

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



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## NC Senate District 41 Newsletter

May 19, 2023

### Governor Cooper's Veto of the Abortion Ban is Overridden on a Party Line Vote



**SB20**, a new abortion ban, is officially law after a rushed, partisan veto override vote in both the House and Senate this week. The bill will go into effect on July 1, 2023.

I am deeply disappointed in this outcome and am especially worried about how it will put women and girls at risk due to lack of access and will drive obstetricians out of our state, reducing healthcare options and healthcare providers for everyone in North Carolina. I did my best to explain all the reasons why SB20 is dangerous and harmful during my floor remarks on Tuesday. Here is a brief excerpt:

"I remember when I believed that the Republican party stood for small government and personal freedom. We can debate exactly when that changed, but it's clear that if you do this to North Carolina's women and girls, if you make SB20 the law here, you can't claim to stand on those principles anymore. Nothing else you will do could ever erase the harm this bill will do to women and girls, our rights, our status in society, our ability to trust that you care about what happens to us, that you trust us to make our own decisions, that you value our lives, our contributions, our humanity. This bill is a slap in the face, a muzzle over our mouths, and a straitjacket on our bodies."

You can see my full remarks at [this link](#), read my column in Newsweek Magazine [here](#) and listen to my interview with Canadian Broadcast Radio [here](#).

I am grateful to all of the healthcare providers, faith leaders, business owners, and voters who came to Raleigh and made their voices heard on this dangerous bill. You can read more about the veto vote process [here](#).

### State Budget Passes the Senate





This week, in about 48 hours, the Senate unveiled and held a vote on [HB259](#), the 2023 Appropriations Act, which distributes state funds for FY2023-2025. The budget includes some positive spending priorities and policies, chief among them Medicaid Expansion. However, overall it really missed the mark and failed to make the kinds of investments we need for North Carolina's future. These missed opportunities may be due to the fact that Democrats were excluded from the budget-writing process.

During the Senate floor debate, **my Democratic colleagues and I offered more than 15 common sense amendments to the bill**, including funding for minority farmers, retention of the corporate tax, and expanding the innovation waiver slots for people living with intellectual and developmental liabilities. You can read all the amendments we offered [here](#).

**I introduced an amendment to provide support for women and families and to close a loophole in our gun laws.** My amendment had six parts:

1. Takes the more than \$6M in state funding given to "crisis pregnancy centers" (anti-abortion groups that pose as medical clinics with no medical training or staff) and instead give it to DHHS for evidence-based maternal and childcare initiatives
2. Repeals the prohibition of state funding for family planning, pregnancy prevention and parenting programs by organizations that also provide abortions
3. Holds CPCs to the same standards and regulations as medical clinics
4. Requires father of the child to provide health insurance for the pregnant person during pregnancy and 6 months post-partum
5. Implements [SB540](#), which codifies the right to use contraception to prevent pregnancy
6. Closes a loophole in our gun laws (which was created when the NCGA repealed the state background check on pistol purchases), which currently allow domestic abusers to legally purchase firearms, by making the new crime of misdemeanor domestic violence effective immediately (so those convictions will start to show up in a federal NICS background check) and establishing a 10-year statute of limitations

Only one of our amendments was accepted. All the others, including mine, were rejected [without debate](#).

**I voted NO on the budget and want to explain why.** Some of the worst provisions of the budget:

- Billions in tax revenue loss from elimination of the corporate income tax, setting us up for significant budget shortfalls; even the NC Chamber of Commerce does not support these cuts
- A massive expansion of the private school voucher program that we cannot afford, wherein taxpayers will pick up the tab for even the wealthiest families to send their kids to private academies that are largely unregulated and unaccountable
- Inadequate teacher pay and public school investments in buildings, nurses, support staff, and counselors. Read more about the education provisions in the budget [here](#).
- Inadequate salaries for state employees
- Inadequate cost of living adjustments for teachers and state employees (COLA)
- Creation of a massive \$1.425 billion reserve to fund an untested startup idea called [NCInnovation](#)
- \$6 million for "Crisis Pregnancy Centers" which mislead pregnant people and use other unfair methods to influence their reproductive choices
- A prohibition on state funding for family planning, pregnancy prevention and parenting programs. Read more about these provisions [here](#).
- Inadequate funding for Board of Elections, which will undermine our ability to hold safe and secure elections, including the new requirements for Voter ID
- A prohibition on joining ERIC, a bipartisan nationwide organization that works to prevent voter fraud and bolster election security
- Unfair cap on Mecklenburg County's fair share of state road funding (Powell Bill funds)
- Additional new CON provisions that are premature and unwise
- Refusal to incorporate our amendments (see discussion above)
- Ignored all funding requests for needs in District 41, such as for research on ocular melanoma cases in North Mecklenburg, affordable housing initiatives in Cornelius, and pedestrian safety projects in Davidson

Working families continue to struggle while Republicans continue to present budgets like this one which caters to the wealthiest in our state and fails to address our state's immediate and long-term needs. **We need serious investments in our schools, our people, and our state.** You can read more about the budget, including some of the good things in it, [here](#).

