

Legislative Updates



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Legislative Updates

Session Wraps Without Budget Deal

After months of back and forth between House and Senate Republicans, the General Assembly packed up for the summer without a comprehensive budget deal in place. The fiscal year begins July 1st. In fact, Republican leadership was unable to strike a deal on “must-do” spending. In previous sessions, budget impasses were dealt with by passing a smaller package with targeted spending. As June concludes, not even that was accomplished.

Without a budget in place, many essential priorities for North Carolinians are going unaddressed. Teachers and state employees will not receive raises on July 1st. Any future raises passed will be retroactive, but uncertainty remains and North Carolinians cannot afford to wait for Republicans in Raleigh. Important state programs will continue to operate under the spending amounts allocated in a previous budget. Some programs without funding in that budget could lapse.

Without a formal adjournment resolution, it is still unclear when legislators will return to Raleigh. No activity is expected at least for the first two weeks of July.

Additional Helene Relief Sent to Governor

After weeks of back-and-forth, House and Senate Republicans finally agreed to a spending package that sends additional relief to Western North Carolina to help with Helene recovery. The bill awaits Governor Stein’s signature.

Senate leadership wanted to include Helene relief as part of a negotiating tactic by putting it in their budget package. Once budget negotiations became intractable, and after Senate Democrats threatened a discharge petition to force a vote on recovery, bills were advanced separate from the budget process.

The \$500 million compromise was passed unanimously by both chambers. House Democrats from Buncombe County, one of the worst struck parts of the state, were advocating for small business grants. The House package originally included \$60 million in grants to help shore up struggling businesses.

Despite being the most populous county affected, Buncombe County was not represented among the eight legislators included on the conference committee, all of whom were Republicans. And three of those eight were not from Western North Carolina.

Anti-DEI Bills Sent to Governor

One of the few priorities of Republicans this Session that made it through the legislative process were various bills seeking to ban Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. Three bills, H171, S227, and S558, were sent for Governor Stein’s consideration. Collectively, they would ban any DEI policies in state agencies and schools and loosely defined “divisive concepts” in classrooms.

Advocates opposing the measures warned that the effect would be chilling both on state employees and educators. They also warned of the potential for self-censorship and an overcorrection in order to avoid being penalized, scrutinized or fired.

All three bills passed the General Assembly on party-line votes and could face a veto from Governor Stein.

Brief Update on Vetoes

Governor Stein has so far vetoed three bills, two related to ICE / immigration and one that relaxes regulations on concealed handguns. While all three were theoretically able to be called for an override vote this past week, Republicans did not have the requisite number of legislators in town. In the Senate, Republicans need all 30 of their Senators to reach the $\frac{3}{5}$ for an override. In the House, Republicans need all 71 of their members plus either a Democrat to vote

with them or some number of absences to lower the threshold from 72. House Democrats won enough seats in 2024 -- 49 -- to sustain Governor Stein's vetoes.

Enjoy your weekend!

PEACE!



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