

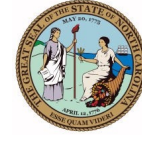
Legislative Updates



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



**Legislature Fast-Tracks Power Grab Under Guise  
of WNC Relief Bill**

Peace. Without prior notice, Republican lawmakers fast-tracked a bill that would strip powers from newly-elected Council of State members, all under the guise of Hurricane Helene recovery. [S382](#) was leaked to members of the press before Democratic lawmakers were even aware that the power grab legislation was under consideration. The bill was presented as a conference report, which means that it did not go through the normal committee process and was ineligible for amendments on the House Floor.

Some of the key components of the legislation include:

- Moving the State Board of Education to the Office of the State Auditor, including appointment power which currently belongs to the Governor.
- Empowering the State Auditor to appoint chairs to county boards of elections, also currently a power of the Governor.
- Diluting the power of the incoming Attorney General to join lawsuits from out of state or to take positions contrary to those of the General Assembly.
- Blocking the State Superintendent from appealing decisions of the Charter Schools Review Board.

The legislation does much more to move various appointments and powers away from incoming Democratic officials. It would also create two judgeships, repealing two in Wake and Forsyth that are currently held by judges who ruled against the General Assembly in the past. The 131-page document was released shortly before legislators in the House voted.

Additionally, the package purports to spend \$252 million in support of Hurricane Helene recovery, but \$227 million of that funding was simply transferred into the Helene fund and will still need legislation to spend it.

All House Democrats voted against the bill and were joined by three Republican legislators in Helene-affected counties.

On Wednesday, Buncombe County House Democrats were joined by Western North Carolina business leaders to discuss the need for quicker investments into recovery, primarily through grants instead of loans.

#### **Bipartisan Group Urges Congress to Act for Helene Recovery**

Governor Roy Cooper is leading a delegation to Washington, D.C. this week to request \$25.57 billion in federal aid for recovery from Hurricane Helene in Western North Carolina. He is joined by Senator Thom Tillis, Senator Ted Budd, Congressman Chuck Edwards and other federal officials. The storm caused an estimated \$53.6 billion in damages, more than three times the impact of Hurricane Florence. The aid request includes funds for transportation, housing, agriculture, disaster loans, and small business recovery. The Governor previously recommended \$3.9 billion in state funding, but the legislature has not approved significant relief. FEMA has provided over \$244 million in individual assistance, with ongoing recovery efforts. The storm has resulted in 103 confirmed deaths, with that number expected to rise.

#### **General Assembly Votes to Override Governor Cooper's Veto of Voucher Bill**

Governor Cooper's veto of House Bill 10, which included a massive expansion of taxpayer-funded vouchers and a measure to require Sheriffs to cooperate with ICE.

More than 70% of the voucher waitlist are for families that were ineligible under previous income caps, including household incomes in the six-figures. The Office of State Budget and Management produced an impact analysis of vouchers, including the total annual funding impact to the state and which counties would see a loss of funding to public school systems due to its passage. Many rural school districts would be disproportionately affected.

Governor Cooper, in vetoing House Bill 10, said that the expansion of taxpayer-funded vouchers would shortchange public schools while benefiting wealthy

households that can already afford private school tuition. He said that, instead, the money should be used to shore up public schools.

### Energy Funds For All

Funding from the federal government will soon be available for consumers in North Carolina. [Energy Funds For All](#) is a comprehensive resource guide that provides clear access to federal climate funds for homeowners, renters, municipalities, and more in North Carolina and South Carolina.

The website allows North Carolinians to go through the various programs that were signed into law by President Biden. The Inflation Reduction Act is widely regarded as the largest climate funding bill in American history. The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act provides funding for roads, broadband access and higher-paying jobs.

Constituents can navigate to the website to find which programs they might qualify for. Staff at the North Carolina League of Conservation Voters are willing to help answer questions about the process.

Energy Funds For All Website North Carolina League of Conservation Voters Foundation

### Upcoming Opportunities at the North Carolina General Assembly

Page applications for 2025 will soon be available on the General Assembly website. Applications can be submitted starting Monday, January 6th. [More information is available here](#). The Youth Legislative Assembly is also accepting applications, with a deadline of January 13. [You can find more information about this program here](#).

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