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Rep. Carla Cunningham October 2019 Newsletter

Rep. Carla D. Cunningham [carlacunningham2012@gmail.com]

Sent: Saturday, November 02, 2019 1:56 PM

To: Steve Johnston




Representative Carla D. Cunningham

North Carolina House of Representative

106th District, Mecklenburg County

Carla.Cunningham@ncleg.net



Rep. Carla Cunningham: House Committee Assignments 2017-2018 Session

Appropriations

Appropriations Health and Human Services

Commerce

Energy and Public Utilities

Health

Wildlife Resources

Non-Standing Committee

Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Health and Human Services

Appointments by North Carolina House of Representative Speaker Tim Moore

Minority Health Advisory Council

North Carolina Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

North Carolina Institute of Medicine Legislative Health Policy Fellows Program

October 25 -31, 2019

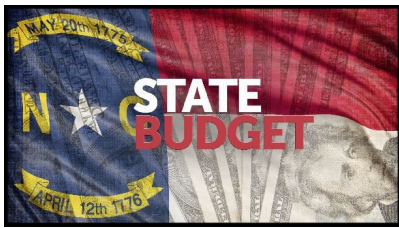
Session Schedule

Regardless of what happens with the budget veto override, Senate leader Phil Berger reiterated Monday that the Senate plans to adjourn Oct. 31 -- but it might not be for long. House Speaker Tim Moore said both chambers are planning a return to Raleigh the week of Nov. 18. Berger told reporters that if a veto override isn't immediately successful, Senate Republicans will move forward with a few additional "mini-budget" proposals this week: Department of Information Technology budget items, teacher pay raises and "perhaps" funding for K-12 school construction needs. "I do not expect any additional new budget items to move through the Senate," he said. Berger also said he wants to attempt a veto override of the "mini-budget" funding Medicaid transformation amid threats that the program could get delayed. Asked if more mini-budgets were possible in the House, Moore would only say "maybe." Moore said the House is also trying to wrap up by the end of the week. (Colin Campbell, THE INSIDER, 10/29/19)

Adjournment Resolution

The legislative break that will begin after today's sessions won't be long. Late Wednesday, Senate Rules Chairman Bill Rabon filed an adjournment resolution, Senate Joint Resolution 694, that calls for the legislature to return at noon on Wednesday, Nov. 13. The November session's agenda will be limited to redistricting matters, including the likely redraw of congressional district maps. Once that work is done, the resolution calls for session to resume on Tuesday, Jan. 14. That session's agenda would be limited to a list of topics, including veto overrides, appointments and nominations, pending conference reports,

Department of Transportation funding issues, healthcare issues, redistricting and budget matters. (Colin Campbell, THE INSIDER, 10/31/19)



State Budget Update

North Carolina remains without a State Budget. Four months ago Governor Cooper and legislative Democrats offered a counterproposal to legislative leaders but they have simply rejected it and declined to negotiate further.

Legislative leaders are now moving scaled-down budget bills through the General Assembly. Some of these bills are non-controversial and have passed into law with bipartisan support. Unfortunately, others continue the policy of advancing corporate tax cuts rather than investing in teacher and public employee compensation.

Here are a few of the important bills that legislative leaders put forward this week:

Corporate Tax Cuts

North Carolina has the lowest corporate tax rate in the country. [SB 578](#) lowers the franchise tax paid by corporations and mostly helps the largest corporations. It reduces revenue over the next four years by over \$1 billion. The bill passed the NC Senate this week and will be in the NC House next week.

Teacher Pay

[HB 377](#) is the Republican teacher pay bill. It funds the “step increases” that teachers are already entitled to by law, but invests no money in teacher pay raises. It also offers no money for pay raises for public school employees like custodians and nurses. Our budget counterproposal does not provide more corporate tax cuts and allows us to offer 5% raises for school employees and average teacher raises of 8.5% over the next two years. The bill passed the NC Senate and will be in the House next week for an up or down vote with no amendments allowed by leadership.

Retiree COLA, Community College, and UNC Employees

[HB 231](#) is the Republican pay bill for UNC and community college employees and the bill providing a one-half of one percent one-time COLA for state retirees. Our counterproposal would double the COLA to one percent each year. It would provide 5% raises for UNC employees and 4% for community college employees – both double what the Republican plan offers. The bill passed the NC Senate and will be in the NC House next week.

State retirees to get 'paltry' bonus checks

WRAL

Cooper talks teacher pay during Dixon Elementary visit

New Bern Sun Journal

Legislators reach compromise on historic rehabilitation tax credits bill; bill goes to governor

Winston-Salem Journal



North Carolina’s Infant Death Rate Reaches Record Low, But Racial Disparities Persist

North Carolina’s infant deaths in 2018 reached their lowest rate in the 31 years that deaths have been tracked. According to the newly released [2018 North Carolina Infant Mortality Report](#), 806 infant deaths happened in 2018 compared to 852 in 2017.

The report reflects that notable disparities persist in infant mortality, particularly among African Americans. The African American infant mortality rate also reached an all-time low, but it is still more than twice the white infant mortality rate.

Research published in 2018 in the American Journal of Public Health found that states that expanded Medicaid saw a greater rate of decline in infant mortality, with greater rates of decline among African American infants.

