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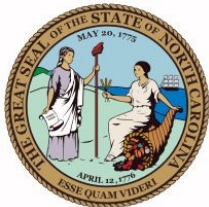
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Legislative Updates from the Office of Rep. Nasif Majeed
Representative Nasif Majeed [majeedla@ncleg.net]

Sent: Friday, June 19, 2020 4:53 PM
To: Steve Johnston

June 19, 2020

Representative Nasif Majeed



Representing District 99
Mecklenburg County



Peace. Happy Juneteenth!! Juneteenth is the oldest nationally celebrated commemoration of the ending of slavery in the United States. Dating back to 1865, it was on June 19th that the Union soldiers landed at Galveston, Texas with news that the war had ended and that the enslaved were now free.

Note that this was two and a half years after President Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation - which had become official January 1, 1863. The Emancipation Proclamation had little impact on the Texans due to the minimal number of Union troops to enforce the new Executive Order. However, with the surrender

of General Lee in April of 1865, and the arrival of General Granger's regiment, the forces were finally strong enough to influence and overcome the resistance.

Later attempts to explain this two and a half year delay in the receipt of this important news have yielded several versions that have been handed down through the years. Often told is the story of a messenger who was murdered on his way to Texas with the news of freedom. Another is that the news was deliberately withheld by the enslavers to maintain the labor force on the plantations. And still another is that federal troops actually waited for the slave owners to reap the benefits of one last cotton harvest before going to Texas to enforce the Emancipation Proclamation. All of which, or none of these versions could be true. Certainly, for some, President Lincoln's authority over the rebellious states was in question. Whatever the reasons, conditions in Texas remained status quo well beyond what was statutory.

Legislative Updates

Bill Advances to Pay Teachers \$350 Bonuses and Step Pay Increases

[SB 818](#) passed the General Assembly this week and heads to the Governor for his consideration. The bill's title describes what it does pretty well: "An Act to Provide for the Compensation of *Certain* Public School Employees." Some public school employees receive money in the bill and some do not.

All teachers receive a \$350 one-time bonus. Some (not all) teachers receive a "step increase" in pay as they move up a year in the established salary schedule. What happens to non-teachers who work in our schools, such as custodians, bus drivers, or teaching assistants? They receive nothing.

Democrats offered two amendments to provide larger bonuses to teachers and to include all public school employees in the bonuses, but the House Republican leadership blocked these amendments and so they failed. I strongly supported both amendments.

I voted No on the bill because the bonuses were too small and are much less than the scheduled pay raises for state employees who work outside of our public schools. We need to do better. If we continue to insult teachers and other public school workers, we will not be able to attract and retain good teachers and workers for our schools.

Every Child's Right to a Sound, Basic Education

North Carolina's courts and state constitution guarantee that every child has a right to a sound, basic education. Today, the truth is we are failing too many of our children particularly those who are African-American, Hispanic, and Native American.

Lack of state funding is a big part of the problem. After ten years of Republican state budgets, North Carolina is now in the lowest tier of state spending per-pupil. Our courts have ordered us to act.

What can we do? House Democrats have introduced two bills that adopt common-sense, proven approaches to make sure every child has the opportunity to succeed.

[HB 1129](#) reforms underperforming schools, allows teacher salary increases based on experience and performance, increases the racial and ethnic diversity of teachers in schools, and rebuilds the state’s capacity to provide turnaround assistance in the state’s chronically low-performing schools by providing funding and funding flexibility.

[HB 1130](#) makes the investments necessary to rebuild the teacher pipeline, train and keep the best teachers in North Carolina, and expand Pre-K, infant-toddler and Smart Start programs that benefit our children early in their development.

The events of the last few months – from COVID-19 to the killing of George Floyd – have laid bare the disparities in our education system. How do we begin to fix these disparities? For our schools and for our students, HB 1129 and HB 1130 are a good place to start.

Education and Transportation Bond Act of 2020

A bipartisan \$3.1 billion [transportation and education bond package](#) passed the NC House on second reading this week and should advance to the NC Senate next week.

The bill originally earmarked \$800 million for public schools and \$200 million for community colleges, but a Democratic amendment boosted that to \$1.05 billion for public schools and \$300 million for community colleges. Additionally, the bill does \$600 million for the UNC System and \$1.15 billion for transportation.

Any bond package approved by the General Assembly would also have to be approved by the voters in a statewide referendum.

With extremely low interest rates and surging unemployment, now is a great time to use bond financing to get moving on critically-need infrastructure projects and create good-paying jobs. The cost of borrowing now is extremely low thanks to low interest rates and North Carolina’s AAA bond rating.

The 2020 Census is Happening Now



April 1 was a reference date, not a deadline to



respond.


The goal of the [2020 Census](#) is a complete and accurate count of everyone living in the United States and its five territories. When you respond count everyone living in your home as of

April 1.


[You can respond online, by phone, or by mail](#)

I will be sending updates as often as I can, but please make sure any information you are getting about COVID-19 is coming directly from reliable sources like the CDC and NCDHHS.

PEACE,



#IWillNotYield



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