

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



From Sen. Joyce Waddell <joyce.waddell@ncleg.net>
To <sjohnston@tuesdayforumcharlotte.org>
Reply-To <waddellja@ncleg.net>
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From the Office of Sen. Joyce Waddell, NC Senate
Mecklenburg County

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday, October 4, 2021

CONTACT: Sen. Joyce Waddell
(919) 733-5650
Joyce.Waddell@ncleg.net
<https://joycewaddell4nc.com/>



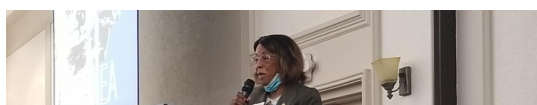
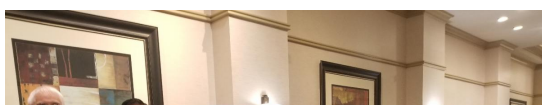
Greetings:

Our work never seems to be complete, because our communities are always in need of support, service, and care. Providing service to our great state is one of my greatest accomplishments, and I enjoy every minute of it. Our state has overcome many challenges and has risen to each challenge with grace. If we continue to work together, there is nothing we cannot accomplish.

The General Assembly is continuing to finalize a new budget and the redistricting committee is completing the new districts for North Carolina.

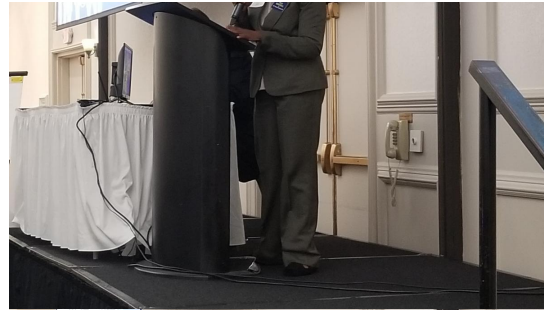
Joyce Waddell

Working in the Community





Senator Waddell and the Mecklenburg Delegation shared legislative information at the NC Retired Governmental Employees' Association Meeting



Senator Waddell gives brief remarks at the NC Retired Governmental Employees' Association Meeting

Mitchell Community College Redistricting Meeting



Senator Waddell listens to concerns about redistricting from attendees of the redistricting meeting



Central Piedmont Community College Redistricting Listening Session

Senator Waddell attends a listening session to hear the concerns of the community for Redistricting in Mecklenburg

*County at Central Piedmont
Community College*



Community Clothing Drive

Senator Waddell assists with a community clothing drive sponsored by the Charlotte Mecklenburg Chapter of Las Amigas, Inc.



**McColl Center for Art
Tour**

Senator Waddell and the Mecklenburg Delegation toured the McColl Center for Art and discussed future arts projects



COVID Deaths

September is now North Carolina's third deadliest month of the COVID-19 pandemic, with deaths spiking since a summer surge in

cases due to the delta variant. So far in September, 1,294 people in North Carolina have died due to the virus, according to the latest reporting from the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services. Only January and December — 3,024 and 2,090 deaths respectively — have higher monthly death tolls. And the increase in deaths over the past several weeks has been stark.

The delta variant is a mutation of the coronavirus that's more than twice as contagious as the original strain, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. More than 97% of sequenced virus in North Carolina is delta, latest CDC data show. In August, 1,169 people died due to the disease, far outpacing the 379 deaths in June and July combined.

A DHHS analysis in late August found people who are unvaccinated are more than four times as likely to catch COVID-19 and 15 times more likely to die from it. As of Monday, 53% of all North Carolinians and 62% of those eligible, ages 12 and up, are fully vaccinated. Nationally those rates are 55% and 65% respectively.

DHHS reported 13,488 new COVID-19 cases over the weekend. Over the past week, the state has reported an average of about 5,100 new cases per day. That rate has dropped from a week ago when it was over 6,100. Statewide, there are 3,012 people hospitalized with COVID-19. Of those, 870 are being treated in intensive care. Those numbers have dropped in the last week from 3,453 and 903 respectively.

Among the tests reported Saturday, the latest available data, 9% were positive. That is above the 5% or lower that the state wants, but it has dropped from 12.4% reported earlier this month. COVID-19 metrics reported each day by DHHS are preliminary and subject to change as more information becomes available.

Nutrition Services Benefits

Households enrolled in North Carolina's Food and Nutrition Services program are about to see an increase in their benefits. The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services announced that FNS benefits will increase 25% as of October 1. This comes following a congressionally mandated re-evaluation of the SNAP food stamp program to determine if the benefits align with the current cost of a nutritionally adequate diet.

According to an NCDHHS news release, this is the largest increase in

the program's history, with the average monthly per-person benefit rising from \$121 to \$157. It's also the first benefit revision since 2006. The 25% increase will be permanent. A temporary 15% increase created during the COVID-19 pandemic will end on September 30. More than 1.6 million people are enrolled in the FNS program in North Carolina.

Leandro Funding

Over the years, the state Supreme Court has ruled that the state Constitution guarantees every child “an opportunity to receive a sound basic education” and that the state was failing to meet that obligation. In June, the judge approved a 7-year plan agreed to by the State Board of Education, the Governor's Administration and the plaintiffs. The \$5.6 billion plan includes things such as a 5% pay raise for teachers, more funding for low-wealth school districts and expansion of the NC Pre-K program.

The General Assembly is not officially a party in the lawsuit. The judge has said that the legislative branch is also bound to follow the state Constitutional mandate to provide students a sound, basic education. The Leandro plan calls for \$690.7 million in new education funding this year and \$1.06 billion next year. “We must increase funding for our public schools,” said the Governor, who fully funds the first two years of the plan in his budget proposal. “Don't let anybody tell you that we can fix things without doing that. We've got to invest more.”

There are many activities taking place in our community, enjoy as many as you can, but take precautions. Outdoor activities are much safer.

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Sen. Joyce Waddell, District 40 | 1113 Legislative Building, Raleigh, NC 27601

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