

SPAM Latest Updates from the NCGA



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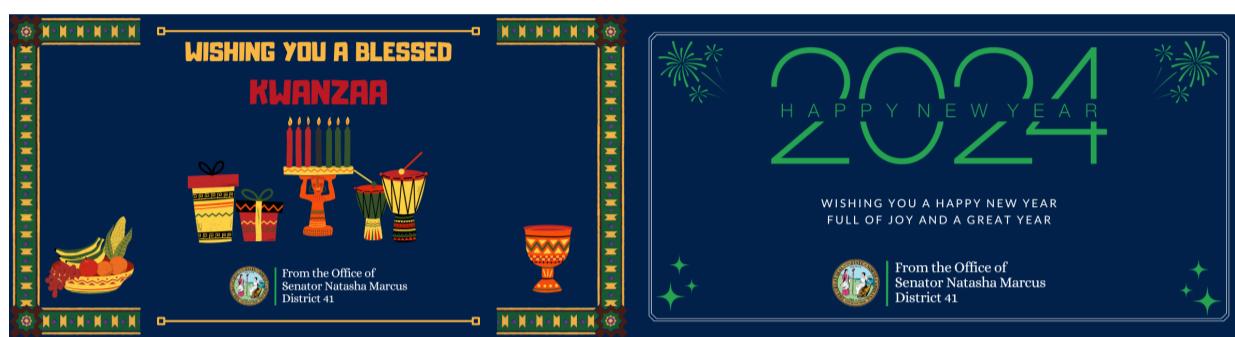
Natasha **MARCUS**

NC Senate District 41



NC Senate District 41 Newsletter

December 29, 2023



Legislative Update: Important Bills Go into Effect January 1



There are several new laws that go into effect on Monday, January 1. The full list of effective dates of legislation with effective dates between July 1, 2023, and January 1, 2024 can be found [here](#). Below are some of the most impactful:

- **SB157, Limited Provisional License Modification.** Teens who obtain a limited learner permit will have to keep it for nine months before seeking a limited provisional license. During the COVID pandemic, the time period was shortened to six months.
- A section of **SB190, Dept. of Health and Human Services Revisions**, clarifies that medication abortions are lawful through twelve weeks. Another section requiring healthcare practitioners to prescribe codeine cough syrup electronically will also go into effect.
- A section of **SB299, Reimburse Late Audit Costs with Sales Tax Revenue**, that allows the Local Government Commission to withhold a small portion of sales tax distributions from local governments that submit audits more than a year late. The amount withheld would be equivalent to 150% of the cost of the required audit.
- **SB747, Elections Law Changes.** Among many other changes, this bill eliminates the three-day grace period for receiving absentee ballots. Now, all mail-in ballots will need to be received by 7:30 p.m. on Election Day for them to be counted. SB747 also requires that voters who register and vote on the same day during in-person early voting show proof of residence and a photo ID and cast a " retrievable ballot," and grants significant powers to poll observers. Though two lawsuits that focus specifically on the changes to same-day voter registration were heard recently by a Federal District Court Judge, the involved parties have been given a week to talk and work out a resolution. If they don't reach a conclusion by January 4, it will be up to the judge to decide whether or not to strike down the law. Read more about the lawsuits [here](#) and [here](#).
- A section of **HB8, Various Statutory Changes**. This section requires age verification on pornographic websites. Websites will need to verify that users in North Carolina are over the age of 18 through a commercially available database. These sites will not be allowed to keep users' identifying data. Users will be able to sue sites if information is retained in violation of the law. Parents or guardians whose minor was allowed to access porn will also be able to sue.
- **HB415, Stop Addiction Fraud Ethics Act of 2023.** This bill establishes new laws for advertising and marketing materials for substance use disorder treatment providers and facilities, including accurate information on the length of the stay at the facilities and a summary of any relationships between the treatment center and the publisher of the ads.
- Some sections of **the state budget**, including a provision that requires an **increase in the registration fee for fully electric vehicles** from \$140 to \$180. The fee will be adjusted for inflation every four years, starting next July 1. Also taking effect is the implementation of a new \$90 fee for plug-in hybrid vehicles, which use both electricity and gas. This fee will be adjusted for inflation next summer, to an estimated \$107. Both fees are on top of the \$38.75 that all passenger vehicles pay the DMV each year.
- Also, per a state budget provision, the **Commissioner of Insurance is stripped of the title of State Fire Marshal**, which will become an appointed position subject to confirmation by the NCGA. Read more [here](#).

