

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

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Date 2022-03-18 16:50

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NC Senate District 41



NC Senate District 41 Newsletter

March 18, 2022

Updates on Noteworthy Votes



The 2021 long session officially adjourned last week. It was the longest legislative session in NC history. We voted on a few final bills before we adjourned, noted below.

I will be back in Raleigh in May for the 2022 short session. You can find a full list of the bills I have voted on this long session [here](#).

Bills on which I voted YES:

- **[HJR975](#), Confirm Karen Kemerait, Utilities Commission.** A joint resolution providing for the confirmation of the appointment of Karen M. Kemerait to the Utilities Commission. The Utilities Commission regulates the rates and services of all investor-owned public utilities. Ms. Kemerait is a Davidson College graduate.
- **[SJR748](#), Adjournment Resolution to Certain Date.** A joint resolution adjourning the 2021 regular session of the General Assembly to a date certain and limiting matters that may be considered upon reconvening.

Bills on which I voted NO:

- **[SB173](#), Vote to Override Governor's Veto of Free the Smiles Act.** This bill would have allowed parents to refuse to have their children wear face coverings in public school, regardless of the public health situation or local decisions. The bill passed the legislature, but was **[vetoed in February](#)**. The veto override FAILED and the bill will not become law. You can learn more about the **[recent NC study that proved that masking helps mitigate the spread of COVID-19](#)** in schools, especially considering how **[few children are fully vaccinated](#)**.

Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Access to Healthcare and Medicaid Expansion



The **[Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Access to Healthcare and Medicaid Expansion](#)** met again this week to discuss and debate the future of healthcare in North Carolina. The committee heard from legislators and Medicaid experts from Montana, Ohio (including former Governor John Kasich), Indiana, and Michigan on how expansion positively affected their states. It was wonderful to hear from a bipartisan group of experts on **why expanding Medicaid is so important from a health access, economic, and moral perspective. They all unequivocally urged NC to follow their lead.** Expansion in their states saved lives, detected unknown cancers, reduced infant mortality, lowered the cost of private insurance, reduced uncompensated care, and was good for their economies. North Carolinians deserve to have the benefits Medicaid Expansion will bring. You can read more about the meeting **[here](#)**, and read the presentations from the meeting **[here](#)**.

Briefing from Charlotte Douglas International Airport's Airport Community Roundtable

Briefing for
Senator Natasha Marcus:

Charlotte Douglas International Airport
(CLT)
Airport Community Roundtable (ACR)

Last week, I met with Bob Cameron, the Town of Davidson's representative on the Airport Community Roundtable for the Charlotte airport, on various initiatives coming from their organization. Our conversation focused on how to combat **noise complaints** for those who live near the airport and **environmental protections** the airport is prioritizing.

Tour of NC Museum of Natural Sciences and Troxler Agricultural Sciences Center



Dinosaur Exhibits at Museum of Natural Sciences



"Exquisite Creatures - The Art of Christopher Manley" exhibit at the Museum of Natural Sciences



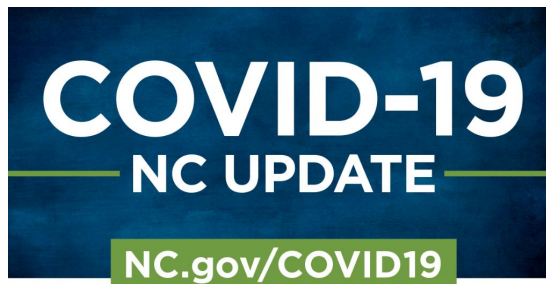


Ron Myer with the NC Forest Services speaking on the importance of investing in trees

This week I was back in Raleigh as a member of the [Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Agriculture and Natural and Economic Resources](#). We toured the Museum of Natural Sciences and the new Troxler Agricultural Sciences Center. At the Museum of Natural Sciences we saw the "[Exquisite Creatures](#)" exhibit before it leaves NC. We also got a sneak peek of the upcoming [Dueling Dinosaurs Lab](#), which is partially funded with State appropriations in the most recent budget, and will give the public access to see a fossilized Triceratops and Tyrannosaurus Rex, who were discovered in the same ancient grave. NC is the envy of paleontologists all across the globe because ours is the **only 100% intact T. Rex fossil in the world**.

