

Medicaid Expansion Bill Heads to Governor's Desk / Bill Passes to Limit Teaching on Difficult Subjects / Bills I Filed



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Medicaid Expansion Bill Heads to Governor's Desk

Peace! Over a decade after President Obama signed the Affordable Care Act into law, the North Carolina General Assembly finally followed the lead of most of the country by expanding Medicaid. Governor Cooper announced he will sign the bill into law very soon.

North Carolina has missed out on billions of dollars in federal money and too many people have either lost their lives or suffered poorer health from the state's refusal to expand Medicaid.

Now North Carolina will start to enjoy the benefits of Medicaid Expansion which include:

Health care coverage for 600,000 people 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%. Most of these people work and earn too much to be on unexpanded Medicaid, but too little to get a federally subsidized plan in the marketplace. Typically, these are child care workers, nursing home workers, grocery store workers, retail workers, restaurant/hospitality workers, and approximately 14,000 military veterans.

Medicaid expansion is also our single biggest opportunity to strengthen rural health and keep more rural hospitals from closing. Rural residents are 40% more likely to be uninsured and eligible for expansion.

Medicaid expansion will help lower costs we all pay with uncompensated care. In the first year of expansion, rural hospitals in Virginia saw a 32% decrease in their uncompensated care costs. Uncompensated care costs hurt all of us: they hurt the state's budget, they hurt rural hospitals, and they hurt people's health.

NC House Passes Bill to Limit Teaching on Difficult Subjects

HB 187 is the latest GOP-sponsored power grab. It is a bill that restricts local schools and local teachers from teaching certain vaguely-defined ideas or subjects. If those ideas or subjects are discussed at all, local schools and local teachers must report it to the state government.

The most likely impact of the bill is to discourage teachers from tackling difficult, but important, topics in American and world history such as slavery, the Holocaust, and racial segregation.

A better approach is to trust parents and teachers, not politicians, to prepare our kids for the future. We do not need politicians in our classrooms, we need experienced and qualified educators. North Carolina ranks near the bottom of the country in state support for public school students. School districts across the state are experiencing unprecedented shortages of teachers, bus drivers, and other school employee positions. Those are the issues we should be tackling in the General Assembly.

HB 187 passed the State House on a party-line vote and now goes to the State Senate for its consideration.

Bills I Filed This Week

I was pleased to file the following bills this week.

HB395 - Counties/Semiannual Assessments

Virtually every county in North Carolina has an orphaned road. Many neighborhoods that are built outside of municipal jurisdictions have roads that are not up to state standards or are in great disrepair. Under these circumstances, they cannot be taken over for upkeep until they are brought up to state standards. House Bill 395 (~~=S250~~) will authorize NC counties to make loans to the property owners to pay for the upgrades. This bill will spread out the payback to the county up to a maximum period of 20 years and ease the burden on the property owner.

HB427 - Honor Women Veterans Plate

Women contribute to the most professional, educated, resourceful, and strongest military the U.S. has ever seen. To salute North Carolina women Veterans, Ms. Barbara Marshall, a 16-year retired Navy Chaplain, led the effort to recognize North Carolina Women Veterans with a special registration plate. I am proud to be the primary sponsor of House Bill 427 which honors NC Women Veterans for their service with a special license plate.

Home Care Advocacy Day



I met with a few Home Care Providers from Mecklenburg County that participated in Home Care Advocacy Day. Nearly 130 advocates from 48 different home care agencies gathered here at the General Assembly, advocating to raise awareness of key issues impacting access to home care.

We discussed the value of home care, the challenges Medicaid providers are experiencing, and the impact these challenges have on North Carolinians in need of home care. These advocates are asking for support from legislators to increase funding for seniors and individuals living with disabilities and medical complexities.

Audubon North Carolina Advocacy Day



Members of the Mecklenburg Audubon Society came to the General Assembly to share their mission to protect birds and their habitat. This was Audubon North Carolina's 7th annual Advocacy Day where they met with legislators to discuss conservation issues, specifically conservation funding, a native plants bill, and an heirs property bill that would protect family land and habitat.



North Carolina's Electric Cooperatives

More than 150 representatives from all 26 of North Carolina's electric cooperatives met with legislators to discuss policy issues important to electric co-ops, their members and their communities.

I had the opportunity to meet with several Union Power representatives. They shared with me what was needed to help in securing power stations while increasing reliability, and sustainability, of electricity to the rural areas.

PEACE,

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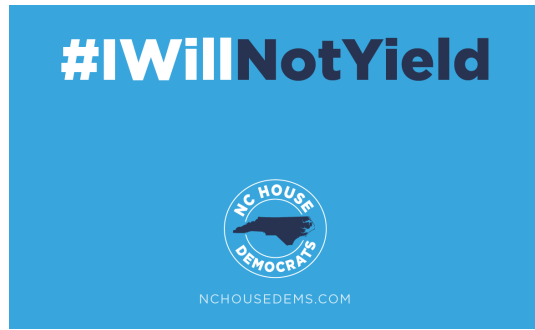


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