

Latest Updates from the NCGA



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NC Senate District 41 Newsletter

August 11, 2023

Still No State Budget: Consequences



We are now over a month into the new fiscal year and there is still no budget in place. The legislature has not been in session in 6 weeks. **The lack of a budget is concerning for a myriad of reasons**, including the way it exacerbates issues created under previous budgets. For example, the Secretary of State's Office handles a wide range of paperwork, including new business filings, which are up 70% since the pandemic. With the increase in business, the S.O.S. Office has had no appreciable staff increase. Additionally, turnover rates in state agencies continue to increase as the rate of new applications decreases. Learn more [here](#).

It's not just the Secretary of State's office. **There are significant, persistent staffing shortages at all state agencies and public school systems due to low pay and inability to recruit and retain workers.** If you've been to a DMV office or tried to make an appointment lately, you know how short-staffed they are and how long the waits are. There are **significant bus driver shortages** at several school districts, including Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools.

In addition to the employment shortages in government departments, **Medicaid expansion is postponed as a result of the delayed budget.** Though the expansion of Medicaid has bipartisan, near-unanimous support this session, expansion cannot go into effect until there is a state budget in place. In the meantime, more rural hospitals are closing and people are losing coverage and falling sick. Learn more about what Medicaid Expansion, and its delay, means for North Carolinians [here](#).

The Senate has been called back for a one-day session next week, but we are told the budget will not be ready for consideration by then. It may be September or later before NCGA leaders reach agreement.

Voter ID: What You Need To Know

Beginning this year, voters will be asked to show photo ID at the polls. Absentee voters must include a copy of their ID with their mail-in ballot.

The first elections that will be conducted under the new rules will be the 2023 municipal elections:

- November 7: general election for the Cities and Towns in Mecklenburg County and CMS Board At-Large
- September 12: primary election for the City of Charlotte

Don't let anyone discourage you from voting. Click here to learn more.

Acceptable Forms of Identification

North Carolina driver's license (with current address and exact name match)

Approved Student ID (varies by school)

Out of State Driver's license or non-driver ID (only if you registered in NC within 90 days of the election)

U.S. Passport

State voter photo ID issued by a county board of elections or NCDMV

Approved state employee, local government, or school employee ID

Senator Marcus in the Community



On Monday, August 8, I participated in a press conference to discuss [SB540](#) and the need to protect the right to access contraception at the state and federal levels. You can watch the recording of the event [here](#).



Next CMS Board of Education Policy Committee Meeting to be Held Friday, August 18th

The next CMS Board of Education Policy Committee meeting will be held Friday, August 18th, at the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center Chamber Room (600 East 4th Street Charlotte, NC 28202). The Policy Committee will consider modifications to the Parental Leave Without Pay Policy and multiple policy changes necessitated by [SB49 \(Parents Bill of Rights\)](#).

[Sign Up to Speak Here!](#)

You can send your comments regarding these policy changes to the Board by emailing boardservices@cms.k12.nc.us.

Additionally, you can sign up to speak at the Policy Committee meeting by calling 980-343-5139 or clicking the button to the left. The cut-off to sign up is Thursday, August 17th at 2:00 PM.

[Text Link](#)

15 School Districts in North Carolina Defy State Law, Starting School Year Earlier than Legally Allowed



Though North Carolina law forbids most traditional public schools to start the school year before the last week of August, an increasing number are defying the law and starting sooner. This year, the official start date is August 28, which CMS is honoring. It has long been a goal of CMS to start sooner, to allow students to take mid-year exams before winter break and to allow high school students to attend community college courses. I have filed bills seeking that calendar flexibility, but those requests have been denied. CMS did not want to risk getting sued, as happened in Union County. Read more about Union County's attempt to start school early and the resulting lawsuit [here](#).

