

**\*\*\*SPAM\*\*\* Latest Updates from the NCGA**

**From** Sen. Natasha Marcus <natasha.marcus@ncleg.gov>  
**To** <sjohnston@tuesdayforumcharlotte.org>  
**Reply-To** <natasha.marcus@ncleg.gov>  
**Date** 2021-02-26 16:41



## NC Senate District 41 Newsletter

February 26, 2021

### Mecklenburg County Delegation Virtual Listening Session



Please join the Mecklenburg County Delegation to the NC General Assembly **tomorrow, Saturday, February 27th, at 10am** for a Virtual Listening Session. We want to hear from you about what is on your mind, what you would like us to know about your community, and what you would like us to work on. This is your opportunity to talk to us and for us to listen. The majority of our 17 members will be present and ready to take notes as we listen to you.

**Attendees must sign up in advance to join the Listening Session.** You can sign up [here](http://bit.ly/mecklisteningsession)

and access more information on the [Facebook event page](#).

## Survey Results: I Want to Hear From You

Thank you to the 43 people who completed our survey about legislative priorities for the new session of the NCGA. I wanted to share our takeaways with you. The **top 5 policy concerns** you have are:

- Public education funding
- Redistricting and ending gerrymandering
- Healthcare affordability and access
- Protecting and expanding voting rights
- COVID-19 relief

The next top five are:

- COVID-19 vaccination roll out and access
- Gun violence protection
- Environmental protections / climate change action
- Mental health and suicide prevention
- Criminal justice and policing reform

I pledge to work on all of this and more.

We asked the question **“Do you support the Charlotte Moves Task Force transportation plan and the proposed one cent sales tax to support it?”** 42% said Yes, 19% said No, and 39% were undecided.

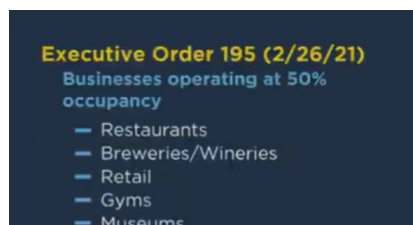
We asked the question **“Do you support returning to in-person school for K-12 public school (under Plan A or B) in February? K-12 staff will be eligible for the vaccination starting on February 24.”** 40% said Yes, 25% said No, and 35% were undecided.

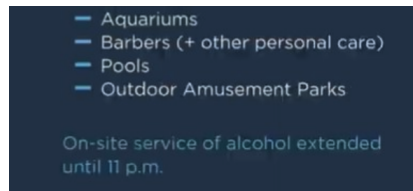
I appreciate that so many people took the time to share their opinions, so I can have a sense of what is on your mind. It helps me represent you better.

**We are still taking responses.** Please take a moment to complete the survey if you have not already.

**Fill Out the Survey Here**

## COVID19 Updates





Governor Cooper's **Executive Order 195 goes into effect** today at 5pm, which will ease and/or lift restrictions in several key areas. The Modified Stay at Home order will be lifted, meaning there will be no more curfew. Many business and venues will be able to expand to 50% occupancy while maintaining health and safety protocols. More information on how this new Executive Order will affect local businesses can be found [here](#). Please remember, easing these restrictions only works if we continue to protect ourselves and others from this virus.

As of this past Wednesday, **COVID-19 vaccines are available for group 1 (Health care workers & Long-Term Care staff and residents), 2 (folks 65+) and some folks in group 3 (anyone working in child care or in PreK–12 schools)**. All other frontline workers from group 3 will be able to get the vaccine starting March 10th. More information on the vaccine can be found [here](#), and resources on how to schedule a vaccine appointment in Mecklenburg county can be found [here](#).

Mecklenburg County Public Health Department is looking for community partners to **host a vaccination clinic** for their members. The County is particularly interested in increasing access for populations that are underrepresented so far, mainly low income individuals and people of color. If your organization can help, submit a request [here](#).

## Increasing Salaries for Community College Staff



Earlier this week I co-sponsored bipartisan legislation to **increase the salary for community college personnel**. [Senate Bill 121](#) appropriates funds to provide a 7% pay increase for employees, including those at Central Piedmont Community College (CPCC). This bill will provide CPCC employees the support they deserve, after two+ years of no raises.

