

*****SPAM*** Latest Updates from the NCGA**



From Sen. Natasha Marcus <natasha.marcus@ncleg.gov>
To <sjohnston@tuesdayforumcharlotte.org>
Reply-To <natasha.marcus@ncleg.gov>
Date 2023-02-17 16:38



NC Senate District 41 Newsletter

February 17, 2023

Updates on Noteworthy Votes



Key bills on which I voted YES:

- **[SJR31](#), Confirm Nels Roseland, State Controller.*** A joint resolution to confirm Nels Roseland as the State Controller.
- **[SR32](#), Confirm Todd Ishee, Sec. of Adult Correction.*** Senate Resolution to confirm Todd Ishee as Secretary of the newly-created Department of Adult Surrender.
- **[SB20](#), Safe Surrender of Infants.*** Revises laws pertaining to the safe surrender of infants under the abuse, neglect, and dependency laws per recommendations from the NC Child Fatality Taskforce.

Key bills on which I voted NO:

- **[SB41](#), Guarantee 2nd Amendment Freedom and Protections.** A 3-part gun bill which includes repeal of the pistol purchase permit system, a change to allow guns in churches that also serve as schools, and a safe storage awareness initiative. The most troublesome part of SB41 **repeals the requirement to obtain a pistol purchase permit from the sheriff** prior to the purchase of a handgun. The current system allows the sheriff to conduct a thorough background check to determine if there are too many risks associated with allowing an applicant to purchase a handgun (e.g., domestic violence convictions, pending charges, a history of mental health crisis). **It is the only background check currently required to buy a handgun from an unlicensed seller (the private sale loophole)**, like the thousands of individuals who advertise on the internet and sell at gun shows. If this bill becomes law, it will **create a huge and dangerous loophole**, leaving these sales to occur without a background check. The second part of the bill allows concealed and open carry at religious facilities that have affiliated schools. I do not support either of these provisions, but do support the third part of the bill, which was initially a standalone bipartisan bill to promote firearm safe storage awareness. I spoke out against SB49, saying "**This bill is the antithesis of commonsense gun safety reform. It's a relinquishment of our job to protect North Carolinians from violence.**" I introduced an amendment to close the private gun sale loophole, which was rejected, along with three other Democratic amendments. The bill passed on party lines. You can read more about the bill and my work against it [here](#) and [here](#).
- **[SB49](#), Parents' Bill of Rights.** A divisive, hurtful bill that erases and shames LGBTQ people, burdens school staff with requests and objections without penalty for abusive and frivolous behavior, undermines our ability to gather anonymous data about student health and well-being, and forbids school staff from providing confidential advice or assistance to students. It also enumerates some parental rights, most of which are already established in law and in practice. The bill passed on party lines.
- **[SB53](#), Hotel Safety Issues.** Clarifies that occupants of hotels, motels, or similar lodgings do not create tenancy and are not subject to tenant protection laws. This bill **eliminates long-standing protections against homelessness** for people who stay in hotels/motels as their primary residence and will allow them to be evicted without notice, reason or an opportunity to gather their belongings. The bill passed on party lines.

*Bill passed Senate unanimously.

Mark Your Calendar: Upcoming In-Person Town Hall

YOU ARE INVITED TO A

LEGISLATIVE TOWN HALL

WITH STATE SENATOR NATASHA MARCUS

ALLEGRA WESTBROOKS REGIONAL LIBRARY
2412 BEATTIES FORD ROAD, CHARLOTTE

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 25 | 10AM

RSVP AT [BIT.LY/MARCUSTOWNHALL2023](https://bit.ly/marcustownhall2023)

In order to be a better representative of the people of my district, I make it a priority to be accessible and come to the various communities in SD41. To that end, I hope you will join me for my first town hall of the year next **Saturday, February 25th at 10AM**. This will be an in-person event at Allegra Westbrook Regional Library (2412 Beatties Ford Road) with an option to join virtually as well. You can sign up at [this link](#). I'll provide **updates about my legislative priorities for the biennium, my committee work, bills moving through the NCGA, and what issues you can expect to be debated in Raleigh in 2023**. I'll also welcome your input and answer any questions you may have. Be sure to sign up in advance. Any questions? Email me or my legislative assistant.

I'll also host a town hall in the North Mecklenburg area. Stay tuned for details about that.

