

For Immediate Release



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

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Greetings:

Session and committee meetings were held last week at the General Assembly. I participated in several district activities throughout the week.

Joyce Waddell

Teacher Pay

Facing a statewide teacher shortage, historically low national test scores and a call for a public school strike, the majority of some General Assembly candidates said they supported raising instructor salaries. Democrats and Republicans who responded to a Sept. 2 a news query said North Carolina teacher pay — the lowest in a cluster of five states and Alabama — should go up.

Statewide, more than 4,400 teacher vacancies have meant larger class sizes and instructors without standard teaching certification.

Women's Choice Press Conference

Senator Waddell participates in a press conference for women's choice.



Reentry Initiative

An April 2022 report by the North Carolina Sentencing and Policy Advisory Commission found a 49 percent recidivist arrest rate within two years from a sample of 16,340 individuals released from prison in 2019. The same sample had a 20 percent recidivist conviction rate and a 36 percent recidivist incarceration rate within two years of release from prison. The measure of how often a person reoffends and is re-incarcerated is incomplete as it only accounts for time spent in the state prison system, not any time spent in local jails due to lack of statewide jail data.

A reentry initiative, “Justice: Release, Reentry, and Reintegration,” funded by the North Carolina Council on Developmental Disabilities, has set a goal is to improve transition outcomes after incarceration for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities — folks overrepresented in the prison system.

Since the reentry initiative began in April 2020, it has served 125 individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities from 13 state prisons. Currently, 86 percent of program participants have not reoffended and returned to prison. According to the NC Department of Public Safety, it costs an average of \$35,009 in taxpayer funds to house one person in prison for a year. Staff from the Alliance of Disability Advocates say that even with the program’s \$300,000 annual price tag, it is a terrific return on investment.

Each year, more than 22,000 individuals are released from North Carolina’s state prison system, according to the North Carolina Department of Public Safety. This means 98 percent of people currently incarcerated will eventually be released back into society, but it is not often a smooth transition. The COVID pandemic further complicated reentry as many in-person services were limited.

According to a report by the Bureau of Justice Statistics released in March 2021, nearly 38 percent of state and federal prisoners nationwide reported at least one disability in 2016 with the most common type being a cognitive disability. The prevalence of disability in the prison system is about two and half times greater than the 15 percent of people reporting disabilities in the U.S. general population, the report states.

The typical reentry resources provided by prisons are often “cookie cutter” plans due to the small number of case managers compared to the number of individuals being released. The generic, broad information does not often fit an incarcerated individual’s needs.

As a member of the Prison Safety Committee, I will continue to advocate for job training programs for those who are in prison to assist them in obtaining marketable skills prior to release.

Monkeypox Vaccine

North Carolina is expanding who is eligible for the monkeypox vaccine. Starting Wednesday, anyone who has sexual contact with men who have sex with men can get the shots, including women who have sex with bisexual men. People with HIV or taking medication to prevent HIV can also now get a vaccine.

Here's the complete list of expanded criteria from the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services:

- Anyone who had close contact in the past two weeks with someone who has been diagnosed with monkeypox; or
- Gay, bisexual, or other men who have sex with men, or transgender individuals, who are sexually active; or
- People who have had sexual contact with gay, bisexual, or other men who have sex with men, or transgender individuals in the past 90 days; or
- People living with HIV, taking medication to prevent HIV (PrEP), or who were diagnosed with syphilis in the past 90 days.

Senator Waddell is working tirelessly for Senate District 40, but she cannot do this alone. Many of her precincts have changed which makes the election much more competitive. In November she will have an opponent running against her. Can she count on your help to continue working for the district?

CLICK HERE TO

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OTHER AMOUNT \$ _____**

Planned Parenthood Tour



Senator Waddell participates in a tour of the Planned Parenthood organization.

Fall is in the air. I am loving the changing of the weather and the color of leaves.

Find a local community program and ask to volunteer. Many programs are understaffed and could use a helping hand.

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