

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



From Sen. Natasha Marcus <natasha.marcus@ncleg.gov>
To <sjohnston@tuesdayforumcharlotte.org>
Reply-To <natasha.marcus@ncleg.gov>
Date 2021-11-05 17:57

Natasha
MARCUS
NC Senate District 41



NC Senate District 41 Newsletter

November 5, 2021

Noteworthy Votes



Below are a few noteworthy bills I voted on over the past week. You can find a full list of bills I voted on [here](#).

Yes votes:

- [HB814](#), **Neighborhood Occupantless Vehicle**. Bipartisan bill that defines

neighborhood occupantless vehicle as a type of fully autonomous vehicle used to transport goods without a human occupant and authorizes its operation on highways with certain restrictions and equipment requirements.

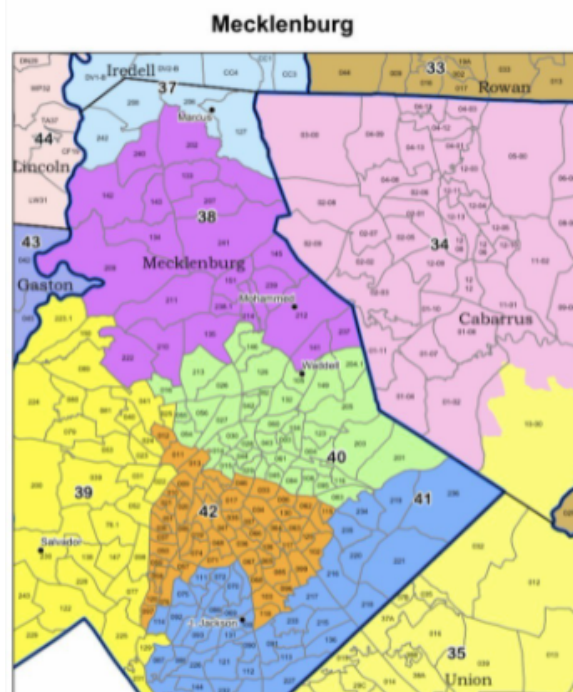
No votes:

- **SB739, Senate Redistricting Plan 2021/SBK-7.** An act to realign the North Carolina State Senate districts following the return of the 2020 Federal Decennial Census. More details below.
- **SB740, Congressional Redistricting Plan 2021/CST-13.** An act to realign the North Carolina Congressional districts following the return of the 2020 Federal Decennial Census. More details below.
- **HB976, House Redistricting Plan 2021/HSA-9.** An act to realign the North Carolina House of Representatives districts following the return of the 2020 Federal Decennial Census. More details below.

Congressional and NCGA Redistricting Updates



Speaking at the Senate Redistricting and Elections Committee on 11/2/21





This map shows the new district lines in Mecklenburg County and members' residences.

The maps passed by Republicans this week in the North Carolina General Assembly are bad. Independent analyses confirm that they will give Republicans an unearned partisan advantage in the US Congress, the State House, and the State Senate. **I voted NO on all three.**

Congressional Map & It's Impact in Mecklenburg County

The Congressional map gets an **F from the non-partisan Princeton Gerrymandering Project** for giving a “significant partisan advantage” to Republicans and creating a high efficiency gap (21% “wasted votes”). The map will likely result in the election of 10 or 11 Republicans and only 3 or 4 Democrats to Congress. I believe this is clear partisan gerrymandering given that NC voters are pretty evenly split between Republicans and Democrats and that the current maps, drawn under court order, are much closer to an even partisan split. Gerrymandering like this causes many voters to feel like their votes do not matter.

The Republican map splits the three most populated counties, Mecklenburg, Wake and Guilford, into three parts each. This dilutes the power of the heavily Democratic votes in those counties and divides communities of interest, putting metropolitan areas into districts that are largely rural and far away. One egregious example is that the towns of Davidson, Cornelius, Huntersville and Pineville, plus part of the Steele Creek area of Charlotte, will be carved out of Mecklenburg County's Congressional district and attached to the outer limit of a new Congressional district made up of six rural counties to the west. Also, the Southeastern portion of Mecklenburg County will be attached to a “Sandhills region district” stretching east of Charlotte into eight rural counties. Democrats offered two alternative maps, both of which were graded A by the non-partisan Princeton Gerrymandering Project. They scored better than the Republican map on all the adopted criteria, but were nevertheless rejected.

