

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

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NC Senate District 41 Newsletter

June 11, 2021

Join Me for an Online Town Hall This Wednesday

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 16TH | 7-8PM

ONLINE

SENATOR NATASHA MARCUS

TOWN HALL

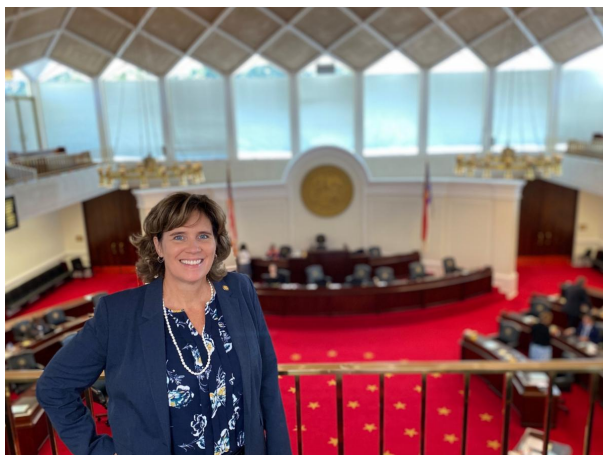
SIGN UP AT: [HTTP://BIT.LY/MARCUSTOWNHALL](http://bit.ly/marcustownhall)

Join me for my second town hall of the year on **Wednesday, June 16th at 7pm**. You can sign up at the link below. I will be joined by special guest Candice Roth, MSN, RN, CENP, the Assistant Vice President of Central & Western Region Operations, Nursing & Quality at the Levine Cancer Institute, who will discuss her work experiences that have led her to

support expanding **healthcare access and closing the coverage gap in North Carolina**. I'll provide updates on the legislative session including my bills, the budget, and redistricting, and answer any questions you may have. **Be sure to sign up in advance to get the log-in information emailed to you.**

Sign Up Here

Updates on Noteworthy Votes



Now that several House Bills have crossed over to the Senate chamber, we're seeing several of them in committees and on the floor. Below is a selection of noteworthy bills I voted on over the past 2 weeks. You can find a full list of bills I voted on [here](#).

Bills on which I voted YES:

- **[HB84](#), Sex Offender Premises Restrictions.** Extends premise restrictions to certain additional sex offenders.
- **[HB128](#), An Act to Reemploy NC's Workforce.** This bill provides an incentive to encourage folks to return to work. It uses the "carrot" approach by offering a \$1,500 bonus for taking a job in the next 30 days and a \$800 bonus for taking a job in the next 30 days. Those who remain unemployed during that time will continue to receive their state and federal unemployment checks. I voted for the bill because it offers folks an additional reason to get a job before all federal unemployment benefits cease in September. Some employers have raised wages and offered signing bonuses and still cannot find sufficient help. This bill could help. That said, this approach seeks to use some of the federal unemployment dollars to fund the bonuses, which is currently prohibited by federal law. It's unlikely Congress will change that rule, so the bill is likely moot. In addition, the bill would have been better if it included our [proposed amendments to raise the minimum wage](#) and provide a holiday for employers from having to pay unemployment taxes (given the system's surplus balance of \$2.77 billion). Those amendments were rejected.
- **[SB257](#), Medication Cost Transparency Act.** Requires pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs) to be licensed, adds consumer protections, establishes rules for claim overpayments and PBM networks, and increases the Commissioner's ability to take

enforcement action against PBMs.

- **SB722, Revise Municipal Redistricting/Census.** Addresses the problem created by late census data, which will delay when voting districts can be reapportioned to meet constitutional requirements. **The bill gives municipalities like Charlotte and school boards like CMS the authority to delay their elections** until the census data is available. Municipalities that do not elect members by districts, like Huntersville, Cornelius and Davidson, are not impacted by this bill. Those elections will be held in 2021, as usual.

