

For Immediate Release



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From the Office of Sen. Joyce Waddell, NC Senate
Mecklenburg County

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Greetings:

Celebrating Black History Month

While Rosa Parks is credited with helping to spark the civil rights movement when she refused to give up her public bus seat to a white man in Montgomery, Alabama in 1955—inspiring the Montgomery Bus Boycott.

Last week was full of committee meetings. Tuesday through Thursday the Joint Appropriations on Base Budget, and Education/Higher Education Committee, Finance, and Rules and Operations of the Senate met.

We had a voting session on Wednesday for SB 45 - CADC Supervision Requirements and SB 46 Medical Billing Transparency.

Joyce Waddell

Senate Bills

SB 45 - CADC SUPERVISION REQUIREMENTS - An act to modify the supervision requirements for certified alcohol and drug counselors and certified criminal justice addictions professionals; and

SB 46 - MEDICAL BILLING TRANSPARENCY - An act to prevent North Carolinians from becoming victims of surprise billing by out-of-network healthcare providers that have rendered healthcare services at health service facilities that are in-network with an individual's health benefit plan.

These bills passed in the Senate and will move on to the House.



Senator Waddell is pictured with Chancellor Gaber of UNC-Charlotte and some members of the Mecklenburg Delegation.

Workforce Development

At a recent State Board of Community Colleges meeting, North Carolina's workforce was at the forefront, with the Board discussing how the N.C. Community College System (NCCCS) is addressing the state's labor shortage and potential solutions moving forward.

The state's 58 community colleges have really played an important role in training skilled workers. Community colleges offer both curriculum courses, which are designed to lead to a transfer degree, and workforce/continuing education courses, which include stand-alone courses and short-term programs focused on technical skills and knowledge. In spring 2022, 133,653 students were enrolled in continuing education courses across the system, according to system data.

The system's legislative request includes \$86.8 million for a 7% salary increase for faculty and staff over the next two years and \$145.88 million in student investment.

Labor shortages can destroy businesses and prevent production and services. We must work together to find solutions, even if unorthodox. Working alongside of each other to seek solutions will help us figure out how to combat this issue.

Town of Matthews

Senator Waddell met with representatives of the Town of Matthews to talk about their legislative priorities.



Medical Marijuana

The new version of this bill is likely to clear the full Senate sometime next week, and the future of medical marijuana in North Carolina will depend on its level of support in the House.

The legalization of smoking or consuming cannabis is being touted as a way to give relief to people with pain or illnesses and from whom their doctors say they could benefit.

The measure says that lawful marijuana use could occur for over a dozen different debilitating medical conditions in which their doctor, trained on the topic, declares the health benefits of cannabis outweigh the risks. Those conditions would include epilepsy, Crohn's disease, HIV/AIDS, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis and post-traumatic stress disorder. People with terminal illness or receiving hospice care also can qualify. A newly created advisory board could add to that list. A proposed Medical Cannabis Production Commission would award licenses to 10 entities that would grow cannabis, process it and sell it. Each licensee could open eight medical cannabis centers across the state. They could sell marijuana or cannabis-infused products to patients or their caregivers, who would have to obtain registration cards from the state Department of Health and Human Services. The licensees would have to send 10% of their monthly revenues to the state. Registered patients would face fines for smoking pot in public or near a school or church.

Pro-cannabis advocates support the medical legalization bill but are concerned about whether 10 licenses are enough for a state of 10.7 million people. And they said the tight "seed-to-sale" licensing structure makes getting into the industry cost-prohibitive for local growers or small entrepreneurs.

Legalization of medical marijuana continues to come before us because of its importance to the medical community, and how its medical benefits can help our state.

COVID & Influenza Vaccinations

Getting vaccinated is not a suggestion, for many it is life saving. There are so many that have underlying conditions that really need to receive their boosters or their original shots.

Please contact your physician if you need to get vaccinated.



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