Despite the state law, Rowan and Stanly counties started August 9; Clay and Surry counties started August 10; Avery, Henderson, Iredell, Lee, Polk and Rutherford counties start on August 14; and Cleveland, Gaston, Jackson, Lincoln and Yadkin counties start on August 16. Public Charter schools are not restrained by the state law and may start earlier. Most local charter schools start this week or next. Read more [here](#).

Free Backpacks, School Supplies, and Shoes in Davidson and Cornelius



Gethsemane Baptist Church in Davidson is hosting its 16th Annual Back2School Community Outreach Event this Saturday from 10am-noon at 565 Jetton Street, Davidson. It's a drive-thru event supplying back to school supplies for qualifying students, including college students. They partner with Davidson College Presbyterian Church, Davidson United Methodist Church, St. Alban's Episcopal Church and Storyhill Church.

The Back2School Event needs volunteers and donations. Donations can be made using **Cashapp** and directed to \$gbclakenorman. I'll be there volunteering. If you can help, contact outreach@gbclakenorman.org or sign up to volunteer [here](#).

The Neighborhood CARE Center is partnering with Grace Covenant to provide free backpacks, school supplies and shoes to neighborhood children this Saturday. **The community event will occur at Smithville Park, 19710 South Ferry St., Cornelius from 2:00 - 5:00 PM on Saturday, August 12.** More than 500 backpacks filled with school supplies, shoes, and over 1,200 bags of snacks will be provided in preparation for the new school year. The event will also include bounce houses, games, activities, and giveaways. **I'll be there helping to offer non-partisan voter registration.** There will be hamburgers, hot dogs, popcorn, snow cones and drinks. Read more [here](#).

Public Health Update



North Carolina is experiencing a summer surge in COVID-19 cases. Hospital visits, hospitalizations due to COVID-19 and evidence of the virus in wastewater have been increasing since early July.

Stay home & take an at-home test if you feel unwell. Those who last had a vaccine or COVID-19 5+ months ago may want to stay away from crowds indoors and wash their hands with soap and water more than usual.

New vaccine formulations targeting the most prevalent variant are expected to be available in September. Read more [here](#).

Lake Norman Charter Boat and Boat Rental Regulations Revisions



[The Lake Norman Marine Commission](#) (LNMC) will host its August meeting on Monday, August 14, beginning at 7:00 PM. This meeting will be held at the Charles Mack Citizen Center (15 N Main St, Mooresville, NC 28115), and will discuss changes made to boat rental and charter boat regulations, effective in January 2024. Anyone wishing to make a public comment should sign up prior to the start of the meeting. All comments are limited to 3 minutes.

The new boat rental regulations are aimed at increasing the safety of those who rent boats on Lake Norman. They will require inspections and permits for each boat, liability insurance, and renter training requirements. The most recent revisions can be found [here](#), posted following the LNMC's May 2023 meeting

The new charter boat regulations are aimed at increasing the safety of those who are chartering boats or paying fees for various boat cruises and other advertised activities on Lake Norman. The new regulations will require all charter boats to have a permit issued by the Commission, proper levels of insurance, and to have a Captain with a valid U.S. Coast Guard Master's license. The most recent revisions can be found [here](#).

Mecklenburg County Transportation News



The Charlotte Regional Transportation Coalition and Sustain Charlotte are taking public input about changes to the bus routes between North Mecklenburg and Charlotte. If you live in one of the North Mecklenburg Towns, they would like your response to [this brief survey](#). Your input is helpful whether or not you've ever ridden a CATS bus.

In other transportation news impacting North Mecklenburg, the City is currently seeking Statements of Qualifications from firms to "provide planning, conceptual design, and public engagement services related to the design update for the LYNX Red Line" (the Red Line Commuter Rail Project). Although this project still faces several hurdles, it's good to see some work in the right direction. You can read more [here](#).

