

For Immediate Release



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

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Greetings:

Last week ended the celebration of Black History Month.

Black History Month Fact:

*First Lawyer: **John Mercer Langston** was the first Black man to become a lawyer when he passed the bar in **Ohio** in 1854. When he was elected to the post of Town Clerk for Brownhelm, Ohio, in 1855 Langston became one of the first African Americans ever elected to public office in America. John Mercer Langston was also the great-uncle of **Langston Hughes**, famed poet of the **Harlem Renaissance**.*

At the General Assembly

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

We had a voting session on Wednesday for SB 3 - North Carolina Compassionate Care Act.

Joyce Waddell

Senate Bills

SB 3 - NC Compassionate Care Act - Senate Bill 3 would enact the North Carolina Compassionate Care Act to provide for the sale of cannabis and cannabis-infused products to qualified patients with a debilitating medical condition through a regulated medical cannabis supply system. The medical cannabis supply system would be self-supporting.

This bill passed in the Senate and will move on to the House.

Black History Month Celebration at the Museum



Senator Waddell participates at an event at the Charlotte Museum of History where the NC Poet Laureate was congratulated.

SNAP Benefits

People receiving food stamp — or Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) — benefits in North Carolina will see a significant drop in their monthly allotment beginning in March. No longer will households receive a second payment on their Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card toward the end of the month, as they have been since March 2020, when the federal government approved the emergency allotments in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Households received either an extra \$95 each month or the maximum amount allowed for their household size, whichever was greater. Now those extra payments will cease for people in North Carolina and 31 other states that didn't end the extra payments early.

In making the announcement, the Food and Nutrition Service said the emergency allotments “were a temporary strategy” authorized by Congress to help low-income households deal with the hardships of the COVID-19 pandemic. The extra allotments are ending due to action by Congress.

So many families are still struggling after the pandemic. My colleagues and I are always looking for ways to help those who live in food deserts and those who are less fortunate.

Future Farmers of America



Senator Waddell meets with Future Farmers of America to discuss their legislative agenda and their future goals.

Gun Stockpiling

North Carolina's 10 most populated cities have more than 74,000 guns under lock and key. Some are evidence in criminal cases. But most are simply warehoused, with their numbers growing weekly. Inventories of handguns, rifles and automatic weapons have been growing inside police stations for years. The prime reason is a 2013 North Carolina law that essentially forbids police from destroying most functioning firearms.

The law, backed by gun rights advocates, allows law enforcement agencies to sell guns to licensed firearm dealers.

Prior to the 2013 law, once a relevant criminal case was finished, firearms that could not be returned to their owners could be destroyed. Now, the guns are growing liabilities spilling out of the evidence room, said a spokesperson for Charlotte-Mecklenburg police. "When the number of firearms stored increases weekly, the level of responsibility and liability increases as well," he wrote.

No one keeps a tally of all guns stored by this state's police and sheriff departments. But the fact that a newspaper survey documented more than 74,000-plus firearms are now held in 10 cities does not surprise many.

Many leaders in larger cities support legislation to allow them to destroy weapons taking over evidence rooms not equipped for the inflow of hundreds of guns each year.

The 2013 law passed with bipartisan support was signed in June. Previous efforts to change the law in 2015, 2019, and 2021 were unsuccessful in the Republican-led General Assembly. There are some legislators that feel it is wrong to destroy guns.

I believe in sensible gun ownership. It makes sense to destroy weapons that do not have a clean serial number. Our priority is currently dealing with so many deaths by the hands of irresponsible gun owners. We need to try to come to a general consensus about how we dispose of those compromised weapons.

COVID & Influenza Vaccinations

Our numbers for those testing positive for COVID and the flu are shrinking, but we cannot take our foot off the gas. If we stay vigilant with safety habits maybe we can eradicate these viruses for good.

Please contact your COVID/Influenza provider if you need to get vaccinated or your booster.



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