Commenting on the report, North Carolina’s Secretary of Health and Human Services Dr. Mandy Cohen noted, “It should come as no surprise that a baby’s health is impacted by a mother’s health, reinforcing why North Carolina needs to expand access to affordable health insurance.”

Medicaid expansion remains stalled in the General Assembly.

[Infant survival improved in North Carolina, but black babies are more likely to die](#)
The News & Observer

[Parents react to infant mortality rates decreasing across the state](#)
WITN

[Our View: NC lawmakers ready to end session, leaving Medicaid expansion on table](#)
The Fayetteville Observer



Resources: [Conference Report](#)
All counties would be required to offer early voting on the final Saturday before elections from 8 a.m. until 3 p.m. under the final version of Senate Bill 683. A conference report was posted Monday night for the bill, which addresses early voting schedules and tightens criminal penalties and security measures for absentee ballots. Weekday early voting hours would be 8 a.m. to 7:30 p.m., instead of 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. under current law. The conference report also gives counties an extension on replacing outdated electronic voting machines until July 1, 2020, if they meet certain conditions. Votes are scheduled today in both chambers, as well as on another conference report for Senate Bill 522. (Colin Campbell, THE INSIDER, 10/29/19)

Early Voting
State and national Democrats have filed suit over North Carolina's 2018 early voting law, seeking to restore voting on the Saturday before Election Day and claiming the law "unconstitutionally burdens North Carolinians' right to vote." The lawsuit was filed in Wake County on Monday by the North Carolina Democratic Party, the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee and the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee. It asks the court to declare the law unconstitutional.

Senate Bill 325 was passed in 2018 by the state's Republican-controlled General Assembly. Democratic Gov. Roy Cooper vetoed the bill, but GOP lawmakers easily overrode the veto. In November 2018, Republicans lost their veto-proof majorities in the state House and Senate.

North Carolina allowed voting on the Saturday before Election Day in 2018's general election, but it will not be in place for 2020 if changes are not made. There is a bill (SB 683) that has passed both chambers of the General Assembly that would restore last Saturday early voting permanently, but it has been stuck in a conference committee since early October. The Saturday before Election Day was the most popular day for early voting in 2018, according to the complaint, with more than 135,000 voters (6.9% of all early votes cast) though early voting was open only in the morning in most counties. It is particularly popular, the complaint said, among key parts of the Democratic coalition -- African American voters and young voters.

The lawsuit also attacks another part of Senate Bill 325, known as "The Uniform and Expand Early Voting Act." The law requires that any one-stop early voting sites in a county, outside of the county board office, be open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. in even years. Some counties said the cost of the law prompted them to reduce the number of early voting locations. "This pattern is likely to repeat itself for the 2020 general election," the complaint says. (Brian Murphy, McClATCHY DC, 10/28/19)



Athlete Tuition

The House voted 88-19 in favor of giving in-state tuition to out-of-state UNC System athletes, a change that would save booster clubs and sports programs millions. The News & Observer has reported that the tuition policy was first created in 2005, but it faced opposition from UNC leaders who found that it limited slots available for non-scholarship out-of-state students who pay significantly higher tuition rates. The tuition break was ultimately repealed in 2010 to address budget shortfalls. Rep. Jon Hardister, R-Guilford, argued that the tuition break would help athletic recruitment at smaller schools such as UNC-Greensboro. "We already allow this for academics, and this would create parity between academics and athletics," he said.

But Rep. Pricey Harrison, D-Guilford, said the biggest financial benefits would go to UNC-Chapel Hill, N.C. State and East Carolina University, which already have large endowments for sports scholarships. She proposed an amendment that would limit the tuition break to schools with an endowment of less than \$5 million. Otherwise, she said, the change will cost about \$17 million with about \$10 million going to the bigger three universities. "That is not a good use of taxpayer money," Harrison said. Hardister disagreed, saying the policy needs to be "uniform" across the state. Harrison's amendment failed in a 36-71 vote. But another amendment from Rep. Billy Richardson, D-Cumberland and a supporter of the bill, passed 101-5. It would clarify that the tuition break would not affect a student's FAFSA status for other scholarship benefits -- so an out-of-state student wouldn't be limited to travel expense benefits allotted to in-state students. The amended Senate Bill 144 passed 88-19, with bipartisan opposition from 14 Democrats and five of the most conservative Republicans. The bill now goes back to the Senate for a concurrence vote (the original Senate bill was on an unrelated matter). (Colin Campbell, THE INSIDER, 10/29/19)



[House members wade into nonpartisan redistricting reform as session winds down](#)
NC Policy Watch

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EdNC.org

[Cooper allowing some state workers to use leave time to deal with abusive situations at home](#)
WRAL

[Cooper signs executive order forming 'Governor's Advisory Council on Film, Television and Digital Streaming'](#)
WECT

[Governor forms council to bolster NC film industry](#)
Wilmington Star-News

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[For personal leave, N.C. teachers pay for their own substitutes. Many say that's a problem](#)
Asheville Citizen-Times



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Our mailing address is:
Rep. Carla D. Cunningham
1400 Sansberry Road
Charlotte, NC 28262



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