Bills on which I voted NO:

- **HB334, JOBS Grants and Tax Relief.** Makes various changes to the North Carolina tax code and how NC will spend federal stimulus money. While there are some good provisions in the bill (like a 0.26% reduction in the individual income tax rate), there were too many unacceptable provisions, including **lowering and then completely eliminating the state corporate income tax.** (Note that our corporate tax rate is already among the lowest in the country at only 2.5%.) The bill sponsors rejected our caucus's amendment to remove the corporate tax giveaways, in order to invest that revenue in our childcare system. HB334 also allows the largest companies to pay less in franchise taxes. I also disagree with the unfair way the bill will distribute a new round of relief checks: businesses that got help previously will automatically receive another check (without having to demonstrate need), and businesses that did not get help previously will be blocked from getting a check (which leaves many small, women and minority-owned businesses out, again). **If HB334 becomes law, the state will lose about \$2.2 billion in revenue annually,** which we need to fund education, [the judicial system](#), broadband, affordable housing, green energy initiatives, cancer cluster research, infrastructure and more. You can read more about the bill [here](#).
- **HB453, Human Life Nondiscrimination Act/No Eugenics.** Prohibits abortion unless a physician has confirmed the abortion is not being sought because of the actual or presumed race or sex of the unborn child or the presence or presumed presence of Down syndrome. This bill was heard in Judiciary Committee, where I raised questions about how this bill creates a new government-mandated requirement for doctors to ask a pregnant person why she wants to end her pregnancy. If any of her reasons include one of the reasons the politicians have decided are prohibited, she cannot have the procedure. **It interferes in that very important, private conversation between a woman and her doctor and sets a dangerous precedent for allowing politicians to decide whether a woman's reasons for her decisions are acceptable.** I also raised a question to the bill sponsor: What if a woman has multiple reasons for choosing abortion, which is often the case. What if, for example, she has a fetal diagnosis of Downs syndrome and is pregnant by rape and wants to end her pregnancy for both of those reasons? The bill would deny her that right. The bill sponsor confirmed that is his intention and declined to amend it to even address that situation.
- **SB719, Confirm Dionne Delli-Gatti/Sec. of DEQ (amended to not support her confirmation).** Last week we saw the derailment of an imminently qualified nominee to lead the NC DEQ. [Acting Secretary Dionne Delli-Gatti](#) has been leading the agency for 4 months on an interim basis and was nominated by Gov Cooper to officially take on the role of Secretary. She's a US Air Force veteran, with significant experience at state and federal environmental agencies. After a two-hour confirmation hearing, during which she answered all the questions asked,

legislators of both parties expressed their favorable opinion of the nominee. She has the **enthusiastic support of both environmental advocates and our state's major energy companies**, including Duke Energy. All signs pointed to an easy confirmation, until something changed in the final two weeks and suddenly Republican legislators decided to block her nomination. This rejection denied Governor Cooper the right to decide who will lead the NCDEQ. We fought hard, pointing out the injustice at play here. Nevertheless, the final vote was 26:20. You can read more about Sec. Delli-Gatti, the controversy, and the new job she will fill instead [here](#) and [here](#).

Happy Pride Month from the NC Senate



Happy Pride month! As a state Senator, I feel it is my duty to **fight for the equality, dignity, and opportunity of all LGBTQ+ North Carolinians**. Five years after the discriminatory HB2 passed, I believe we are making serious strides in the right direction with bills I filed like [SB396](#), the Equality for All Act, which will establish comprehensive statewide nondiscrimination protections for North Carolinians from all walks of life. I am also proud to have introduced [SB392](#), the Mental Health Protection Act, which will help stop the dangerous anti-LGBTQ+ practice of conversion therapy for minors. Everyone should be able to live in public as their authentic selves, and I am proud to put North Carolina on the path towards embracing the diversity and value of all people.

Updates from Senate Judiciary Committee



Below are some of the bills that we discussed in Judiciary Committee these past 2 weeks:

- **HB64, Government Transparency Act of 2021.** This is the PCS version of **SB355**, which creates a new requirement that state government employers make public a general description of personnel actions, including reasons for terminations, demotions, promotions, transfers, etc. This bill presents a conundrum. It is supported by lobbyists for the news media, who want access to this information about all state employees. While I see the value of transparency in certain cases, particularly concerning "bad apple" employees with power, lobbyists for teachers and other state employees argue that the bill is too broad, could violate due process and privacy rights, and will discourage people from taking jobs with the state. **If you have thoughts about this bill, please let me know. It's up for a vote on Monday at 7pm.**
- **HB341, Protection from Online Impersonation.** Creates a new crime and new civil cause of action for online impersonation that defrauds another person.

