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Senator Joel Ford: January 2018 Newsletter

Lisa Fair (Sen. Joel Ford) [Fordjla@ncleg.net]

Sent: Thursday, January 11, 2018 5:45 PM
To: Steve Johnston



Vol. 5, Ed. 2

January 12, 2018

Dear Constituents and Friends,

Excited is an understatement! Honoring and commemorating the rich legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in Dallas NC: Dallas is a small town in Gaston County, NC a suburb of both Charlotte & Gastonia. "We need suburban and rural NC" In 2018! All are welcome!



Committees

- [Commerce & Insurance](#)
- [Finance](#)

- [Joint Committee on Judicial Reform & Redistricting](#)
- [Joint Legislative Transportation Oversight](#)
- [Rules & Operations of the Senate](#)
- [Select Committee on Nominations](#)
- [Joint Legislative Elections Oversight Committee](#)



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Senator Ford Cosponsored Two (2) Bills

S702: Independent Redistricting Commission

The goal of compactness, to avoid elongated and irregularly shaped districts.
The goal of one person, one vote to ensure each voter's vote.
The goal of minimizing the number of split counties, municipalities, and other communities of interest. Precincts shall not be split in the preparation of a plan for State Senate districts. All districts shall be contiguous.

S703: Tech Correct to Appropriations Act of 2017.

Addresses the unfunded class-size mandate causing budget crunches in schools or provide the resources DEQ and DHHS have requested to combat emerging contaminants statewide.

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LEGISLATIVE

Senator Rabon entered Bill 698:

AN ACT TO AMEND THE NORTH CAROLINA CONSTITUTION TO ALLOW 2 FREQUENT ELECTION OF JUDGES BY CREATING TWO-YEAR TERMS OF 3 OFFICE FOR JUSTICES AND JUDGES.

CMS K-3 CLASS SIZE FIX:

The class sizes for kindergarten through third grade is an issue that has been a concern for many constituents. As session has reconvened, answers on resolving the large class sizes in those grades have been discussed and debated. Recently, the CMS Board's Intergovernmental Relations Committee that stated numerous "fixes" to resolve the growing class size issue. These suggested fixes would require an additional 43.3 million dollars in funding to support an additional 353 teachers and an additional 200 trailers. If this funding is not made available to CMS then to support the additional teachers and trailers CMS would have to eliminate all of the special education offerings, eliminate Pre-kindergarten, and have a significant increase in the average class size for fourth and fifth grade and numerous student reassignments.

Governor Cooper's spokesman, Ford Porter, offered the following statement:

"Today, legislative Republicans walked out on students, teachers and families concerned about overcrowded classrooms and safe drinking water. When legislators return home today, North Carolinians in their communities should demand they take action to fund our schools and protect our air and drinking water. These issues should have been addressed months ago and North Carolina families are waiting for action."

HB 514 MATTHEWS/MINT HILL CHARTER SCHOOLS:

HB 514 is a bill that would authorize the towns of Matthews & Mint Hill to apply for and hold a charter school. Data shows, that the outcome would be the creation of a Matthews Charter School System that would undoubtedly be whiter and wealthier than the rest of Mecklenburg County. That demographic shift would further re-segregation of Mecklenburg County public schools to a two tiered system. One tier would be a suburban, predominantly white school system and the other an inner-city, urban school system with much higher levels of poverty than its suburban neighbor.

COMMITTEES

Commerce and Insurance

"Affordable and reliable public utilities are vital to North Carolina families and in recruiting new jobs and industry to our state. The Utilities Commission makes decisions that impact the daily lives of millions of people, as well as the growth of our economy, and I'm appointing highly qualified individuals who will be fair and keep North Carolinians' best interests in mind," Governor Cooper said.

The Utilities Commission regulates the rates and services for all public utilities in North Carolina, including electric, telephone, natural gas and water services. Seven members are appointed by the Governor and approved by the General Assembly to serve terms of six years each.