Co-Sponsored Bills



These are the bills I have co-sponsored so far. You can find a full list of the bills I have supported [here](#).

- **SB67, Firearm Safe Storage Awareness Initiative.** Bipartisan bill to launch a statewide firearm safe storage awareness initiative and to facilitate the distribution of gun locks. As I discuss more in the "Updates on Judiciary Committee" section, I am deeply disappointed that this bipartisan gun safety bill was amended to be combined with dangerous bills I cannot support.
- **SB74, Parents' and Students' Bill of Rights.** A bill, sponsored by the entire Senate Democratic Caucus, to enumerate the rights held by parents related to education of their minor children and rights of students related to their own education.
- **SB92, Expand Circuit Breaker Property Tax Benefit.** A bill to expand those who are eligible for the property tax homestead circuit breaker. Removes provision that the owner has to be at least 65 or totally and permanently disabled and allows subsequent owner to count the ownership and occupancy of the previous owner.

Judiciary Committee Updates



The following bills were discussed in the [Senate Judiciary Committee](#) over the past 2 weeks:

- **SB3, Compassionate Care Act.** Bipartisan bill to legalize medical marijuana for qualified patients with certain medical conditions through a regulated medical cannabis supply system. This would be major progress for our state. I believe that we need to stop making caregivers, patients and veterans into criminals by denying them legal access to treatment that can help. You can read more about the bill [here](#).
- **SB20, Safe Surrender of Infants.** See details in "Updates on Noteworthy Votes" section.
- **SB41, Guarantee 2nd Amendment Freedom and Protections.** See details in "Updates on Noteworthy Votes" section.
- **SB53, Hotel Safety Issues.** See details in "Updates on Noteworthy Votes" section.

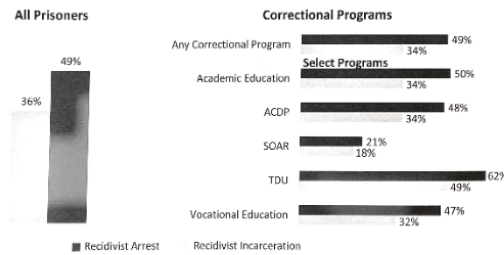
Justice and Public Safety Appropriations Committee Updates



Lower recidivist arrest and incarceration rates were found for inmates with correctional jobs



ACDP, SOAR, and Vocational Education participants had lower recidivist arrest and incarceration rates than all prisoners



This biennium I am serving as a new member on the [Justice and Public Safety Appropriations Committee](#). We met six times over the past 2 weeks to hear briefings from the [Department of Public Safety](#), the [Administrative Office of the Courts](#) and other agencies to learn more about their programming and what they need from the NCGA.

While the overall crime rate has decreased, the violent crime rate has increased. This costs the state more due to increased court time, for resources, and incarceration costs. Additionally, DPS is struggling to fill vacancies for their correctional officers; there is an approximate 40% vacancy rate. We also learned about the newly-established [Department of Adult Correction](#), which is now its own agency independent of DPS as of 1/1/23. Key data points from DAC:

- Vacancies at DAC exceed the state average and are persisting despite increased salaries for correctional officers based on a new experience-based salary schedule.
- Average daily cost to house inmates rose from \$99 in FY2017-2018 to \$131 in FY2021-2022.
- The prison population decreased from 40,102 in FY2009-2010 to 30,352 in FY2021-2022.

The committee also learned more about recidivism data in North Carolina. The department studied over 16,000 prisoners post-release and found that the **highest rates of recidivism were among those who struggle with substance abuse, are age 21, and/or did not complete high school.** Those with lower rates of recidivism had a **correctional job or vocational training during their incarceration.** Rates of recidivism decreased over the past few years due to the pandemic.

I inquired about the "road squads" which allow offenders to work outside on road and rights of way projects, including **litter pickup under DOT supervision.** I asked whether this program can be expanded to help address the problems with trash along many Mecklenburg County roads, but DAC says it's a complicated issue and may no longer be cost effective.

