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Legislative Updates

Representative Nasif Majeed [majeedla@ncleg.net]

Sent: Monday, June 29, 2020 3:42 PM

To: Steve Johnston

June 29, 2020

Representative Nasif Majeed

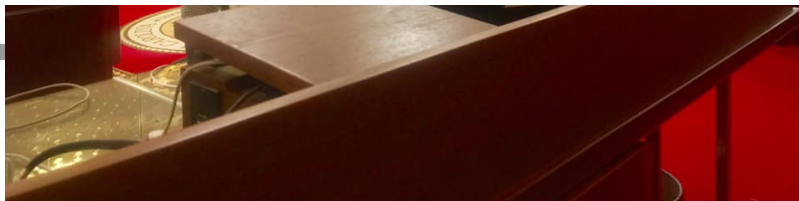
District 99 - Mecklenburg County

LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

PEACE. We had a long day in the North Carolina House of Representatives ending at 3 o'clock Friday morning. It was a marathon for me in my numerous attempts to amend bills from the floor adding my Hate Crimes Protection Act. My amendment would make hate crimes a felony, create a database for hate crime statistics and establish training for law enforcement officers and prosecutors.

While Rome is burning the callous Republican legislative majority is fiddling. Because of tricky parliamentary tactics exercised by the Republicans, I was unsuccessful. Additionally, it was appalling to see Republicans undermining public health by introducing several reopening bills in-spite of DHHS's recommendations not to open bars, gyms and other high risk venues.

When we had a short session break, I ventured to the Old Capitol Building and I was so happy to see where that "Dang Confederate Statue" had been toppled. PEACE



NORTH CAROLINA PAUSES IN SAFER AT HOME PHASE 2, ADDS STATEWIDE REQUIREMENT FOR FACE COVERINGS

Governor Roy Cooper and North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Dr. Mandy Cohen announced last week that North Carolina will remain in Safer at Home Phase 2 for three more weeks. Cooper also announced that face coverings must be worn when people are in public places as officials seek to stabilize concerning trends of increasing viral spread.

Growing evidence shows that cloth face coverings, when worn consistently, can decrease the spread of COVID-19, especially among people who are not yet showing symptoms of the virus.

Based on the metrics laid out in April, North Carolina is evaluating a combination of the data from the following categories that shows the indicators moving in the wrong direction, causing officials to pause in Phase 2.

- North Carolina's syndromic surveillance trend for COVID-like illness is increasing.
- North Carolina's trajectory of lab-confirmed cases starting to level, but is still increasing.
- North Carolina's trajectory in percent of tests returning positive remains elevated.
- North Carolina's trajectory of hospitalizations are increasing, though we have capacity in our healthcare system.

Businesses can download templates for signs on face coverings [here](#).

Read [Frequently Asked Questions](#) about last week's executive Order and mandatory face coverings.

LEGISLATORS, ADVOCATES PUSH FOR NEEDED CHANGES TO NC'S UNEMPLOYMENT SYSTEM

Long before the COVID-19 crisis, North Carolina had the worst unemployment system in the country for unemployed workers. Our system provided too little in compensation, for too short a period of time, to too few unemployed workers.

I am a strong supporter of [House Bill 1075](#) to fix the unemployment system now so jobless workers can weather the current crisis and the next one. Federal pandemic assistance programs are set to expire at the end of July and December, leaving workers and businesses across our state with an inadequate system to stabilize the state's economy through to a full recovery,

particularly given the potential for a second wave of the virus in the fall.

House Bill 1075 would:

- Lengthen the amount of time an unemployed worker could potentially receive compensation to 26 weeks (up from 13);
- Increase the maximum potential weekly benefit to \$450/week (up from a max of \$350/week); and
- Expand when a worker could receive unemployment such as when a spouse relocates for a job.

DEMOCRATS PROPOSE SMALL BUSINESS RELIEF GRANTS TO BUSINESSES CLOSED DUE TO COVID-19

Last week House Democrats proposed a \$50 million grant program to help small businesses like gyms forced to close due to COVID-19. Priority for the grants would be given to businesses with less than 100 employees and those who are not receiving federal small business assistance.

Republican leaders blocked consideration of the amendment, instead, putting in their own, similar amendment in a bill that is currently sitting in a legislative graveyard.

All of our businesses will continue to suffer until the public health situation improves and consumers grow confident enough to resume normal spending. Until then, we should stop partisan political games and provide our closed businesses with funding to help them survive.


DEMOCRATS PROPOSE REQUIRING AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION FACILITIES TO BETTER PROTECT FACTORY WORKERS AS A CONDITION OF RECEIVING COVID-19 FUNDING

North Carolina has more COVID-19 outbreaks at meat and poultry processing facilities than any other state. Despite voluntary guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and NC DHHS, more than 2,000 processing plant workers had tested positive for the virus by the end of May. These workers are disproportionately African-American and Hispanic, a major contributing factor as to the growing spread of the virus in these communities.

HB 1201 spends nearly \$18 million to help small, independent meat processors to increase production. House Democrats put forward an amendment to require the processing plants to comply with safety guidance from federal and state health officials as a condition to receive funding. The amendment died on a tied vote with some Republicans joining Democrats in voting Yes.


After the amendment failed, a compromise amendment was adopted to require the grant recipients to submit to public health officials a plan detailing how they will protect employees from viral spread.

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