

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



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NC Senate District 41 Newsletter

August 25, 2023

Updates on Noteworthy Votes



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

Key bills on which I voted YES:

- **HB323, Retain Adult Developmental Vocational Rehabilitation Programs.** Prohibits the Department of Health and Human Services from reducing the number of Adult Developmental and Vocational Programs and Community Rehabilitation Programs or the number of individuals in those programs without consulting stakeholders and or appropriately reviewing current services. These programs are designed to help individuals to live and work as independently as possible, and offer a wide range of employment and support services.*
- **HB422, Unfair Real Estate Agreements Act.** Prohibits companies from using oppressive and excessively long-term agreements that undermine a person's ownership of their home and provides remedies for owners who are inconvenienced or damaged by the recording of unfair real estate service agreements. Read more [here](#).*

Key bills on which I voted NO:

- **SB9, Local Omnibus Changes.** This bill originally was a local bill dealing with elections in the town of Apex, but was amended to impact police and fire departments in Winston-Salem and the school board in Greensboro in ways that interfere with local government. Read more [here](#).
- **SB176, Consumers in Crisis Protection Act.** Allows loan companies to advance up to \$400,000 to a consumer pursuing a legal claim. The consumer would then pay the loan company back, with interest, out of any net proceeds recovered in the legal claim. When this bill was heard in the Senate Judiciary Committee, we raised concerns about its interference with the attorney-client relationship and its potential to get people into unfair debt.
- **SB512, Greater Accountability for Boards/Commissions.** Consolidates more power in the partisan-controlled NCGA and away from the executive branch. Replaces the entire state Board of Transportation and shifts appointment powers. Reduces or reallocates gubernatorial appointments to eight governing boards, including the Commission for Public Health and the Environmental Management Commission, which sets a number of business regulations. This bill goes against the precedent set by two state Supreme Court decisions over the past decade and is likely unconstitutional. Read more [here](#).
- **SB747, Elections Laws Changes.** Repeals the 3-day grace period for absentee ballots postmarked by Election Day (so ballots arriving after Election Day will not be counted), prohibits state or county boards of elections from accepting private donations for election administration, purges individuals from voter rolls based on jury disqualification, encourages poll observers to listen to conversations between voters and election workers, and more. [Though some of the harmful and vague sections of this bill have been repealed or amended](#), I do not support this bill. It will discourage certain voters from casting ballots and will cause valid ballots to be discarded instead of counted. In addition to the significant modifications to the voting process, the NCGA is not funding the boards of elections to ensure voters are informed of the new requirements or that ballots and polling locations will be ready and accurate in time for upcoming elections. Read more [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#).

*Passed Senate unanimously

Vetoes and Overrides



Over the past two weeks, Governor Cooper vetoed the following bills. So far, the NCGA has overridden six:

- **SB49, Parent's Bill of Rights.** I voted to sustain the Governor's veto. This is not about parental rights; it's an injection of culture wars into our classrooms. SB49 burdens school staff with requests and objections without penalty for abusive and frivolous behavior, undermines our ability to gather anonymous data about student health and well-being, disallows any books or other curriculum that discusses LGBTQ families in K-4, and forbids school staff from providing confidential advice or assistance to students. It targets some of the most vulnerable members of our communities and undermines public education. While debating the override on the floor, I spoke about what students and parents actually want the NCGA to address, such as school shootings and teacher, staff, and bus driver shortages. You can watch my full remarks [here](#). Read more [here](#) and [here](#).*
- **HB219, Charter School Omnibus.** I voted to sustain the Governor's veto. This bill allows unfair pre-lottery priority admissions to charters for children who attend certain preschools, prevents the Charter Review Board from considering the impacts of charter approvals and renewals on local public schools, removes restrictions on growth for low-performing charters, and allows counties to appropriate property taxes to fund charter school capital needs. The State Board of Education should continue to oversee the enrollment of charter schools to assure success and accountability and North Carolina should continue to cap the enrollment of low-performing charter schools. Read more [here](#).*
- **HB488, Code Council Reorganization and Various Code Amendments.** I voted to sustain the Governor's veto. This bill undermines our energy efficiency and safety goals because it freezes residential building code standards at an already outdated level. It also splits the Building Code Council into two committees, commercial and residential, limits the governor's appointment power to the council, and will likely cause North Carolina to lose federal dollars under the FEMA program. Our state building standards are already outdated, so further delay is a mistake and will result in higher energy costs for new home buyers. The bill is supported by builders, contractors, and developers. The measure is opposed by local fire marshals, environmentalists, and consumer protection advocates. Read more [here](#).*
- **HB574, Fairness in Women's Sports Act.** This bill prevents transgender girls from participating in school sports from kindergarten through the collegiate level (private and public). I oppose this blanket ban because it's unfair and hurtful, and voted to sustain the veto. There are already procedures in place to determine which team is appropriate for transgender athletes, on a case-by-case basis, taking all facts into consideration. Additionally, there are only 2 transgender girls in North Carolina playing sports at the K-12 level, which further demonstrates that this bill is unnecessary. Republican governors in other states have vetoed similar bills because they hurt their states' reputation and economy, and because they needlessly target an extremely small number of already vulnerable children. Read more [here](#).*
- **HB618, Charter School Review Board.** I voted to sustain the Governor's veto. In North Carolina, it has always been the responsibility of the State Board of Education to supervise free public education, including charter schools. The new charter school board established by this bill will have conflicts of interest; they are people who run charters and are vocal advocates for charter schools. We need serious and unbiased oversight as provided by the NC Constitution. This bill is bad policy and unconstitutional. Education experts, not partisan politicians, should conduct oversight of charter schools. Read more [here](#).*
- **HB808, Gender Transition/Minors.** I voted to sustain the Governor's veto. This bill strips rights from the parents of transgender children and undermines the standards of care utilized by accredited medical organizations. Republican governors from other states have rejected similar bills, and courts in other states have ruled that similar bills violate the constitutional rights of doctors and discriminated against transgender people. I voted no on HB808 because it is discriminatory and based on faulty information. Ordering doctors to stop following approved medical protocols sets a troubling precedent and is dangerous for vulnerable youth. Read more [here](#).*
- **SB512, Greater Accountability for Boards/Commissions.** See "Updates on Noteworthy Votes" section. Vetoed on August 24, 2023. Read more [here](#). No override vote scheduled yet.
- **SB747, Elections Laws Changes.** See "Updates on Noteworthy Votes" section. Vetoed on August 24, 2023. Read more [here](#). No override vote scheduled yet.

