

For Immediate Release



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

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Greetings:

At the General Assembly
For the Week

Committee Meetings
Rules & Operations of the Senate
Education
Finance

Joyce Waddell

Senate Bills

(Click on bill title to view bills in their entirety)

SB 340 - Expand Prob. Officer/Sheriff Authority - An act to allow district attorneys to file probation modification petitions, to allow probation officers to reduce a term of supervised probation in certain instances, and to exempt sheriff's offices from certain state contracting requirements when contracting for food and food services at detention facilities.

SB 512 - Greater Accountability for Boards/Commissions - An act to increase the accountability of public boards and commissions to the citizens of North Carolina by changing the appointment structure of those boards and commissions.

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

Appointment Power

The North Carolina General Assembly would get to choose many more members of several powerful state commissions, under legislation approved on Thursday. Currently, most of the commissioners on the targeted panels are picked by the Democratic governor. Senate Republicans are pushing for the changes, which would eliminate majority — or in one case unanimous — control held by the Governor's appointees. Among other duties, these eight boards and commissions approve electricity rates and road-building projects, and adopt environmental regulations.

The bill, which passed the chamber on a 29-18 party-line vote before heading to the House, would either shift control or eliminate over 20 commission seats otherwise filled by the Governor and future governors. Current members would not be replaced until their terms end. The legislature, Senate leader or House speaker would get to make many of those appointments instead.

The bill would give the legislature the majority of appointments on the Board of Transportation and Economic Investment Committee, which awards state incentives to companies seeking to build in North Carolina. The speaker and Senate leader, or their substitutes, would serve on the economic committee.

I have been a part of the General Assembly for quite a few years and chipping away the power of the Governor is very dangerous. These types of laws creates power dynasties and waters down the people's voices.

License Policy

North Carolina's Division of Motor Vehicles will now issue full-term driver's licenses to more immigrants with permanent or indefinite residential status in the country after a ruling that implements a new policy. State Transportation Secretary ruled last week on a petition filed in December by advocacy groups on behalf of three non-U.S. citizens who had been issued limited-term licenses by the DMV despite such status types.

The Secretary said that, starting this week, full-term licenses would be issued to people in these situations lacking a definitive end date as long as other prerequisites are met, he said. For example, the state will continue to run names through a Department of Homeland Security database program to verify applicants are lawfully present in the U.S.

This ruling will allow citizens to be legal drivers. I believe this is moving in the right direction. I would much rather be on the road with those who are legal drivers.

COVID Vaccinations

The state of North Carolina has deemed COVID no longer a major threat. There are fewer and fewer cases showing up in our hospitals. However, the virus is still dangerous and we should ensure we are still taking precautions.

If you are in the vulnerable population, continue to take precautions with large crowds and washing your hands.

Influenza and COVID-19 vaccines are safe, effective, and free.



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