## Updates on Noteworthy Votes



Below are the other noteworthy bills I voted on over the past two weeks. You can find a full list of bills I voted on [here](#).

**Key bills on which I voted YES:**

- **SB206, Controlled Substances/Opioid/Vaccine/At Home Omnibus** (for concurrence). \* Amends the NC Controlled Substances Act to establish new violations involving counterfeit controlled substances, expands the state's definition of opioid antagonist, allows the use of FDA-approved opioid antagonists in needle exchange programs, continues to authorize pharmacists to administer vaccines in response to expiring Public Readiness and Emergency Preparedness (PREP) Act, and continues the acute hospital care at home program.

**Key bills on which I voted NO:**

- **SB20, Care for Women, Children, and Families Act** (reconsideration of vetoed bill). Dangerous abortion ban bill, full details in section above.
- **HB259, 2023 Appropriations Act**. State budget for FY2023-2025. Full details in section above.

\*Passed Senate unanimously

## Redistricting and Elections Committee Updates



The following noteworthy bills were discussed in the [Senate Redistricting and Elections Committee](#) over the past two weeks:

- **SB248, Change Number of Members on Nash County Board of Education**. Decreases the size of the Nash County Board of Education to seven members and redraws the school board districts. I do NOT support this bill after hearing from numerous Nash County elected officials, advocates, and constituents who oppose the bill, were not consulted in the process, and recognize the partisan motivations for the bill. In addition, residents in Edgecombe County are concerned about how the bill will impact their school board.
- **HB66, Partisan Boards of Education**. Provides partisan elections for the members of the Catawba County, Hickory City, Newton-Conover City, and Pamlico County Boards of Education. I do NOT support this bill because I do not believe we should be politicizing our local boards of education. You can read more about efforts to politicize local races [here](#).

## Senator Marcus in the Community & Meetings in Raleigh



Governor Cooper came to Senate District 41 last week to announce that Atom Power, a company that makes electric vehicle charging equipment, is planning a \$4.2 million expansion of its Huntersville headquarters. This expansion will bring 205 high-paying jobs to the district. Read more about the expansion [here](#) and [here](#).



Governor Cooper was also in Davidson last week to talk about the negative impacts SB20 will have on the health and status of women in our state. I was proud to join this Roundtable Discussion with the Governor, healthcare providers, and community advocates. Read more about the Roundtable [here](#).



I had a great time at the new international exhibit of the Marvel Universe at Discovery Place last week! Pictured with Catherine Wilson Horne (President & CEO of Discovery Place), County Commissioner LaWana Mayfield and Representative Terry Brown. Get your tickets [here](#).

Thank you to staff and advocates from [People Over Politicians](#) for stopping by the office to talk about the importance of an independent redistricting process. I am grateful that this organization is advocating for provisions in my bill, [SB306, Fix Our Democracy](#), which would put an end to partisan gerrymandering.



I met with a group of physicians from the [NC Medical Society](#), including one from SD41, to discuss the [SAVE Act](#) and the [abortion ban](#). I appreciate them taking the time to share their perspectives on these bills.

I met with staff from [North Carolina Asian Americans Together](#) to discuss the growing Asian American community across our state and their legislative priorities, including the [Hate Crimes Prevention Act](#), of which I am proud to be a co-sponsor.



The [NC Downtown Development Association](#) hosted a legislative reception in Raleigh this week. They had a \$4.3 billion economic impact in our state last year, creating 650 new businesses and 5,000 new jobs.

The [NC Association of Regional Councils of Government](#) also hosted a legislative reception in Raleigh. This organization works with local, state, and federal entities to improve our state's quality of life and resiliency. Their priorities include enhancing finance administration for local governments and increasing funding for the long-term care ombudsman program.

## New Law Changes Timeline for Getting a Driver's License



[Senate Bill 157](#), which passed the Senate a few weeks ago, is officially in effect and has changed the process by which young drivers can get their licenses. Young drivers no longer have to wait a year to get a license. The bill extends the pandemic-era rule that requires only a 6 month permit period to help tackle the backlog and, effective January 2024, the new permit period will be 9 months. I voted NO on this bill because I have concerns that the permanent reduction from 12 months to 6 months will make our roads less safe as young drivers won't have the experience they need before they are driving unsupervised. You can read more about these new changes [here](#).

