

Latest Updates from the NCGA



From Sen. Natasha Marcus <natasha.marcus@ncleg.gov>
To <sjohnston@tuesdayforumcharlotte.org>
Reply-To <natasha.marcus@ncleg.gov>
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NC Senate District 41 Newsletter

December 16, 2022

The General Assembly did not convene for session over the past two weeks. So there are no votes or committee meetings to report. This will be the last newsletter of the year, I hope everyone has a happy and safe holiday season.



Election Litigation Updates



There has been significant court activity relating to North Carolina elections in the past week or so. The United States Supreme Court heard oral arguments for **Moore v. Harper**, a case that could vastly change the way Americans vote and how candidates are chosen for office. This case, which was brought by North Carolina Republican legislators, will decide whether State Supreme Courts have a role to play in determining whether election maps are constitutional and how elections are conducted. I am deeply concerned about this case and am following it closely. You can read more about the case [here](#).

And today, the North Carolina Supreme Court issued its opinions in the **Harper v. Hall and Holmes v. Moore cases**. In **Harper**, the Court held that the **2022 State Senate district map is unconstitutional due to extreme partisan gerrymandering and must be redrawn** with oversight by the trial court. It's unclear at this time whether the trial court will order legislators to redraw the map and, if so, when. In **Holmes**, the Court held that the **2018 voter ID law (SB824) is unconstitutional** because it was "formulated with an impermissible intent to discriminate against African-American voters." The Court held, "the right to vote is a fundamental right, preservative of all other rights."

So, once again, State Senate district maps must be redrawn to be constitutionally compliant and legislators will need to try again to draft a voter ID law that allows the right to "exercise the franchise in a free and unimpaired manner."

You can read the [full Harper v. Hall opinion here](#) and the [full Holmes v. Moore opinion here](#). Reporting on today's decisions [here](#).

Constituent Survey



As I prepare for the upcoming Long Session, I'd like to have your input. This constituent survey helps me know what your priorities are as I prepare for the 2023 Long Session. Please complete [the survey](#). I will appreciate your thoughts.

Senator Marcus in the Community



Sen. Marcus attended the grand opening of **NSI Industries'** new corporate headquarters in Huntersville. They are a fast-growing electronic manufacturing company. We are grateful they decided to stay in the area when locating their new HQ facility. On the left is Sen. Marcus helping NSI's CEO connect the circuit to light up the backdrop. On the right is Margaret Thornton, the Associate Director of ROC Charlotte (a trade school that serves 6 local high schools) receiving a \$10,000 check from NSI.

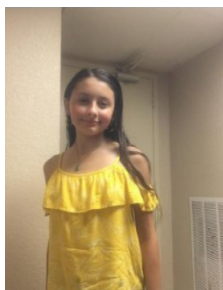


Recently I visited the Beatties Ford Road Vocational & Family Counseling Center and met its founder and Director Ms. Frances Hall. They offer certification for lucrative careers in various skills without having to attend college. It's a path that costs less and can be completed more quickly, to allow folks to earn good money in satisfying fields like carpentry, electrical, HVAC, plumbing and more. They also offer counseling to aid students in mental health, substance free living, marriage/relationships, and other wellness needs. If you want to learn more, contact Ms Hall at **980-349-4067** or online at www.BeattiesFordVocCenter.com.



On Tuesday evening, I attended the [Carolinas LGBT+ Chamber of Commerce](#) Award Gala and met the co-founders of Center 360, a great non-profit with two locations in SD41 (1620 Clanton Road in Charlotte and Bradley Middle School in Huntersville). Center 360 won the Donaldson Wells King Community Impact Award for providing free enrichment to middle school students in various career paths. Their mission is "Empowering youth who are at risk of disengaging from school by providing non-traditional enrichment opportunities." If you would like to enroll your middle school student, volunteer or learn more, click on [this link](#) for Center 360.

Have You Seen This Missing Child?