The committee also heard from the Administrative Office of the Courts and the Clerk of the Superior Court. Approximately 1 in 4 people visit their local clerk's office each year (top reasons include being a victim of a crime, jury duty, and to probate a family member's will). In FY2021-2022 there were over 1.8 million district court cases filed in the state. Clerks of Superior Court receipted and distributed over \$736.7 million to citizens and government entities. These funds included:

- **\$406.13M** disbursed to citizens (restitution to victims, worthless check victims restitution, condemnation awards, trusts, cash bonds, civil judgments, alimony, rent bonds)
- **\$64.91M** disbursed to local governments and schools (fines/forfeitures, jail and facility fees, license revocations, officer fees, lab fees)
- **\$38.66M** disbursed to other entities (law enforcement, IDS fees, State Bar fees, license revocation, Domestic Violence Center Fund, misdemeanant confinement, SBI lab fees, Displaced Homemaker Fund, escheats and satellite-based monitoring)
- **\$4.5M** to select court operations (information technology, worthless check, arbitration, etc.)

DEQ to Hold Public Hearing for Colonial Pipeline Wastewater Permit

Roy Cooper, Governor



Elizabeth S. Biser, Secretary

Release: IMMEDIATE
Date: February 14, 2023

Contact: Anna Gurney
Phone: 919.623-5004

DEQ to Hold Public Hearing for Colonial Pipeline Wastewater Permit

RALEIGH - The N.C. Department of Environmental Quality's Division of Water Resources (DWR) will hold a public hearing on March 16, 2023 for a Colonial Pipeline wastewater permit (#NC009000).

Colonial Pipeline has requested a National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Wastewater Discharge permit to allow the discharge of treated groundwater to North Prong Clark Creek in the Yadkin-Pee Dee River basin. The permit relates to fuel recovery and groundwater remediation efforts [required by the Department's Division of Waste Management](#) following the August 2020 fuel release by Colonial Pipeline in the Oehler Nature Preserve in Mecklenburg County. Members of the public are invited to provide comment at the hearing or during the comment period.

WHEN: March 16, 2023, 6:00 p.m.
 WHERE: Central Piedmont Community College – Merancas Campus
 Claudia Watkins Belk Center for Justice – Auditorium
 11920 Verhoeff Drive, Huntersville, NC 28078
 Map Link: <https://goo.gl/maps/HngU4ya8Di997gHbA>
 Speaker registration opens at 5 p.m., onsite via sign-up sheet.
 WHAT: [View](#) draft permit and related documents
[View](#) public notice

The public is invited to attend and provide comments about the draft permit. A sign-up sheet will be available beginning at 5:45 p.m. at the location specified.

Written comments will also be accepted by email at publiccomments@ncdenr.gov. Please include COLONIAL PIPELINE in the subject line. Written comments may also be mailed with a postmark through March 17, 2023 to:

Wren Thredford, Wastewater Permitting
 Attn: Colonial Pipeline Permit
 NC Division of Water Resources
 617 Mail Service Center
 Raleigh, N.C., 27699-1617

The division will consider all public comments before making a final decision on this permit request.

DEQ will be holding a public hearing on Colonial Pipeline's wastewater treatment plant permit application on **March 16th at 6PM at CPCC - Merancas campus (11920 Verhoeff Drive, Huntersville)**. You can view the current proposed draft permit [here](#). This is your opportunity to ask questions and register your concerns. I hope to see you there.

If you cannot attend the in-person hearing, DEQ is also accepting public comment via email and mail. Please email DEQ at publiccomments@ncdenr.gov and include COLONIAL PIPELINE in the subject line. Written comments may also be mailed with a postmark through March 17, 2023 to:

Wren Thredford, Wastewater Permitting
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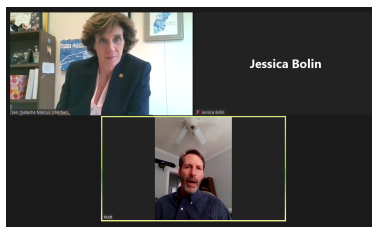
Senator Marcus in the Community



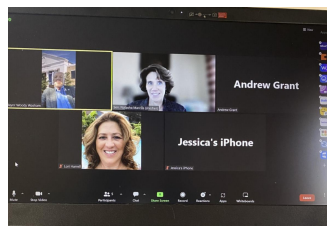
I was happy to attend the Unity in Community 5 Year celebration earlier this month.



I met with students from Johnson C. Smith University this week for HBCU Advocacy Day. I appreciated our discussion on community and economic development, support for HBCUs, and gerrymandering and election reform.



