

## \*\*\*SPAM\*\*\* Latest Updates from the NCGA



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**Date** 2022-05-27 18:38

# Natasha **MARCUS**

NC Senate District 41



## NC Senate District 41 Newsletter

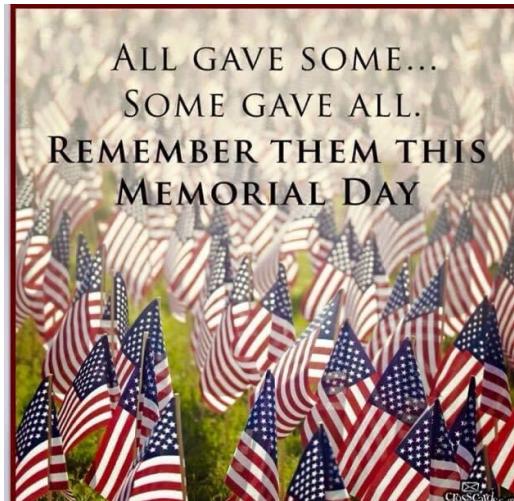
May 27, 2022

### Memorial Day 2022

**Some personal news:** My son-in-law is an officer in the Navy and is being deployed today for a six month mission. I know you join me in wishing him well and in being grateful for his service. My daughter, his wife, and the rest of his loved ones will miss him and worry about him.

**As we mark Memorial Day, we are also grateful to the service members who paid the ultimate price for our country.**

I hope you and yours have a restful and safe holiday weekend.



### The Start of Short Session





The Short Session has officially begun at the General Assembly. Below are some noteworthy bills I have introduced.

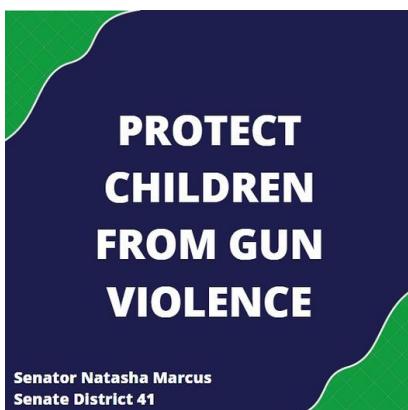
Bills I Introduced:

- **SB779, Study & Abate Ocular Melanoma/Funds.** Appropriates \$150,000 to the Nicholas School of the Environment at Duke University to study the potential causes of and solutions for abating ocular melanoma in the towns of Huntersville and Cornelius and the surrounding area. I am grateful to have **bipartisan support** on this very important piece of legislation.
- **SB780, Improve Pipeline Safety.** Gives authority to the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality to study the condition, safety, and environmental impact of pipelines that transport petroleum products in and through the State to protect the State's land and waters from pollution caused by leaking or poorly maintained petroleum product pipelines.
- **SB781, Funds for Smithville Community Development Corporation.** Provides \$1M to support the Smithville Community Development Corporation's Revitalization Plan to save the historically African American neighborhood of Smithville.
- **SB799, Funds for Huntersville Affordable Housing.** Appropriates \$150,000 to the Town of Huntersville to create a comprehensive redevelopment plan to increase affordable housing.
- **SB832, Menstrual Equity for All Act.** Exempts feminine hygiene products from sales tax and creates a recurring fund for the feminine hygiene products grant program for public school units.
- **SB888, Codify Roe and Casey Protections.** Codifies the essential holdings of *Roe v. Wade* and *Planned Parenthood of Southern PA v. Casey* to ensure the constitutional right to an abortion and privacy in the state of North Carolina.
- **SB898, Community Health Center Grants for LARCs.** Appropriates funds to DHHS Division of Public Health to provide grants to nonprofit community health centers for the purchase and distribution of long-acting reversible contraceptives.
- **SB899, SCHOOLS Act.** Comprehensive education reform bill including use of remote instruction for makeup days, school calendar flexibility, increased principal salary bands, a tutor fund from available remaining voucher program funds, restored retirement benefits for new hires, and improved school performance scores and report cards.
- **SB900, Increase Funding for Rape Victim Assistance.** Increases the maximum amount paid by the assistance program for victims of rape and sex offenses to a medical facility or medical professional for rape kits.

