

*****SPAM*** For Immediate Release**

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From the Office of Sen. Joyce Waddell, NC Senate
Mecklenburg County

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Greetings:

Long Session for the years 2021-2022 is almost complete. The Senate budget has passed and will now go to the House of Representatives for a vote. Committee meetings are continuing to take place to complete the long session. For the next few weeks we will be wrapping up the business of long session and I look forward to the work to be done in my district.

Sincerely,
Joyce Waddell

Senate Budget

Senate leadership pushed their North Carolina government budget proposal through the chamber's largest committee Tuesday, rejecting critiques that the measure spends too little now and serves as a vehicle to sting the GOP's political rivals. The measure, which also allocates \$5.2 billion in federal COVID-19 relief aid for business grants, state employee bonuses, broadband expansion, and water and sewer

projects, cleared the appropriations panel after less than three hours of debate and a few amendments. The plan remains on track for passing the full Senate by Friday — another step toward enacting a two-year budget.

GOP leaders highlighted plans within the measure to cut income taxes more deeply and fund more future capital projects than originally envisioned — the result of an unexpected surge in current and projected tax collections through mid-2023.

But those in the Senate minority and their allies call the GOP budget a wasted opportunity to spend more on immediate education and health care needs — especially teacher pay — as many in the state are still struggling to rebound from COVID-19 restrictions. “This pandemic has highlighted existing inequities, and now we have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to repair these faults while investing in the future of our state,” Senate Minority Leader said in a prepared release. Senator Waddell brought forth an amendment during debate on the Senate floor regarding increased COLA for retirees. The amendment was tabled by Republican leadership and not voted upon.

The 400-plus-page bill also contains several policy changes that critics argue have nothing to do with spending and should be left out. Many of these “special provisions” would weaken or roll back powers of two Democrats — the Governor and the Attorney General — and the State Board of Elections, which is controlled by Democrats.

The measure incorporates a separate Senate bill approved in April that would require governors to obtain approval of the Council of State and ultimately the legislature to extend executive orders declaring a state of emergency — like one the Governor still has in place for the pandemic. Republicans have said Cooper holds too much unilateral power.

Another item would require the Attorney General to get Council of State approval before formally getting involved in litigation within out-of-state or federal courts in which the state is not already specifically named. Some Republicans have said the Attorney General spends too much time and state money on multistate litigation initiated with other Democratic attorneys general.

A spokesperson from the Attorney General's office was still reviewing the budget proposal but the provision appears to violate the state constitution. The attorney general is a constitutionally named officer elected statewide, bringing with it wide latitude.

Another special provision in the budget measure — also already approved separately by the Senate — would require legal settlements involving constitutional challenges of state law to be backed by the Senate leader and House speaker before they can be entered. The Attorney General and the state elections board entered a legal settlement last fall with a labor-affiliated group that increased the number of days mailed absentee ballots could be received after Election Day and still count. Angry Republican legislators, left out of those negotiations, argued the settlement overturned state law, which allows a three-day grace period.

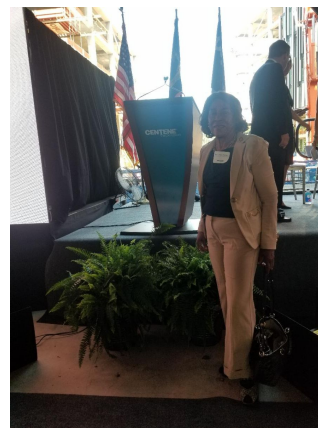
A new item within the budget would direct the elections board division charged with investigating elections and campaign finance to be transferred to the State Bureau of Investigation. One republican Senator said it is better for “a completely neutral party” like the SBI performing investigations rather than investigators that can be subject to influence by the officially partisan board. The division investigators are not political appointees and are specifically trained on elections matters, while the SBI has other competing priorities, the board wrote in a document addressing the provision.

Business Grants

The Senate’s budget includes the chamber’s proposed \$1 billion “Job Opportunity and Business Saving Grant Program,” which would use federal American Rescue Act money to automatically send a check to every business that received one of several COVID-19 relief grants, including PPP loans or other state and federal grants. It is one of several business and workforce development initiatives included in the Senate’s spending plan. The grants would be equal to 7.5% of the amount of aid the business previously received, with a cap of \$18,750. It is an alternative to the House’s plan for tax deductions on PPP loans.