Updates from Senate Redistricting and Elections Committee



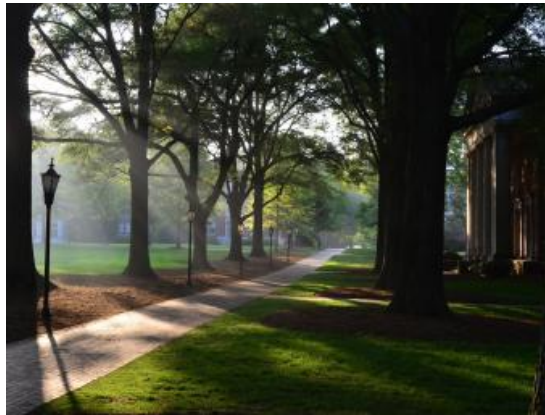
Below are some of the bills that Senators discussed in Redistricting and Elections Committee these past 2 weeks:

- **SB326, Election Integrity Act.** Changes election law to require that absentee ballots be received at the county board of elections by 5pm on Election Day, regardless of postmark, in order to be counted. I raised many concerns about this bill during committee, especially that voters will be at the mercy of the USPS to deliver their ballot on time. Mail delays and other factors will cause **many valid ballots to arrive after Election Day and they will be thrown in the trash.** This bill will lead to **bipartisan voter disenfranchisement, not election integrity.** You can read more about the bill and see my interview about it [here](#).
- **SB724, Expand Access to Voter ID & Voting.** Creates a portal for visually impaired people to vote online (a necessary improvement), sets up a new way to register online that will actually be worse than what we have now (an unnecessary move that sounds good but will lead to bad outcomes), and mentions that it is the intent of the General Assembly to fund a program to identify and assist voters needing photo ID (no specifics provided). If this bill wants bipartisan support, significant changes will have to be made, especially to the online voter registration section because the Board of Elections does not have the technology or data that is necessary to run OVR as prescribed in SB724.
- **SB725, Prohibit Private Money in Elections Admin.** Prohibits the State Board of Elections, county boards of elections, and county boards of commissioners from

accepting private monetary donations, directly or indirectly, for conducting elections or employing individuals on a temporary basis. Ninety-seven counties across the state depended on additional funds in 2020 in order to conduct a safe and secure election. While I agree that private foundations should never be allowed to influence the outcome of our election (and there is no evidence that they did in 2020), I am concerned how this bill would impact future elections if counties cannot afford to run elections without these donations.

Several pro-democracy and voting rights advocates came to the hearing to speak against these three bills. Unfortunately, the Chair only allowed three or four of them to speak, before ending the meeting. The John Locke Foundation spoke in favor of the bills.

Protecting Trees



Over the past few weeks I have received emails from constituents and seen local news coverage about [HB496](#), **Property Owners' Rights/Tree Ordinances**. This problematic bill would prohibit local governments from adopting ordinances regulating the removal of trees from private property without the General Assembly's express authorization. **I do not support this bill** and will vote against it if it comes to a vote in the Senate.

In addition, I am a **co-sponsor of two bills that would accomplish the exact opposite of HB496**. I filed [SB245](#), a local bill that will allow the Town of Davidson to preserve its trees, and co-sponsored [SB436](#), which authorizes all local governments to adopt ordinances to preserve trees.

Meeting with NC Forever on Flooding and Resiliency

Last week I met with NC Forever, a coalition of businesses and nonprofit organizations that are committed to the **conservation of our state's natural resources**. We discussed flooding and resiliency efforts within Mecklenburg county. I am working to reinstate the authority of local governments to address



stormwater remediation on redevelopment projects. This authority was removed by a bill that passed in 2018 and is causing negative impacts on water quality in Mecklenburg County.

Mecklenburg Delegation Meeting with Central Piedmont Community College President



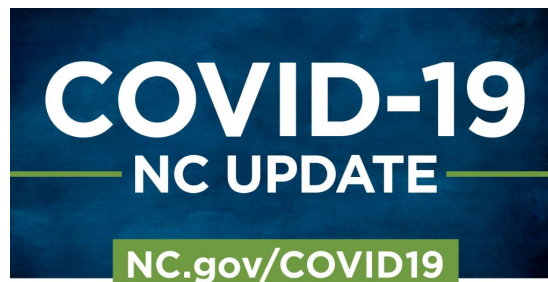
As Chair of the Mecklenburg Delegation, I led a meeting last week with Dr. Kandi Deitemeyer, President of Central Piedmont Community College. **CPCC is an important resource for the Mecklenburg community and the many people they educate and prepare for various jobs.** Unfortunately, salaries for community college employees across the state are quite low and have been overlooked for several years. Low pay makes it hard for colleges to compete with the private sector, particularly in the IT field. **CPCC should not have to struggle for the up to date IT systems and professionals it needs to educate our community.** To help change this, I have co-sponsored [SB121](#), which will raise community college employee salaries across the state. I also co-sponsored [SB604](#), which will create grants to remove nonacademic barriers to student success such as food and housing insecurity.

