

For Immediate Release



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From the Office of Sen. Joyce Waddell, NC Senate
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Greetings:

Session and committee meetings have continued for the 2021-2022 Biennium. Most of the sessions have been procedural and the committee meetings are closing down most business for the year. I will continue to update you on the meetings and the happenings through the end of this year.

Joyce Waddell

Energy Costs

The cost of food, rent, and gas is steadily rising which is leading many North Carolinians to wonder how they will pay the rest of their bills, including their energy bills. The COVID pandemic caused North Carolinians to live in the most unprecedented times that they have ever had. Couple that with the rising cost of rent, food and gas to get to and from work, there has been an increase in individuals needing assistance with crisis programs.

Additionally, according to the data, almost 27% of North Carolinians had to give up basic necessities like food or medicine to pay an energy bill. In the last year, almost 16% kept their home at an unsafe or unhealthy temperature to keep costs lower.

I will advocate for laws that would lower energy bills, so that we can help families make ends meet. I believe that so many are being forced to make these decisions and without some relief many will become homeless.



Senator Waddell Congratulates Incoming Basileus

Senator Waddell congratulates incoming Basileus for the Pi Phi chapter of the Greek fraternity Omega Psi Phi at their 2022 Achievement Celebration.

EMS Shortages

Across the state, EMS staffing was so strained that the North Carolina Department of Public Safety requested the support of 50 ambulances and crews from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, or FEMA. Twenty-five ambulances, each with a two-person crew, arrived in September 2021 to temporarily help nine counties. In early 2022, with the labor shortage persisting and cases surging due to widespread infection with the coronavirus Omicron variant, the agency dispatched more ambulances around the state.

Some in the field say North Carolina's shortage might also trace back to changes in state health policy. In 2007, the state office of Emergency Medical Services and the NC Board of Nursing both offered their support to a rule change that allowed EMS professionals to work in alternative practice settings.



Senator Waddell Receives Recognition

Senator Waddell receives a certificate of award from the Retired Teachers Association. The award was for her advocacy during the 2021-2022 legislative session.

Reading Proficiency

North Carolina elementary school students made reading gains last year but are still performing below pre-pandemic levels. The annual Read To Achieve report presented at Wednesday's State Board of Education meeting showed students in grades 1-3 had higher proficiency rates in the 2021-22 school year than the 2020-21 school year. All three grade levels were below 2018-19 school year levels.

The State Superintendent said schools are starting to see the benefits of shifting to the new "science of reading" literacy program. In April 2021, the General Assembly passed legislation requiring elementary school teachers to receive 160 hours of training in the LETRS system by 2024.

Although we passed legislation for the training of educators and we are seeing proficiency levels increase, there is still more work to be done. We need to ensure our schools have fair and equitable funding to provide increased opportunities for low performing schools, as well as those that are doing well.

Have a Happy Thanksgiving. Please make sure that you and your family enjoy the time you spend together and be safe.

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