

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

Another week without an approved budget. We have to pass a budget to keep all things moving smoothly for state employees and state services. The Governor's appointed committees are continuing to meet throughout the state.

Joyce Waddell

Sheriff Bills

Senate Bill 303 - Strengthen Juvenile Laws, passed the Senate 45-1 and moved to the House in April but has not advanced since then.

Still, on Aug. 7, the North Carolina Sheriffs' Association said it will continue to seek the bill's passage. SB303 would allow the public release of names, pictures and other information about juveniles for whom officers are searching and deem dangerous.

That is because even though law enforcement web and social media sites would be wiped after a juvenile is taken into custody, the information would almost certainly persist online.

This can be a slippery slope for our youth ages 16 - 17. This bill may still need some fail safes incorporated into it so that we will not destroy children's lives based on unfounded accusations. I believe that we should remove all criminals from the community, but if history has not taught us anything, it has taught us that not all accusations are true. This is especially true for black and brown communities.



**Farm
Bureau**

*Senator Waddell
shares legislative
updates at Farm
Bureau's
Mecklenburg County
Legislative Brunch.*



Tax Cuts

Income tax cuts saved taxpayers \$805 million in the fiscal year that ended June 30, according to the Office of State Budget and Management. There was a decline in individual income tax collections last year, “due primarily to reductions in the tax rate from 5.25% in 2021 to 4.99% in 2022 and 4.75% in 2023,” came as the total general fund revenue collections increased by \$327 million, or 1%, the agency reported recently.

Individual income taxes accounted for over \$16 billion of the total revenues, a figure that came in at \$1.292 billion. Sales and use taxes contributed \$10.801 billion, or about \$618 more than certified revenues and \$30 million above the May forecast. Corporate income and franchise taxes brought in \$2.483 billion, or \$637 million more than was budgeted. All other taxes totaled \$2.136 billion.

State agencies reverted \$1.17 billion in unspent funds, accounting for 4% of general fund appropriations for the year, due mostly to “historically high state employee vacancy and turnover rates as well as prudent budget management by agencies,” the budget office said. The budget office said the vacancy rate for state agencies has remained above 20%. The rate is currently above 23%.

The General Assembly continues to have negotiations over a new budget for the fiscal year that started on July 1. It is expected to accelerate further scheduled tax cuts, with legislative leaders signaling the final budget will likely include triggers tied to revenue. The coming tax cuts are estimated to save taxpayers an additional \$1.7 billion to \$6.7 billion over the next five years, depending on the final details.

I believe tax cuts should be approached slowly and carefully. It is important that we use taxes to keep vital services going for our state. It is clearly understood that we will lose services and state jobs.



Democratic Women

Senator Waddell is presented with the 2023 Doris Cromartie Award, an honor from the Democratic Women of Mecklenburg County for her diligence and hard work and more than 4 decades of service and membership at their annual fundraising gala.



COVID Booster

Just when we think we have a handle on COVID it reappears. The virus that causes COVID-19 is circulating more widely across North Carolina, and health experts are again urging people to make plans to get updated vaccine boosters. Data released recently shows there was an average of 17.3 million COVID-19 particles in sampled wastewater for the week of July 26, the most recent week of data available. That marks the fifth straight week of increase, and the highest weekly average since early April. It is a level four times higher than the low point set in late June.

Hospitalizations with COVID-19 have not increased at a similar rate, an indication that vaccines and immunity from prior infection are — for now — keeping most people from getting badly sick.

Back to School Press Conference

Senator Waddell participated in a press conference highlighting the budget impasse and the impact of chronic underfunding our public schools.



Vaccinations

COVID-19 and Influenza vaccines are still available, but there are other vaccines that are important as well. Contact your healthcare provider to inquire about vaccines that can help you lead a healthier life.



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