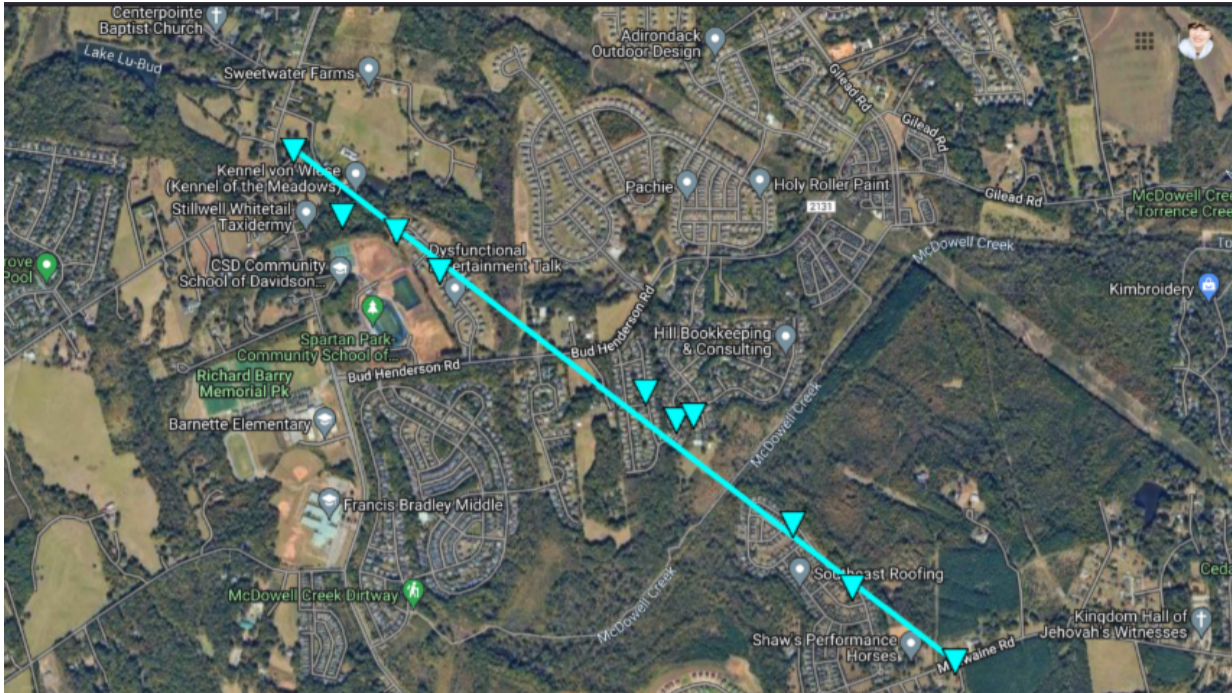
For those in West Charlotte, there is a free BBQ picnic hosted by the Charlotte Regional Transportation Coalition on Sunday, September 17th, from 1:00 - 3:00 PM.

Location: Clanton Road Park shelter (1520 Clanton Road, Charlotte)

More details [here](#)

RSVP [here](#) by September 7, 2023

Bizarre Local News



The National Weather Service has confirmed that a second tornado formed during Monday's record-breaking severe weather outbreak. The first tornado struck portions of Catawba, Iredell, and Rowan counties. The second tornado (an EF0 tornado with 85 mph winds) touched down in Huntersville (its path shown above).

At least two injuries were reported Tuesday in the greater Charlotte area as a result of the storms, which produced more damage reports than any other day in the western Carolinas in the past two decades. Read more [here](#).



On Monday, a 900-LB longhorn bull broke free from his restraints during relocation after being startled by the rough weather. Local officers and the owner have tried to corral and lasso the steer with no success (as of Friday morning). Police are urging anyone who encounters the bull to keep a safe distance and contact 311 to provide the location of the sighting. Read more [here](#).

Links to Helpful Information

Domestic Violence Hotline: If you or someone you know is experiencing domestic violence or partner abuse, please call [Safe Alliance](#) at 704-332-2513 and they can help you.