The new Congressional map passed the Senate on Tuesday on a party-line vote, 27 to 22. This map will have a significant impact on Mecklenburg County residents' and North Carolina's representation in Washington.

State Senate Map

The State Senate map also gets an **F from the non-partisan Princeton Gerrymandering Project** for giving a “significant partisan advantage” to Republicans. We believe the map violates the Voting Rights Act and includes a pattern of partisan gerrymandering in several counties, including Mecklenburg, in violation of the NC constitutional guarantee of free elections. Democrats offered several amendments that would have cured the violations and followed the committee's adopted criteria more closely. Yet, in almost every case, Republicans rejected our amendments.

Republicans even unnecessarily double-bunked 4 sets of incumbents (1 in Guilford, 1 in Wake, and 2 in Mecklenburg) in their original map. They later agreed to separate those

incumbents into separate districts **in all but one case -- mine.**

State Senate Map in Mecklenburg/Iredell

In Mecklenburg County, the Republican Senate map shifts all of Davidson (where I live) and part of Cornelius (Precincts 242 & 208) into a new district that is made up mostly of Iredell County, which is currently represented by Sen. Vickie Sawyer (R). **In other words, I am double-bunked with a Republican incumbent in a Republican district.** This outcome dilutes the votes and representation of these North Mecklenburg residents by shifting us to another county, where we have little in common with the rest of the district.

The Mecklenburg Delegation offered an alternative map that would have kept all current members in separate districts. Our amendment was also more compact and split zero voting precincts. Although our map more closely followed the committee's criteria, it was rejected.

The Committee Chair offered to undouble-bunk me if the entire Mecklenburg delegation agreed to introduce and vote for a map that included their map's configuration in southeast Mecklenburg. They offered no alternative option by which I could be undouble-bunked. **Even though that deal was the only way to save my place in the Senate, we would not agree. We could not support a map that included what we believe to be clear partisan gerrymandering.**

Thus, I remain in the Iredell district (SD37), along with the Town of Davidson and a portion of Cornelius. The new Senate map passed on Wednesday, 26 to 19.

Colonial Pipeline Updates

Roy Cooper, Governor



Elizabeth Biser, Secretary

Release: IMMEDIATE
Date: Nov. 2, 2021

Contact: Laura Leonard
Phone: 919-707-8233

DEQ files Action Against Colonial Pipeline for Largest Gasoline Spill in State's History

RALEIGH – The North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) today filed a Complaint and Motion for Injunctive Relief in Mecklenburg County Superior Court to force Colonial Pipeline to meet their obligations as the responsible party in the state's largest gasoline spill. As outlined in the complaint, Colonial has failed to provide DEQ with essential information required for the appropriate remediation at the site.

"Colonial owes it to the people of North Carolina to cooperate with DEQ and be forthcoming with the information required by our statutes, starting with an accurate estimate of how much fuel was released into the environment," said Secretary Elizabeth S. Biser. "DEQ is committed to holding Colonial accountable and we now seek a court order directing Colonial to comply with their obligations to cleanup and restore the communities impacted by the release."

The release was discovered in August of 2020 in the Oehler Nature Preserve in Huntersville. To date, Colonial has recovered more than 1.23 million gallons of petroleum product from the site, but has failed to provide DEQ with an updated volume estimate of the release. Despite requirements to do so, Colonial has not satisfactorily defined the vertical extent (depth) of petroleum contamination in soil and groundwater at the site and has not fully investigated the extent of per- and polyfluoroalkyl (PFAS) contamination at the site related to the response activities.

The complaint seeks a judicial action requiring Colonial Pipeline to take the following actions:

- Remove, treat or control any source of petroleum, PFAS or other contaminants that have the potential to contaminate groundwater;
- Provide DEQ with a current, revised estimate of the volume of petroleum released;
- Submit a comprehensive conceptual site model for both the petroleum release and the PFAS contamination;
- Complete site assessment activities, and submit and receive DEQ approval for a corrective action plan and proposed schedule for implementation;
- Conduct monthly sampling of nearby surface water for petroleum, pH, conductivity, dissolved oxygen

- Conduct monitoring sampling of nearby waterways for petroleum, PAH, PCBs, organochlorine, Volatile Organic Compounds, total lead and PFAS at locations determined by DEQ; and
- Provide evaluations of Colonial's leak detection system statewide, provide locations of all pipeline Type-A collar repairs within North Carolina and remove or replace them with approved alternatives if necessary. Colonial has cited corrosion related to a Type-A sleeve repair as the cause of the Huntersville release.

