

## NC House Passes Medicaid Expansion / State Budget Revenue Forecast / Exception to Law Prohibiting Guns on School Property /NC House Adopts Permanent Rules



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**Representative Nasif Majeed  
District 99 - Mecklenburg County**



**NC House Passes Medicaid Expansion**

Peace. President Obama and Democrats in Congress passed the Affordable Care Act over a decade ago. A critical piece of that landmark legislation was to give states the option to expand Medicaid to cover many uninsured people in their states with federal tax dollars covering 90% of the costs. 39 states have expanded Medicaid. They all decided accepting federal funds from DC to help people obtain health care coverage, create health care jobs, and save rural hospitals was a good deal. Not one has changed their minds on Medicaid Expansion.

North Carolina has refused to expand Medicaid even after the American Rescue Plan added billions of dollars in incentives to get states like ours to take this step.

This week the North Carolina House finally took the first step to expand Medicaid by passing [HB 76](#). I was so proud to co-sponsor and vote for this significant bill. Passing Medicaid Expansion was my top agenda item for this biennium.

The reasons to finally pass this bill are almost too many to list:

- Expanding coverage to 600,000 North Carolinians at no cost to the state. The federal government pays 90% of the costs, and our hospitals and health plans will pay the other 10%. Included in the 600,000 are around 14,000 veterans and their families.
- Expanding mental health coverage to many who have not previously had any access to treatment.
- Lowering health care costs by reducing hospital's uncompensated care costs – which all of us end up paying for.
- Creating thousands of healthcare jobs across the state.
- Investing \$1 billion in NC's 43 rural hospitals over the next three years.

Of course, the fight is not over. Passing the bill in the NC House is just one step. Next it goes to the NC Senate. I will keep fighting and will keep you posted.



*Members from NC State AFL-CIO affiliated organizations attended the AFL-CIO Lobby Day at the General Assembly, where they visited members to push for Medicaid and Broadband expansion in North Carolina. I had the pleasure to meet several groups throughout the day.*

### **CENTER FOR RACIAL EQUITY IN EDUCATION**



*I met with the director of the Center for Racial Equity in Education (CREED), Mr. Jerry Wilson, to discuss his organization's efforts to strengthen the diversity of teachers within our North Carolina education system.*

### **New Revenue Forecast for State Budget**

Economists in the Office of State Budget and Management and the General Assembly's Fiscal Research Division released an updated consensus revenue forecast this week anticipating an additional \$3.25 billion in state revenues for FY 2022-23, putting total state General Fund revenue collections at \$33.76 billion.

The primary changes in the forecast are a smaller-than-expected decline in individual income tax collections, persistently high corporate profits, particularly among large multi-national corporation, and resilient consumer spending despite longer-lasting inflation in goods and services.

You can [read the forecast here](#).

The revenue forecast is important because North Carolina is constitutionally required to balance its budget and so the money we invest through the State Budget depends on how much money we bring in.

There are two big impacts to the updated forecast. The first impact is good: the General Assembly will have the ability to invest a lot of money on one-time projects such as capital investments to our clean water infrastructure and local schools and on bonuses for state workers, teachers, and school employees.

The second takeaway is more concerning: state revenues are projected to remain flat over the biennium meaning we will not have more recurring money to spend even as North Carolina is one of the fastest growing states in the country with lots of investment needs in public schools, transportation, and public safety. State revenues are projected to stay flat because of planned tax cuts for corporations scheduled to go into effect and because of lingering recession concerns.

Revenue forecasts are never final until the data stops coming in. The next forecast will be in May, after April 15 tax payments come in, and will provide even more certainty on the state's finances.

## **NC House Passes Bill to Create Exception to Law Prohibiting Guns on School Property**

Guns do not belong on school grounds. That is common sense and it is also North Carolina law.

This week the NC House passed [HB 49](#) which creates a loophole in the blanket prohibition against guns on school property by allowing people to conceal carry or open carry when attending a religious service on school grounds. The law change would only apply to charter schools and private schools. Supporters of the bill argued that churches have become targets for gun violence and churchgoers should be able to bring their guns even if their church service takes place on school property. Opponents of the bill argued that guns have no place on school property under any circumstances given the risks that a gun could be misplaced or left behind.

I voted against the bill because the best way to keep guns off school property is to have a clear, easily understood, and enforceable law. Creating exceptions or loopholes will make enforcement of the law more difficult.

## **NC House Adopts Permanent Rules With Less Transparency to the Public**

Republican leaders pushed controversial rules changes through the NC House this week. The changes make a notoriously secretive and hard-to-follow legislative process even more difficult for citizens to follow. Changes also give more power to the Republican Speaker to manipulate the legislative schedule to win votes to override potential vetoes by Governor Cooper.

I opposed the rules adoption because of these reasons. A legislative body should be as open and transparent as possible with rules that provide for a fair playing field for all sides. I also supported a number of amendments to make the legislative process more transparent, including:

- Providing 48 hours notice to the public of votes to override Governor Cooper's vetoes;
- Making it harder for committee chairs to change a bill's contents overnight through a "Proposed Committee Substitute" without giving the public proper notice; and
- Giving the Speaker less authority to rearrange the scheduled Order of Business on a typical legislative day with no notice to anyone else.

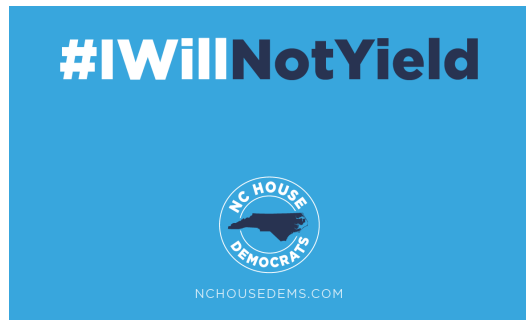
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