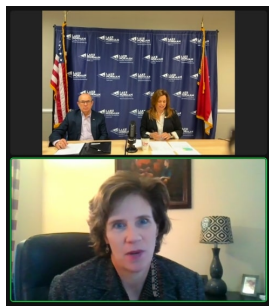
Last week I met with Matt Hamilton, who represents Davidson on the Airport Community Roundtable, to discuss citizen concerns regarding noise levels from the Charlotte Douglass airport and the new runway.



I met with Mayor Woody Washam and Cornelius commissioners and staff to discuss the Town's legislative priorities for this biennium. I appreciated our discussion on transportation initiatives, affordable housing, and infrastructure projects, and more.

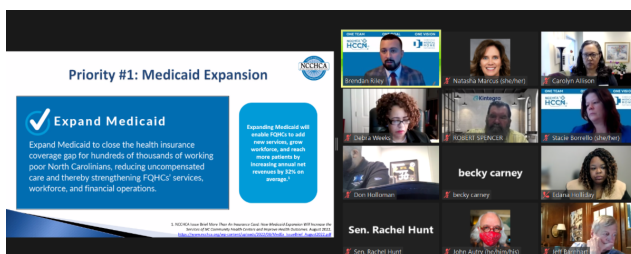


Last week I met with advocates from the AFL-CIO labor unions and attended their annual legislative banquet. We had a great discussion on the importance of advocating for workers and their right to collective bargaining across our state. My colleague Sen. Jay Chaudhuri was honored for his work.



Thank you to everyone who joined the Lake Norman Chamber of Commerce for their "Focus Friday" event this morning. I provided a legislative update and answered questions, along with my colleague Senator Vickie Sawyer.

This week I met with staff from MyFutureNC to discuss the future of educational attainment in our state. This organization is doing great work, and you can learn more about it [here](#).



It was great to hear from local community health centers the other today during a regional briefing from the NC Community Health Center Association. I learned more about the greater work our local centers are doing and heard their legislative priorities for the biennium. Medicaid expansion is their top priority - to address the large number of uninsured North Carolinians.

Ada Jenkins Center Offering Tax Assistance Services



During Tax Season 2023, the [Ada Jenkins Center](#) will again host two program sites — Davidson and Huntersville — for Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) and Tax Counseling for the Elderly (TCE).

VITA volunteers will assist neighbors with incomes of \$60,000 or less prepare their taxes for free. In 2022 they helped 173 households, saving them a total of \$43,250 in tax preparation fees. Appointments are required. Register for the Davidson location [here](#) and the Huntersville location [here](#).

DMV to Allow More Walk-In Appointments



North Carolina Division of Motor Vehicles

The NC DMV wants to make it easier to get served at a driver's license office without making an appointment. **Starting May 1, the DMV will see customers by appointment only in the mornings; after noon, customers will see a DMV agent on a first-come, first-served basis. Walk-in customers are also welcome in the mornings, but people with appointments will continue to take priority.** The move is a response to customer demand, as folks want more walk-in availability. You can read more about this change [here](#). You can find a DMV office near you [here](#).

Governor Cooper Announces \$7.7 Million for Mental Health Programs in NC Colleges



The UNC System recently announced they will be receiving a \$7.7 million grant to provide additional mental health services to students. The funds are coming from the Governor's Emergency Education Relief fund. You can read more about the announcement [here](#).

Atrium Health Mobile Clinic for Women's Care Services



[Atrium Health](#) has a mobile women's healthcare clinic that is traveling across the county to provide various healthcare services, from cervical cancer screenings to first-time prenatal visits. Walk-ins are welcome, but appointments are recommended and can be made by calling (704) 468-0137. There are locations at a variety of times and locations (you can see a full list [here](#)), but the ones in SD41 are:

- Lakehaven Baptist Mission (in partnership with Caterpillar Ministries), 12000 Tuscaloosa Road, Huntersville. Open every 2nd and 4th Wednesday from 9AM-3:30PM.
- On Ramp Resource Center at The Relatives, 2219 Freedom Drive, Charlotte. Open every 1st and 3rd Wednesday from 1PM-3:30PM.
- Freedom Communities, 3501 Tuckaseegee Road, Charlotte. Open every 1st and 3rd Wednesday from 9AM-12PM.

Highlighting the Year of the Trail



2023 is officially the Year of the Trail in North Carolina! Check out this video from America's Morning News Headquarters with information on this initiative and how you can get outdoors and enjoy all of North Carolina's natural beauty.

