

For Immediate Release



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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Chapter V
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Greetings:

At the General Assembly
For the Week

Senator Waddell's schedule included session alongside of committee meetings.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

*Rules and Operations of the Senate
Education/Higher Education
Pensions and Retirement
Finance*

Joyce Waddell

Override Votes

The Senate voted to override four vetoes from the Governor on Tuesday, with one a dispute over how state employees can discuss race and gender at work. That vote was 30-18 along party lines, enough to override the veto with a three-fifths majority of votes.

The other vetoes overridden were for Senate Bill 331, which amends the Consumer Finance Act; Senate Bill 329, which amends the Retail Installment Sales Act; and Senate Bill 299, which would let the state penalize local governments that are late to file audits by withholding some sales tax revenue from them.



4-H

Senator Waddell engages a group of 4-H students regarding how legislation can assist in the organization's agenda.



Transgender

House Bill 574, dubbed the “Fairness in Women’s Sports Act,” bans transgender women and girls from playing on women’s sports teams in middle and high school, as well as in colleges and universities. HB 574 is a bill that restricts transgender athletes in women’s sports passed the state Senate Tuesday.

The bill prohibits “students of the male sex” from playing on “athletic teams designated for females, women, or girls” in all public middle and high schools, and private middle and high schools if the school is a member of an interscholastic athletic organization or playing against a team required to follow the provisions of the bill. As for “institutions of higher education,” which include all public universities, private colleges or universities and community colleges, the bill applies to all athletic teams that are part of an “intercollegiate athletic program” such as the National Collegiate Athletic Association.

Transgender Care

SB 631 is not the only bill limiting gender-affirming care access for transgender youth. There are several bills related to transgender people in various stages in the legislative process. With session ending in the coming weeks, N.C. Republican lawmakers are expediting legislation through committees, including the handful of transgender-related bills.

House Bill 808 — a similar bill to SB 631 — would bar surgical gender transition procedures and puberty blockers for transgender minors. There are exceptions for children with a few physical disorders. It passed through a Senate committee Thursday morning.



NOW

National Organization for Women (NOW) discusses with Senator Waddell a few upcoming agenda items that affect women that will be discussed in committee soon.

Elections Bills

The Senate passed two major elections bills Wednesday, furthering a set of goals advocated for by conservative election integrity groups and advancing a plan to strip the governor of more power. Senate Bill 747 and Senate Bill 749 would bring significant changes to how elections are conducted in North Carolina with just three months until the first municipal elections begin.

Among a host of other provisions, SB 747 would eliminate the three-day grace period for receiving absentee ballots, ban private money for election administration and make most voters using same-day registration cast a provisional ballot.

Two amendments were adopted making substantive changes to the bill. While the bill initially called for signature verification technology to be used when checking votes, an amendment from Sen. Mujtaba Mohammed, a Charlotte Democrat, turned this into a pilot program affecting 10 counties for the 2024 primaries.

The Senate also approved an amendment from Sen. Julie Mayfield, an Asheville Democrat, that allows voters to solve problems with their absentee ballot via phone or email. Democrats proposed many more amendments to the bill that would have made more sweeping changes, but all were rejected by the chamber's Republican majority.

Despite making some progress with amendments, Democrats opposed the bill. Sen. Natasha Marcus, of Davidson, claimed provisions in the legislation would "dissuade people from voting, throw out ballots and suppress the votes of certain voters in a way that is discriminatory and anti-democratic." The bill passed 28-19 along party lines.

Elections Boards

SB 749 would restructure the state and local boards of election, making them evenly split between Republicans and Democrats and removing the governor's ability to appoint board members. Currently, election boards consist of five members, the majority of whom come from whichever party the current governor represents. The Senate passed SB 749 28-19. Now that the Senate has passed them, the new elections bills head to the House for consideration.

Photo ID

House Bill 772 would loosen restrictions on poll observers, people appointed by local political parties to watch election procedures for wrongdoing.

Before the 2022 elections, the State Board of Elections had put in place stricter rules for poll observers, which would have prevented them from coming and going throughout the day. The rules were challenged in court, where a Wake County judge ruled against the state board, saying observers should have more freedom. Now, lawmakers want to build on that ruling with further protections for poll observers.

HB 772 would give observers greater freedom to roam around voting enclosures and hear conversations between poll workers and voters. It would also allow observers to take photos and video, as long as voters aren't in the picture. Observers would not be allowed to campaign or speak with voters inside the voting enclosure. It passed the House Judiciary committee Wednesday and next heads to the Rules committee, likely its final step before a floor vote.

Vice President of the United States

Senator Waddell participated in an event that featured the Vice President of the United States. The Vice President traveled to Charlotte, NC to deliver a national address on reproductive freedom. This marks one year to the day of the Supreme Court's Dobbs decision.



Vaccinations

Is COVID gone? Has the virus that is COVID 19 been eradicated? The answer is a resounding NO! COVID 19, although not rampantly moving throughout the community as fast as when it so quickly wiped out the lives of so many, is still as deadly. The CDC is still cautioning communities to us safety as we move about the community.

- Continue to wash your hands
- Wear masks in public (especially if large crowds)
- If you feel sick - stay home!



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