school support personnel	\$20 million	\$0

House Democrats tried multiple amendments to improve the budget. All were voted down.

You may remember all of the controversy surrounding HB 13 at the beginning of the session? It was about the fact that the legislature mandated class sizes in early grades but did not provide the money. That left local schools with the prospect of laying off art/music/PE teachers in order to hire more early grade teachers. HB 13 passed and gave local schools some much-needed flexibility.

What HB 13 did not provide was any money. That was to come later. But it's not in this budget. Evidently, "later" means much, much later.

That is why Rep. Rosa Gill (D-Wake) offered an amendment to add funding to lower class sizes in early grades by cutting new funding for private school vouchers. Unfortunately, the amendment was defeated. I voted Yes.

The State tying the hands of local schools is nothing new. That is why Rep. John Autry (D-Mecklenburg) offered an amendment to give local schools \$20 million in funding and flexibility to hire school support personnel (nurses, counselors, etc.). This amendment was also funded by freezing the level of private school voucher spending. Unfortunately, the amendment was defeated. I voted Yes.

Prior to the Great Recession, North Carolina invested over \$80 per pupil on textbooks and digital resources. Then funding plummeted to nearly zero, "rebounded" for several years to around \$15, and this year hit a level 40% below where we were pre-recession. The state's failure to fund textbooks and digital resources has hit students hard and forced local taxpayers to try to make up some of the difference. Rep. Amos Quick (D-Guilford) offered an amendment to divert over \$1 million from a turf war between the Department of Public Instruction and the General Assembly to fund what our kids need – more textbooks and digital resources. Unfortunately, the amendment was defeated. I voted Yes.

[NC House rejects attempts to cut funding from private school vouchers and shift it to public schools](#)

The House Budget: Community Colleges

Education is not just K-12, of course. Community colleges are the lifeblood of many communities, a critical resource for our kids and an attraction for new jobs and businesses. The House budget provides one-fifth (1/5) of the new investments that Governor Cooper called for in his budget.

One glaring missed opportunity is the NC GROW scholarship. Governor Cooper proposed this to allow recent high school graduates in good academic standing to attend community college for free. The House budget proposes a severely limited program that helps a fraction of the number of students. Rep. Billy Richardson (D-Cumberland) proposed an amendment to fully fund NC GROW. Unfortunately, it was defeated. I voted Yes.

The House Budget: Job Creation

Again, a budget is about priorities. House Democrats offered amendments to fund rural broadband access in rural areas. Previously, this year the House has passed a bill to advance rural broadband access, but that bill did not include any money to pay for it.

How can we expect all of North Carolina to move forward economically if significant parts of the state do not have meaningful broadband access. Once upon a time we used taxes and revenue to build roads to all corners of the state. That challenge is before us today with broadband access. Rep. Terry Garrison (D-Vance) offered an amendment to fund this effort, but it was defeated. I voted Yes.

Another House Democratic effort to create jobs in rural areas did pass, but only after it was

Despite the growing number of Americans with mental health problems, about a third of those who need help aren't getting it, said researcher Dr. Beth Han. She's from the Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality at the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

"These are real increases," Han said. The reasons people aren't getting the help they need are varied. They include not having health insurance and not knowing where to go for help, she said.

Han believes that stigma continues to play a part in why people with mental health problems don't seek help. "They are afraid that other people may find out," she said.

Among teens, marijuana use has gone down slightly, from nearly 8 percent in 2011 to 7 percent in 2015, though with more states legalizing its use, more people continue to accept the drug as safe and discount its potential harms, the researchers said.

"For teens, marijuana is a substitute for other behaviors like binge drinking," said Dr. Scott Krakower. He's the assistant unit chief of psychiatry at Zucker Hillside Hospital in Glen Oaks, N.Y.

Often, substance abuse is driven by other mental problems such as depression or bipolar disorder, Krakower said. These mental problems may also be a product of the substance abuse, he said.

On the bright side, fewer teens are smoking cigarettes. And fewer teens started using marijuana, drugs or alcohol in 2015 than in previous years, the researchers said.