- **SB902**, **Revise Motor Vehicle Emission Laws.** Prohibits after-market modifications enabling illegal emissions on diesel-powered motor vehicles, defines and criminalizes "coal rolling", and requires law enforcement officers to undergo training to develop the ability to properly identify illegal motor vehicle emissions.

You can see a full list of the bills I have introduced and voted on since the start of the biennium [here](#).

## Statement from Senator Marcus on School Shooting in Texas and "Parental Bill of Rights"



On Tuesday, as the news was breaking that a teenage gunman shot and killed children and teachers in Uvalde, TX, Republicans in the NC Senate were holding a press conference to unveil and promote a bill filled with hate aimed at children and teachers. They call their bill a "Parents Bill of Rights," but really it's a Don't Say Gay Bill with some Distrust Teachers and Undermine Public Schools provisions too.

**HB755** attempts to make us pretend that LGBTQ people don't exist by banning any discussion about them. It requires disclosure of confidential counseling notes and forces students out against their will and before they are ready. It encourages lawsuits against teachers who share pro-equality resources. **The bill will harm children and our state's reputation, even if it never becomes law.**

Instead of banning books and seeking to divide us, **we need to address the real problem most parents, students and teachers worry about: gun violence.** Shame on the sponsors of HB755 for refusing to pass common sense gun safety laws, while they simultaneously foment hate and oppression. Shame on them for not addressing the very real mental health crisis so many young people are facing, while they simultaneously pass bills that make it worse.

**This bill is another ill-advised education mandate from politicians.** Schools are overburdened, and many kids are falling behind. We need to properly fund our schools, keep them open, pay teachers what they are worth, and **keep extreme partisan politics out of our classroom.**

## Updates from Senate Judiciary Committee



This week, the Senate Judiciary Committee convened to debate the following bills:

- **SR760, Confirm Eddie Buffaloe/Secretary of DPS.** A senate resolution for the appointment, nomination, and confirmation of Eddie Buffaloe as Secretary of the Department of Public Safety. Secretary Buffaloe is an experienced and adept public official, serving in a variety of roles in local government and law enforcement. Governor Cooper nominated him to this role, which he has been holding on an interim basis for several months. I voted in favor of his appointment.
- **SB762, North Carolina Farm Act of 2022.** A bipartisan bill that makes various changes to NC's agricultural laws, including making the exception for hemp in the NC Controlled Substances Act permanent (so we are following federal guidelines) and other various technical changes.
- **HB911, Regulatory Reform 2.0.** Amends various laws related to State and local government, utilities, education, occupational licenses, and other regulations. I raised the concerns of several environmental advocacy organizations that the bill will allow unacceptable contamination levels in the Neuse River. The bill sponsors have indicated that they are working to amend the bill to alleviate those concerns.

## Exciting Updates on Medicaid Expansion in North Carolina



These past few weeks have been filled with a lot of tragic news, so I am especially grateful to share some good news. On Wednesday the Senate Healthcare Committee debated **House Bill 149, Expanding Access to Healthcare.** This comprehensive healthcare bill includes measures to expand and regulate advance practice registered nurses (the SAVE Act) and (finally) expand Medicaid in North Carolina. Unfortunately the bill in its current form includes some problematic provisions that I do not support, but this is a great step forward. We are expected to see amendments and to vote on the final bill next week. Then it will go to the House, where unfortunately the Speaker has stated that they

do not support the bill. You can read more about the bill [here](#).

## Updates on the Baby Formula Shortage



I am very concerned about the baby formula shortage.

If you are having trouble finding formula, it is recommended that you talk with your pediatrician or contact your County Health Department WIC office (even if you aren't a WIC recipient they can help). The number in Mecklenburg is **704-336-4700** and email is [meckhealth@mecklenburgcountync.gov](mailto:meckhealth@mecklenburgcountync.gov).

