

Celebrating Labor Day / Medicaid Expansion Delays / State Budget Delays / School Bus Driver Training / Small Business Export Grant Opportunity



From Representative Nasif Majeed <majeedla@ncleg.net>
To <sjohnston@tuesdayforumcharlotte.org>
Reply-To <majeedla@ncleg.net>
Date 2023-09-06 18:39

September 6, 2023

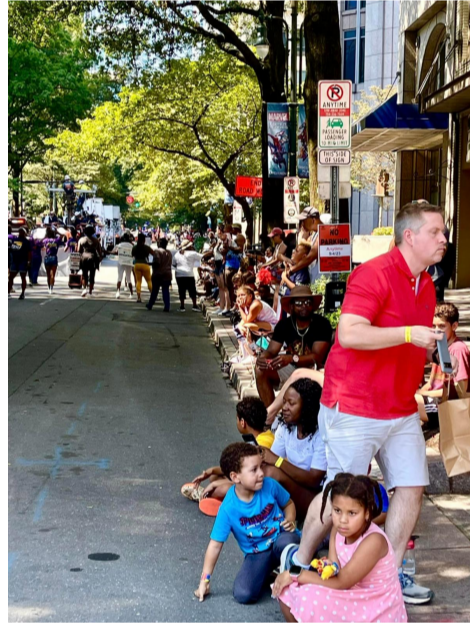
**Representative Nasif Majeed
District 99 - Mecklenburg County**



Peace. This week, in Uptown Charlotte at the Labor Day Parade, we honored the dignity of the worker and showed our appreciation for the American Labor Movement.



Ben Lee, Parade Coordinator





MEDICAID EXPANSION DELAYS COST JOBS AND LIVES

Medicaid expansion has been available to North Carolina for over a decade and, each year, North Carolina lawmakers declined to accept billions of federal dollars to expand coverage and fund health care jobs across the state. In March, a bipartisan vote finally expanded Medicaid with a start date of October 1 but there was a catch. The Republican-controlled legislature also had to pass a State Budget. We are now months past the budget deadline as House and Senate Republicans negotiate amongst themselves.

The failure to pass a State Budget on time means Medicaid will not be expanded on October 1 and North Carolina will lose out on more federal dollars and people will lose the opportunity for health care coverage.

There has been a lot of coverage on the impact of Medicaid expansion being delayed in the short term, but North Carolina has gone without it for almost ten years while many other states accepted it immediately.

The NC Department of Health and Human Services estimates that North Carolina's refusal to expand Medicaid has cost us more than \$30 billion in federal funds since 2014. More than 600,000 North Carolinians have missed out on health care coverage. No doubt thousands have died or led less healthy lives because of these delays.

Timely Medicaid Expansion would have helped the state's economy:

- Billions of federal dollars invested in NC would have produced an estimated 37,000 more jobs across the state.
- Most of the jobs would be in the health care field, while the rest would be in ancillary fields like construction, retail, etc.
- Expansion would have also boosted tax collections due to increased spending, both for state and local government.

STATE BUDGET DELAYS AND CHRONIC UNDERFUNDING HARM SCHOOLS

With students returning to class across North Carolina, schools are facing significant obstacles thanks to years of state underfunding and this year's State Budget delay.

While we do not yet know what is in the final State Budget package, we know from the preliminary House and Senate budgets that the underfunding of public schools in recent years will continue. Significant tax cuts for the wealthiest individuals and corporations combined with an unprecedented diversion of funds away from public schools to private school vouchers will leave classrooms shortchanged once again.

We are seeing the results of years of underfunding with shortages of teachers, school employees, bus drivers, nurses, and school counselors. It is difficult to recruit and retain when the funding is not there for predictable, significant pay increases. Our schools are struggling to compete with the private sector. At the start of school this year, we saw record numbers of vacancies in school employment positions. Underfunded schools and understaffed schools lead to less teaching, more problems with discipline, and less attention to students' mental and physical health.

Our state constitution guarantees children the right to a sound, basic education but we are falling short.