Here is a list of additional bills I co-sponsored this week:

- [Senate Bill 130](#), UNC Building Reserves/Certain Projects (including a Science Bldg at UNC-Charlotte)
- [Senate Bill 143](#), Juneteenth Observance Day in NC
- [Senate Bill 154](#), Fully Fund School Social Workers/Psychologists
- [Senate Bill 165](#), North Carolina CROWN Act

## Colonial Pipeline Updates

Roy Cooper, Governor



Michael S. Regan, Secretary

Release: IMMEDIATE  
Date: February 25, 2021

Contact: Laura Leonard  
Phone: 919-280-0544

### DEQ cites deficiencies in Colonial Pipeline's Comprehensive Site Assessment; directs extension of private well sampling radius

**RALEIGH** – Following an extensive review, the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) has found several deficiencies in the [Comprehensive Site Assessment](#) (CSA), submitted by Colonial Pipeline on Jan. 20, issuing a [Notice of Continuing Violation](#) detailing the actions required to remedy the identified issues.

"We will continue to hold Colonial Pipeline accountable for its actions and response to the largest gasoline spill in North Carolina's history," said Division of Waste Management Director Michael Scott. "The Comprehensive Site Assessment lacks critical information necessary to determine the full extent of the impacts of this event. This information is crucial for the protection of public health and the environment."

Due to the size and scope of the release, estimated in the CSA at 1.2 million gallons, DEQ also has directed Colonial Pipeline to extend residential private well sampling 500 feet beyond the edge of the current sampling radius. The approximately six additional wells in the expanded sampling radius, many of which were tested in the initial response activities, will be sampled once every six months going forward. To date, Colonial has reported no gasoline products in drinking water well samples within the sampling radius.

The [Notice of Continuing Violation](#) identifies 22 corrective actions needed to remedy the CSA deficiencies. By April 26, Colonial must complete further actions, including but not limited to:

- Install at least 12 deep wells to fully define the vertical extent of the contamination;
- Supply free product volume estimate documentation;
- Provide additional subsurface cross-sections to further develop the conceptual site model;
- Describe the waste profile of excavated soil and permanent disposal location;
- Provide a report that identifies the potential for vapor intrusion in residences, buildings and utility conduits;
- Provide a detailed summary about air and noise monitoring sampling efforts; and
- Provide additional information about nearby surface water features, particularly neighboring springs.

In November, [DEQ required Colonial Pipeline to recalculate the estimated release](#) because the amount and continued rate of free product recovery, along with other data submitted by Colonial Pipeline, indicated that the spill is significantly larger than initially reported. As of Feb. 23, 740,368 gallons of free product and 592,037 gallons of petroleum contact water have been recovered and transported off-site for disposal.

DEQ required Colonial Pipeline to submit a CSA as part of its regulatory process to ensure the site is restored to the state's groundwater standards. It identifies and describes the groundwater plume and soil impacts, and it is the next step in ongoing cleanup and remediation efforts. The CSA, and any additional information requested by DEQ, will dictate the direction of the Corrective Action Plan. DEQ must approve the CSA before Colonial Pipeline can prepare and submit its Corrective Action Plan, which will detail Colonial's remedial actions.

Since the spill was reported, DEQ has required Colonial Pipeline to take all appropriate actions to protect the community and will continue to do so throughout the cleanup process. Colonial Pipeline has installed pumps in the wells within the free product area and is actively recovering approximately 3,000 to 5,000 gallons of free product per day. DEQ meets with Colonial Pipeline frequently, and continues to closely monitor the progress of the site investigation and cleanup activities through onsite inspections.