Mental illness is a growing problem among adolescents. Three million teens from 12 to 17 had major depression in 2015. The problem is particularly acute among girls, the researchers found.

Among teens, depression increased from 2 million in 2011 to 3 million in 2015, Han said.

Among adults, 9.8 million Americans reported having serious thoughts about suicide in the past year. This continued an upward trend that started in 2012. In 2011, 9 million adults reported thoughts of suicide, Han said.

These numbers are rising along with the opioid epidemic, she said.

In addition, 9.8 million adults have a serious mental illness. That number has remained about the same since 2011, Han said.

Despite this, only about two-thirds of those who need it are getting treatment for mental health problems. Poor people have less opportunity for treatment, Krakower said.

People who are uninsured or who have insurance with large deductibles may be more likely to deal with a physical problem rather than a mental problem, he said.

In addition, wait times for treatment can be very long -- up to a year, Krakower said. That's because of the lack of trained staff and resources.

"The country needs to figure out a better model so people get the mental health care they need," he said. The prescription drug abuse epidemic also continues, Han said.

Many of these people get their drugs from a friend or relative or from a doctor, the researchers said. People without health insurance were nearly twice as likely to have misused a prescription painkiller as those with insurance in the past year, according to the report.

In 2015, more than 1 million Americans were being treated for substance abuse. From 2011 to 2015, the number of people receiving medication-assisted therapy, mostly methadone, as part of a narcotic treatment program has increased about 16 percent.

Looking for an explanation for the behavioral health problems in the country, Krakower speculated that the mood of America is feeding mental health and drug issues.

"The morale of the country has been down," he said. "The economy drives a lot of people's mood. I don't think people feel comfortable in this country. When that kind of morale happens, it has an effect on people's psychology," Krakower said.

The findings are published in the *Behavioral Health Barometer -- United States, 2016*, which was released June 12 by SAMHSA



watered down. Rep. Charles Graham (D-Robeson) attempted to offer amendments fully fund Governor Cooper's NC Ready sites to attract industry to rural areas. His amendment finally passed, but only after the funding was reduced, and over the opposition of most House Republicans. I voted Yes.

The House Budget: Opioid Crisis

The initial House budget ignored the opioid crisis in this state by only funding a single pilot project in Wilmington address the crisis. When Rep. Jean Farmer-Butterfield (D-Wilson) offered an amendment to fund opioid programs at the level found in Governor Cooper's budget (\$10 million for mental health and \$2 million for law enforcement), a House Republican instead offered an amendment for half of that. The amendment passed and the House budget now includes \$5 million for community-based substance abuse treatment to go along with the Wilmington pilot.

The House Budget: State Employees

Two amendments to help state employees and retirees were voted down by House Republicans. I voted for both. The first amendment, offered by Rep. Mickey Michaux (D-Durham) provided state employees a 2% cost of living adjustment (COLA) rather than a one-time bonus. One-time bonuses are insufficient because even if it keeps retirees on pace with inflation the year of the bonus, the payment drops in the second year leaving retirees with less spending power.

The second amendment shifted salary funds so that all state employees would receive a \$2,000 pay increase. A House Republican offered the amendment, but his caucus colleagues voted it down overwhelmingly. If passed, it would have doubled the House budget raise. I voted Yes.

Below are some details on state employee compensation in the House budget:

Governor Cooper's Budget	NC Senate Budget	NC House Budget
State employee raise of 2% or \$800 raise (whichever is greater).	State employee raise of 1.5% or \$750 (whichever is greater)	Most state employees get a \$1,000 raise.
1.5% one-time bonus for retirees, as well as \$150 million for retiree health care liabilities.	No bonus or cost of living adjustment for retirees.	1.6% one-time bonus for retirees.
Allows retired law enforcement officers to retire after 25 years of service.	Does not do this.	Does not do this.

Duke Energy Requests a 15% Rate Hike

Duke Energy announced this week it was requesting a 15% rate hike to help pay for coal ash clean up, transmission system upgrades, and more conversions to natural gas. The NC Utilities Commission will decide on this request.