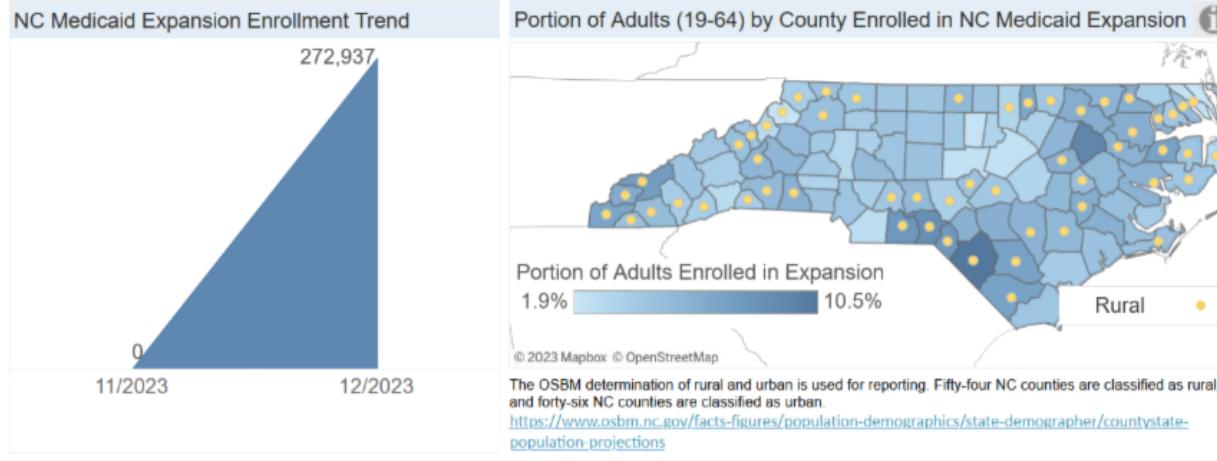
Learn more about the bills going into effect in January 2024 [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#).

2023 Legislative Session Is Over



The NCGA ended our long session in October, following passage of the budget and the completion of redistricting. As a result, there have been no committee meetings or votes over the last two weeks. I'll keep you posted about any special sessions that may arise.

Medicaid Expansion Enrollment Reached 280,000 in First Weeks of Program



Medicaid expansion in North Carolina began December 1 of this year. By December 12, the number of residents enrolled under the state's new coverage for low-income adults reached almost 300,000. **The expanded eligibility covers people ages 19-64 who make too much to qualify for traditional Medicaid but not enough to qualify for government-subsidized private insurance.** North Carolina's Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) reported that more than 84,000 people had applied for Medicaid through December 15, and that 49,000 prescriptions had been filled for expansion enrollees as of December 12. DHHS operates an online dashboard that keeps track of [overall Medicaid enrollment](#) and has unveiled an additional dashboard to keep track of [Medicaid Expansion enrollment](#). Read more [here](#).

North Carolina School Districts Need Calendar Flexibility



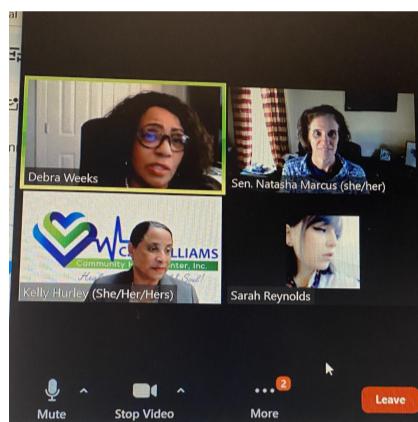
Though North Carolina law forbids most traditional public schools to start the school year before the last week of August, an increasing number defied the law by starting sooner. This year, the official start date was August 28. CMS honored that date, though it has long been a goal of CMS to start sooner. **An earlier start date allows students to take mid-year exams before winter break and allows high school students to attend community college courses.** Charter and private schools have control over their calendars, but traditional public schools do not. I have filed bills in previous years and sponsored [SB229](#) this year, seeking calendar flexibility, but those requests have been denied. CMS did not want to risk getting sued, as happened in Union County earlier this year.

Last year, three districts opened early and faced no legal ramifications. This year, fifteen districts opened early, going against North Carolina law. If Union County had not been sued, sixteen districts would have opened early. Last week, the Gaston County school board unanimously approved calendars for 2024 and 2025 that will start classes in the middle of August, approximately two weeks before the legal start date. Prior to the vote, surveys were held that showed early starts for both years being overwhelmingly favored by students, employees, parents, and community members. Options for start dates that were compliant with the law got only 12% approval from survey participants, and earlier starts for 2024 and 2025 received approval from 88% of participants. Read more [here](#).

