



House Democrats Introduce Bill to Ratify Equal Rights for Women

The U.S. Constitution does not guarantee equal rights for women. The Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) would change that. It would guarantee that "[e]quality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or any State on account of sex."

Last week I joined with all 55 of my House Democratic colleagues to sponsor <u>HB 271</u>, a bill to ratify the ERA. If HB 271 becomes law, North Carolina will become the 38th state to ratify the amendment. Thirty-eight is a significant number because an amendment must be ratified by 38 of the 50 states (or ¾ of all the states) to go into effect – although because the Congressional original deadline to ratify the ERA has passed we still need Congress to act to extend the deadline.

It is important to ratify the ERA because there will never be equal rights in this country until all laws apply to American citizens regardless of their gender. Families and individuals need non-discrimination in hiring, wages, and working environments.

Equal pay for women? State lawmakers file ERA bills today Winston-Salem Journal

What Is the Equal Rights Amendment, and Why Are We Talking About It Now? NY Times



Gov. Cooper Proposes State Budget, Education Bond, and Medicaid Expansion

Typically, the most important piece of legislation in the session is the State Budget. The State Budget bill raises and spends billions of dollars and often includes many important changes in law or policy.

The traditional kick-off to the budget process is the Governor releasing his proposed budget. This year the Governor's budget is particularly important because the General Assembly is more closely divided between Republicans and Democrats and it will be more difficult for Republican leaders to pass a budget over his objections – as has happened the last two years.

Governor Cooper released his budget it has three big parts:

- A teacher pay raise to get NC to the top in the Southeast in teacher pay;
 - A strong school bond to build and renovate schools;
- Medicaid expansion to close the health care coverage gap and create health care jobs.



Better Pay for Educators

The governor's plan puts North Carolina on a path to become best in the Southeast in teacher pay in four years. Teachers would see an average pay raise of 9.1% over two years with no teacher receiving less than a 3% raise in either year.

The plan eliminates salary plateaus for veteran teachers, allowing teachers with up to 30 years of service to earn more for each year of service. Under the current teacher pay plan enacted by legislators, teachers who keep working beyond 15 years receive only one pay

raise of \$2,000 after their 24th year of service.

In addition, Gov. Cooper proposes restoring extra pay for teachers who hold a master's degree in the subject they teach and eliminating the requirement that teachers pay for their own substitutes when they take a personal leave day.

<u>Click here</u> to see Gov. Cooper's proposed teacher pay schedule.

Gov. Cooper's plan also provides experience-based raises for school principals. Principals would earn more based on both experience as a principal and the size of the student body they lead. The plan also restores salary supplements for principals who hold advanced degrees.

<u>Click here</u> to see Gov. Cooper's proposed principal pay schedule.



Invest NC Bond

To invest in better schools from kindergarten through college as well as to improve other critical infrastructure, Gov. Cooper proposes putting a bond worth \$3.9 billion to a vote of the people.

The proposed bond would include \$3.1 billion for education efforts, including \$2 billion for K-12 public schools statewide, \$500 million each for facility improvements at community colleges and University of North Carolina System institutions, and \$100 million in the NC History Museum and the NC Zoo.

Also included in the bond proposal would be \$800 million to invest in clean water through local water and sewer projects.

A bond is a fiscally responsible option for making these investments, offering stability for school districts, colleges and universities, and local governments planning their budgets. It also allows the people of North Carolina the chance to voice their opinion on making these public investments.

Click here for a Fact Sheet on Gov. Cooper's Invest NC Bond Proposal.

Click here to see how North Carolina public schools could benefit from the Invest NC bond.

Click here to see how UNC System Schools could benefit from the Invest NC bond.

Click here to see how North Carolina Community Colleges could benefit from the Invest NC bond.



Future Teachers, Safer Schools

Gov. Cooper's budget offers \$5 million to recruit, retain, and support quality teachers and \$5.3 million for more professional development opportunities for teachers and school leaders. To bring more good teachers into the profession, Gov. Cooper plans to invest \$4 million to expand the Teaching Fellows program to include more universities and more types of teachers.

To keep schools safe and students healthy, the governor's budget provides \$40 million to hire more school nurses, counselors, psychologists, social workers and school resource officers. His budget also includes \$15 million for safety improvements and training at K-12 schools. Both recommendations were endorsed in a report issued last month by a special school safety committee headed by local sheriffs.

The governor's plan also includes \$29 million in new funding for schools to purchase more textbooks, digital resources, instructional supplies, and enhanced digital learning opportunities for students.

Cooper confident he now has leverage to get more from lawmakers in budget WRAL

For teachers and state workers, here's how much of a raise the governor wants for you

The News & Observer

Our View: Tough climb ahead for Cooper's budget

Fayetteville Observer

Medicaid expansion looms large in Cooper's budget bid

North Carolina Health News

Cooper budget would expand Medicaid

The Robesonian

Cooper budgets calls for \$3.9 billion bond referendum, \$2 billion for schools

The Robesonian

Cooper seeks \$3.9B bond package, 9 percent teacher raises

Associated Press

Cooper Calls Attention To Aging North Carolina Schools

WEAR

Gov. Cooper's environmental budget adds \$6 million to tackle emerging contaminants

Progressive Pulse

Governor Roy Cooper proposes teacher pay raise, affordable housing in two year budget WBTV

Gov. Roy Cooper presents full 2-year budget plan

WTVD

Editorial: Cooper's budget won't fly in assembly, senate

The Time-News

Roy Cooper asks for \$2 billion in public school spending in budget proposal

WCNC

Cooper's State of the State Address aimed for bipartisanship. But are Republicans in?

The Daily Tar Heel

Governor Cooper Proposes Budget to Invest in Education, Good Jobs, and Healthier

Communities; And a Response From House Speaker Tim Moore

High Country Press



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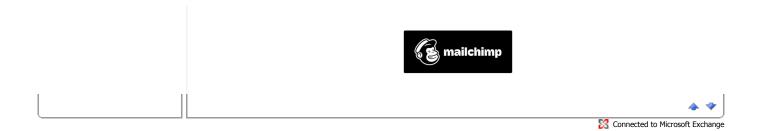
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