Website: [www.deq.nc.gov](http://www.deq.nc.gov)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/ncdeq](https://www.facebook.com/ncdeq)

Twitter: [@NCDEQ](https://twitter.com/NCDEQ)

1601 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-1601

The North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) issued a **Notice of Continuing Violation (NCV)** earlier this week to Colonial Pipeline. The full press release notes the various actions required to remedy the issues identified by DEQ. DEQ found several deficiencies in the Comprehensive Site Assessment (CSA) submitted by Colonial Pipeline earlier this year, which DEQ required Colonial Pipeline to submit to ensure the site's groundwater standards are restored. The earlier Notice of Violation outlined several issues DEQ required Colonial to address, which as of this week are **still not addressed**. There are also new issues cited in this NCV.

More information about the Huntersville spill and pipeline safety is included [in this article](#) published in E&E News, which includes a quotation from me. NC Policy Watch published a story about the NCV this week as well, which can be read [here](#).

## Updates from Judiciary Committee Meeting This Week



I have recovered from COVID-19 and was back at the Legislature this week for votes and committee meetings. This past Wednesday, members of the Senate Judiciary Committee discussed Senate Bills [43](#) and [50](#).

Senate Bill 43, called Protect Religious Meeting Places, would allow **concealed carry handguns at religious facilities that have affiliated schools**. [I expressed my concerns about the bill](#), specifically the possibility of an individual leaving behind their weapon, which could end up in the hands of school children, and the potential this bill has to allow guns at churches and/or schools that are used as polling locations. I was especially concerned about this due to an incident of voter intimidation in Charlotte in 2020 when a man carrying a gun showed up at a polling site, causing many voters to leave without casting a ballot. To the extent this bill would enable similar situations to happen more frequently, either by design or due to careless drafting, I oppose it.

We also discussed Senate Bill 50, which would make changes to estate planning law. This bill is based on recommendations from The Estate Planning & Fiduciary Law section of the NC Bar Association. I was happy to support this bill in its current form.

[Senate Bill 101](#), **Require Cooperation with ICE 2.0**, was on the calendar as well. **Mecklenburg Sheriff McFadden came to Raleigh to speak against the bill**, but was denied that opportunity when the bill was pulled off the calendar without notice or explanation. I will continue to keep you updated on this bill.

## RBG Act: Removing Barriers to Access Abortion

# REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS ROUND TABLE

Tuesday, March 2nd at 7:00 PM

Register for the virtual event:  
[bit.ly/rprorights](https://bit.ly/rprorights)

**Moderators:**  
Rep. Deb Butler  
Sen. Natalie Murdock

**Discussion Between:**  
ACLU of North Carolina  
A Woman's Choice  
NABAL Pro-Choice North Carolina



Planned Parenthood South Atlantic  
The Center for Reproductive Rights

Next week, I will introduce the **Removing Barriers to Gain Access to Abortion Act (the "RBG Act")**. This bill will eliminate medically unnecessary and politically-motivated barriers that limit access to abortion care in North Carolina. I will be participating in an online press conference to discuss the RBG Act on Monday at noon.

Join my colleagues and me on **Tuesday, March 2**, for a round table discussion about reproductive rights in North Carolina and the RBG Act. Guest speakers will include Rep. Deb Butler, Sen. Natalie Murdock, Nimra Chowdhry of the Center for Reproductive Rights, Susanna Birdsong of Planned Parenthood South Atlantic, Tara Romano of NARAL NC, and Ann Webb of the ACLU of North Carolina. You can sign up to join [here](#).

## Funds to Study and Abate Ocular Melanoma



This week I introduced legislation to provide \$150,000 in funds to the Nicholas School of Environment at Duke University and UNC-Chapel Hill via the Collaboratory to study the high number of ocular melanoma cases in North Mecklenburg County. I hope that the funds from [Senate Bill 137](#) will provide answers for our community about what is causing this dangerous cancer, as it is [still unknown](#).