Senator Marcus in the Community



The Black Political Caucus of Charlotte-Mecklenburg hosted a fun holiday event at the newest venue in Senate District 41, the very cool Marquee Charlotte Lounge. It was good to see friends and colleagues and support a new local business.



I met with Chief Executive Officer, Debra Weeks, and Chief Development Officer, Kelly Hurley, of [C.W. Williams Community Health Center](#) located in West Charlotte. C.W. Williams Community Health Center was the only federally-qualified health care center in Mecklenburg County when it was founded in 1981. The more than 40-year-old healthcare center broke ground this July on its new medical facility. The \$11 million, two-story building will replace the now-demolished health center at 3333 Wilkinson Boulevard. The new center is scheduled for completion next spring or summer. C.W. Williams meets the health needs of underserved populations in Mecklenburg, Cabarrus, Gaston, Iredell, Anson, Union Counties. In our meeting, we discussed the positive effect that Medicaid Expansion will have on patient coverage - 43% more patients at C.W. Williams will have healthcare coverage - as well as updates regarding the construction of the new building.

Recycling in Senate District 41

Interested in Recycling Your Christmas Tree?

Live Christmas trees can be recycled curbside or at a full-service center.
Residents can bring up to two trees for free. Remove all decorations and lights first!
Paper gift bags, wrapping paper, and cardboard boxes (no glitter or foil) can be recycled as well.
Just place them directly in your curbside cart!

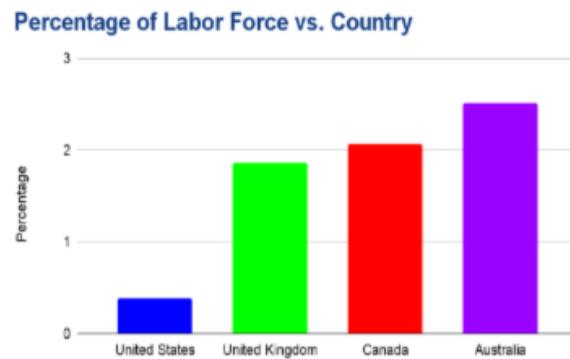
From the Office of
Senator Natasha Marcus
District 41

Mecklenburg County residents all follow the same guidelines on what can and cannot be recycled at their homes. While the county does not collect your materials, it does process them at its materials recovery facility. Please remember to recycle right and only recycle curbside the items that they can process. Unacceptable items contaminate the recyclables making whole loads unacceptable to the county's end users. A complete list of all acceptable and unacceptable materials can be found [here](#).

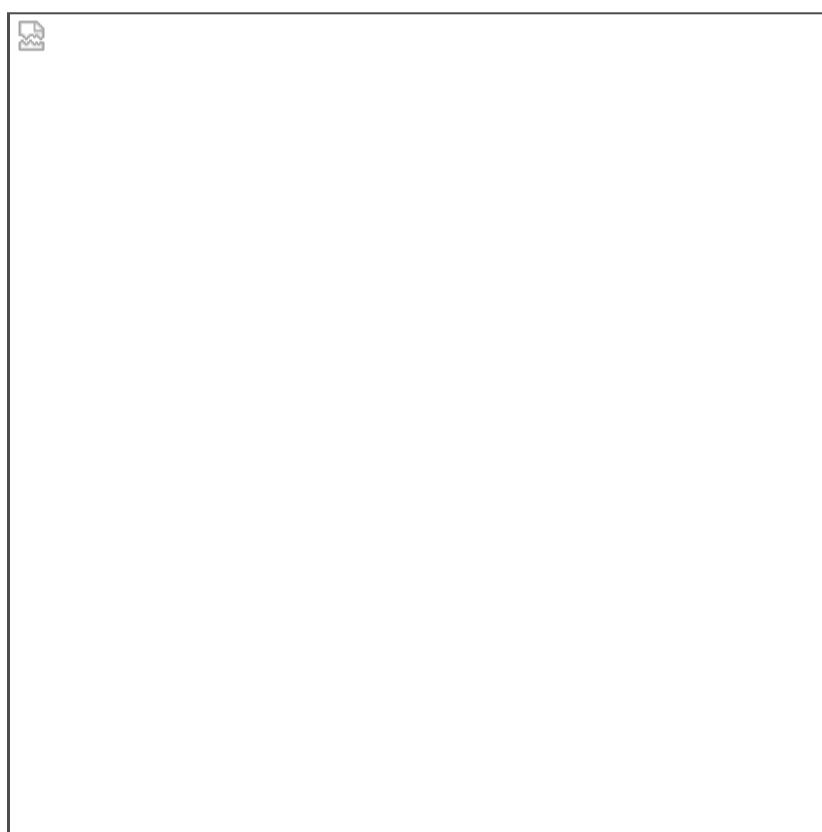
Information specific to recyclable pickups, such as pickup schedules in Davidson, Cornelius, and Huntersville, can be found [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#). Some materials that are unacceptable for curbside pickup can be taken to retailers, or any of the four Mecklenburg County Full Service Recycling Centers where they are recycled through separate systems. Find the Mecklenburg County Full Service Recycling Center located closest to you [here](#).