This Complaint/Motion for Injunctive Relief does not preclude DEQ from imposing civil penalties for any violations related to the release or from taking any future enforcement action against Colonial Pipeline if new information indicates additional enforcement measures are warranted. The Complaint is available on the DEQ website at: <https://deq.nc.gov/about/divisions/waste-management/underground-storage-tanks-section/colonial-pipeline-spill-information-huntersville-nc>.

###

NCDEQ filed a lawsuit in Mecklenburg County Superior Court earlier this week to force Colonial Pipeline to meet their obligations as the responsible party in the gasoline spill.

As DEQ detailed in the complaint, Colonial has not provided DEQ with “essential information required for appropriate remediation at the site.” The complaint alleges that Colonial has not provided timely and accurate estimates of the amount of gasoline released into the ground in Huntersville, has not provided information necessary to determine whether PFAS was present and, if so, why, and has not utilized appropriate wells to avoid the spill from possibly spreading. The complaint, which seeks six specific actions, is available in full [here](#).

I support DEQ’s work to hold Colonial Pipeline accountable for the massive gasoline contamination caused by a leak in their pipe. That includes using all possible methods, including legal action, to force Colonial to comply with the law and mitigate and remediate fully the damage to the environment in my district. You can read more about the lawsuit [here](#).

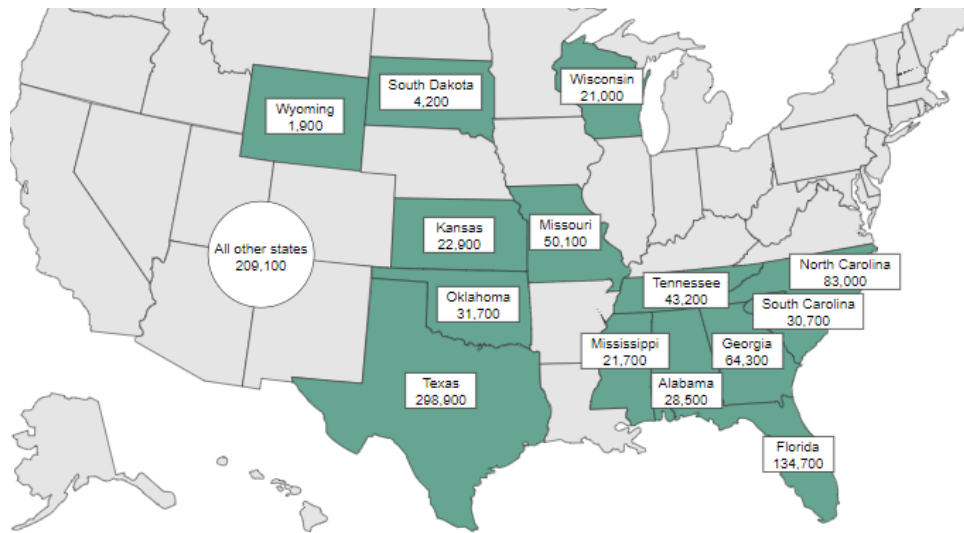
State Budget Updates



Unfortunately, we still do not have a state budget, despite being more than four months into the fiscal year. Senate President Pro Tem Phil Berger recently said that GOP negotiators remain **"very, very far apart" on an agreement with Governor Cooper**. This, unfortunately, raises that prospect that Republican leadership will try to pass their own budget without the Governor's input. As always, please keep an eye on my social media for up to date information. You can read more about current negotiations [here](#). There are serious consequences for public school funding too. See section below.

NC Child Survey on Medicaid Expansion





Projected Job Gains under Medicaid Expansion, 2022

[The nonpartisan, nonprofit NC Child](#) recently released a survey showing widespread support for **Medicaid expansion** in North Carolina even among those whose party affiliation would traditionally oppose it. 600 North Carolina Republican voters were surveyed, with 52% saying they support the provision. Importantly, when specific points about Medicaid expansion were discussed, Republican support grew:

- Providing coverage to more than **30,000 uninsured veterans**, including a quarter of those who served in Afghanistan and Iraq – 75 percent support, 13 percent oppose.
- Helping people get **medication and treatment for chronic conditions** like diabetes, cancer and other life-threatening diseases – 72 percent support, 15 percent oppose.
- Increasing early detection of **cancer, heart disease and other life-threatening illnesses** – 72 percent support, 12 percent oppose.
- Thirty-nine states have already expanded Medicaid, including several controlled by Republican officials – 62 percent support, 24 percent oppose.
- Applicants who aren't working would have to enroll in a job-training program – 76 percent support, 14 percent oppose.

