

Latest Updates from the NCGA



From Sen. Natasha Marcus <natasha.marcus@ncleg.gov>
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Date 2023-01-20 15:02

Natasha **MARCUS**

NC Senate District 41



NC Senate District 41 Newsletter

January 20, 2023

North Carolina Senate Inauguration

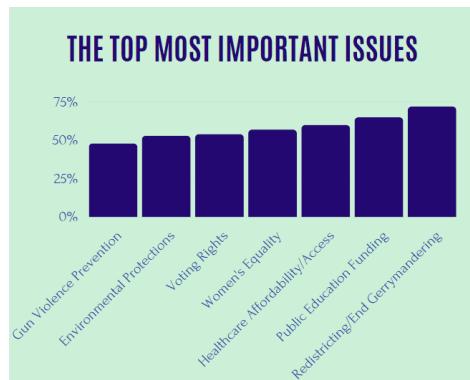


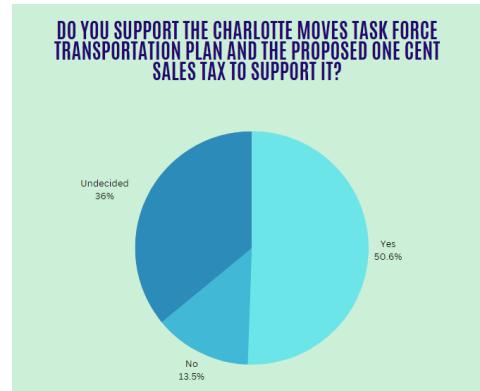
Last week I was sworn in for my third term to the North Carolina Senate. **It is an honor to serve Senate District 41 and I am looking forward to the work ahead.** I have been appointed to the following committees for this biennium:

- Appropriations/Base Budget
- Appropriations on Justice and Public Safety
- Commerce and Insurance
- Education/Higher Education
- Judiciary
- Redistricting and Elections

Additionally, I am proud to share that I have been **appointed Deputy Leader for Legal Matters for the Senate Democratic Caucus.**

Constituent Survey Results





Thank you to everyone who took the time to respond to my constituent survey for the 2023-24 biennium. I appreciate hearing your thoughts as I prepare bills to be filed.

Notable results:

- The top most important issues: redistricting/ending gerrymandering, public education funding, healthcare affordability/access, women's equality, environmental protections, and voting rights
- 51% of respondents support the [Charlotte Moves Task Force](#) transportation plan and the proposed 1% sales tax to support it. 14% did not support the plan and 36% were undecided. [NCGA leaders came out against the plan](#) during their visit to Charlotte earlier this month. There will be a lot of discussion about the plan in the months ahead.

Senator Marcus in the Community



I was honored to speak at Davidson's MLK Day event on Monday. I spoke about how Dr. King's profound legacy and his call for justice and service inspires my work in the State Senate.

I attended the 2023 Kick-Off of the Historic Hoskins Coalition Group to meet residents and introduce myself since district lines have changed. More information about the Coalition [here](#).



I joined nonprofit leaders and fellow Mecklenburg legislators Rep. Brown and Rep. Lofton at the NC Center for Nonprofits Policy Conversation. I appreciated the discussion about how legislators' work intersects with the important work nonprofits do to empower and improve our communities.

North Carolina Ranks 48th in Country for K-12 Public School Funding



A recent report from the Education Law Center **ranked North Carolina 48th in the country** in funding effort in a nationwide report on K-12 public school funding. The report used three measures of funding fairness, including calculations based on per-pupil spending adjusted for inflation, and concluded that "**North Carolina's funding levels decreased by approximately 10% when adjusted for inflation.**" The state's most recent budget appropriated \$11.2 billion for education (not including higher education). **North Carolina's cost per pupil was \$10,791, which is \$4,695 below the national average.** You can read the full report [here](#) and can read the ELC's article on the report [here](#).

I am deeply disappointed about our state's failures on this front and will continue to advocate for *Leandro* funding and the needs of our public schools. As a new member of the Senate Education Committee, I look forward to having a seat at the table this session.