Have you seen this missing child? Madalina was reported missing yesterday. She is a Bailey Middle School student and was last seen on November 23rd.

Anyone with information regarding the whereabouts of Madalina Cojocari is asked to **please contact the Cornelius Police Department at 704-892-7773 or the North Mecklenburg Crimestoppers at 704-896-7867. You can remain anonymous.**

Potential Changes to NC's Education System



For the past year, the [House Select Committee on an Education System for North Carolina's Future](#) has been meeting to **discuss various changes to our education system -- from teacher pay to learning loss to standardized tests.** They recently announced their proposed recommendations, which include sweeping structural changes to teacher and principal compensation, job descriptions, testing, the school calendar, student discipline, and more. Rep. Torbett, the Chair of the committee, recently had an interview with EdNC about their recommendations -- you can read the article [here](#).

NC's Department of Public Instruction has also announced a **proposed pilot program to pay teachers based on outcome/student success instead of longevity.** This plan is still in its initial phases, and I expect a lot of debate on this topic when the General Assembly reconvenes in January. You can read more about the proposed program [here](#).

Senate Page Program Accepting Applications

PAGE PROGRAM APPLICATIONS ARE LIVE

The NCGA Page Program is open to NC high school sophomores, juniors and seniors to learn about and participate in the legislative process for a 1-week period during the 2023 Long Session.

The program will be offered from Feb. 6 to June 29, 2023. Each Senator can select up to 5 pages for a one-week slot within the time frame listed.

Interested applicants can email me at natasha.marcus@ncleg.gov for the application link. Learn more about the program at the link below.

<https://ncleg.gov/Senate/PageProgram>

Senator Natasha Marcus

The Page Program is returning to the NCGA for the 2023 Long Session. We will welcome high school sophomores, juniors, and seniors from across the state to the NCGA. **This one-week program offers young men and women the opportunity to learn about and participate in the legislative process of our state.** Senate Pages are important to the operation of the General Assembly as they assist the members and staff of the Senate during the legislative session.

The program will be offered for one-week sessions from February 6th to June 29th, 2023. Availability of weeks is based on a first-come, first-served basis. Each Senator can select up to five Pages for the Long Session and preference is given to students who live in the district. No experience necessary. Parents of pages will be responsible for securing lodging during the time their child serves.

Applications are open now. If you or someone you know is interested in applying, please email me at natasha.marcus@ncleg.gov for the application link. You can learn more about the application process and the Page Program [here](#).

Statement in Support of LGBTQ+ Community

Joint Statement Against Violence and Hateful Rhetoric Toward the LGBTQ+ Community

I joined elected officials from across the state in a **joint statement against violence and hateful rhetoric toward the LGBTQ+ community in North Carolina.** You can read the statement and see the other signatories [here](#). I am a pro-equality legislator and will continue to file and support legislation in support of the LGBTQ+ community when we return to Raleigh for session in 2023.

Meeting with Best Friends Animal Society



This week my staff and I met with two representatives from [Best Friends Animal Society](#). Their mission is to bring about a time when there are no more homeless pets by working to end kill-shelters and build community partnerships. We discussed **recommended changes to NC law to protect people who have pets during the rental process and to protect adoptable animals from being euthanized.** Unfortunately, North Carolina is the third-highest state in the nation for euthanizing stray animals. I plan to introduce legislation to improve how our state treats animals.

Letter in Support of DACA Recipients



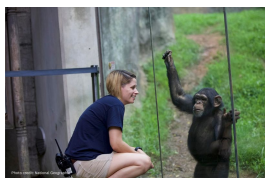
I was proud to sign onto a letter in support of DACA recipients, who have been waiting for years for permanent and lasting protections. The letter calls on Senators Burr and Tillis to lead the way to enact permanent protections for Dreamers. While state legislatures do not set immigration policy, I wanted to use this opportunity to express my support for DACA recipients.

