

## 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*

*I hope your holiday was memorable. We are gearing up to head back into session in a few months.*

*In the interim, I have had meetings and events within the district and will continue to check on my constituents. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact my Raleigh office.*

*Joyce Waddell*

## Special Education Funding

The North Carolina General Assembly is asking state education officials to study ways to improve state funding and services for students with disabilities. The 2023 state budget requires the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) to recommend changes to the state funding formula for special education. Right now, school districts receive a flat rate of \$5,309 per student who qualifies for special education services.

However, that funding is also capped, and a large majority of school districts and many charter schools exceed that cap. A little over 13% of all North Carolina public school students receive special education services, according to a 2022 report by RTI International commissioned by the General Assembly. Some school districts have much higher concentrations of students with disabilities.

The report also recommends calculating state funds for students with disabilities — either physical or attention and learning differences — based on the students' needs. For example, if a student needs to be in a smaller class or be assigned an individual aide, their school district would receive more funding. The report suggests classifying students into four levels based on the intensity of their needs and assigning weighted funds for each level.

I believe this might help to alleviate some of the overcrowding issues we have faced in our schools. Additional funding can help to place the students in classes where they get that extra assistance rather than being overlooked because the teachers are trying to teach a class with multiple levels of learning styles.

## Gambling Update

The start of mobile sports betting in North Carolina could be about 10 weeks away. Or about the same time as Selection Sunday for the NCAA men's basketball tournament.

The tournament, often referred to as March Madness, tips off in earnest on March 21. Charlotte's Spectrum Center will host first- and second-round games.

The North Carolina Lottery Commission is charged with creating rules and regulations around mobile sports betting and establishing a start date in the state. The commission's next scheduled meeting is Wednesday. It has yet to set a start date, but said it won't be before the Feb. 11 Super Bowl.

Eight mobile sports operators have applied for licenses. They are FanDuel, Bet MGM, DraftKings, Fanatics Sportsbook, bet365, Penn Sports (ESPN Bet), Underdog Sports Wagering and, most recently, Catawba Two Kings Casino. The operators must have agreements with teams, venues or organizations such as NASCAR and the PGA Tour in order to obtain a license. Several agreements have been announced or reported in recent weeks.

Senator Waddell is working tirelessly for Senate District 40, but she cannot do this alone. Her precincts have changed because of redistricting. Can she count on your help to continue working for the district?

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***Elections are important to communities, if you know someone who is not registered to vote, please encourage them to do so. It is also important to get our registered voters out to the polls. Please do not forget ID is now required to vote.***

## Vaccines

Getting vaccinated can alleviate the need to be hospitalized. It is important that we pay attention to our surroundings. Many are sick and have not been diagnosed with one of the three most common viruses - COVID, RSV, or Influenza. Vaccines can help ward off these viruses.



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