

## NC Legislative Updates

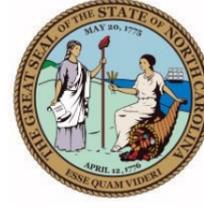


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**Representative  
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**Serving District 99  
Mecklenburg County**



**LEGISLATIVE UPDATES**

PEACE. The General Assembly returned to Raleigh this week for two days, one for the Senate on Monday and one for the House on Tuesday. A few major pieces of legislation were passed and sent to Governor Stein, including a crime bill called Iryna's Law, a mini-budget and a regulatory reform bill. Perhaps more important is the legislation that wasn't passed: Neither a comprehensive budget deal nor a compromise deal to fund Medicaid. Legislators will return to Raleigh no sooner than October 20th to renew those efforts.

### **Iryna's Law**

The General Assembly passed Iryna's Law this week, a crime bill spurred by the murder of Iryna Zarutka on a Charlotte light rail train last week. The murder went viral and brought national attention to Charlotte and the General Assembly as legislators returned to Raleigh. Democratic lawmakers offered suggestions for policy proposals that could be included in the legislation, but those were largely if not entirely ignored by Republican leadership.

Some highlights of the legislation, which now awaits action from Governor Stein:

- Restricting the use of cashless bail for certain types of offenses
- Provides more specificity for magistrates on how to deal with people with mental illnesses, particularly around violent offenses
- Introduces new forms of accountability for magistrates, including removal
- Requires judicial officials to explain their reasoning for pretrial release conditions
- Adds 10 prosecutors for Mecklenburg County
- Forces the Department of Adult Corrections to restart the death penalty via lethal injection

The final provision, regarding the death penalty, was originally included in the legislation as it was presented to the public Sunday night. But on the Senate floor, top Republican Phil Berger filed an amendment that would make it so that if lethal injection is unavailable to use, then the Department of Adult Corrections would need to find an alternative method that is legal in another state that currently allows the death penalty. The two most mentioned by critics and the media were the electric chair and the firing squad. Due in part to the last-minute amendment by Senator Berger, Senate Democrats either walked out of the vote or voted against the bill.

In the House, the vote was more bipartisan but still split. I voted in favor of the bill because it is a start, but doesn't get us nearly where we need to be on investments in mental health. We can be tough on crime without solving the problems that lead to these sorts of heinous crimes in the first place. We cannot rely on jails and prisons to fill the role of mental institutions for our communities. If we are serious about making a positive change in our state, we must come back and make genuine investments into mental health and the infrastructure required to keep individuals who are dangerous to themselves and others off the streets.

You can read a full analysis of the bill -- before the Berger death penalty amendment -- [here](#).

### **Medicaid Rebase**

North Carolina is slated to cut Medicaid reimbursement rates on October 1st without additional action by the General Assembly. Republican legislators left Raleigh on Tuesday with no plans to return before October 20th. Republican legislators in the House and Senate have been unable to reach a compromise in time, and they seem to remain far apart on any deal.

More than a month ago, DHHS Secretary Sangvai sent a letter to lawmakers warning about the impending cuts. The mini-budget passed in July funded \$600 million, short of what DHHS needed at the time. That mini-budget passed with an expectation that lawmakers would return and sort out funding the remaining need. They have agreed on a number -- around \$190 million on top of the prior \$600 million -- but Senate Republicans are demanding that funding for an

unrelated capital project be included. This has resulted in the current impasse. Neither side will budget.

While Republican legislators continue to fight amongst themselves, North Carolinians face the prospect of losing their health care in mere days. House Democrats are joining Governor Stein in calling for a clean Medicaid rebase deal that funds our program adequately so that nobody has to go without the care they deserve.

### **Mini Budget**

This week the General Assembly passed a mini-budget which funds a number of smaller projects and needs in the state. The bill is well short of a comprehensive state budget, something that Republican legislators have failed to complete in time once again. The fiscal year began months ago, yet we are no closer to a budget deal because Republican lawmakers cannot agree with one another.

Some highlights of the mini-budget, which now awaits Governor Stein's signature:

- \$65 million for disaster relief, especially to address the impact of Tropical Storm Chantal on central North Carolina.
- \$35 million is for public infrastructure improvements in Raleigh at the Lenovo Center where the Carolina Hurricanes and NCSU men's basketball play. Canes ownership is planning a big development to encourage more businesses and activities around the facility to make it more of a draw.
- \$51 million for an economic development project, which WRAL [reports](#) is likely a steel startup, in Hertford County.
- \$1.5 million over two years for RDU airport to begin a direct flight via Aer Lingus to Dublin, Ireland.

North Carolinians are still waiting for a comprehensive state budget that includes raises for state employees, adequate funding for Medicaid and more. Read a full analysis of the mini-budget from nonpartisan staff [here](#).

Enjoy your weekend!

PEACE!



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