The Senate budget also includes \$20 million for the “ReToolNC” program, which has been used in the past year to provide grants to minority and women-owned businesses. It includes several allocations to boost community college efforts in preparing students for in-demand careers. About \$5.2 million would help community colleges develop new programs in those fields that “require significant start-up funds,” according to a news release. To attract more students to those workforce development programs, the Senate wants to spend \$3 million per year on grants of up to \$750 for each student “pursuing

workforce credentials.” Community college students needing childcare to pursue their studies, there is a \$1.5 million allocation for childcare grants.



Senator Waddell attends Centene's Charlotte Campus Dedication Ceremony on June 21. Centene is the largest Medicaid managed care organization in the U.S. They are also the national leader in managed long-term services and supports, and the number one carrier in the nation on the Health Insurance Marketplace.

Teacher Prep

North Carolina will try to address the national teaching shortage by allowing people who complete just one college semester of teacher preparation classes to become part-time high school instructors. The Governor announced Monday that he signed legislation that allows people to become a high school “adjunct instructor” if they teach classes related to their bachelor’s degree or graduate degree. These adjunct instructors would only have to complete at least one semester of courses concentrating in teacher preparation at a community college.

Senate Bill 582 had been unanimously passed by the General Assembly. Lawmakers had talked about the value of bringing people like doctors, pharmacists and accountants into the classroom to work with students. “The best teachers that I had at the high school and college level were folks that came out of the industry with real-life experience,” said one of the bill’s primary sponsors, said at a legislative committee meeting this month.

The new law will make it easier for non-educators who don’t want to go through the “lateral entry” process of getting a license to become a teacher. Adjunct instructors would only be working part-time — up to

20 hours a week or for less than six months at a time — so they wouldn't need a teaching license. Instead of taking a full load of classes, they would only need to complete one semester, or about three teacher preparation classes. Schools would have to train adjunct instructors in areas such as educating students with disabilities and how to positively manage student behavior. They would also need to pass the same background checks as licensed teachers. The North Carolina Association of Educators took a neutral position on the legislation.

Poverty Campaign

The Rev. William J. Barber II took his national movement back to its Raleigh roots Monday evening with a rally at Halifax Mall kicking off a yearlong campaign meant to remake America so that it serves the poor and immigrants as well as the wealthy. “We have work to do,” he reminded about 300 attending the rally in person, along with thousands watching online. “Especially when so many things are working to the contrary of what we know is right.” As he has before, the Reverend cited a litany of injustices he said are caused by systemic racism and intractable poverty, starting with ongoing efforts by legislators in various states that would restrict voting.

The rally launched what the National Poor People's Campaign said would be a year's worth of events leading up to a mass march on Washington in June 2022. Barber is a co-founder of the National Poor People's Campaign along with the Rev. Dr. Liz Theoharis, who also spoke at the Raleigh event.

More than a dozen speakers were on the slate for Monday's rally, including the US President, who sent a recorded speech that was played at the gathering. The President expressed his solidarity with the Poor People's Campaign, saying, “We are all created in an image of God, and we all have the right to economic opportunity, to health care, to clean air, water, and the right to vote. With our advocacy, we're translating our shared prayers into policy. and building our economy from the bottom up and the middle out.” he said it won't be enough to build back from the pandemic, which has been especially hard on the poor, analysts say. “We have to build back better than before, with millions of jobs that deliver dignity, a \$15 minimum wage, affordable housing, universal pre-K, tuition-free community college. We need to build worker power through organization and collective bargaining, and heed the cry for racial justice some 400 years in the making.”



Senator Waddell interacts with participants of the 'Poor People's Campaign' as Rev. Barber presents his message.



Senator Waddell interacts with the crowd while 'Poor People's Campaign' supporters the speakers with signs and posters.

The Senate has voted on the 2021-2022 budget for North Carolina, and it has been sent to the House of Representatives. After the House votes on the budget, the Senate and House appoints members of a select committee to come to a consensus in order to create a balanced budget. Alongside the Senate and the House of Representatives, the Governor's office has some input the budget process. Once complete, the two chambers will vote to complete the process.

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