[Watch the Video Here](#)

Mayors' Fitness Challenge



Who will be the fittest North Mecklenburg town? Cornelius, Davidson, and Huntersville are all participating in the 2023 Mayors' Fitness Challenge. **The event runs from March 12th to April 22nd** and at the end of the six weeks the Town with the highest average active minutes per participant will be awarded the Fittest Community Trophy. **I'm in. Are you?** Find the sign-up links for each respective town below:

- [Cornelius](#)
- [Davidson](#)
- [Huntersville](#)

Updates on Road Safety in the District



It's sometimes hard to see the road lines at night and/or in bad weather. **Bright reflective paint is helpful, but often in need of touch ups.** Below are the routes within the district slated for paint re-striping. Due to funding restrictions in past years, DOT has not been able to meet the need as quickly as we would like. However, re-striping has begun on some of the highest priority locations and DOT is developing a plan over the next several years to re-stripe additional locations.

- WT Harris Blvd, 1-85 to 1-77
- Mount Holly Rd., near Mount Holly-Huntersville Rd.
- 1-485 Mainline including ramps and collectors from I-85 to South Tryon
- Independence Hill Rd - From Hwy 115 to Eastfield Rd
- Freedom Dr - From Bradford Rd to Ashley Rd
- Mt Holly - Huntersville Rd - Beatties Ford Rd to Fox Thorne Dr
- Hwy 21 - Shiv Dr to Westmoreland Rd
- Hwy 21 - Catawba to Mini Golf Ct (Lake Norman Mini Golf)
- Hwy 73 (Sam Furr Rd) - I-77 Bridge to Hwy 115
- Hwy 115 - Carrier Plant to West W.T Harris Blvd

Updates on Local American Rescue Plan Projects



Below is an overview of some projects across the district that are being funded by the American Rescue Plan's State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund. I'm grateful to see all this innovative work happening.

- \$750K to **Carolina Farm Trust** to build a local food production and distribution center
- \$83K to **Community Support Services** to hire six full-time Licensed Clinicians and one full-time Clinical Supervisor which will enable the department to expand mental health services for adults and children experiencing domestic violence
- \$400K to **On Ramp for three new staff positions to the existing RAMP Program** (drop-in resource center for young adults) to address the increased demand for housing and homeless prevention services
- \$350K to **Right Moves for Youth to expand their school-based mental health programming**, which offers group counseling to preventatively address mental health challenges (such as isolation, anxiety and depression that have resulted from COVID-19 pandemic)
- \$7K for **free public wifi at Mecklenburg Parks and Recreation**

You can see a full list of NC projects [here](#).

Update on CharMeck Emergency Alert Error



I want to thank everyone who took the time to share their concerns with me about the recent emergency alert error. **I have been in touch with Duke Energy to get an update on steps they are taking to ensure this does not happen again, as well as their overall emergency preparedness plans. It's important to know what to expect in an emergency and how to prepare.**

Each year, state and local officials, along with Duke Energy, update emergency planning information for neighbors who live within 10 miles of McGuire.

Once a year, Duke Energy mails a post card to each resident in the 10-mile radius of McGuire. It contains important contact information for each county emergency management office (in English and Spanish), as well as a mail back card for requesting special assistance. These cards are shared with the appropriate county emergency management office.

The postcard has a QR code that when scanned with phone will link to the [web site](#) which has a lot of very helpful information, such as signing up for texts related to a specific nuclear site community and more. Remember to sign up for CharMeck alerts at [this link](#).

Each county's Health Department keeps potassium iodine tables, and any resident within the 10-mile radius can request them. They are only to be taken at the direction of the state or county. You can learn more about that option [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>

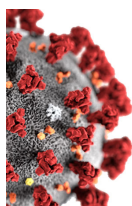
Senator Natasha Marcus

The Page Program has returned 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 space 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](#).

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](#).

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

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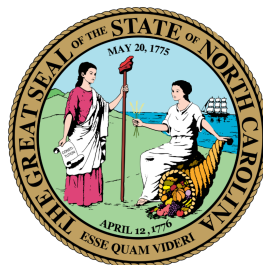
Jessica.Bolin@ncleg.gov

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.

Senator Natasha Marcus | [Website](#)



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

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