

## 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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## 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*

## Veto Overrides

A new state law could lift environmental protections from more than half of the state's wetlands, according to state officials. The Farm Act of 2023 became law as the N.C. General Assembly overrode Gov. Roy Cooper's veto.

The law also prevents the state from promoting 13 concepts, including the ideas that "One race or sex is inherently superior to another race or sex; An individual, solely by virtue of his or her race or sex, is inherently racist, sexist, or oppressive or "bears responsibility for actions committed in the past by other members of the same race or sex;" or "should feel discomfort, guilt, anguish, or any other form of psychological distress." Some say the law — one of several pieces of legislation that could limit the way people are permitted to talk about race and gender— infringes on individual rights. Republican sponsors say it does the opposite.

**ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL INVESTMENTS** More than a dozen states have passed laws prohibiting their employee pension plans from accounting for ESG factors. House Bill 750, "Address Environmental, Social, and Governance Factors," institutes a similar ban in North Carolina.



## ***College Voting***

*Senator Waddell discusses new voting laws and their affects on college campuses.*

## **Supreme Court Ruling**

The U.S. Supreme Court rejected a controversial legal theory Tuesday advanced by North Carolina's GOP legislative leaders in a nationally watched case in which they had argued that state courts should not be allowed to strike down the rules lawmakers pass dealing with federal elections.

Supporters of what has been called the "independent state legislature theory" say authority over federal elections laws, including district lines for the U.S. House of Representatives, lies only with state legislatures. Opponents of the doctrine say it would give state lawmakers across the country free rein to violate their state constitutions.

In a 6-3 decision released Tuesday, led by Chief Justice John Roberts, the court rejected the argument that state courts have no say over state lawmakers, holding that the U.S. Constitution's elections clause "does not insulate state legislatures from the ordinary exercise of state judicial review."



## ***Black Political Caucus***

*Senator Waddell gives a legislative update at the Black Political Caucus Meeting.*

## Parents Bill

Senate Bill 49, called a Parents Bill of Rights, revives proposed legislation from the previous legislative session that would compel educators for kindergarten through high school to notify parents if a child asked school personnel to use other pronouns or other names for them. The bill, which passed the Senate in February, had been sitting in committee without movement. Then it was suddenly revived last week at a contentious committee hearing where opponents were not given an opportunity to speak. Critics say these types of laws could hurt LGBTQ students by forcibly “outing” them to their families, even if those families are not accepting of their identities.

With the possibility of financial penalties in the bill, the measure has the potential to put teachers and counselors in an ethical quandary as they look to balance their obligations to their students and the need to abide by state law. Opponents of the bills also say such legislation could harm the mental health of kids during an emotionally challenging time of their lives.

## Retirement Changes

Senator Waddell spoke on the floor on Thursday regarding SB 201 - Retirement Administration Changes Act of 2023, which made a few changes to some retirement laws that are currently on the books.

Below are a few of those changes:

- Changes the contributory death benefit for the Teachers' and State Employees' Retirement System (TSERS), the Local Governmental Employees' Retirement System (LGERS), the Legislative Retirement System (LRS), and the Consolidated Judicial Retirement System (CJRS);
- Makes changes to the second six months of short-term disability, to the review and approval of short-term disability benefits, and to the application for extended short-term disability benefits under the Disability Income Plan (DIP) of North Carolina;
- Allows the first retirement benefit check to be paid direct deposit rather than mailed; and
- Amends the law pertaining to overpayment of funds when the overpayment is caused by administrative error.



## *Prayer on the Senate Floor*

*Senator Waddell leads the Senate in prayer on the floor.*

## Vaccinations

*Vaccinations for COVID and other health anomalies are still available at most health-care facilities. Please check your list of vaccines that are not updated. Call your health-care provider to determine if you are due to receive a vaccine.*



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