Apprenticeships for America's First State Legislators' Forum

Apprenticeships Globally



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Last month, [Apprenticeships for America](#) held its first State Legislators' Forum, where legislators from across the United States met to share their successes, challenges, and ideas regarding apprenticeships. Representatives from the organization presented some interesting facts regarding apprenticeships in the United States, such as the total public funding for apprenticeships (\$1 per apprentice vs. \$50 per college student), and that the fastest-growing apprenticeship occupations are outside of construction in occupations like IT, healthcare, manufacturing and public service. The proportion of the U.S. labor force trained through apprenticeships hovers around half a percent of the total labor force of the United States, which is significantly smaller than that of the United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia.

Before COVID, North Carolina middle school students had the opportunity to visit facilities to learn about different career opportunities. Other than that program, North Carolina has struggled to grow apprenticeship programs. During the meeting, state legislators discussed the importance of educating youth about educational opportunities involving Registered Apprenticeships, addressing the obstacle of transportation for apprentices, attending to workers' compensation and insurance issues for minors, and coordinating with state labor departments. Legislators from other states shared a variety of initiatives and bills designed to promote apprenticeship programs centered around youth, particularly in middle and high schools.

New Census Numbers Confirm North Carolina's Explosive Population Growth



North Carolina added 139,526 people to its population in the year ending last July 1. The state's rate of growth (1.3%) was the fifth fastest during that time. Migration of people from other states and other countries accounted for about 91% of North Carolina's growth last year, and waning COVID-19 mortality rates resulted in an increase in natural population growth, accounting for the other 9% of the population increase. Most new residents are settling in the Triangle and Charlotte areas or coastal counties, but last year 78 of the state's 100 counties added population. Between 2010 and 2020, about half of North Carolina's counties lost population. This upward trend is certainly something that has been felt by residents and is a significant change from the population loss seen in the last decade. Read more [here](#).

North Carolina Celebrates Historic Gift from Holocaust Survivor



Earlier this year, state historians uncovered the history of an antique chandelier that hangs in the dining room of the governor's mansion, given to the state of North Carolina by Karoline Horowitz. Karoline, her husband and son fled the Nazis, leaving the chandelier behind in Germany, along with nearly all of their belongings. They settled in Murphy, North Carolina, in the 1960s. The Horowitz chandelier miraculously survived the war and was disassembled and shipped to the family. Instead of hanging it in their own home, Karoline's son, Bob Horowitz, said his mother decided to donate it to the state as a way to say thank you. A special Hanukkah event was held on December 12 at the governor's mansion to celebrate the gift, with Mr. Horowitz in attendance. Learn more [here](#).

Bus Shelter Design Survey



The Charlotte Area Transit Center (CATS) is designing the next generation of bus shelters and is requesting input from the public. This survey will collect community members' opinions to help design new bus shelters systemwide. You can complete the survey [here](#).

COVID Updates and Information



Every home in the U.S. is eligible to order an additional four free at-home tests beginning November 20. If you did not order tests this fall, you may place two orders for a total of eight tests.

Your order of COVID tests is completely free, including shipping. Order your free at-home tests [here](#), or call 1-800-232-0233 for help.

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.

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

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 Energy Assistance Programs: Do you need help paying your heating or cooling bills? Mecklenburg offers [two different programs](#) to help eligible low-income households with their energy needs.

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.

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

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

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

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](#).

Contact Our Office

Phone: (919) 715-3050

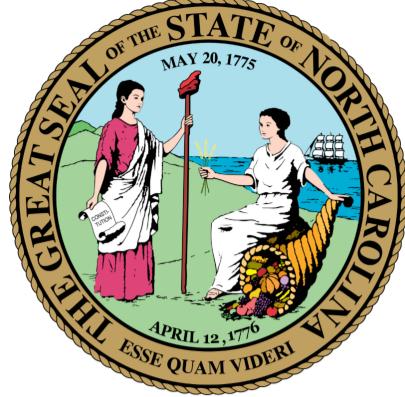
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How can we help you? Let us know and [reach out](#) to our office! We want to hear from you.

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