



INTRODUCTION

The General Assembly dealt with its work quickly this week, passing the Coronavirus Relief Act 3.0 with bipartisan support and sending it to Governor Cooper. The \$1 billion bill allocates federal funds for coronavirus response that must be spent by the end of the year. The centerpiece is the Extra Credit Grant Program, which will send \$335 to households with at least one qualifying child (just one check per household regardless of the number of children).

Unemployment got a boost in the bill, with \$50 million set aside for the state match requirement for the federal Lost Wage Assistance program and an increase of \$50 in weekly unemployment benefits through the end of the year. The bill also includes \$30 million for broadband through a supplemental round of the Growing Rural Economies with Access to Technology (GREAT) grant program. The State Board of Elections is allocated \$5 million to prepare for the election during the pandemic, including funds to recruit election day poll workers and increase their pay.

The bill holds schools harmless for reductions in actual average daily membership, something schools and administrators had requested due to the impact of the pandemic on schools. Additional funds are provided for PPE, COVID-19 research and a range of state and local needs.

The General Assembly has officially ended its business for this session, and adjourned sine die, which is the fancy term for the end of the session. Both chambers plan to return for an organizational session at noon on January 13th with new members voted in after the election, but Speaker Moore says there is a chance of an earlier return if additional COVID-19 relief funds are received from Congress.

With session officially coming to a close, campaign season is now in full swing. This election will certainly be one to watch here in North Carolina, as many races will be competitive and both parties will be fighting to maintain or gain control of the chambers. Republicans have held the majority in both chambers for a decade, but in the current political climate and along with newly redrawn districts, many races are up in the air which could dramatically shift the makeup of the General Assembly.



NORTH CAROLINA COLLEGE OF EMERGENCY PHYSICIANS



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North Carolina began sending out absentee mail-in ballots today, Friday, September 4th, two months ahead of Election Day. Requests for mail-in ballots are well underway in North Carolina, with a significant uptick in requests due to the pandemic. To date, there have been 618,842 absentee ballot requests in North Carolina; a vast majority of the requests for mail-in ballots are Democratic or Unaffiliated voters. The deadline to request a ballot by mail is Tuesday, October 27th. Early voting will begin on October 15th and will end on October 31st, and Election Day is November 3rd, 2020.

BILLS OF INTEREST

HOUSE BILL 807, *Championship NC Act*. This bill was a bit of a surprise and provides funding for a new economic development project that is defined as “a sports championship employer.” The bill would reallocate \$3.6M from funds available in the One NC Fund (\$3.5M) and the JDIG Special Revenue fund (\$100k). **The bill was approved by the House and Senate and has been sent to the Governor for his signature.**

HOUSE BILL 1105, *Coronavirus Relief Act 3.0*, would provide additional and revised uses for federal coronavirus relief funds and funding for disaster recovery that must be used by the end of 2020. Provisions of interest include:

- providing \$20 million to the Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Social Services (DSS), for facilities licensed to accept State-County Special Assistance to offset increased costs related to COVID-19;
- providing an additional \$5 million to the North Carolina Association of Free and Charitable Clinics (NCAFCC);
- providing \$300,000 for the Craven County Sheriff's Office and the Town of Chocowinity for the purchase of VIPER radios;
- providing \$20 million to establish the North Carolina COVID-19 Provider Relief Fund, which will reimburse providers enrolled in the North Carolina Medicaid program for costs incurred in providing COVID-19 related treatment to uninsured patients;
- providing \$25 million to the North Carolina Medical Society for independent medical practices with demonstrable financial needs related to COVID-19;
- allocating \$38 million to the Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Substance Abuse Services to be distributed to local management entities/managed care organizations (LME/MCOs) as additional lump sum single-stream allocations for direct services associated with the COVID-19 pandemic;
- providing \$300,000 to establish a student health collaborative pilot program allowing a local education agency (LEA) to collaborate with the county department of social services to assist students with their mental and physical well-being in response to the COVID-19 pandemic;
- removing the K-1 cap for the opportunity scholarship program and increases the income eligibility to 150% of free and reduced lunch threshold;
- directing the UNC Board of Governors to allocate funds for up to 100 resident full-time students enrolled in Comprehensive Transition Programs, under the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008;
- appropriating \$10 million from the Community Living Housing Fund to the NC Housing Finance Agency for fiscal year 2020-2021; and
- providing an additional \$17 million to the Department of Public Instruction to award as grants to public school units to provide access to services for exceptional children who have lost critical services as a result of school closures related to COVID-19.

The bill was passed by both the House and the Senate and was sent to the Governor for his signature on September 3, 2020. The North Carolina College of Emergency Physicians worked with the North Carolina Medical Society to support the \$25 million appropriation to assist independent medical practices with financial needs related to COVID-19. We will be following up soon to provide more information on how to apply.

SENATE BILL 872, Additional 2020 Appointments. This legislation appoints persons to various public offices upon the recommendation of the President Pro Tempore of the Senate and makes modifications to appointments made in the 2020 appointments bill, including:

- Effective January 1, 2021, Brian T. Drew of Wake County is appointed to the 911 Board for a term expiring on December 31, 2024.
- Effective July 1, 2020, the Honorable William Brawley of Mecklenburg County is appointed to the North Carolina Medical Board for a term expiring on October 31, 2023.

Effective: September 3, 2020.

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