

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

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NC Senate District 41 Newsletter

April 16, 2021

Bills Introduced & Co-Sponsored



I want to provide some updates on bills I have introduced and co-sponsored since my last newsletter. You can find a full list of the of the bills I have supported this session [here](#).

Introduced Bills:

- [S549](#), **Improve Pipeline Safety**. This bill gives authority to the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality to study the condition, safety, and

environmental impact of pipelines that transport petroleum products in and through the State to protect the State's land and waters from pollution caused by leaking or poorly maintained petroleum product pipelines. You can click [here](#) to listen to my interview about this bill with Fox 46. WFAE is also doing a story on it.

- **[S561](#), Increase Funding for Rape Victim Assistance.** This bill increases the maximum amount paid by the assistance program for victims of rape and sex offenses to a medical facility for forensic medical examinations. North Carolina currently has the lowest maximum cap for financial assistance in the country, which results in rape victims having to pay for their rape kit preparation.
- **[S572](#), Coal Ash/Structural Fill Modifications.** This bill ends the unlined and unrecorded use of coal as structural fill and conforms the state's coal ash requirements for use as structural fill to federal EPA standards.
- **[S573](#), Equal Pay Act.** This bill prohibits discrimination in the payment of wages on the basis of the gender of the employee.
- **[S585](#), Funds/Eliminate NC Pre-K Waitlist Statewide.** This bill appropriates funds to eliminate the waitlist for the NC Pre-K program.
- **[S613](#), North Carolina Animal Abuse Registry Act.** This bill creates an animal abuse registry, requires forfeiture of an animal treated cruelly, and prohibits a person convicted of animal cruelty from adopting an animal.
- **[S614](#), Feminine Hygiene Product Sales Tax Exemption.** This bill exempts feminine hygiene products from sales tax due to them being a medical necessity. Thank you to [The Seahawk](#) for writing an article on this important bill.
- **[S627](#), State Surplus Property Computers for Nonprofits.** This bill enables nonprofit entities that refurbish computers for low-income students in the state to obtain surplus computer equipment at low or no cost from the state surplus property agency and the University of North Carolina.
- **[S633](#), NC Healthy Pregnancy Act.** This bill combats pregnancy-related discrimination and reasonable accommodations in the workplace.
- **[S669](#), Enact Medical Cannabis Act.** This bill sets protections for the medical use of cannabis.
- **[S699](#), Polluter Pays.** This bill makes persons causing or contributing to contamination responsible for costs of cleanup and provision of alternative supplies to persons with water supplies affected by such contamination.

Co-Sponsored Bills: Last week was the deadline in the Senate to introduce and co-sponsor bills. So, there are too many to list in the newsletter this week. A full list can be found [here](#). The highlights are:

- **[S451](#), Ban Single-Use and Non-Recyclable Products.** This bill prohibits the use of single-use and non-recyclable products.
- **[S461](#), Fund Health Center Programs/Health Disparities.** This bill funds initiatives by community health centers to target racial and ethnic health disparities.
- **[S485](#), Fund Drug Treatment/Mental Health Courts.** This bill creates and supports local drug treatment court programs and mental health court programs.
- **[S510](#), Release Body-Worn/Dashboard Camera Video.** This bill requires the release of body-worn and dashboard camera video upon request 48 hours after the recording is made.
- **[S518](#), Protecting and Supporting NC's Children.** This bipartisan bill amends abuse and neglect laws to ensure the safety of children.
- **[S523](#), Broadband Affordability Program/Digital Equity.** This bill establishes the NC Broadband Assistance Program to provide funds to eligible low-income families to

make broadband affordable.