*Veto has been overridden

Senator Marcus in the Community



Last week I was able to volunteer at two Back to School community events. At Smithville Park, I helped [Unity in Community](#) offer non-partisan voter registration. It was exciting to pre-register two teenagers, help two people update their address, and register an 18 year old new voter. The crowd was full of friendly people, many of whom are from other countries including Japan, Afghanistan, El Salvador, Mexico and Venezuela. Immigration makes our community more interesting!



Last Friday, I discussed gender violence and abortion access with a delegation from Kyrgyzstan (previously part of the USSR) and members of the [North Carolina Reproductive Access Network](#). The Kyrgyzstan delegation was hosted by the US Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs as part of its International Visitor Leadership Program, which addresses global issues through diplomatic engagement. We met at the [International House](#) in Charlotte.

The delegation was interested to learn about the impact of the *Dobbs* decision and the recent passage of [Senate Bill 20](#). We discussed how abortion restrictions in their country and in the US are a form of control and violence against women. It was a memorable opportunity to speak with people from the other side of the world and was memorable as the first time my words were interpreted into Russian and I was provided with an earpiece to listen to the delegate's remarks translated into English.



Last week, I attended the [Historic Hoskins Coalition Group](#)'s neighborhood meeting where they highlighted their partnership with [West Side Community Land and Trust](#) (WSCLT) and the recent purchase of 29 homes in the Historic Hoskins Community and 3 in the Freedom Drive area.

WSCLT's Executive Director shared their journey to acquire the homes, saving them from poor management and likely gentrification. The homes require significant updates to make them habitable. WSCLT has a plan to find alternative housing for the families while the homes are rebuilt/improved and families will have an option to return as homeowners. The homes will remain affordable in perpetuity.



The Charlotte Pride Parade felt especially important this year, given the discriminatory laws enacted last week in our state. The crowds were huge, showing so much love and kindness. I walked the route with several friends. Were you there?

Eliminate the Digital Divide's Laptop Giveaway Tomorrow



Last night, I attended Eliminate the Digital Divide (E2D)'s 10 year anniversary celebration, where founder Pat Millen announced that **E2D will be giving away 1,000 laptops for free at tomorrow's distribution event.** The event will be held on Saturday, August 26, from 9:00am-12:00pm at ImaginOn Library (300 E. 7th St). Parking is at the 7th St Parking Garage and will be free as well because E2D is validating parking!

E2D laptops are intended for families without sufficient access to technology and there is a maximum of 2 laptops per family. If you or a family member needs a laptop, be sure to get there early. This event is first come, first served.

Back-To-School Immunization Clinic Tomorrow



Rising Kindergartners, 7th graders, and 12th graders are due for **required vaccines**. Get them up to date on vaccinations before school starts at **this weekend's back-to-school immunization clinic**. Located at 2845 Beatties Ford Road in Charlotte, appointments will be held from 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM on Saturday, August 26. **Appointments are required, and you can call 704-336-6500 to schedule.** Please bring your child's vaccination record! More details about tomorrow's clinic are [here](#).

