



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE FROM
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NC House

District 64 – Alamance County

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Short Session in Review

The 10 week summer session of the General Assembly really was a short session. The NCGA adjourned just before midnight on July 1st “Sine Die” (literally ‘without a day’ meaning we adjourned to no future specific date).

HB1030 Appropriations Act passed by a vote of 92-23 near the end of Session. The **\$22.34 billion budget** is a 2.8% increase in spending from last year. What follows are some budget and legislative highlights.



This photo represents four years of budgetary reading of the Governor’s proposed budgets, GenGov committee budgets, House Appropriations committee budgets, House passed amended budgets, Senate budgets, Conference Committee budgets and finally NCGA approved and Governor signed budget. Yes I have read them all! I cannot promise that I remember it all but I did read it all.....and more.

We once again were under our self-imposed conservative spending target of: the cost of living increase (COLA) + population increase = TABOR limits. (Taxpayer Bill of Rights) For more detailed budget information go to www.ncga.state.nc.us/Fiscal_Research/

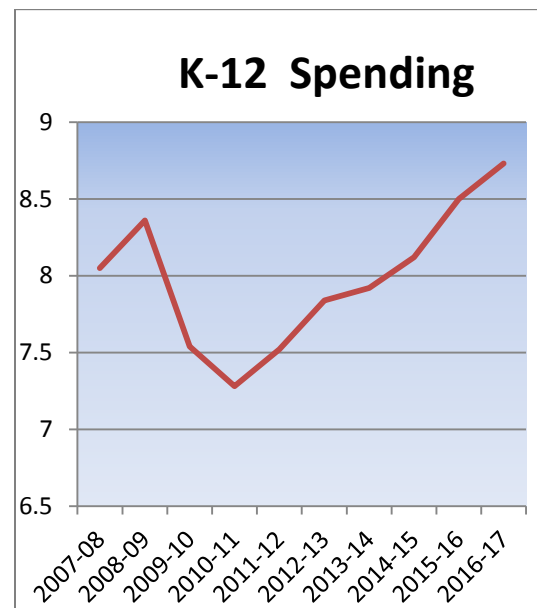
Tax Cuts

Raises the standard deduction to \$17,500 over two years for married couples filing jointly and \$8,750 for single filers. This will save North Carolina families who earn the median income around \$110 next year.

Education

\$12.68 billion - **57% of the total General Fund budget** of \$22.34 billion for 2016-17.

- \$8.73 billion in K-12 funding



Republican majority elected in 2010 - now about those “cuts to education”...somehow the numbers just keep going up. Hmmm.

- An avg. 4.5% increase in teacher pay and accelerated base pay grade increases through a new step system
- This increase in pay will boost median North Carolina teacher salaries to above \$50,000 - the highest in state history
- Continued budgetary support for the implementation of the NC Digital Learning Plan
- Provide funding to hire 430 additional first grade teachers to reduce class size
- Fully funds Teacher Assistants
- Increased Community College funding by \$30 million
- UNC system funding increased \$169 million
- Expand Special Education Scholarships
- Uses motor vehicle late registration fees as a source of revenue for driver's education programs



Office visit by the Saunders Family. Rm 533 in the LOB is family friendly.

Health and Human Services

\$5.02 billion - 22% of spending

- Mental health and substance abuse will be addressed through implementation of the recommendations from the Governor's Task Force on Mental Health
- Zika virus detection and prevention plan to be put in place by developing the needed infrastructure
- Sets aside \$9 million to reform North Carolina's child welfare program
- Continues our commitment to improving education and retention of rural physicians by directing nearly \$20

million to establish new medical schools in Fayetteville and Asheville

Justice and Public Safety

\$2.6 billion - 11% of total spending

- Step increases to State Highway Patrol troopers, clerks, and magistrates pay
- Provide 4.5% pay increase for assistant district attorneys, public defenders and other judicial branch workers
- \$16 million to boost pay for correctional officers
- \$1.3 million to get the Western Crime Lab operational
- Sets aside funds to close the long-standing backlog at the State Crime Lab

Agriculture, Natural and Environmental Resources

\$536 million - 2% of total spending

- Provides funding to NC Forest Service to purchase firefighting equipment.
- Increased funding for the Farmland Preservation Trust Fund and FFA programs
- Protects our State's water supply by significantly increasing funding for the Clean Water Management Trust Fund, Agriculture Water Resources Assistance Program, and State water and wastewater infrastructure grants.