Suicide Prevention: If you have thoughts of harming yourself, **please call or text 988**, the Suicide Prevention Hotline for help.

Property Tax values and histories in Mecklenburg County can be searched on [this site](#) that includes links to Polaris and information about past assessments. You can find more detailed information on real estate values on the [Mecklenburg](#) site.

Mecklenburg's Department of Community Resources provides individuals and families with [immediate access](#) to a diverse range of Mecklenburg County Health and Human Services programs and community partner services in Community Resources Centers throughout the County.

Mecklenburg's County Bar website provides a list of pro bono resources for those unable to afford legal counsel.

Voter Information: You can find your current information on the [NC Voter Lookup page](#).

Unclaimed Cash! Visit [NCCash.com](#) today to see if you have unclaimed property under the supervision of the NC Treasurer's office.

Free Property Tax Assistance Services



Do you need help with your property taxes? The [Charlotte Center for Legal Advocacy](#) is providing free assistance to help homeowners prepare their NC property tax relief applications. Call **980-256-7952** or visit their website to learn more [here](#).

COVID-19 Test Updates



COVID TESTS are approved for use after expiration date. The FDA granted another three-month shelf-life extension for the iHealth COVID-19 Antigen Rapid Test, which extended the shelf-life of all iHealth tests from 6 months to 15 months. Please use the tool at the link below to check the most updated expiration date of your kit. FDA for shelf-life extensions are issued every three months based on stability studies, and the new shelf-lives for our tests will apply to tests already produced as well as future production. More information [here](#).

Financial Update on the State's General Fund

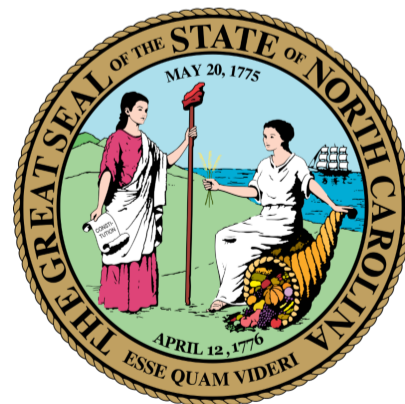
Beginning Cash, Friday, July 28	15,462,157,131.32
Add Receipts:	
Tax and Non-Tax Receipts	638,559,956.23
Coronavirus Relief Receipts	0.00
Other Receipts	1,622,674,273.73
Less Disbursements:	
Payroll	150,066,941.63
State Aid	3,407,653.77
Medicaid/Other Provider Payments	1,100,045,070.62
Tax Refunds/Distributions	26,007,807.90
Debt Service	0.00
Coronavirus Relief Transfers Out	0.00
General Operating	927,416,876.22
Ending Cash, Friday, August 04	15,516,447,011.14
Less Reserved Cash:	
Due to Local Governments – Sales and Use Tax Payable	979,972,167.77
Other Reserves	26,963,407.97
American Recovery Plan Act Reserve	103,076,693.32
Carry Forward Reserve	662,612,839.96
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	601,900,000.00
Federal Infrastructure Match Reserve	95,328,642.00
Housing Reserve	0.00
Hurricane Florence Disaster Recovery Reserve	59,125,856.06
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	3,503,127.09
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	4,750,001,113.98
Stabilization and Inflation Reserve	1,000,000,000.00
State Emergency Response/Disaster Reserve	873,489,333.22
Unfunded Liability Solvency Reserve	0.00
Wilmington Harbor Enhancements Reserve	283,800,000.00
World University Games Reserve	25,000,000.00
Unreserved Cash Balance, Friday, August 04	5,460,575,749.77

The Office of the State Controller (OSC) released the General Fund Cash Watch numbers for the week ending Friday, August 4. OSC provides a weekly update on the State’s General Fund cash position which can be found at osc.nc.gov. **The current unreserved cash balance in state coffers is \$5.460 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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