Press Conference for Immigrants' Rights



Advocates from El Pueblo, the ACLU, North Carolina Asian Americans Together, and Student Action with Farmworkers came to the General Assembly this week to advocate for immigrant rights. They held a press conference to speak against [SB101](#) (which I spoke out against in Judiciary Committee earlier this session), Cooperate with ICE 2.0, and in favor of [SB672](#), **DACA Recipients/In-State Tuition**, of which I am a co-sponsor. I enjoyed seeing them in the building and appreciate their advocacy.

COVID19 Updates: \$4M Summer Cash and College Tuition Drawings



As part of North Carolina's effort to bring summer back with safe, effective and free [COVID-19 vaccines](#), Governor Cooper announced **\$4 Million Summer Cash and College Tuition drawings** to motivate those who have not yet been vaccinated -- and thank those who have. Four vaccinated North Carolinians 18 and older will win \$1 million each and four North Carolinians ages 12 to 17 will win tuition for post-secondary education.

North Carolinians 18 and over who have **received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine will be automatically entered** into four drawings for a chance to win a \$1 million cash prize. Youth between the ages of 12 and 17 who have received at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine will be automatically entered into four drawings to win \$125,000 towards post-secondary education.

The \$4 Million Summer Cash and Summer Cash 4 College Drawings will run from **June 21 through August 9**. Learn more about the drawings at SummerVaxCash.com.

Meeting with Community Leaders to Discuss Public Safety in Charlotte

Mecklenburg Delegation members in the I-85 and Sugar Creek area met to discuss the **ongoing issues of crime in the area**. This issue has persisted for over a decade due to it being a high traffic area that is also surrounded by hotels. We met with community leaders and nonprofit organizations to see how the police, local government, and the state can **work together to promote public safety**.



HOPE Program Application Period Open



The **N.C. Housing Opportunities and Prevention of Evictions (HOPE) Program** is **open** for a second application period to **assist very low-income renters that are experiencing financial hardship due to COVID-19**. The program helps prevent evictions and utility disconnections to promote housing stability during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

To find out more about the program, learn about eligibility requirements, **apply** and see a list of frequently asked questions, go to the **HOPE program's website**. Mecklenburg County's Emergency Rental Assistance Program is being administered by Dream Key Partners. Residents can access the services at **www.rampclt.com**. They are handling the city and county programs.

Paid Leave for All: Letter to Congressional Leadership

PAID LEAVE for ALL

All working people should have the ability to take paid family and medical leave when they need it. To support paid leave legislation at the federal level, I have signed on to [Paid Leave for All's](#) letter to Congressional leadership. To fight for this right in North Carolina, I have co-sponsored [SB648](#), which will provide eight weeks paid parental leave to all state employees. To further support working families in our state during these difficult times, I also co-sponsored [SB576](#), which will reinstate the earned income tax credit. Our state is at its strongest when we support each other through hard times, and these bills will help us do that.

Economic Impact Study with the Charlotte Regional Business Alliance



I participated in a stakeholder focus group as part of the Transformational Mobility Network (TMN) economic impact study with the Charlotte Regional Business Alliance. The meeting was conducted by leaders at NC State's Institute for Transportation Research and Education. We had a guided discussion on how mobility plans impact our region and how we should evolve. We discussed **various transportation issues affecting the district, including I-77, the Red Line commuter rail, and greenways/trailways.**

Meeting with Greater Charlotte Apartment Association



Last week I met with the Greater Charlotte Apartment Association (GCAA) for their lobby day. The GCAA, which is a part of the Apartment Association of NC, covers an eleven-county footprint and represents over 166,200 apartment units and 1,220 apartment communities, suppliers, and owner management companies. We discussed **changes to landlord and tenant laws, affordable housing needs across the district, and the impacts of COVID-19 on the industry.**

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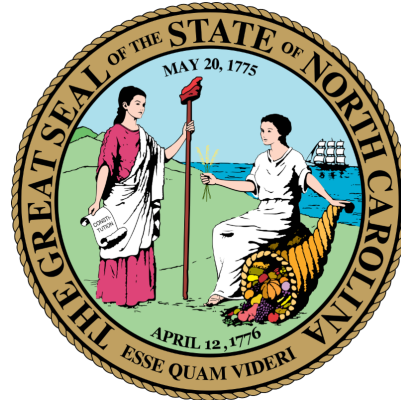
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How can we help you? Let us know and [reach out](#) to our office! We want to hear from you.

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