Additionally, the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services is connecting families with resources and [sharing recommendations](#) to help navigate supply issues safely. NCDHHS is also broadening access to formula for families who use the federal Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC).

For families struggling to find the formula they need, NCDHHS has several [recommendations](#), as well as four important reminders for families:

- Do NOT water down your baby's formula to stretch it out, it can be extremely dangerous to your baby to do so.
- Do NOT try to make homemade formula or give your baby toddler formula before their first birthday, these can also be dangerous to your baby.
- If you can't find formula or can't find your baby's specific formula, work with your child's health care provider to determine the best feeding plan.
- Only buy formula from reputable retailers, not from unknown individuals, online resellers or from overseas. How formula is stored and shipped can impact its safety for your baby.

DHHS will continue to update information for families and partner organizations and share at [this link](#).

I am grateful to [StarMed](#)'s leadership for giving away free baby formula. I shared that information on social media prior to the giveaways. Check with them for possible future such opportunities.

## NC Automobile Dealers Association Hosts Electric Vehicles Day



Many thanks to the NC Automobile Dealers Association for bringing some electric vehicles to test drive to Raleigh. I am proud to have supported legislation related to electric vehicles: [\*\*SB592, Plug-In Electric Vehicle Tax Credit & SB670, Electric & Zero Emission Vehicle Consumer Education\*\*](#) and am excited to see how this industry will continue to grow across our state. We are hoping to get a charging station at the NCGA to encourage members to make the switch. I support [\*\*Governor Cooper's commitment\*\*](#) to get 1.25 million plug-in electric vehicles on the road in NC by 2030.

## Mecklenburg County Participatory Budgeting



The banner features the text "Mecklenburg County PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING" in white and blue. Below it are three icons: a lightbulb for "BRAINSTORM IDEAS", a document for "SUBMIT PROPOSALS", and a hand holding a dollar sign for "FUND PROJECTS". To the right is a hexagonal image of a city skyline. At the bottom right is the tagline "Your Ideas. Your Impact." in red. The Mecklenburg County seal is located at the bottom left of the banner.

Mecklenburg County Participatory Budgeting (PB Meck) allows community members to determine how to best address the needs of their communities by **turning ideas into actual project proposals, voting on which projects to fund, and Mecklenburg County providing the funding for winning projects.**

Winning proposals will be funded in the FY2023 budget, with the dollars divided evenly among the County Commissioner districts. PB Meck puts decision-making power in the hands of Mecklenburg County residents. Learn more about this innovative opportunity [here](#).

## Senator Marcus in the Community





Senator Marcus was honored by the North Carolina State Firefighters' Association this week as they thanked her for supporting [Senate Bill 472](#), Expand Occupational Cancer Benefits/Firefighters.



Various Nursing Associations hosted "Nurses Night at the Legislature" last week. Senator Marcus was happy to attend and proud to support various legislative items that support nurses, including the [SAVE Act](#).



It was Graduate Student Day at the NCGA this week! Senator Marcus enjoyed the opportunity to meet Kaitlin, a UNC Charlotte doctoral student working in the biological sciences. She also met with a pharmaceutical student from UNC Chapel Hill over Zoom.



Senator Marcus was in Atlanta last weekend for the NCEL Southern Regional Environmental Legislators Conference. It was great to meet with a bipartisan group from across the south to develop solutions to tackle climate change. (Photo L to R: Sen. Salvador, Rep. Harrison, Sen. Marcus, Sen. Murdock, Rep. Smith, Rep. Cooper-Suggs.)

## 2022 NC Child Fatality Taskforce Annual Report



The [NC Child Fatality Task Force](#) recently released their 2022 Annual Report, which you can read [here](#). This report contains data on child deaths in NC as well recommendations aimed at **preventing child deaths, preventing child maltreatment, and supporting child well-being**.

These recommendations aim to address the rise in youth suicide rates and the current youth mental health crisis, the significant rise in firearm-related deaths, a stubbornly high infant mortality rate, motor vehicle-related deaths and injuries, and the need to strengthen the statewide child fatality prevention

system.