CMS Reopening on Monday

STAFFING

Vacancies *(as of Aug 21, 2023)*



516 Teachers (745 hired)
270.5 Teacher Assistants (219 hired)
87 Guest Teachers (79 hired)



34 Bus Drivers
(49 hired)



156 Cafeteria Staff
(13 hired)

CHARLOTTE-MECKLENBURG SCHOOLS 34

Hiring Incentives

	Sign-on bonus	Incentive Pay
Teacher Critical Shortage Pay <i>(Secondary Math, Science and English Language Arts; K-12 EC and Multi-Language)</i>	\$2,500	\$200/month
Bus Drivers	\$1,500	
HVAC	\$1,000	
Transportation Technician II	\$3,000	
Substitute Incentives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5-9 substitutes assignments 10+ substitutes assignments Title 1 assignments 		\$200/month \$500/month \$20 extra per day

CHARLOTTE-MECKLENBURG SCHOOLS 35

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools will welcome students for the start of a new school year on Monday. All buildings are ready to open on time, after a summer that included 350 repair/replace projects. You can **apply for free or reduced price student lunch** [here](#) (breakfast is free for all CMS students).

The lack of a state budget means that there are no raises or bonuses from the state yet and CMS has a significant number of unfilled positions, including 101 EC teacher vacancies and 187 EC teacher assistant vacancies. Several bus routes were consolidated in order to cover the driver vacancies, which will mean less convenience for riders. If you are interested in working for CMS, you can find more information [here](#).

Click [here](#) for more back to school information from CMS's public meeting earlier this week.

North Carolina Needs Teachers



NC Teaching Fellows Newsletter

Be a part of the legacy.
Be a part of a brighter future.

TEACHING FELLOWS ON THE MOVE



Kristen Taylor Herring, 2023 NC Teaching Fellows recipient was recently featured in the *Duplin Times*. Follow the link to learn more about Kristen.

[Kristen Taylor Herring](#)

BIG NEWS!

There will be **TWO** application cycles for prospective Teaching Fellows during the 2023/2024 academic year.
The first cycle opens September 4, 2023.
Be on the look out for more updates!!

Upcoming Events

NCTF State Director Meeting - Wednesday, September 6th - 6:30 PM-7:30PM VIA Zoom



Applicant Checklist

- Be willing to teach Special Education or STEM in NC**
- Gain admission to one of our partner institutions**
- College Student with a 2.7 GPA**
- High School Senior with a 3.0 unweighted GPA**

North Carolina needs teachers! Are you interested in the profession? Please look into the NC Teaching Fellows Program. You get your education paid for and we get the benefit of your service to North Carolinian students.

[Connect With NC Teaching Fellows](#)

[Teaching Fellow FAQ](#)

North Carolina Department of Transportation: Public Involvement



The N.C. Department of Transportation is accepting public input through August 31 on what you would like to see in NCDOT's draft 10-year transportation plan for 2026-2035. The State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) is updated every two years to ensure that NCDOT responds to transportation needs throughout the state. **So let them know what SD41 needs - whether big projects or small. Project priorities can be as large-scale as an interstate improvement or as small as a new turn lane or intersection improvement.** Priorities can be for any type of transportation.

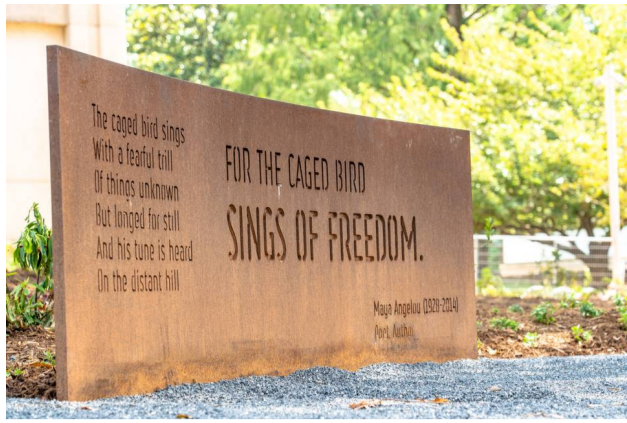
You can submit comments by [taking a short online survey](#). You can also provide input by phone, email, or mail using the contact information associated with each county listed [here](#).

Please note that the comment period is not for maintenance-related projects, such as patching potholes, resurfacing, or ditches. NCDOT uses a different method to prioritize maintenance projects.

Plan a Visit to Raleigh's Freedom Park



The North Carolina Freedom Park opened on Wednesday, August 23rd in downtown Raleigh. The park honors George Floyd, Harriet Jacobs, and other prominent Black Americans. At the center is a public art piece called the Beacon of Freedom, which will be lit at night. Quotations about freedom from civil rights activists such as Pauli Murray, Ella Baker, and Golden A. Frinks line the park's pathways. It sits on the corner of Wilmington and Lane streets. Read more [here](#).