How can you make your voice heard?

The NC Utilities Commission has a public input process. Find out more at [this website](#).

Duke seeks 15 percent rate hike in N.C.

Fayetteville Observer

Rep. Carla Cunningham: House Committee Assignments 2017-2018 Session

- Appropriations
- Appropriations Health and Human Services
- Commerce and Job Development
- Energy and Public Utilities
- Health
- Health Care Reform
- Regulatory Reform

Non-Standing Committee

Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Health and Human Services

Appointments by North Carolina House of Representative Speaker Tim Moore

- Minority Health Advisory Council
- Health Public Policy Committee - Council of State Governments (CSG)

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.

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Fighting to spare mental health from NC budget cuts

Proposed cuts to regional mental health offices would jeopardize planned community mental health crisis centers in Wake and Durham, advocates say. Legislators want the regional offices to reduce their cash reserves. NEWSOBSERVER.COM

Redistricting and Racial Gerrymanders in North Carolina

The U.S. Supreme Court affirmed a lower court ruling that found 28 North Carolina legislative districts to be illegal racial gerrymanders that diluted the overall impact of black voters.

Where were the racial gerrymanders?

In August 2016, a panel of three federal judges ruled that Republicans who led the 2011 redrawing of districts to elect state Senate and House members relied too heavily on the race of voters in 28 districts. The judges agreed with challengers of the maps, ruling that map drawers had unconstitutionally packed black voters into the districts and weakened their overall voting power in the surrounding districts.

The following districts were found to be racial gerrymanders.

N.C. House districts: [5](#), [7](#), [12](#), [21](#), [24](#), [29](#), [31](#), [32](#), [33](#), [38](#), [42](#), [43](#), [48](#), [57](#), [58](#), [60](#), [99](#), [102](#), [107](#)

N.C. Senate districts: [4](#), [5](#), [14](#), [20](#), [21](#), [28](#), [32](#), [38](#), [40](#)

Any redrawing of the unconstitutional districts is likely to have an impact on the shape of surrounding districts.

What still has to be decided in court?

Since the 2011 redistricting, more than a half-dozen lawsuits have been filed challenging the shape of districts that North Carolina voters use to elect representatives in the U.S. Congress and N.C. General Assembly. • After North Carolina voters David Harris, Christine Bowser and Samuel Love filed a lawsuit, North Carolina's 1st and 12th congressional districts as drawn in 2011 – one in the northeastern part of the state and the other in the Piedmont – were found to be racial gerrymanders. The U.S. Supreme Court in late May upheld a ruling by a three-member panel of federal judges that forced the redrawing of congressional maps in 2016.

• Those redrawn congressional maps were then challenged as partisan gerrymanders by Common Cause and the League of Women Voters. Those cases could test the breadth to which the courts allow redistricting for partisan advantage.

• A lawsuit filed initially in state court by former N.C. state legislator Margaret Dickson and others challenging General Assembly lines and congressional

lines drawn in 2011. A three-judge panel in state court upheld the maps in 2013, saying that while race played a role in the drawing of the lines, legislators had done so to comply with the federal Voting Rights Act. The state Supreme Court has twice upheld that ruling. Last week, the U.S. Supreme Court sent the case back to North Carolina's highest court for a third review that takes into account the finding of racial gerrymandering in the 1st and 12th districts. Since the last review of the case, the state Supreme Court has shifted to majority-Democrat. The hearing in state court has not been scheduled yet. The typical time frame for moving a case from one court to another is 25 days, unless otherwise specified.

• A lawsuit filed by Sandra Little Covington and 30 other North Carolina voters challenged General Assembly districts. The U.S. Supreme Court decided on Monday not to review a ruling issued in August 2016 by three federal judges who found nine state Senate districts and 19 state House districts to be illegal racial gerrymanders. The U.S. Supreme Court upheld the lower court's ruling in that case, but canceled an order in which the judges called for special elections this year. That question could go back to the panel this summer for an additional decision in the case.

make your selection for the House Chamber, Senate Chamber, Press Conference Room or Appropriations Committee Room.

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