## Mecklenburg County Mortgage Payment Assistance Program



Mecklenburg County received an **additional \$26.4 million federal dollars last week to assist those who were financially impacted by COVID-19** and need assistance with paying rent, utility bills, and mortgages. There is a separate application for Charlotte residents vs residents of Mecklenburg towns. You can read more about this new additional funding [here](#) and read more about the program [here](#).

## Letter to the Biden Administration in Support of a National Biodiversity Strategy

**States are calling for a National Biodiversity Strategy because:**

We are losing wildlife species and their habitats faster than ever before.

I proudly joined 360+ bipartisan state legislators from 48 states and territories in sending a letter to the Biden Administration to **establish a National Biodiversity Strategy to address the drastic decline in wildlife and natural spaces**. You can read more about this strategy [here](#).



NCEL ncelenviro.org/national-biodiversity-strategy

## NCMed Assist Free Over the Counter Medicine Giveaway



Saturday, June 4, 2022  
9 am - 2 pm

Archwell Health  
5740 N Graham St.  
Charlotte, NC 28269

**FREE**  
**OTC MEDICINE**  
**Giveaway**

**STOCK YOUR MEDICINE CABINET FOR FREE!**

Free OTC medicine items include cold, cough, flu medicine, pain relief, vitamins, children's medicine, etc.

#### HOW IT WORKS:

- Stop by from 9 AM - 2 PM for FREE OTC products.
- If you want to request specific medications, you can pre-order online: [www.medassist.org/mobile](http://www.medassist.org/mobile) or scan the QR Code.  
\*ONLINE REGISTRATION OPENS - 5/4/2022 @12:00 AM\*
- You may pick up your pre-order during our event.
- Pick up items for a friend or family member.



#### NO APPOINTMENT OR PRE-REGISTERING REQUIRED.

If you do not pre-register, you can come by and pick up a pre-packaged bag of medication while supplies last.

## THIS EVENT IS OPEN TO EVERYONE

All NC residents are welcome. No income requirements to receive products.  
No I.D. required. Must be 18 years or older. This event is rain or shine.



#### BROUGHT TO YOU BY:



NC MedAssist is a nonprofit pharmacy providing access to prescription medications to qualified uninsured North Carolina residents. We also provide over-the-counter (OTC) medications at no charge to all through Mobile Free Pharmacy events or at our store location in Charlotte.

Learn how to receive free prescription medication at [www.medassist.org](http://www.medassist.org).

**NCMed Assist** is hosting a free OTC medicine giveaway on **Saturday, June 4th from 9am to 2pm at 5740 N. Graham Street in Charlotte**. No appointment or pre-registration is required, but if you want to request specific medications, you can do so at [this link](#) or by scanning the QR code on the flyer.

## Wind Energy in North Carolina



Earlier this month the Department of the Interior announced the results of the [Bureau of Ocean Energy Management](#)'s offshore wind sale off the NC coast. There are two lease areas which have the potential to support at least 1.3 gigawatts of offshore wind -- enough wind energy to power approximately 750,000 homes.

I am happy to see leaders in the renewable energy sector taking advantage of this incredible economic opportunity. This will also have impacts in the district, as there is a factory in Huntersville that assists in making wind turbines. I look forward to see how this burgeoning sector will continue to grow in the coming years. You can read more about this recent sale [here](#).

## Mecklenburg County Equity Investments Community Poll



Mecklenburg County is investing \$2M as part of its Equity Action Plan, and wants to hear from residents for its [Equity Investments Community Poll](#). The County's proposed engagement strategy will include paid community navigators that will inform its engagement efforts related to the distribution of the \$2 million. **The deadline to provide feedback is June 10, 2022.** Individuals can also call 980-314-2802 to provide feedback.

## NC Disability Council Opens Applications for Summer Grants



The [North Carolina Council on Developmental Disabilities](#) (NCCDD) has opened a request for applications for Summer Mini Grants to fund a diverse array of short-term activities or build capacity to enable individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) to live full and meaningful lives in the community.

