



## INTRODUCTION

### HOUSE BUDGET

The House budget proposal as released tops 1,000 pages and spends approximately \$30 billion over the biennium. “This is a budget that invests in our state employees, teachers, infrastructure and workforce development. It is a budget that balances the needs of the state with a growing economy while maintaining a sustainable spending path,” Speaker Moore told reporters.

The House budget was released, discussed in committee the next day, had a few amendments, and went quickly through the various committees – Appropriations, Finance and Retirement. It was approved on a bi-partisan vote with 9 Democrats joining their Republican colleagues. There is much to like in the House Budget, including the trigger for Medicaid Expansion, substantial teacher raises, State employee raises, and other funding for hard to fill positions in schools and government. Please see below for some of the budget’s highlights.

- State employees would receive at least a 7.5% raise over the next two years.
- North Carolina teachers’ raises would raise their average pay to \$62,650, which would be the best average pay in the Southeast. The next closest state would be Georgia at an average of \$54,353.
- The plan would provide over \$305 million each fiscal year for school health personnel, such as school nurses, school psychologists, school counselors, and school social workers.
- The budget would reduce the individual income tax to 4.5% by 2024, a year ahead of schedule.
- It would provide \$30 million over the biennium for nursing and other high-cost workforce programs start-up funds.
- The proposal would provide additional funds for 5 new employees for the State Board of Elections.
- The budget would disallow the State to join ERIC (Electronic Registration Information Center), which is a tool aimed to help election officials maintain more accurate voter rolls.
- It would ban private funds in elections and include funds for Voter ID.



## NORTH CAROLINA COLLEGE OF EMERGENCY PHYSICIANS



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- The plan would provide \$300 million for a megasite development program (up to 7 sites over 1,000 acres). It would also provide \$100 million for a “SelectSite Fund” (up to 10 sites less than 1,000 acres).

The House approved the budget at the end of last week on a 78-37 vote after hearing 27 amendments on the House floor mostly from House Democrats and mostly rejected. The House sent their version of the budget over to the Senate before the General Assembly takes a spring break this week. It's the Senate's turn next! The Senate will craft their own version of the budget, and then a Conference Committee will be formed to iron out the differences between the two chambers' spending plans for the biennium.

### **PISTOL PERMIT REPEAL - VETO OVERRIDE**

The Republican-led General Assembly responded to Gov. Cooper’s first veto of the session with their first veto override. The bill, that will now become law, repeals the requirement to obtain a pistol purchase permit from a sheriff prior to the purchase or transfer of a pistol. Supporters argue this is a necessary measure to ensure our 2nd amendment rights are upheld and that gun sales are not slowed down by obtaining this permit that can sometimes take weeks to receive. Opponents of the repeal say this unnecessarily endangers the public and removes an effective, simple backstop. “Hours after children were shot to death in their school, NC GOP leaders announced a vote to eliminate strong NC background checks and make it easier for dangerous people to buy guns and take them on some school grounds. Outrageous,” Gov. Cooper said in a statement.

A veto override takes a three-fifths majority. With sufficient Republicans to complete an override in the Senate, this veto was expectedly overridden by that chamber with little fuss. The House has been the chamber to watch this session with Republicans being just one shy of a veto-proof majority in that chamber. As proven by this vote, Republicans don’t necessarily need a Democrat to vote along with them to successfully override a veto, they just need one to be absent. In this case, there were three: Reps. Tricia Cotham, Cecil Brockman, and Michael Wray. Rep. Cotham released a statement explaining that she is a COVID long hauler and receives routine treatment for it. She said while she is opposed to “the dangerous repeal of pistol purchase permits,” she had an appointment that morning. She was also absent for the previous vote on the same bill. Rep. Brockman, who previously voted against this bill, told reporters he was in urgent care that morning. Rep. Wray, who previously voted for this bill, told reporters he had a family emergency.

Given the recent tragedy in Nashville, opponents of this bill were exceptionally frustrated with this policy move and its timing. However, they weren’t given the opportunity to discuss their concerns on the floor before the vote. Through House rules, the House cut off debate in just a few minutes and took the vote to override. “For us to come in this tone deaf about what happened in Nashville and to pretend that it doesn’t matter, to pretend that that might not be an issue that we’ve got to bring up, is disturbing — with a bunch of kids sitting up here,” said House Minority Leader Robert Reives following the vote on the floor, noting the school groups watching session in the gallery.

