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The latest news for you

Representative Nasif Majeed [majeedla@ncleg.net]

Sent: Saturday, June 29, 2019 12:03 PM

To: Steve Johnston

June 28, 2019

Representative Nasif Majeed

District 99





Updates from Raleigh:



PEACE. After weeks of behind-the-scenes meetings, House and Senate Republican leaders worked out the differences between their two Chambers' budgets and introduced their **\$24 Billion Budget Conference Report** [\[HB966\]](#). What they failed to do, however, was include any of Governor Roy Cooper's priorities. It was NOT a compromise involving Governor Cooper and the Democratic caucuses.

Last week, Republican budget writers and Democratic leaders brought negotiations to Governor Cooper in a meeting that didn't create agreement. Medicaid expansion, which the Governor supports, was one area of misalignment with the majority party.

Since North Carolina operates on a fiscal year beginning July 1<sup>st</sup> and ending June 30<sup>th</sup> of each year, the legislature is tasked with completing the budget by the end of June. However, more budgets than not are passed after the deadline with the accompaniment of a Continuing Resolution. Unlike most other states and our neighbors, North Carolina has

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no formal limit on legislative sessions. In theory, there is some political pressure to wrap things up and for legislators to go home, but in practice few voters pay attention to the Raleigh politics in the middle of the summer.

If the legislature does not come to an agreement by June 30<sup>th</sup>, a temporary spending measure will have to be enacted to fund state operations until negotiations are completed. This is formally known as a Continuing Resolution, and by definition it is a type of appropriations legislation used by the government to fund agencies if a formal budget bill has not been signed into law by the end of the state's fiscal year.

Since 2001, only three budgets have been signed into law before the June 30<sup>th</sup> deadline; two of those being signed before the deadline, the other being signed on the 30<sup>th</sup>. This morning Governor Cooper vetoed the budget conference report, meaning it will not go into effect unless a number of Democrats join with the Republicans to override the veto.

I voted against the conference report and welcome Governor Cooper's veto. There is much we can do to make this budget better. A veto will force Republicans to compromise and make this a better budget for North Carolina.

**NOTE: Most Democrats in the House and Senate have agreed to SUSTAIN the veto.**



Democrats and Governor Cooper agree that closing the Medicaid gap is simply the right thing to do for North Carolina. In a roundtable discussion last week with the Governor and Health and Human Services Secretary Mandy Cohen, business leaders made the economic case for closing the health care coverage gap in North Carolina. They shared how high uninsured rates for people in their communities was hampering entrepreneurship, innovation and business productivity.

People in states that have closed the coverage gap report it helps them work and get better jobs. In Michigan, 37% of survey respondents said Medicaid helped them get a better job. In Ohio, 83% of employed Medicaid expansion enrollees reported that Medicaid made it easier to work. And a recent study found that people with disabilities are working at higher rates in states that closed the coverage gap.

"You are not getting productive workers when they are worried about health bills or when they are not healthy. Large companies and small businesses are suffering from the impact," said Vicki Lee Parker, Executive Director, North Carolina Business Council.

"A high uninsurance rate is impeding innovation and entrepreneurship. People who want

to be entrepreneurs are reluctant to leave a job where they have insurance to start a business. We support expansion because it is the way to a healthier economy,” said John Chaffee, President and CEO, NC East Alliance Chambers.

I just read a new report in the Winston-Salem Journal that stated 643,000 more North Carolinians would get health-care coverage over the next three years if the state expands access to Medicaid. The report, paid for by the Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust, the Cone Health Foundation and done by George Washington University researchers, comes as we debate expansion of our state Medicaid program. Medicaid already serves 2.14 million North Carolinians, representing about 21% of the state population. Another 1.6 million will be enrolled in Medicaid through a new managed-care program that is projected to be rolled out in the state between November and February, if Governor Cooper’s budget is accepted by the Republican majority. Again, 90% of the funding will come from the federal government and 10% from the state hospitals and insurance companies (no money from the state). It’s cruel and criminal that these funds will not be accepted. Call these Republican legislators and demand that they vote for Medicaid expansion today.



Last Tuesday, I joined my fellow House Democrats for a breakfast with the Governor to discuss the [Budget Conference Committee](#)’s work on HB 966, as well as the need for us to remain unified behind important issues. None more important than the expansion of Medicaid.

*\* A Conference Committee is a temporary, ad hoc panel composed of House and Senate Conferees which is formed for the purpose of reconciling differences in legislation that has passed both Chambers.*

North Carolina has participated in Medicaid, a program that provides health insurance to low-income people, since 1970. Since 2014, 37 states under bipartisan leadership, including the District of Columbia, have used a provision in the federal Affordable Care Act to pay for expanded Medicaid coverage for people with household incomes below 138 percent of the federal poverty line, according to the Kaiser Family Foundation, an independent health care research group. Not one of those states has changed its mind.

North Carolina has not expanded Medicaid, and the Republican-led state legislature passed a bill in 2013 that effectively prohibits expansion without the legislature’s approval. Most Democrats see economic reasons to expand the program. Medicaid expansion would not only provide health coverage but it would also provide billions of dollars to North Carolina hospitals, many of whom are struggling to survive.

It makes sense to expand Medicaid since the cost is split between the state and the

federal government, with the federal government currently paying 67 percent.

Also, the federal government has pledged to pick up the bulk of the expansion costs, including 95 percent now and 90 percent after 2020. That means \$5 billion the federal government will put back into North Carolina. Economists and health care experts alike say more money injected into North Carolina would lead to more jobs for its residents.

**The reason to expand is simple:** An influx of new Medicaid money would lead to more spending across the state's economy. It's estimated that expanding Medicaid would bring at least 40,000 jobs to North Carolina.

**States that expanded Medicaid found that their economies were stronger—the lack of expansion in North Carolina has held us back.**

**Supreme Court Redistricting Update**

This week the United States Supreme Court declined to order NC lawmakers to redraw our state's congressional districts. Previously, all nine justices on the Court had ordered North Carolina to redraw its congressional lines because they were racially gerrymandered.

When forced to draw the lines again legislative leaders claimed not to use racial data, instead proudly proclaimed their sole intent was to elect as many Republicans as possible. So another lawsuit was brought and it said the districts were unconstitutional *partisan* gerrymanders. Four justices agreed with that argument (so do I), but five justices said it is not the job of the federal courts to referee partisan disputes and so the districts will not change in 2020.

While the refusal of our highest court to do something about the problem of partisan gerrymandering is disappointing, all of the justices acknowledge some important points. They agree gerrymandering is wrong. They note that non-partisan redistricting ideas like the ones I support are a way to stop gerrymandering. Most importantly, they recognize that state supreme courts have the authority to strike down gerrymandering if the districts violate state law.

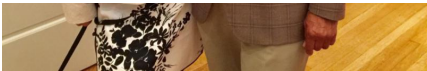
Right now, in North Carolina, we have an ongoing lawsuit in state court that challenges our current gerrymandered districts. Nothing in this week's opinion hurts that case. Hopefully, it will be resolved prior to the 2020 elections.

I was pleased to attend the Asian American and Pacific Islanders Caucus of the North Carolina Democratic Party's "Meet and Greet" on Monday evening. The event was attended by other state legislators and various elected officials.



Members of Asian American Pacific Islanders Caucus of the North Carolina Democratic Party





With Dr. Gracie Galloway  
President of AAPI Democrats



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PEACE,

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