The mini grants could support the following types of activities that address the NCCDD's Five-Year State Plan Goals and Objectives such as trainings, events/programs, and written materials. The deadline to apply is May 31, 2022 by 5pm EDT. You can apply at [this link](#).

## CVS Hosting Upcoming Local "Pop Up" Clinic Events



[Project Health by CVS Health](#) is offering a few "pop up" clinic events in Mecklenburg county this June.

Project Health offers an array of **free comprehensive health risk assessments**, including blood pressure, body mass Index (BMI), glucose and total cholesterol screenings. Once screened, we offer patients on-site consultations with bilingual (English/Spanish) nurse

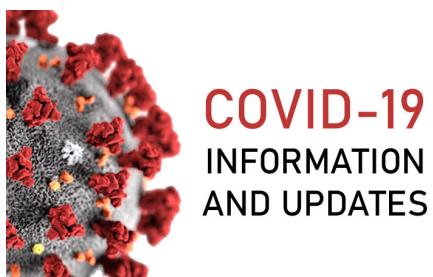
practitioners who will analyze results and refer patients who require additional medical attention to no-cost or low-cost medical facilities nearby or to their primary care physician. CVS pharmacists are also available to conduct one-on-one medication reviews and answer any questions patients may have.

**The events are open to all consumers regardless of ethnicity, gender or insurance coverage and no appointment is required.**

The events will be at the following times/locations:

- Saturday 6/11, 2PM - 6PM – 9308 Kendall Dr., Charlotte, NC 28214
- Sunday 6/12, 2PM - 6PM – 9308 Kendall Dr., Charlotte, NC 28214

## COVID-19 Updates



The [DHHS COVID-19 Dashboard](#), which is updated weekly every Wednesday, shows the following data points:

- Wastewater testing has shown an **increase** to 19m particles from 13.7m particles.
- COVID-like illness in hospital emergency departments remains steady at 4%.
- **COVID-19 reported cases for the week are up to 27,636 from 23,807.**
- COVID-19 hospital admissions of COVID-19 patients this week **going up** at 636, compared to last week which was at 524.
- Booster rates are 55% for the total population. We have 77% of adults with at least one dose and 38% of children and teens ages 5-17 with at least one dose.
- 0.61% of the cases are Omicron BA.1, 1.48% are Omicron BA 2.12.1, 0.07% are Omicron B.1.1.529, and 87.77% are Omicron BA.2.

If you have **COVID-19 symptoms do not wait to get tested and talk to your doctor about treatment.** Don't wait. COVID-19 [treatments](#) can lower your risk of hospitalization or death. Talk to your doctor about treatment. Call 1-800-232-0233 to find out more about treatment. The call center can help if you do not have a health care provider. This line can accept callers in 150 languages, including English and Spanish. Treatments are not a substitute for [vaccination](#). Vaccines offer the best protection against COVID-19.

Additionally, **Mecklenburg County Public Health has free COVID-19 tests available at libraries across the county**, including the Huntersville location on Mondays and Thursdays from 10am to 7pm (16500 Holly Crest Lane). You can learn more about these tests [here](#).

## Contact Our Office

Phone: (919) 715-3050

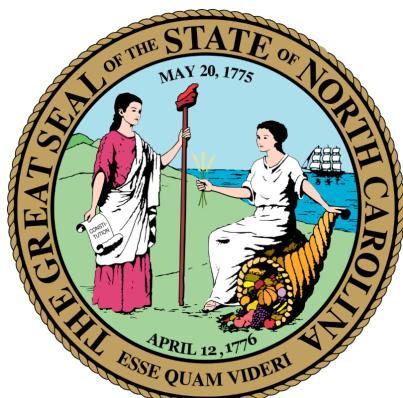
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How can we help you? Let us know and [reach out](#) to our office! We want to hear from you.

[Senator Natasha Marcus](#) | [Website](#)



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