- **[S524](#), Small Business Assistance.** This bill creates the Small Business Recovery Program to help small businesses hit by the pandemic with grants.
- **[S546](#), UNC BOG/No Lobbyists/Spouses.** This bipartisan bill prohibits lobbyists and spouses of lobbyists from serving as members on the Board of Governors.
- **[S562](#), HVAC Improvements for Public Schools.** This bill creates the Clean Air Grant Program, which would make improvements to HVACs in public schools.
- **[S566](#), Investing in Law Enforcement.** This bill strengthens policies and standards surrounding law enforcement officers, including support for more training.
- **[S568](#), Expand Minority Business Capacity.** This bill increases the number of minority and historically underutilized businesses used in state contracts.
- **[S576](#), Recovery Rebate for Working Families Act.** This bill reenacts the earned income tax credit.
- **[S588](#), Low-Income Housing Tax Credit.** This bill re-enacts the low-income housing credit.
- **[S602](#), Flood Resiliency and Prevention Act.** This bipartisan bill provides funds for storm debris removal.
- **[S620](#), Military Spouse Appreciation Day.** This bill designates the Friday before Mother's Day as Military Spouse Appreciation Day in North Carolina.
- **[S632](#), North Carolina Momnibus Act.** This comprehensive bill addresses various factors related to maternal and infant health, with an emphasis on Black maternal health. More information on this bill and Black Maternal Health Week can be found [here](#).
- **[S638](#), PFAS Manufacture Use/Sale Ban.** This bill bans the manufacture, use, and distribution of PFAS and PFAS-containing products within the state.
- **[S646](#), Marijuana Justice and Reinvestment Act.** This bill regulates the sale, possession, and use of cannabis in North Carolina and invests the proceeds into the Community Reinvestment and Repair Fund to improve the well-being of those who have experienced a disproportionate negative impact from poverty, unemployment, cannabis prohibition and enforcement, mass incarceration, or systemic racism.
- **[S647](#), End Racial Profiling in Traffic Stops Act.** This bill requires law enforcement agencies to develop policies prohibiting the use of racial profiling in traffic stops.
- **[S656](#), Equity in Justice Act of 2021.** This 32 page comprehensive bill makes various reforms to the criminal justice, policing, and juvenile justice systems based on the recommendations of the Governor's Task Force for Racial Equity in Criminal Justice.
- **[S672](#), DACA Recipients/In-State Tuition.** This bill authorizes North Carolina high schools students who have status under the federal DACA initiative (the "Dreamers") to receive in-state tuition at UNC institutions and community colleges.
- **[S682](#), Citizens Review Board.** This bill creates a model CRB for municipalities to adopt, including the ability to investigate or review allegations of misconduct by law enforcement officers.
- **[S713](#), Go Big for Early Childhood Education.** This bill appropriates funds to provide additional funds to the NC Pre-K Program and the NC Partnership for Children, Inc.
- **[S716](#), Fix Our Democracy.** This bill is a sweeping package of democracy reforms that will expand and protect voting rights for all, end partisan and racial gerrymandering, get dark money out of politics, restore transparency and accountability in our government, and ensure fair and impartial courts.

What I Voted On This Week



Highlights of Some of the Bills on which I voted YES:

- **H73, Temporarily Defer ABC Permit Renewal Fees.** This bill delays the required payment of certain ABC permit renewal and registration fees due to COVID.
- **H138, Adopt Wounded Heroes Day.** This bill adopts April 24th as Wounded Heroes Day in honor of Army Sgt. Michael Verardo.
- **S202, No Lapse, No Problem.** This bill modifies how the DMV takes action when it believes a lapse in financial responsibility has occurred, giving drivers more time to prove that a lapse did not occur.
- **S212, Bennett College Accreditation/Private Need-Based.** This bill ensures that students at Bennett College, an HBCU, can continue to qualify for need-based scholarships.
- **S323, Joint Municipal Power Agencies/Investments.** This bipartisan bill, which I also co-sponsored, authorizes money in certain decommissioning funds established by the NC Municipal Power Agency to be invested through the State Treasurer's ancillary governmental participant investment program. It will help reduce electric rates in towns like Cornelius and Huntersville.

Bills I Do Not Support



I want to take some time to discuss some Senate bills that have received some press attention recently, and explain why I do not support them.

- **S404, A Second Chance for Life.** This bill makes the unsupported claim that a medication abortion can be “reversed” through a hormone injection. This would force doctors to interrupt the procedure midway through to give medically inaccurate information, question patients, and further stigmatize abortion care.
- **S514, Youth Health Protection Act.** This bill would prohibit transgender people

under the age of 21 from receiving essential medical care. The bill also requires public school teachers, counselors, and administrators, to report to parents if a student has “exhibited symptoms of gender dysphoria, gender nonconformity, or otherwise demonstrates a desire to be treated in a manner incongruent with the minor's sex.” SB514 also protects the dangerous practice of “conversion therapy” which my previously-filed bill, [SB392](#), seeks to end.

- [S515](#), **Health Care Heroes Conscience Protection Act**. This bill would allow any medical provider to refuse to do anything they object to on the basis of conscience or religion. Medical providers, assistants, and staff could refuse to schedule appointments and procedures or process insurance paperwork if they had objections to the procedures involved or to the patients receiving care.

If you are interested in LGBTQ policy in North Carolina, you might enjoy [this podcast](#). I am one of the speakers included in the summary of the bills we've filed to promote equality in NC. I admit that my voice cracked a bit, showing my emotion related to the harms caused by conversion therapy.

Updates from Senate Judiciary Committee

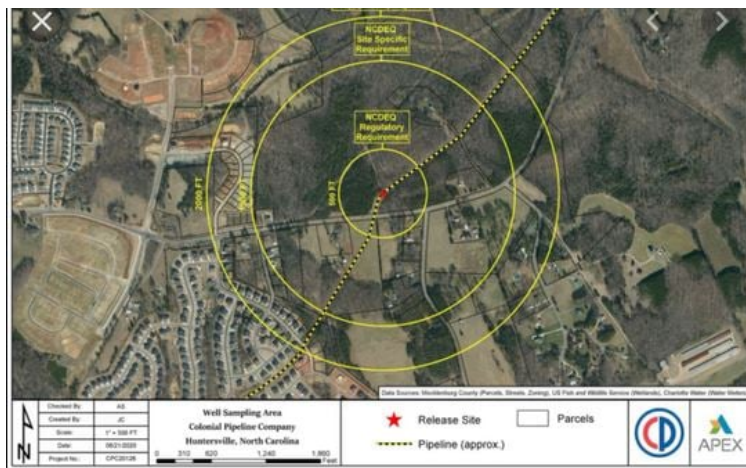


The following bills were discussed in the Senate Judiciary Committee this week. I voted in favor.