Update on Public Hearing on Colonial Pipeline's Proposed Treatment Plant



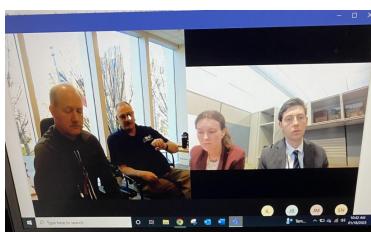
Colonial Pipeline has applied for a permit to treat contaminated water at the site of the gasoline contamination and then release it directly into the North Prong Clarke Creek in Huntersville. This would allow Colonial to stop having to truck contaminated water offsite, which is costly and requires many trucks to come and go from the site. The contaminated water cannot be treated at a municipal treatment plant because those systems do not accept water that is contaminated in this way (benzene and related chemicals are obviously present in high amounts).

While this idea to treat and release the water may be a good alternative to trucking it offsite, **I have concerns about whether the permit specifies the appropriate safety standards, i.e. the water quality standards approved by the NCDEQ and the EPA. It is imperative that the water be fully treated to within safe standards before its released into the creek.**

NCDEQ had a public comment period to hear from folks about their concerns. The comment period is now closed, but you can read the public comments submitted by the Yadkin Riverkeeper, me and others [here](#) and [here](#). **The public hearing was supposed to happen in January, but due to an insurance problem, DEQ staff had to postpone the hearing to mid-March. We should know the location, date and time by mid-February.**

I will be sure to keep everyone updated as I learn more.

Meeting with DEQ on Proposed Landfill



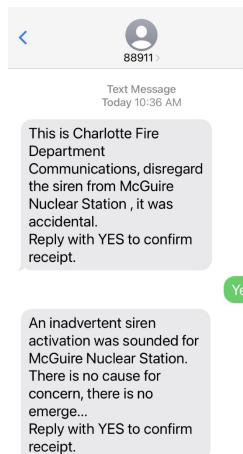
Last week I was alerted to a **proposed Land Clearing and Inert Debris (LCID) landfill in a residential area of West Charlotte** (in the city's ETJ). The neighbors are worried about the impact the landfill could have if approved. I met with DEQ this week to discuss the safety regulations in place to protect human health and the environment and will continue to keep nearby residents updated as the application is under consideration at the state level. You can learn more about the proposed landfill [here](#). If you would like to be added to the listserv we started to get updates as they are available, email [my legislative assistant, Jessica Bolin](#).

Department of Public Instruction Biennial "Polaris" Report



The [North Carolina Department of Public Instruction](#) recently released their 2020-2022 biennial report, titled "Operation Polaris 2.0". This report is a 4-year **strategic vision aimed to improve outcomes for North Carolina students**. Notable priorities from the report include literacy, student support services, district and regional support, and the Office of Learning Recovery and Acceleration. You can read the full report [here](#).

Update on CharMeck Emergency Alert Error



On Thursday morning, one or more emergency alert sirens for the McGuire Nuclear Station were activated in error by a county operator. It caused concern about our safety and residents were unable to find any information about the possible emergency for almost an hour. The alert systems that are supposed to provide this information were not operating as they should. **This is unacceptable. I am looking into how this happened and how we can ensure the public gets accurate, timely emergency information in the future.**

In the meantime, make sure you are signed up for alerts from Duke Energy (text "McGuire" to 71729) and from [CharMeck Alerts](#).

CMS Information Sessions on Magnet Schools and School Choice Lottery



The CMS School Choice lottery opened on January 16th and they are hosting information sessions about the lottery application process -- both virtual and in-person events throughout January and February. Specific dates and times can be found [here](#).

Ada Jenkins Center Needs Donations

Can you help?



Our Food Pantry needs:

- Diapers in sizes 3, 4, 5, 6
- Baby wipes



The [Ada Jenkins Center](#) needs baby item donations for their food pantry clients (especially diapers size 3-6 and baby wipes). Non-perishable food donations are also always needed. Donations can be brought to the Center at 212 Gamble Street in Davidson from 9:30 to 11:30AM on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

NC Teaching Fellows Application Extended



North Carolina needs teachers! The Teaching Fellows Program is a great incentive. The **Teaching Fellows 2022-2023 application is live** and posted on the Teaching Fellows website [here](#).

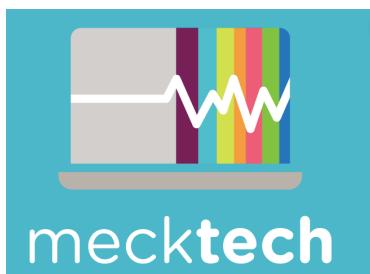
Program benefits include studying at one of eight educator preparation programs, receiving up to \$4,125 per semester in financial aid, and benefiting from unique enrichment experiences at your chosen institution.