GOVERNOR COOPER TAKES ACTION TO HELP ADDRESS SCHOOL BUS DRIVER SHORTAGE WITH \$1 MILLION INVESTMENT IN TRAINING

Last week Governor Roy Cooper announced an investment to help tackle North Carolina's school bus driver shortage crisis by allocating \$1 million in federal funding to the Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) in the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) to enhance school bus driver training capacity. The shortage of school bus drivers is a serious concern for school districts, causes problems for families, and impacts student well-being and learning.

One of the primary challenges identified by both school districts and the North Carolina Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) is the extended time it takes to train newly hired bus drivers due to trainer staffing shortages and an increased number of trainees. In response, Governor Cooper has taken decisive actions to address this issue and bolster the state's school bus driver workforce.

The plan includes hiring up to seven temporary trainers, one for each NCDOT region, to accelerate the training process. This investment will be utilized to employ former school bus driver trainers who have expressed interest in helping expedite training of new bus drivers.

This investment will also provide retention bonuses of up to \$3,000 to current school bus driver training employees. This incentive seeks to recognize their dedication and support in staying with the state, ultimately enhancing the training capacity. In addition to hiring trainers and providing retention bonuses, funds will be used to purchase two dedicated training buses. This will enable DMV to conduct training sessions more efficiently and without constraints on borrowing buses from school districts, which are sometimes unavailable, thus improving the overall training process.

Funding for this initiative is from federal Emergency Assistance for Non-Public Schools (EANS) funds that have reverted to the Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) fund.

SMALL BUSINESS EXPORT GRANT OPPORTUNITY

The State Trade Expansion Program (STEP) is specifically designed to help small businesses in North Carolina fund costs associated with international trade. Qualifying small business exporters are eligible for up to \$16,000 in reimbursements for international business building activities. Learn more about this opportunity in an Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina webinar on September 26 at 10:00 AM.

Here is the [link to register](#).

This one-hour webinar is designed for NC exporters to not only understand eligibility for funding through the STEP program, but more specifically about utilizing the current program, STEP 11.

The following topics will be addressed:

- Eligibility
- Application Process
- Offerings
- SBA (Small Business Administration) Rules Surrounding the Program
- Reimbursement Process

Peace,

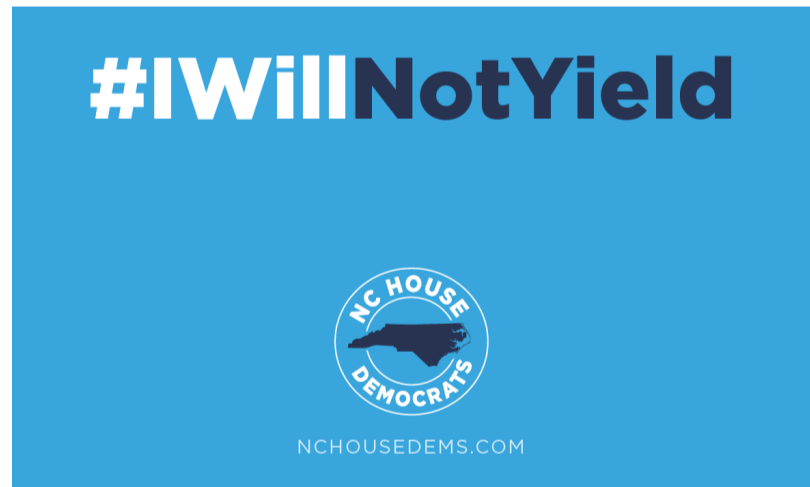


Join Our Mailing List & Follow Me on Facebook



It's easy to join our mailing list! Just send your email address by text message:
Text MAJEEDN to 22828 to get started.

Visit our Website



Representative Nasif Majeed, District 99 | Legislative Building, 16 W. Jones Street, Room 1008, Raleigh, NC 27601

[Unsubscribe sjohnston@tuesdayforumcharlotte.org](mailto:sjohnston@tuesdayforumcharlotte.org)

[Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)

Sent by majeedla@ncleg.net powered by



Try email marketing for free today!