### **ENERGY MARKET**

Given the burdensome rise in cost of utilities on families and businesses and the state’s widespread blackouts during the holidays in frigid temperatures, some Republican House members have posed the question of if our state’s energy model is actually the best fit for North Carolinians. Republican House members have filed House Bill 503 to study energy market reforms to determine just that. A similar study was ordered by the South Carolina General Assembly in 2020. Their study found that South Carolinians could save \$362 million a year and enjoy better reliability if they joined a

regional transmission organization (RTO). The report further emphasizes that both Carolinas should join for optimal savings and reliability for both. Specifically, the report suggests both Carolinas join the PJM Interconnection, which includes 13 states currently. PJM also has territory in northeastern North Carolina. Given our state's size relative to South Carolina, we can only assume the savings for North Carolina ratepayers would far exceed the substantial savings South Carolina could expect from a change.

Primary sponsor Rep. Larry Strickland of Johnston County has had his eye on this potential benefit to our state for some time, and has led the effort for North Carolina to follow suit and do its own market reform study for years. Duke Energy, the main electric public utility in both the Carolinas, has stood ardently opposed to RTOs, or even the study of such a measure, even as they push for a 33% rate increase for its North Carolina customers. Upon its filing, this study bill was met with a great deal of pushback from Duke Energy. Even still, the study bill has strong Republican primary sponsors, including Energy Chair Kyle Hall, and a number of co-sponsors.

### **NC STATE TREASURER DALE FOLWELL RUNNING FOR GOVERNOR**

"I will be the best governor money can't buy," State Treasurer Dale Folwell told a crowd in his home county of Forsyth while announcing his campaign for governor. Treasurer Folwell was first elected as State Treasurer in 2017 and then again in 2020. A Republican, Folwell will have a challenging primary against another expected Republican candidate: Lieutenant Governor Mark Robinson. "Voters do not have to gamble when they vote for me," said Folwell. "They know I attack problems, not people. As governor I will continue to be focused on saving lives, minds, and money as I have successfully done throughout my career in public service."

### **REP. JOHN BRADFORD**

The State Treasurer's run for governor has created an open seat for state treasurer in 2024. Following Treasurer Folwell's announcement, Republican Rep. John Bradford of Mecklenburg County released a statement expressing his interest in possibly running for this statewide seat. "Over the next few weeks, I will not only work to help pass the state budget, but I will take some personal time to talk to my family, employees, supporters, and others to gain their insights and perspectives about my possible candidacy," Bradford said in the press release. "I will make a formal announcement with my decision in the weeks ahead."

### **REP. TRICIA COTHAM CHANGES PARTIES**

Rep. Tricia Cotham of Mecklenburg County has changed her party affiliation from Democrat to Republican. This move has delivered Republicans their 72nd seat in the House, the additional seat they needed to have a veto-proof majority in both chambers. Rep. Cotham has gained a reputation as a swing vote this session, missing key votes and being willing to vote alongside Republicans in others. She was also given a gavel as an Education Chair this session, an unusual honor for a member of the minority party. With just one House Democrat needing to break off to override a veto, she was clearly one of the top choices.

Rep. Cotham first came into office as a House Democrat in 2007 and served until 2016 before her return this past election. While she has her own lengthy history with the Democratic Party, her family ties go back even further. Her father chaired the Mecklenburg County's Democratic Party, her mother is currently a Democratic county commissioner and previously chaired the Uptown Democratic Forum and the Mecklenburg County Democratic Women, and her great-grandmother was a delegate to the 1948 Democratic National Convention and worked on President Harry Truman's campaign. Although her friendliness with Republicans was exceptionally notable this

session, it still sent shockwaves when she announced that she would formally change her party affiliation given her background.

As to why she did it? In a press conference at the NC GOP headquarters, Rep. Cotham gave a scathing account of what it has been like returning to the General Assembly and working with the Democrats of today. "I've suffered many attacks since I've been up here, from Democrats in the party, from blasting me on Twitter, to calling me names, to going after my family, going after my children," she said. "They certainly will slice and dice you in a second with malicious, vicious, untrue rumors and do not celebrate your success." During the press conference, she also made various remarks suggesting that the Democratic party was unwilling to accept various points of view, and alleged that Gov. Cooper "tells you what to do" and "if you don't do" what the party tells you to do "they will bully you."