HOMES Program and Mecklenburg County Homeowners



Helping Out Mecklenburg’s Homeowners with Economic Support (HOMES) is a county-created seasonal program designed to help Mecklenburg County residents reduce the cost of annual home ownership. HOMES offers qualifying homeowners an economic assistance grant of up to \$660. There is no age requirement to participate in the program, and the home does not have to be paid off. **The application period runs from July 1 to November 17, 2023.** Applications will be processed on a first-come, first-served basis until funds are exhausted.

Mecklenburg County homeowners who qualify for a HOMES grant are those who have lived in their home for at least the last three years and it is their primary residence, have no more than one delinquent tax bill in the last three years, and meet a qualifying total household income level. Applicants may pick up paper applications at the Department of Community Resources or the County Assessor’s Office, both at 3205 Freedom Drive in Charlotte, or request by phone at 980-314-4663. Read more [here](#), and apply for a HOMES grant [here](#).

Community Resources: Back to School Supplies and Free Haircuts this Weekend



Lucky Spot Barbershop and Cops & Barbers are hosting their 13th annual back-to-school event this weekend in West Charlotte. The **school supply giveaway** will be held on Saturday, August 26, at Southview Recreation Center, 1720 Vilma St.

Lucky Spot will also give **free haircuts** on Sunday, August 27 at their location in the Walmart at 3240 Wilkinson Boulevard. **Registration is required for both events.** Click [here](#) to register.

Davidson Branch Library's National Voter Registration Day Event



Are you registered to vote? Is your registration up to date? Do you know when and where to vote? **What about the new requirements for voter ID?**

On **Tuesday, September 19th**, the Davidson Branch Library will host a help desk to answer your questions regarding your voter registration and how the implementation of photo identification will change the voting process.

If you are interested in volunteering for the table, contact [Nancy Lingle](#) at the Davidson Public Library.

Aspire Trade High School Opens Its Doors



[Aspire Trade High School](#), founded by the nonprofit [Aspire Carolinas Foundation Inc.](#) and located in Huntersville, is the **first charter trade high school in the Charlotte Metro area**. It opened on August 23 and **offers students the opportunity to graduate with both a high school diploma and a trade certificate**. The school is starting out with programs in 10 industries, such as carpentry and masonry, and will also include classes on "soft skills" important to the professional world. Read more [here](#).

The Town of Davidson Now Accepting Applications for Nonprofit Grant Requests



The Town of Davidson is accepting applications from nonprofits for grant funding for Fiscal Year 2023-2024. **The deadline for submission is Friday, September 15, 2023.** The total amount of funding available is \$50,000 annually. Program guidelines can be found [here](#).

For more information, please email Parks and Recreation Operations Manager [Gina Carmon](#) or call 704- 940-9644. Apply [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, August 11	15,351,198,016.53
Add Receipts:	
Tax and Non-Tax Receipts	623,195,105.91
Coronavirus Relief Receipts	0.00
Other Receipts	465,417,841.24
Less Disbursements:	
Payroll	74,127,084.38
State Aid	44,003,072.88
Medicaid/Other Provider Payments	170,367,044.14
Tax Refunds/Distributions	22,946,996.29
Debt Service	0.00
Coronavirus Relief Transfers Out	0.00
General Operating	280,930,107.28
Ending Cash, Friday, August 18	15,847,436,658.71
Less Reserved Cash:	
Due to Local Governments – Sales and Use Tax Payable	608,196,454.22
Other Reserves	15,548,345.80
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	59,078,215.84
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	8,380,211.23
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	873,373,177.31
Unfunded Liability Solvency Reserve	10,000,000.00
Wilmington Harbor Enhancements Reserve	283,800,000.00
World University Games Reserve	25,000,000.00
Unreserved Cash Balance, Friday, August 18	6,160,042,885.05

The Office of the State Controller (OSC) released the General Fund Cash Watch numbers for the week ending Friday, August 18. 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 \$6.160 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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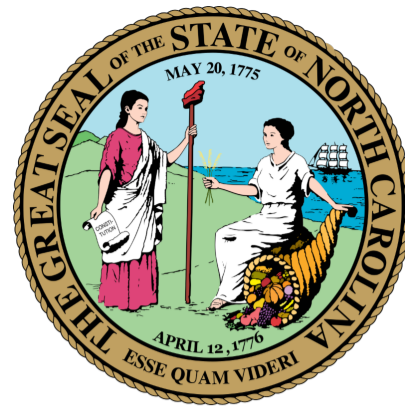
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How can we help you? Let us know and [reach out](#) to our office! We want to hear from you.

Senator Natasha Marcus | [Website](#)



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