

For Immediate Release



From Sen. Joyce Waddell <joyce.waddell@ncleg.gov>
To <sjohnston@tuesdayforumcharlotte.org>
Reply-To <joyce.waddell@ncleg.gov>
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CONTACT: Sen. Joyce Waddell
(919) 733-5650
Joyce.Waddell@ncleg.net
<https://joycewaddell4nc.com/>



Greetings:

Last week at the General Assembly we voted on 3 bills. One local bill that is specific to another county and 2 other bills. SB 13 - Clarify Insurance Fee Referral Cap and SB 24 - Govt Mandates Increase Healthcare Costs.

Joyce Waddell

Future-Ready North Carolina Policy Platform Released

The newly released policy platform, Future-Ready North Carolina, outlines key priorities aimed at addressing critical challenges in the state. The plan focuses on resolving the child care and early childhood education crisis while strengthening investments in community colleges to support workforce development.

A strong emphasis is placed on preparing the workforce for emerging job opportunities by investing in education and skill development. Expanding access to high-quality early childhood education is also a central component, ensuring parents have reliable child care while setting children up for long-term academic and social success.

One of the major components of this initiative is Propel NC, a workforce and education strategy designed to expand economic opportunity, strengthen communities, and drive statewide growth.

Early childhood education remains a top priority, as access to high-quality, affordable child care is essential for working families and for fostering the success of young learners. Addressing child care accessibility is seen as a vital step in strengthening the workforce and ensuring economic stability.

I believe the Future-Ready North Carolina plan outlines real solutions to support the child care system, expand workforce development, and grow the state's economy. These initiatives reflect a commitment to investing in North Carolina's people, ensuring the state is prepared for the challenges and opportunities of the future.



Senate Prayer

Senator Waddell leads the Senate in prayer at Session on Wednesday.

Leandro Funds

For decades, some school districts in North Carolina have struggled with a lack of resources, leading to ongoing legal battles over education funding. The issue first gained legal attention in 1994 when several low-wealth school districts filed a lawsuit, arguing that the state was not providing adequate funding to ensure all students received a proper education.

Many of the challenges identified in the initial lawsuit persist, as multiple generations of students continue to face barriers to quality education. The case has evolved through multiple state Supreme Court rulings, complex legal proceedings, and political shifts that have influenced its trajectory. While the courts have repeatedly ruled that all students are entitled to a "sound, basic education," determining whether the state has met this obligation and how to enforce it has proven to be a complex and lengthy process.

However, the state legislature, led by a different political majority, resisted full implementation of the plan, arguing that decisions about school funding should be made through the legislative process rather than the courts. When a superior court judge ordered the release of \$1.7 billion to fund a portion of the plan, legislative leaders challenged the decision, contending that only the General Assembly has the authority to allocate state funds. In late 2022, the state Supreme Court upheld the judge's order, siding with proponents of increased education funding.

Shortly after that ruling, a shift in the political balance of the state Supreme Court led to the case being reconsidered. In 2023, the newly elected court agreed to review the issue again. More than a year has passed since the court last heard arguments, yet a final ruling remains pending.

Currently, approximately \$678 million remains underfunded for the second and third years of the proposed eight-year remedial plan. Many education advocates argue that the case is not just about this immediate funding but about securing a long-term commitment to fixing an underfunded education system.

It is unfortunate that we are not on the same page as it relates to fully funding the public school system. All children in North Carolina deserve equality as it relates to receiving education. I will continue to fight for additional funding for the public schools.

NC General Assembly

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Sen. Joyce Waddell, District 40 | 1106 Legislative Building | Raleigh, NC 27601 US

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