Meeting with NC Council on Developmental Disabilities



I met with the folks at the [NC Council on Developmental Disabilities](#) this week to learn more about the state's [Olmstead Plan](#), whose goal is to ensure we are providing support for people with disabilities. We discussed the current litigation related to folks with intellectual and developmental disabilities, including the recent ruling that North Carolina must provide services to people with IDD in the home settings of their choice. You can read more about the ruling [here](#) and [here](#). The NC Council of Developmental Disabilities and DHHS also recently hosted a town hall on these topics. You can watch a recording [here](#).

NC Zoo Featured in Disney+ Series



While you are home for the holidays, consider watching [Secrets of the Zoo: North Carolina](#) on Disney+, which features the NC Zoo. I am proud of our state's world class Zoo and am happy to see it get the attention it deserves. You can plan a trip to the NC Zoo [here](#).

Letter in Support of Protecting Endangered Species



I was proud to join the [National Caucus of Environmental Legislators](#) to sign a letter urging the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate to establish dedicated funding for states, territories, and tribes to **protect and recover endangered and threatened species** at the sub-national level. State fish and wildlife agencies have identified more than [12,000 species](#) that may become extinct unless there is human intervention. These species' risk of extinction is projected to increase as the threats of climate change and habitat loss are exacerbated.

Mecklenburg County Services for Heating Bill Assistance



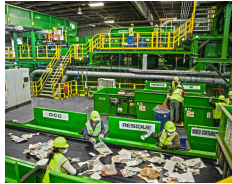
Mecklenburg County is **offering assistance to pay for residents' heating bills**. The county is partnering with the Department of Social Services to implement the Low-Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP). You can more about who qualifies for the program [here](#). You can apply at [this link](#) or by calling 704-336-3000.

Made in NC Holiday Gift Guide



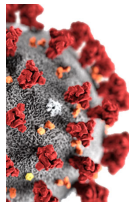
The **NC Chamber of Commerce** created a [NC Holiday Gift Guide](#), highlighting **products made in North Carolina**. This is a great way to find unique gifts while supporting local businesses.

Recycle Your Packages After The Holidays



Mecklenburg County is accepting foam packing from families this holiday season. The county will take the rigid, white foam packaging that usually comes in packages that protect new electronics. Drop it off at one of the county's **4 full-service recycling centers**, where it will be shredded, compacted and sold to companies that reuse it. Read more about the program [here](#).

COVID-19 Updates



COVID-19 INFORMATION AND UPDATES

Most children 6 months to 4 years are [now eligible for their updated COVID-19 vaccine](#), which protects against COVID-19 variants. These vaccine doses are becoming available in North Carolina this week following the Food and Drug Administration's emergency use authorization and the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's recommendation](#).

Children 6 months and older may be able to get this updated COVID-19 dose along with other routine vaccines at the same visit. Parents should talk with a health care provider to make sure their child is up to date on COVID-19 and other vaccines. The COVID-19 vaccine is safe to take alongside the annual flu shot.

You can see updates on the key data points (wastewater testing, hospitalization, vaccine rates, etc.) on the [DHHS COVID-19 Dashboard](#). I highly encourage everyone make sure they are up to date on the COVID-19 and flu vaccines for the holiday season.

You can request free at-home COVID tests from the federal government at [this link](#).

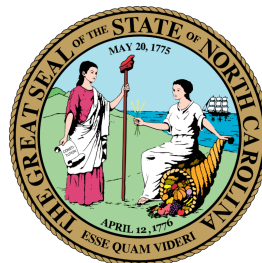
For more information about how vaccines for children work and where you can find a vaccination appointment nearby, visit [MySpot.nc.gov](#). Project ACT is also providing free COVID-19 at-home tests for certain zip codes in SD41, you can check if your home zip code is eligible [here](#).

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.



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

[Unsubscribe sjohnston@tuesdayforumcharlotte.org](mailto:sjohnston@tuesdayforumcharlotte.org)

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