## Free and Reduced Lunch Options for NC Students Over the Summer

	<p><b>Summer P-EBT Alert: Apply for free or reduced-price school meals or FNS ASAP!</b></p>		<p><b>Alerta P-EBT de verano: ¡Solicita comidas escolares gratuitas o a precio reducido, o FNS lo antes posible!</b></p>
<p>For more info, visit: <a href="http://www.ncdhhs.gov/PEBT">www.ncdhhs.gov/PEBT</a></p>		<p>Para más información, visita: <a href="http://www.ncdhhs.gov/PEBT">www.ncdhhs.gov/PEBT</a></p>	

If your child does not already get Free or Reduced-Price (FRP) meals at school, then you should apply for FRP school meals or Food and Nutrition Service (FNS/food stamps) ASAP. **As a reminder, Summer P-EBT eligibility is based on participation in FRP school meals.** You can apply for FRP directly through your school or enrolling in FNS will automatically qualify your student for FRP/Summer P-EBT if they attend a participating school. The eligibility cutoff is May 31, and these applications take time to process. Learn more about the program and how to apply [here](#).

## COVID-19 Test & Vaccine Updates



**NC DHHS** is partnering with Project Act to provide **free COVID-19 tests to all North Carolinians**. This program used to just be available for select zip codes, but it is now available statewide. Order your free tests [here](#).

Additionally, DHHS has **approved additional booster shots for folks 65+ and/or who is at high risk for severe illness**. Anyone who meets the age requirement is eligible for a bivalent booster if it has been at least 4 months since their previous vaccine. Folks with compromised immune systems can get a booster if it has been at least 2 months since their last vaccine. More information [here](#).

## Financial Update on the State's General Fund

<b>Beginning Cash, Friday, May 05</b>	<b>14,501,316,279.62</b>
<b>Add Receipts:</b>	
Tax and Non-Tax Receipts	340,828,143.50
Coronavirus Relief Receipts	0.00
Other Receipts	459,235,855.21
<b>Less Disbursements:</b>	
Payroll	107,852,313.72
State Aid	27,748,399.23
Medicaid/Other Provider Payments	238,550,710.34
Tax Refunds/Distributions	453,697,656.07
Debt Service	0.00
Coronavirus Relief Transfers Out	0.00
General Operating	267,679,615.83
<b>Ending Cash, Friday, May 12</b>	<b>14,205,851,583.14</b>
<b>Less Reserved Cash:</b>	
Due to Local Governments – Sales and Use Tax Payable	518,055,108.08
Other Reserves	46,776,348.79
American Recovery Plan Act Reserve	75,331,202.90
Carry Forward Reserve	282,708,315.34
Clean Water Drinking Water Reserve	0.00
Coronavirus Capital Projects Reserve	0.00
Coronavirus Relief Reserve	0.00
Earthquake Disaster Recovery Reserve	0.00
Economic Development Project Reserve	613,900,000.00
Federal Infrastructure Match Reserve	95,328,642.00
Housing Reserve	0.00
Hurricane Florence Disaster Recovery Reserve	60,490,685.35
Information Technology Reserve	108,943,174.00
Local Fiscal Recovery Reserve-ARPA	0.00
Local Govt Coronavirus Relief Reserve	0.00
Local Project Reserve	0.00
Medicaid Contingency Reserve	326,512,736.00
Medicaid Transformation Reserve	155,642,170.00
NC GREAT Reserve	0.00
Opioid Abatement Reserve	765,130.94
Public School Contingency Reserve	0.00
Public School Need Based Capital Reserve	0.00
Repairs and Renovations Reserve	0.00
Retiree Supplement Reserve	0.00
SCIF General Fund Reserve	0.00
Savings Reserve	4,750,000,000.98
Stabilization and Inflation Reserve	1,000,000,000.00
State Emergency Response/Disaster Reserve	748,779,970.12
Unfunded Liability Solvency Reserve	0.00
Wilmington Harbor Enhancements Reserve	283,800,000.00
World University Games Reserve	25,000,000.00
<b>Unreserved Cash Balance, Friday, May 12</b>	<b>5,113,818,098.64</b>

The Office of the State Controller (OSC) released the General Fund Cash Watch numbers for the week ending Friday, May 12. OSC provides a weekly update on the State’s General Fund cash position which can be found at [osc.nc.gov](https://osc.nc.gov). **The current unreserved cash balance in state coffers is \$5.113 billion.**

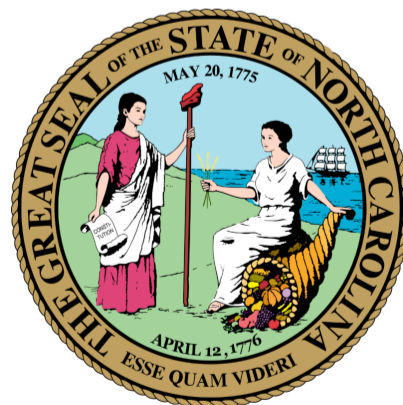
The State Controller is North Carolina’s chief fiscal officer and serves as an independent resource to ensure the financial integrity of the State.

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How can we help you? Let us know and [reach out](#) to our office! We want to hear from you.





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