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## Legislative Updates from the Office of Rep. Nasif Majeed

Representative Nasif Majeed [majeedla@ncleg.net]

Sent: Thursday, May 16, 2019 9:00 PM

 To: [Steve Johnston](#)

# May 16, 2019

## Representative Nasif Majeed



## Representing District 99 Mecklenburg County

### Legislative Updates:

PEACE. I was pleased to welcome constituents and citizens attending the North Carolina Divine Nine Legislative Day on yesterday. The Divine Nine are a group of nine historically African-American fraternities and sororities that annually come to the General Assembly to advocate on important issues.

This year they emphasized six policy areas: criminal justice reform, voting reform, accessible health care, improved public education, economic empowerment and housing justice, and assuring a full count in the 2020 Census.

["Divine Nine" advocates press state lawmakers for change](#)

Progressive Pulse

### Mental Health Providers, Consumers, Advocates Urge Legislators to Close the Health Coverage Gap to Increase Access to Behavioral Treatment

"The cost of doing nothing is not nothing," John Owen, mental health consumer, told Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Mandy Cohen, M.D, at a roundtable to discuss the impact of untreated behavioral health on communities and the challenges of accessing care for those who need it. He called on legislators to follow the lead of 37 other states and expand Medicaid.

One in 20 people in North Carolina lives with a serious mental illness, and more than half the adults with mental illness do not receive needed treatment. In addition to impacting the quality of life of individuals and their families, untreated mental illness or substance use disorder imposes hidden costs on North Carolina's economy, justice system, healthcare providers and county divisions of social services.

The roundtable, which included mental health providers, consumers and advocacy leaders from across the state, called on legislators to close the health insurance coverage gap. Expanding Medicaid would provide an estimated 500,000 North Carolinians with access to affordable health care, including 144,000 North Carolinians with behavioral health needs, including substance use disorder. States that have expanded Medicaid have seen substantial improvements in mental health and access to care among low-income adults with chronic conditions.

Attendees included Cherene Allen-Caraco, Promise Resource Network (Charlotte); Valerie Arendt, National Association of Social Workers North Carolina Chapter (Raleigh); Tim Brooks, Carolina Outreach (offices across North Carolina); Natasha Holley, Family Integrated Services (Ahoskie); Robin Huffman, North Carolina Psychiatric Association (Raleigh); John Owen, past member of the Mental Health Commission (Carrboro); I. Azell Reeves, member of the Mental Health Commission (Greensboro); Luke Smith, El Futuro (Durham); and Martha Turner-Quest, North Carolina Psychological Association (Raleigh).

Last week Governor Roy Cooper announced the new Awake58 Fellows program, an initiative to promote Finish Line Grants on North Carolina community college campuses. Awake58 fellows will encourage their eligible peers to apply for Finish Line Grants to cover costs that might otherwise force them to drop out of school.

Through a grant from the Belk Endowment, EducationNC will fund up to 20 Awake58 Fellows to begin three-month fellowships this spring. Nine community colleges have selected applicants in good academic standing to serve as Fellows on their campuses. Fellows will receive a \$1,000 stipend and professional networking experience for their work to expand the use of Finish Line Grants.

Last year, Governor Cooper created the Finish Line Grants program to help community college students cover unforeseen expenses and complete their training. To date, hundreds of Finish Line Grants have been distributed to students across North Carolina.

I supported an amendment to the House budget to expand Finish Line Grants, but it was defeated on a party-line vote.

The Finish Line Grants program uses funds from the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) to help community college students cover unforeseen financial emergencies like medical needs, car repairs and childcare so they can complete their training. Community college students can apply for Finish Line Grants of up to \$1,000 per semester through their community college financial aid office or their local NCWorks Career Center.

For more information about Finish Line Grants, click [HERE](#).

### **Highway Storm Recovery Act**

Storm recovery is always an important issue in North Carolina. Whether it is hurricanes in the late summer and fall or tornadoes in the spring or heavy rain and flooding year-round, our state is always vulnerable to natural disasters.

This week the NC House passed [SB 605](#) and Governor Cooper signed it into law today. The bill creates a special fund in the Department of Transportation that provides that agency flexibility and funding to handle debris clean-up and other disaster-related expenses without waiting for funds to be transferred from other areas.

This bipartisan bill should facilitate our efforts to clear and repair transportation networks in the aftermath of future natural disasters.

### ~ NCGA House Page Program ~ "Youth Learning through Serving"

It was a pleasure for me to sponsor Ms. Aleemah Williams as a House Page in the North Carolina House of Representatives this week.

All page applicants are asked to submit a short essay on why they want to be a page. Aleemah stated that she wanted to see first-hand how the legislative process works and that this program offers a unique insight for teens to get involved with and explore their local government.

In her essay, Aleemah quoted a line from President Obama's Farewell Speech that should resonate with all of us. It should make us all want to take action and stay in the fight.

I'm proud that I know one young lady who has stepped up and shown that she is ready to do the work to make a difference.

*Continued success Aleemah!*



*"Not just when there's an election, not just when your own narrow interest is at stake, but over the full span of a lifetime... Show up. Dive in. Stay at it." ~ Barack Obama*

For more information about the House Page Program, click [HERE](#).

## HBCU LOBBY DAY - CALL TO ACTION





*So glad to see my Charlotte Precinct #60 neighbor, Delta soror and retired teacher, Pamela Hemphill (3rd from left) lobbying for such a worthy cause here at the NCGA.*

Legislative Black Caucus members, along with Common Cause NC, and members of various HBCUs held a press conference on yesterday pushing for expanded funding for North Carolina's HBCUs.

There are 10 HBCUs in North Carolina – the most in any state – including five in the University of North Carolina system: North Carolina A&T State University, North Carolina Central University, Fayetteville State University, Winston-Salem State University, and Elizabeth City State University.

Those schools are responsible for \$1.7 billion in annual economic impact on the state, employ 15,500 people and educate 32,800 students, while producing about one-third of the science, technology and math degrees among blacks nationwide.

I am proud to have sponsored [House Bill 618](#), that calls for \$50 million in recurring funding for the 10 HBCUs, half public and half private, to close disparities with funding of non-HBCUs. It also calls for \$7.5 million for N.C. A&T State University's doctoral program.

With an enrollment surpassing 12,000 students, N.C. A&T in Greensboro is the largest public HBCU in the U.S. and awards the most undergraduate engineering degrees to African Americans, according to the university.

Black Caucus leaders also want [Senate Bill 640](#), which would require a minimum match of federal funds to support agricultural research and cooperative extension programs.

Students in our state deserve to have access to options for education, higher education, that includes our HBCUs, and for our HBCUs to be sustained, they need to have adequate funding.

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Enjoy this weekend; as always, thank you for allowing me to be of service to you.  
PEACE.



**GA Glossary**

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