The deadline to apply has been extended to January 27, 2023.

If you know a high school student who is open to the idea of becoming a teacher, please share this information. It's a great program.

[Apply Here](#)

Charlotte Mecklenburg Library Providing Free Laptops to Eligible Residents



Charlotte Mecklenburg Library will be providing **20,000 refurbished laptops to eligible adults in the county through the Emergency Connectivity Fund**. Each laptop is free and will include preloaded productivity and education applications. More information on eligibility and how to apply for a laptop [here](#).

January is Radon Awareness Month



January is National Radon Awareness Month, which is the **second leading cause of lung cancer**. I recently received a free home test for this awareness month. You can also request a free radon test kit [here](#).

You can read more about NC DHHS's resources related to radon [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@nclcg.gov for the application link. Learn more about the program at the link below.
<https://nclcg.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 people 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@nclcg.gov for the application link. You can learn more about the application process and the Page Program [here](#).

Financial Update on the State's General Fund

Beginning Cash, Friday, January 06	11,565,650,499.02
Add Receipts:	
Tax and Non-Tax Receipts	690,165,661.13
Coronavirus Relief Receipts	0.00
Other Receipts	579,413,874.46
Less Disbursements:	
Payroll	124,031,799.52
State Aid	49,524,251.72
Medicaid/Other Provider Payments	247,901,801.48
Tax Refunds/Distributions	569,007,819.66
Debt Service	0.00
Coronavirus Relief Transfers Out	0.00
General Operating	714,855,595.44
Ending Cash, Friday, January 13	11,129,908,766.79
Less Reserved Cash:	
Due to Local Governments – Sales and Use Tax Payable	454,605,845.81
Other Reserves	31,305,101.31
American Recovery Plan Act Reserve	54,098,841.60
Carry Forward Reserve	379,489,638.43
Clean Water Drinking Water Reserve	0.00
Coronavirus Capital Projects Reserve	0.00
Coronavirus Relief Reserve	0.00
Earthquake Disaster Recovery Reserve	0.00
Economic Development Project Reserve	642,275,000.00
Federal Infrastructure Match Reserve	95,328,642.00
Housing Reserve	0.00
Hurricane Florence Disaster Recovery Reserve	68,610,283.10
Information Technology Reserve	108,943,174.00
Local Fiscal Recovery Reserve- ARPA	0.00
Local Govt Coronavirus Relief Reserve	0.00
Local Project Reserve	0.00
Medicaid Contingency Reserve	326,512,736.00
Medicaid Transformation Reserve	155,642,170.00
NC GREAT Reserve	0.00
Opioid Abatement Reserve	13,988,151.73
Public School Contingency Reserve	0.00
Public School Need Based Capital Reserve	0.00
Repairs and Renovations Reserve	0.00
Retiree Supplement Reserve	2,483,300.00
SCIF General Fund Reserve	0.00
Savings Reserve	4,115,993,278.98
Stabilization and Inflation Reserve	200,000,000.00
State Emergency Response/Disaster Reserve	227,442,395.24
Unfunded Liability Solvency Reserve	0.00
Wilmington Harbor Enhancements Reserve	283,800,000.00
World University Games Reserve	25,000,000.00
Unreserved Cash Balance, Friday, January 13	3,944,390,208.59

The Office of the State Controller (OSC) released the General Fund Cash Watch numbers for the week ending Friday, January 13, 2023. OSC provides a weekly update on the State's General Fund cash position which can be found at osc.nc.gov. The current unreserved cash balance in state coffers is \$3.944 billion.

The State Controller is North Carolina's chief fiscal officer and serves as an independent resource to ensure the financial integrity of the State.

COVID-19 Updates



I got my free COVID tests. Did you?

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](#).

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](#).

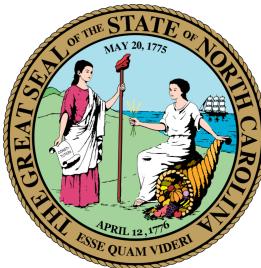
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How can we help you? Let us know and [reach out](#) to our office! We want to hear from you.

[Senator Natasha Marcus | Website](#)



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