You can read more about the survey results [here](#). Please take a moment to let me know your thoughts about closing the healthcare coverage gap with Medicaid Expansion. My email address is listed at the bottom of this newsletter.

Medicaid Expansion has been a key part of the negotiations about the state budget and is a top priority for my caucus and for Governor Cooper. Unfortunately, recent statements by NCGA leaders indicate that it will not be a part of a final budget. There was a recent Op-Ed in the Charlotte Observer about this issue, which you can read [here](#).

Schools Face Potential Budget Cuts Due to Lower Enrollment During Pandemic





School districts statewide have not returned to pre-pandemic enrollment levels, which puts them **at risk of losing approximately \$132 million in state funding this year**. The state faced a similar situation last year, but the General Assembly passed a "hold harmless" provision to ensure funding would not be impacted by decreased enrollment. This is another negative impact of taking so long to pass a state budget -- a "hold harmless" provision could be added in the budget as a provision, but negotiations are at a stalemate again. You can read more about the issue [here](#).

NC Teaching Fellows Program Accepting Applications

**CHANGE LIVES.
INSPIRE. TEACH.**

**NC TEACHING
FELLOWS**

Up to \$4,125 per semester for students
interested in teaching in a STEM or
Special Education licensure area.

**APPLICATION DEADLINE:
MIDNIGHT. MONDAY, JANUARY 10.**

APPLY TODAY!

www.ncteachingfellows.com

[@NCTF_Program](https://twitter.com/NCTF_Program)

The 2021-2022 application for the North Carolina Teaching Fellows Program is now available! Applications will be accepted until midnight on Monday, January 10, 2022. The program partners with the following institutions: Elon University, Fayetteville State University, Meredith College, NC A&T State University, NC State University, UNC Chapel Hill, UNC Charlotte, and UNC Pembroke .

Since being reauthorized by the General Assembly in 2017, the NC Teaching Fellows Program has been a **primary tool for recruiting the best and brightest in North Carolina to become teachers. Teaching Fellows is a competitive, merit-based forgivable loans for service program** that provides up to \$4,125 a semester (\$8,250 a year) for up to four years to highly-qualified students committed to teaching special education or a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering or Mathematics) subject in a North Carolina public school. The program is open to the following categories of applicants:

- A North Carolina high school senior
- A student applying to transfer to an educator preparation program at one of the eight Teaching Fellows partner institutions
- A student already enrolled at one of the eight Teaching Fellows partner institutions who transitions into an educator preparation program
- An individual with a bachelor's degree pursuing preparation for teacher licensure at one of the eight Teaching Fellows partner institutions

Additional information, including a detailed FAQ for prospective applicants, can be found [here](#).

State Legislators Urge President Biden to Commit to Decarbonization by 2050

**The Benefits of
Full U.S. Decarbonization
by 2050**

- Reduce emissions and improve air quality.
- Lessen climate-induced extreme weather.
- More renewable energy and lower utility bills.

NCEL
National Caucus of
Environmental Legislators

I am proud to have joined 537 legislators from 47 states and territories to urge President Biden to **commit to decarbonization by 2050** at [COP26](#), the UN Climate Change Conference. Many states are already decarbonizing. We hope the federal government can follow. You can read the full press release from the National Caucus of Environmental Legislators [here](#).

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.

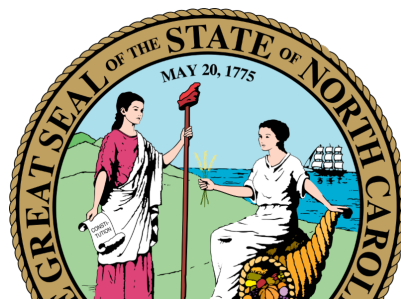
Contact Our Office

Phone: (919) 715-3050

Email:

Natasha.Marcus@ncleg.gov

Jessica.Bolin@ncleg.gov



Mailing Address:
300 N. Salisbury Street,
Rm. 519
Raleigh, NC 27603



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

Senator Natasha Marcus | [Website](#)



Sen. Natasha Marcus, District 41 | 300 N. Salisbury Street, Raleigh, NC 27603

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