

For Immediate Release



From Sen. Joyce Waddell <joyce.waddell@ncleg.gov>
To <sjohnston@tuesdayforumcharlotte.org>
Reply-To <joyce.waddell@ncleg.gov>
Date 2025-08-18 12:06



From the Office of Sen. Joyce Waddell, NC Senate
Mecklenburg County

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday, August 18, 2025
Chapter VI
Volume 33

CONTACT: Sen. Joyce Waddell
(919) 733-5650
Joyce.Waddell@ncleg.net
<https://joycewaddell4nc.com/>



Greetings:

Colleges and Universities are returning and soon our schools will be returning. Please prepare for the increase in traffic and be careful.

Joyce Waddell

Food Aid Cuts in North Carolina

A tax and spending reduction bill enacted in July includes significant reductions to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), which provides food assistance to 1.4 million low-income residents in North Carolina. Supporters of the measure argue that the changes will encourage states to address waste, fraud, and abuse within the program.

Hunger relief advocates warn that the cuts—amounting to \$420 million for North Carolina—will worsen an already critical food insecurity crisis. Demand for food assistance is currently at its highest level in two decades. Charitable organizations distribute millions of pounds of food each year, but the scale of SNAP’s impact far exceeds what charities alone can provide.

Reducing SNAP funding is also expected to have negative economic effects, particularly in rural communities, where roughly 85% of the program’s funds are spent in grocery stores and with farmers. Under the legislation, states that lower their SNAP payment error rate below 6% will have their funding restored.

I am concerned that all budgets being decreased, but I am most disappointed that those requiring food is reduced. I hope we can meet the needs of our citizens by finding a way to meet those shortfalls both with state funds and as neighbors.

O.E.L. Legacy Back to School Giveaway

Senator Waddell participates in a back to school giveaway providing supplies for college and other students. The O.E.L. Legacy organization is a grandparents scholarship organization.



Medical Release in North Carolina Prisons

In 2023, North Carolina lawmakers expanded the eligibility criteria for prison medical release to allow more seriously ill incarcerated individuals the opportunity to return home before the end of their lives. However, data indicates that these changes have not resulted in more releases.

Since 2008, medical release was limited to incarcerated people who were likely to die within six months, were permanently and totally disabled, or were at least 65 years old with a chronic, debilitating age-related disease.

The 2023 revisions lowered the age for “geriatric” release to 55, extended the timeframe for terminal illness death risk to nine months, and reduced the safety threshold so that individuals need only be considered “no risk or low risk” to public safety.

Despite these changes, approvals remain rare. In 2024—the first full year under the new rules—only four individuals out of a prison population of about 32,000 were granted early medical release. So far this year, five people have been released.

I spoke in the committee meeting that there needs to be a greater evaluation of these rules. I believe that we need to take a more focused look at this issue. I am sure there is a way to decrease the population of those incarcerated with major health issues that will take the burden off of the state.

Proposed 2026 State Health Plan Premium Changes

The North Carolina State Health Plan has released proposed premium increases for 2026. The new structure introduces salary-based tiers, with employees earning less facing smaller premium increases.

Currently, active employees with a tobacco attestation pay \$50 per month for the enhanced plan and \$25 per month for the base plan, with higher costs for those without the attestation. In the proposed changes, premiums will no longer vary based on tobacco use. The rates provided are for individual coverage and do not include spouses, children, or other family members.

For non-Medicare retirees, those on the enhanced plan would see a \$16 monthly premium increase, while those on the base plan would retain a \$0 premium. Additional changes would apply depending on whether other family members are covered. The final decision on the proposal will be made during a public board meeting at the state treasurer’s office on Friday, from 9:30 a.m. to noon.



Charlotte Pride Parade

Senator Waddell and other elected officials participate in the Pride Parade in Charlotte, NC.

NC General Assembly

Visit www.ncleg.gov, the official website of the North Carolina General Assembly. Use this website as a tool to track bills, find and communicate with your state representatives, as well as follow chamber activity, meetings and issues before the General Assembly.

You can view bills in full by visiting www.ncleg.gov.

Please don't forget to consider getting vaccinated. There are viruses and other illnesses plaguing our community that can be prevented by vaccines and proper handwashing.



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

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)



Try email marketing for free today!