Joint Resolution Providing Confirmation of Two Utility Commission Appointments Nominated by Governor Cooper and Sponsored by Senator Ford with a unanimous vote.

ToNola Brown-Bland

Nominated for reappointment to her current position. She has served on the Utilities Commission since 2009 and serves as Chair of the Board of Directors of the National Regulatory Research Institute. She previously served as President of the Southeastern Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners and is a member of the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners. Commissioner Brown-Bland previously worked as an attorney for the North Carolina Utilities Commission and as Associate General Counsel for the Greensboro City Attorney's office. She received her B.A. from UNC-Chapel Hill and her J.D. from the Duke University School of Law.

Charlotte Mitchell

Nominated to replace Commissioner Bryan Beatty. She is an attorney in Raleigh, NC, representing public utilities and their customers before the NC Utilities Commission. She is a member of the NC Bar Association and former member of both the NC Mining and Energy Commission and NC Sedimentation and Control Commission. Mitchell was a Morehead Scholar as an undergraduate at UNC-Chapel Hill, where she also attended law school. She received a Master of Environmental Economics and Policy degree from Duke University.

Redistricting

Judicial Redistricting and Reform Committee Meeting



"I am concerned about a diverse judiciary under any plan Sen. Newton says diversity – geographic, racial, gender – would be an 'expectation' (not requirement) in a final plan. #NCGA 'That's a non-starter.'"

Transportation

See [Agenda](#) for meeting details

*****DISTRICT NEWS/CONSTITUENT CORNER*****

Twelve Year Old Scholar- While many recent college graduates are working hard to pay back student debt a twelve year old that attends Druid Hill Academy has already secured funding for his education. **Blake Mangum** is a seventh grade student at Druid Hill Academy, who has already received his first college scholarship. Due to Blake's hard work and commitment to his education, he was selected by his teachers to be a recipient of the Victor Bell Scholarship. The Victor Bell Scholarship is awarded to only ten middle school students in North Carolina, and provides each recipient with up to two thousand dollars a year from middle school until their final year of college. [Click here](#) to see the WSOC-TV News special.

North Tryon Corridor Project- Construction began on January 2, 2018 and should be completed by mid-2020. Lane closures are set to take place outside of peak traffic hours. The goal is to ensure the safety of workers and commuters while maintaining access to neighborhoods and businesses. This project will

install cross walks, sidewalks, planting strips, decorative lighting and more along North Tryon Street and Church Street. Once completed North Tryon will be one-way inbound on Church Street and two lanes outbound on North Tryon. [Click here to learn more.](#)

I-77 Update- Construction is occurring mostly in the median of I-77 with minimal disruption to commuters. Occasional lane closures on I-77 only take place in overnight hours (typically 10:00 p.m. to 5:00 a.m. approximately). Visit the [Traffic Notices](#) page on the website for the most current information on lane closures. For a complete list of all detours, click [here](#) for more information and maps. The [I-77 Express Lanes](#) are 26 miles of dedicated toll lanes that will operate adjacent to the current general purpose lanes from I-77/I-277 in Charlotte to Exit 36 in Mooresville.

Welcome to NCCASH.COM

There is approximately \$659 million in the unclaimed property fund. You may be one of the North Carolinians who is owed money from the fund. *Claim Your Cash*, part of the NC Cash Program, helps reunite owners with their unclaimed property

Search for your unclaimed cash online!

As always, please continue to refer to the North Carolina General Assembly website to **LISTEN LIVE** to all committee meetings and press conferences, www.ncleg.net. Once on the website select the audio tab then select you will have the option to listen in on either the Senate, House, Committee Room or Press Conference. The North Carolina state government, website, www.ncgov.com, is helpful for in-depth information regarding our state resources.

Thank you for continuing to voice your issues, thoughts, and concerns through your many e-mails, phone calls, and office visits this session. Please feel free to contact me or my office at any time. Please kindly forward this newsletter 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!

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