School Reopening Compromise Passes/House Passes Bill to Increase Lawsuits Against Towns & Cities



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School Reopening Compromise Passes

Peace. A bipartisan compromise passed the General Assembly this week to create a path for a safe re-opening of schools, but maintain the ability to return to all-remote learning if the public health situation requires it. School reopening should not be political, nor should it be a one-size-fits-all approach.

<u>SB 220</u> ensures schools will return to in-person learning while requiring necessary safety measures and preserving the ability for public health officials to respond to local emergencies by preventing further outbreaks. I voted Yes.

The legislation says that all K-5 schools must return to Plan A in-person learning and must participate in the Duke University School of Medicine ABC Science Collaborative, follow the DHHS Strong Schools Toolkit, and engage in contact tracing. This will help those students who are struggling with online learning and parents struggling to balance their jobs with the need to provide daily support for their online students.

Local schools have the option of Plan A or Plan B for middle and high school grades, but also must follow the public health guidelines.

All parents have a choice to keep their children in a 100% remote setting. This compromise is an example of how we can work together. It also shows the value of the House Democratic Caucus's work to prioritize teacher and school employee vaccinations.

Bill to Increase Lawsuits Against Towns and Cities Passes NC House

Immigration is a national issue that requires a national solution. This week in the State House we heard <u>House Bill 62</u>, a bill to allow any citizen to sue his local town or city if he feels town or city workers or police officers are not enforcing properly federal immigration law. I voted No.

There are a lot of important issues around immigration: the wellbeing of families and children, jobs and our economy, and public safety. I do not know all of the solutions to these issues, but I do know that making it easier for disgruntled citizens to sue our local towns and cities is not a solution to anything.

We are in the middle of a health pandemic and a time of unprecedented losses of jobs, paychecks, and small businesses. Our focus should be on getting

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NC House Passes Three Gun Bills

Three different gun measures passed the NC House this week.

- · <u>HB 48</u> allows certain emergency medical technician (EMT) personnel to carry concealed weapons. I voted no.
- <u>HB 49</u> allows a concealed carry permittee whose permit lapses to not have to take another firearms safety and training course upon applying for renewal. I voted no.
- <u>HB 134</u> includes the language of HB 48 and HB 49, but also makes it legal to carry a weapon onto school property when that property is used as a church. I voted no.

We need common-sense gun safety reforms, not risky ideas like making it legal to carry a gun into a school under certain circumstances. Something is wrong when House leadership pushes through just as many pro-gun bills as they do COVID relief bills. And there are so many other important issues we need to be working on such as racial justice reforms, gerrymandering reform, or anti-discrimination bills that receive no attention at all.

Vaccine Information

Frontline Essential Workers in Group 3 are now eligible for vaccination.

Group 4 vaccinations will begin March 24 for people who have a medical condition that puts them at higher risk or who live in certain group settings. Higher-risk medical conditions for Group 4 include intellectual and developmental disabilities including Down Syndrome, and neurologic conditions, such as dementia.

State officials continue to prioritize speed and equity in vaccine distribution as eligibility prioritization expands. On February 26, the Kaiser Family Foundation ranked North Carolina as first in the nation for vaccinating the largest share of its 65 and older population.

Detailed information about each vaccine group is online at YourSpotYourShot.nc.gov (English) or yaccunate.nc.gov (Spanish).

<u>One U.S. State's Laser Focus on Data Helps Shrink Racial Vaccine Gap</u> Bloomberg

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