At the Agricultural Sciences Center the Joint Committee was briefed by the NC Forest Service on the importance of their **sound conservation practices** and by other AgNER state agencies on their use of state and federal dollars during the pandemic, including those used to improve meat processing efficiency and capacity.

COVID-19 Updates



NCDHHS released its plan for the current stage of the pandemic yesterday, [Moving Forward Together](#). NCDHHS also announced upcoming changes to its COVID-19 Data Dashboard starting March 23.

Governor Roy Cooper, NCDHHS Secretary Kody H. Kinsley and NC Department of Commerce Secretary Machel Sanders held a [press briefing](#) yesterday to look ahead to a [new phase of COVID-19](#). The approach is based on four principles: **prioritizing equity, empowering individuals, maintaining health system capacity, and collaborating with local partners**. The full plan is available online [here](#).

Beginning on March 23, the summary page of the [NCDHHS COVID-19 Dashboard](#) will be updated weekly on Wednesdays and will include a focus on seven key metrics.

- Wastewater testing can detect and quantify the SARS Co-V-2 virus in community wastewater systems. This testing may be an early indicator of increases in other metrics.

- COVID-like illness in hospital emergency departments is a percentage of total emergency visits. It is also an early indicator of rising cases, and it warns about increasing strain on hospital capacity.
- COVID-19 hospital admissions, when high, can indicate strained capacity at hospitals, which may lead to difficulty caring for people with COVID-19 and for people with non-COVID-19 emergencies or elective procedures.
- COVID-19 reported cases reflect people who have tested positive for COVID-19. This number gives an idea of community transmission, even though it does not reflect all COVID-19 cases.
- Booster rates give an indication of how much of the population is up-to-date on their COVID-19 vaccinations, which is one indicator of immunity and protection against severe disease and need for hospital level care. This data is also available at the county level.
- A new variant, and its levels in the state, may cause a shift in the state's response or in individuals' choices about layered protection.
- The CDC's [COVID-19 community levels](#) is based on hospital beds in use, hospital admissions and cases. This tool can help people understand COVID-19 spread in their community.

Progress for Affordable Housing in North Mecklenburg County



The towns of **Cornelius and Davidson** will both receive federal funds to increase access to affordable housing.

Cornelius will receive \$3 million from the American Rescue Plan to support the revitalization plan for the historically-African-American neighborhood of Smithville. You can read more about the Smithville funding in Cornelius [here](#).

Davidson will receive \$400,000 from the recent federal omnibus bill that President Biden signed into law this week for eight affordable housing units in the Hoke Townhomes development. You can read more about the funding for Davidson [here](#).

Rally for Ukraine



I was one of several speakers at the community rally in support of Ukraine on



March 6th in Davidson. Several hundred people attended and it was moving to hear from various community members who helped explain the situation and advocated for peace, including those who have friends and family in the region. Organizers raised several thousand dollars for non-profits assisting Ukrainians. You can read more about the rally [here](#).

NC Department of Justice Panel on Medical Marijuana

Impact on Adolescents

- Acute effects include; impaired learning, memory, attention, and motor coordination.
 - In some; anxiety, paranoia, and cannabis induced psychosis
- Regular use of cannabis by adolescents may result in:
 - A relatively frequent worsening of psychosocial functioning.
 - An earlier onset of psychotic symptoms in vulnerable young people
 - 3.2-fold increase in daily users and 4.8-fold increase when using high-potency products.
 - As a result of the neurotoxic effects from regular use:
 - Cognitive impairments, most prominent < 25 years of age.
 - Potential extension into adulthood depending on the age of onset and regularity of use.
 - Greater potential for subsequent use of nicotine, alcohol, and other drugs, worsening the young person's long-term health and social wellbeing.
 - There can be confounding reasons for this evidence, though a consistent factor is the regularity of use at a younger age.