- [S183](#), **Begin Modernizing Ignition Interlock Laws**. This bill modernizes the use of vehicle ignition interlock devices to track people convicted of DUI/DWI to ensure they do not reoffend. It also allows offenders to get a restricted license in order to get to work or school. The bill is supported by numerous organizations, including Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD), Governor's Highway Safety Program, NC Conference of District Attorneys, Attorney General's Office, and the DMV.
- [S188](#), **Board of Architects/Interior Designers**. This bill allows for the registration of interior designers and modifies the NC Board of Architecture. This bill will support numerous small businesses across the state.

Colonial Pipeline Update -- More Gasoline Discovered Deeper in the Ground





Earlier this year, Colonial Pipeline began working with DEQ to begin a new technology called OIP, a geological analysis of the soil, to determine the scale of the leak. They received the results of the analysis this week, which shows that while the product is contained in the general vicinity of the leak and previously delineated product area, **there are areas where product is located deeper in the soil than originally anticipated.** Due to this new data, Colonial Pipeline will be revising their Comprehensive Site Assessment report and **we should expect that the estimated number of gallons spilled will increase, even beyond the current estimate of 1.2 million gallons.**

I am in regular contact with Colonial Pipeline and DEQ staff, and will keep you updated as I hear more. **If you want to be added to our listserv to receive updates by email specifically related to the spill, email my office to let us know.**

You can read Colonial's statement about this development [here](#).

Mecklenburg Delegation to the NCGA Hosting Second Virtual Listening Session of the Year

THE MECKLENBURG COUNTY DELEGATION TO THE
NC GENERAL ASSEMBLY

SECOND VIRTUAL LISTENING SESSION OF 2021



Thursday, May 13 | 7-8PM
Sign up here: <http://bit.ly/ncgamecksignup>
*Attendees must sign up in advance to join the Listening Session

The Mecklenburg County Delegation to the NC General Assembly is hosting our second virtual listening session of the year on **Thursday, May 13th from 7-8pm**. The 17-member Delegation wants 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. Attendees must sign up in advance to join the Listening Session. I hope you will join us.

Sign Up for the Listening Session Here

New I-77 Occupancy Detection System

A new **Occupancy Detection System** was recently installed on I-77, which detects if a vehicle has violated the HOV3+ status. If you have three or more occupants, you can ride in the toll lane for free. This new system will allow the operators to know if you have the required number.



Smart Start Legislative Briefing



This week I attended a legislative briefing about Smart Start (for children birth-age 5). The goals this year are to build on our progress and to **strengthen early learning environments**, support families via parent education, improve child health beginning with prenatal, and reward the work of childcare professionals. Current challenges include that operating costs have spiked during the pandemic to make it safe and the average wage of \$12/hr makes it hard to staff centers. More information can be found [here](#). I am a cosponsor of the bill to fund Smart Start, **Senate Bill 464**.

Read the Full Bill Here

First Commercial-Scale Offshore Wind Project in U.S. Announces Contract with Huntersville Facility

US companies and government agencies are finally starting to embrace offshore wind as a viable, renewable energy source. The nation's first major offshore wind project is starting off the coast of Massachusetts. That's great news for the planet and, to makes matters even better, a **local Huntersville company, Southwire, will be a major supplier for the design, manufacturing and installation of the onshore cables for the offshore wind project.** You can read more about this new project [here](#).



NC School Counselor Association's Virtual Legislative Day



This week I participated in the NC School Counselor Association's Virtual Legislative Day. **School counselors briefed legislators** about how their jobs have evolved from trouble shooters for specific students to providers of life skills, coping mechanisms, problem solving and more for the entire student body. They are **masters degree level professionals who do so much good work for students.** Their caseload is very high and they need help, especially in the past year due to the impacts of COVID19.

If this newsletter was forwarded to you and you would like to receive future editions, please subscribe at [this link](#) or email me at Natasha.Marcus@ncleg.gov and let me know you want to subscribe to the biweekly newsletter.



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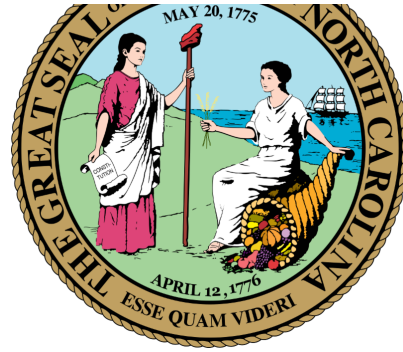
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How can we help you? Let us know and [reach out](#) to our office! We want to hear from you.

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