Enjoyed a visit to the Conservator's Center in Mebane. Great people and lion's and tigers and lemurs.....oh my.

General Gov't (I am committee co-chairman)

\$427 million -1.9% of total spending

- Provided funds to make the NC Building Code registry fully accessible and searchable on line
- Improves gov't transparency by enabling the State Auditor to conduct more specialized audits of state agencies



It was my privilege to participate in Burlington Christian Academy's Graduation Ceremony for the Class of 2016. Go Royals!

- Invests in new technology software to improve online tax filing
- Provides funds to contract tax fraud analysis and identity theft protection information technology upgrades
- Retirees received a 1.6% COLA
- State employees received over 2% in salary/bonus/merit pay increases
- Added 2 positions to Consumer Assistance Group at the Dept of Insurance to handle increased call volume and caseload demands
- Added one position to the Local Gov't Commission to help local gov'ts on the LGC watch list avoid financial failure

Transportation

- Increased funding to \$3.4 billion (up 5%) for the Highway Trust Fund and Highway Fund
- Increases funding for the Strategic Transportation Investment (STI) by over \$32 million which will add new highway projects in the next few years
- Appropriates \$3 million to advance DMV modernization initiatives - specifically customer service and office wait times
- Provides nearly \$30 million in additional funding to improve freight

rail tracks, crossing safety, industrial, port and military access and general aviation airports



Very glad to have Gov. McCrory in town recently to cut the ribbon at the new Walmart Distribution Center = Jobs

Savings and Reserves

- Put an additional \$473 million in the State's savings reserve fund, bringing the total balance to \$1.6 billion - this is our rainy day fund
- Pays off an outstanding \$37 million loan from the fedgov that former Gov. Hunt borrowed in 1999 but deferred payment on for over 15 years. This will save the state an additional \$45 million in interest over the next 30 years.
- \$10 million to the Disaster Relief Fund



David Boyd of Payne Oil stopped by the office to say hello and discuss some pending legislation

Other Legislation

- HB630 Drinking Water Protection & Coal Ash Cleanup Act
Provides permanent alternative drinking water supplies for residents that live within areas of coal ash

ponds. Modifies the closure requirements for coal combustion residual impoundments (ponds). Also seeks to expand the safe reuse of coal ash to reduce the amount to be stored. It will also bring various commissions into conformity with a recent NC Supreme Court ruling.

- **HB970 State Controller/Criminal Record Checks**

Provides additional screening and personnel security to safeguard critical financial information of state agencies and employees



Keeping up with the flow of legislation on the House floor via our on line dashboard

- **SB770 NC Farm Act of 2016**
Farm bill that dealt with many farm issues and agriculture regulatory reform measures
- **SB667 Elections Omnibus Revisions**
Requires the Attorney General to represent the state in all local acts passed by the NCGA....that is show up for work, provides for even-numbered municipal elections, provides more time for county boards of election to verify ballots cast
- **HB972 Law Enforcement Records**
Provides \$5 million in matching grant money for the purchase of body cameras and equipment, also provides a path by which interested parties can access footage where they previously could not

From the Inbox - constituent questions

Question - Why do you think the 4th Circuit Court of Appeals overturned North Carolina's Voter ID law?

Answer - Two reasons:

1. Because they are not 'judges' they are activist liberal lawyers bound more by a political agenda than the unbiased reading of the law (including previous Supreme Court decisions and other standing federal court determinations on which our Voter ID law was based).
2. It is a critically important election year, probably the most important one of this generation. So, the stakes are high and the political rhetoric and shenanigans are being ratcheted up as election day nears.

Election 2016: make sure you are registered to vote, well informed on the many candidates and leading issues, then make whatever effort is necessary to vote.....once.



Whenever I walk past the old capitol grounds at night I am reminded of the great twin privileges that are mine – (1) I was born an American and (2) I get to live in North Carolina while representing you in Raleigh. It is an honor. Thank You,

Dennis