## A Tragedy in Cornelius

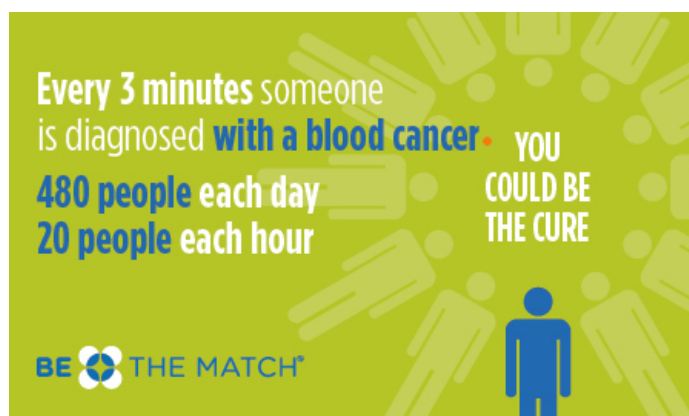


Last week we heard the sad and shocking [news](#) that a young, single Cornelius mother was accidentally shot and killed by one of her five children when he found her gun and

thought it was a toy. Rest in peace, Gabriel "Gabby" Henderson. We mourn for you, pray for your youngest who was injured, and hope all your children will be okay without you.

Let me take this opportunity to say that if you have a firearm in your home, please store it safely at all times. The [Be SMART program](#) from Moms Demand Action is a good resource for **checklists and advice for responsible gun ownership**.

## Increasing Bone Marrow Awareness



I am proud to co-sponsor [Senate Bill 110](#), a bipartisan bill that will designate the month of **November as Marrow Donation Awareness Month**, and direct the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Motor Vehicles to raise awareness through public service announcements about bone marrow donations and registries.

There are thousands of folks across the country with blood cancers who could benefit from receiving a lifesaving bone marrow or peripheral blood stem cell transplant. More information about becoming a donor can be found [here](#). **I am registered with Be the Match and hope you will register too.**

## Affordable Housing in Charlotte



The Urban Ministry Center and the Men's Shelter of Charlotte are joining forces to launch [A Roof Above](#), working together to end homelessness. One of the keys to having sufficient affordable housing is **retaining the "naturally occurring affordable housing (NOAH)"** that is at risk of getting bought up and converted to expensive units. This group of good people have found a way to preserve it, keep it affordable for the long term, and make it profitable for owners. This is really encouraging for Charlotte. If you would like to help people experiencing homelessness, consider supporting A Roof Above.

## Open Enrollment for Health Insurance

Have you lost insurance coverage due to job loss during the pandemic, or need to adjust your coverage for any reason? The Biden administration has **opened the Affordable Care Act marketplace** for three months, through May 15th. More information can be found [here](#).



## Atrium Opens Emergency Medicine Facility at Mt. Island Lake



There is good healthcare news for Mt. Island Lake residents. **Atrium will open an emergency medicine facility** at the intersection of Mt Holly-Huntersville Road and Brookshire Blvd/Highway 16, in northwest Mecklenburg County. This will **expand access to quality healthcare** for residents in this part of Senate District 41 by the end of this year. You can watch video of this morning's groundbreaking ceremony [here](#).

I am hopeful that the proposed Atrium facility in Cornelius will be approved soon, so residents in North Mecklenburg will also have the benefit of closer, accessible healthcare. Our region is growing quickly and its important that healthcare options increase to meet demand.

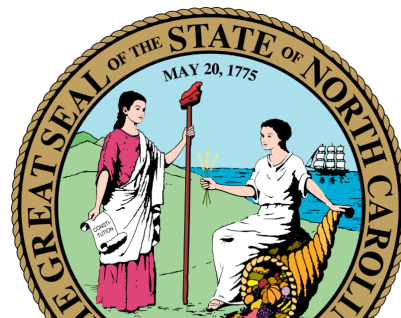
## Contact Our Office

Phone: (919) 715-3050

Email:

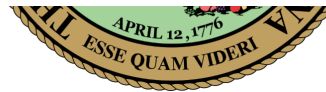
[Natasha.Marcus@ncleg.gov](mailto:Natasha.Marcus@ncleg.gov)

[Jessica.Bolin@ncleg.gov](mailto:Jessica.Bolin@ncleg.gov)





Mailing Address:  
300 N. Salisbury Street,  
Rm. 519  
Raleigh, NC 27603



How can we help you? Let us know and [reach out](#) to our office! We want to hear from you.

Senator Natasha Marcus | [Website](#)



Sen. Natasha Marcus, District 41 | 300 N. Salisbury Street, Raleigh, NC 27603

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