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The latest news for you

Representative Nasif Majeed [majeedla@ncleg.net]

Sent: Friday, July 26, 2019 7:08 PM

To: [Steve Johnston](#)

July 25, 2019

Representative Nasif Majeed District 99 - Mecklenburg County



Updates from Raleigh

Peace. The new budget year has begun and we continue to operate on the previous biennial budget. WHY? Because the Republicans refuse to negotiate a final budget with Governor Cooper.

Two weeks after the Governor vetoed an insufficient budget, the House has failed to find enough votes to override the veto. Fourteen days and yet, Legislative leaders, Senator Phil Berger and Representative Tim Moore, refuse to negotiate with Governor Cooper on a budget that supports Medicaid Expansion, provides fairer raises for teachers and State employees, and includes an Education bond that would put all counties first.

Right now we are holding strong so it looks like the veto is safe, which forces Republican leaders to negotiate with our Governor.

Let's take a look at the comparison of the Governor's proposed budget versus the Republican Budget.



GOV. COOPER'S COUNTEROFFER		REPUBLICAN BUDGET
HEALTHCARE	EXPANDS MEDICAID	AVOIDS EXPANSION
ENVIRONMENT	INVESTMENT OF \$5MILLION	INVESTMENT OF \$500K
TEACHERS	8.5% TEACHER PAY RAISE	3.5% TEACHER PAY RAISE
STATE EMPLOYEES	5% RAISE	2% RAISE
RETIREES	2% COST OF LIVING ADJUSTMENT	1% COST OF LIVING ADJUSTMENT
SCHOOLS	\$3.5 BILLION SCHOOL BOND	\$3.4B PAY AS YOU GO OPTION
TAX BREAK	-NO CORPORATE TAX BREAKS -INCREASE PERSONAL DEDUCTION	-MORE CORPORATE TAX BREAKS -INCREASE PERSONAL DEDUCTION
LOCAL PROJECTS	FUND ALL LOCAL PROJECTS PROPOSED IN CONFERENCE BUDGET	

Support Floods in to Bolster Ruling Invalidating 2 North Carolina Constitutional Amendments



From an article on Southern Environmental Law Center's website: <https://www.southernenvironment.org/news-and-press/news-feed/support-floods-in-to-bolster-ruling-invalidating-2-n.c-constitutional-amendments>

Several weeks ago, the North Carolina NAACP, represented by Southern Environmental Law Center and Forward Justice, urged the North Carolina Court of Appeals to uphold the Wake County Superior Court's February 2019 ruling that two North Carolina constitutional amendment proposals are unconstitutional because they were placed on the ballot by an illegally gerrymandered General Assembly. One amendment would impose a photo ID requirement for voters and the other would lower the state income tax cap.

Support for the North Carolina NAACP's challenge came from a variety of parties include Governor Roy Cooper, the North Carolina Legislative Black Caucus, Democracy North Carolina, and 15 constitutional law professors from North Carolina's six law schools, who all filed *amicus curiae* briefs in the case.

Governor Roy Cooper highlighted the essential role of the courts in maintaining the appropriate balance of power among the three branches of government, and provided numerous examples of the illegal supermajority's attempts to entrench their policy views by passing legislation that, among other things, encroached on the executive branch's power to enforce the laws. According to the governor, "when those efforts were invalidated by the courts, the legislative leadership sought to take advantage of its unconstitutionally gerrymandered supermajority to enshrine in our constitution what it could not achieve through statutory enactments."

The North Carolina Legislative Black Caucus argued that the amendments were intentionally aimed at entrenching the supermajority's illegally-procured power by disenfranchising African Americans long after the illegal gerrymander was remedied. The caucus noted that, unlike a regular law that could be overturned by a simple majority in a newly-constituted General Assembly, the "difficulty of undoing constitutional amendments was a significant part of their appeal" for General Assembly leadership. Furthermore, if the General Assembly had not engaged in the "most extensive unconstitutional racial gerrymander ever encountered by a federal court" – which artificially depressed the number of members of the Caucus in the General Assembly in 2018 – caucus members could have played a critical role in stopping these amendments.

In its brief, Democracy North Carolina emphasized that the voter ID amendment was a classic example of "the most straightforward political entrenchment strategy" of preventing one's opponents from casting ballots, since voter identification laws disproportionately disenfranchise African Americans who are more likely to vote for Democratic candidates.

The 15 constitutional law professors, representing all six public and private law schools in the state of North Carolina, recounted the history and purpose behind the procedures enshrined in the state's constitution for its amendment. The professors then unanimously agreed that the procedures that lead to placing these two amendments on the ballot in 2018 were "fatally flawed," and nothing more than a brazen attempt to exploit the constitutional amendment process for partisan ends.

Oral argument in the case is expected later this year.

ONE YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF FINISH LINE GRANTS

Last year, Governor Cooper announced that more than 1,700 Finish Line Grants have helped community college students complete their training and prepare to enter the workforce. These grants total more than \$1.1 million awarded to date.

Since last summer, Finish Line Grants have been launched at all of North Carolina's 58 community colleges. Students must be 50% of the way through their degree or credential training program to be eligible to receive a grant.

Every community college in North Carolina may participate in the Finish Line Grants program but is not required to do so. Community colleges and workforce development boards will collaborate to apply for funding and will establish a joint process for reviewing funding requests from students. Funds will not be distributed directly to students. For example, if a student applies for a Finish Line Grant to pay for a car repair, the approved payment will go to the auto repair shop.

The maximum grant per student per semester is \$1000. The local community college and workforce development board will decide whether students will be eligible for grants in more than one semester.

Unfortunately, funding for Finish Line Grants are not in the current State Budget proposal. I support expansion of Finish Line Grants program in whatever budget compromise is ultimately adopted. Students who face tough financial situations should have resources to help them get through their difficulties and finish their degrees. That is best way to help their long-term success.

Students interested in applying for a Finish Line Grant can contact their college's designated staff person listed [here](#). To learn more about Finish Line Grants, click [here](#).



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Have a great weekend, PEACE!

View inside House Chambers




Representative Nasif Majeed, District 99 | Legislative Building, 16 W. Jones Street, Room 1008, Raleigh, NC 27601

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