Earlier today I attended a webinar sponsored by the NC Department of Justice on [cannabis policy](#). This webinar is a part of a 4 part series; today's topic was **health and law enforcement implications of cannabis**. The discussion focused on how cannabis (including "medical cannabis") can positively and negatively affect people's physical and mental health, the larger implications for cannabis regulation, and the challenges of detecting cannabis-impaired driving. The speakers included two Psychiatrists and a DWI Program Specialist from the NC Division of Public Health. You can sign up for future webinars [here](#).

Watch a Recording of the Webinar Here

Celebrating International Women's Day





I joined the [International House](#) in Charlotte on March 8th to celebrate International Women's Day. It was a great opportunity to see women leaders from across the region. I wore my blue and yellow in support of the Ukrainian people.

Equality NC Education Panels



[Equality NC](#) recently hosted 2 **panels on the state of education policy for LGBTQ youth**. You can watch the recordings in the links below:

- [Unpack Don't Say Gay](#): A discussion on anti-LGBTQ bills across the nation and a call to action on what you can do to help.
- [Black Queer Youth Health & Wellness Panel](#): In honor of Black History Month, young people gathered to discuss mental health and wellness and its impacts in our schools and beyond.

2022 Preservation Awards



The Preservation Awards recognize outstanding people, projects, businesses, and organizations in the field of historic preservation. The strength of the awards program comes from the work of people who take the time to nominate deserving individuals, organizations, and projects that have made a difference in historic preservation. **The deadline to submit a nomination is May 2nd!** More information on the awards and how to submit a nomination [here](#).

"Wipe Out Waste" - Mecklenburg County's Recycling Guide



Mecklenburg County has a "[Wipe Out Waste](#)" program to promote best practices for recycling. The county is one of the top 10 counties in the state for the successful recovery of recyclable materials per person.

Some recycling rules are county-wide, whereas others change depending on where in the county you live. Be sure to read through their guide, linked below, to learn more about how to be an effective recycler.

[Learn More Here](#)

Free Tax Assistance Services



Get help this tax season! There are resources available in 2022 to help you and your family save money on your taxes.

- **VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance)** – Individuals and families who earn less than \$57,000 per year can receive FREE income tax preparation assistance by an IRS-certified volunteer. VITA sites are free, reliable, and available in communities across North Carolina.
 - Schedule an appointment at the **Ada Jenkins Center** (in Davidson or

Huntersville) [here](#).

- Schedule an appointment at the **Beatties Ford Library** in Charlotte [here](#).
- **Earned Income Tax Credit** – Low-to-moderate-income workers and their families can get a tax break, ranging from \$1,502 to \$6,728 depending on income level, marital status, and number of children.
- **Child Tax Credit** – Nearly all working families with children under age 18 at the end of 2021 can receive \$3,000 to \$3,600 per child. The CTC expanded in 2021, offering more credit per child and the option for advance monthly payments instead of one lump sum when filing taxes. Learn more [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.

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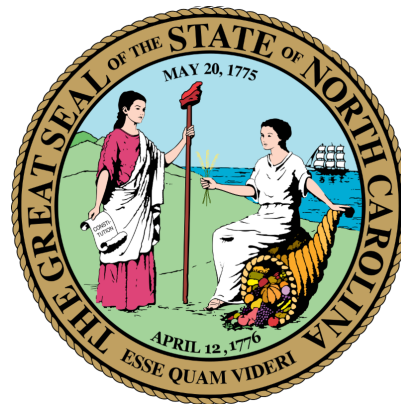
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How can we help you? Let us know and [reach out](#) to our office! We want to hear from you.

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