The NC Democratic Party was quick to respond to the news, and held their own press conference just hours after the GOP's. Surrounded by a sea of "Resign" signs, Party Chair Anderson Clayton called Rep. Cotham's accusations "off-base" and her switch a "betrayal." Gov. Cooper released a statement on the news: "This is a disappointing decision. Rep. Cotham's votes on women's reproductive freedom, election laws, LGBTQ rights and strong public schools will determine the direction of the state we love. It's hard to believe she would abandon these long-held principles and she should still vote the way she has always said she would vote when these issues arise, regardless of party affiliation." House Minority Leader Robert Reives also shared his thoughts on the situation. "Just a few months later, Rep. Cotham is changing parties. That is not the person that was presented to the voters of House District 112. That is not the person those constituents campaigned for in a hard primary, and who they championed in a general election in a 60% Democratic district," Reives said in a statement. "Those constituents deserved to know what values were most important to their elected representative."

Rep. Cotham's district is currently a safe Democrat seat, so does this mean Cotham risked losing re-election to switch parties? Not necessarily. Speaker Moore told reporters this week that all of the House districts will be redrawn. He didn't answer reporters about whether Rep. Cotham's suburban Mecklenburg seat could become more Republican friendly. "Of course, when districts are drawn, incumbency is always taken into account," Speaker Moore said. "But beyond that, there's been no determination made."

### **S512, GREATER ACCOUNTABILITY FOR BOARDS/COMMISSIONS**

A bill to change the composition and manner by which a number of powerful boards and commissions' members are selected has passed through the Senate on party lines. This bill, supported by Senate leader Berger, would take away Gov. Cooper's majority control over appointees for the following boards and commissions: the Utilities Commission, the Economic Investment Committee, the Environmental Management Commission, the Commission for Public Health, the Board of Transportation, the Coastal Resources Commission, the Wildlife Resources Commission, the North Carolina Railroad Board of Directors, and the Board of Directors of the University of North Carolina Health Care System. The bill would also transfer the North Carolina Utilities Commission from the Department of Commerce to the Department of the State Treasurer.

Gov. Cooper's office has called the bill an "unconstitutional power grab" by the Republican-led General Assembly. While opponents have called the bill unlawful, Senate Republicans have argued that this bill gives a "fairer balance of appointments between the executive branch and the legislative branch," Sen. Warren Daniel said on the floor.

A policy move like this would almost certainly be met with litigation, which is not an uncommon ending for legislation in our state given our Republican-led General Assembly and Democratic Governor. A battle between the two over their division of powers has been ongoing since before our Democratic Governor took office in 2017.

## **BILLS OF INTEREST**

HOUSE BILL 485, Provisional Ballot/Same-Day Registration, would allow an individual who is qualified to register to vote to register in person and then vote by provisional ballot only at a one-stop voting site in the individual's county of residence during the period for one-stop voting. **Introduced by Representatives Davis, Mills, Warren, and Blackwell and referred to the House Election Law and Campaign Finance Reform Committee.**

HOUSE BILL 490, Tax Deduction for Overtime and Bonus Pay, would allow an individual income tax deduction for the amount received as overtime compensation and the amount received as bonus pay not to exceed \$2,500. **Introduced by Representative Bell and referred to the House Finance Committee.**

HOUSE BILL 496, North Carolina Work and Save, would establish the North Carolina Small Business Retirement Savings Program and set out requirements for the Program, including: (1) providing a process to facilitate voluntary enrollment into the Program for covered employers, covered employees, and self-employed persons; (2) providing that the IRA to which contributions are made will be a Roth IRA, with the an option for participants to affirmatively elect to contribute to a traditional IRA as an alternative to the Roth IRA; (3) providing that the standard package must be a Roth IRA with a target date fund investment, and a contribution rate that begins at 5% of salary or wages; (4) providing for a uniform annual increase in the participant's contribution rate of up to 1%; (5) allowing a covered employer to withhold payroll deductions from a covered employee's paycheck for making a covered employee contribution to the Program funds; (6) including an account status notification process for covered employees to be notified about and track their investments; and (7) ensuring that the Program is designed to be financially self-sustaining over time. The bill would provide \$400,000 this year and \$600,000 next year to the Department of Commerce for the Program and to hire an executive director. **Introduced by Representatives Lowery, Warren, McNeely, and Hardister and referred to the House Appropriations Committee.**

HOUSE BILL 505, Make Legislators' Docs Public Records, would:

- prohibit a legislative employee from revealing the identity of a legislator who has made a drafting or information request, or revealing the existence of the request, to any person who is not a legislative employee without the consent of the legislator;
- remove the provisions that deemed drafting or information requests or supporting documents to not be public records and make identical changes to existing provisions regarding the confidentiality of documents prepared by legislative employees at the request of a legislator;
- prohibit present and former legislative employees from disclosing documents, in addition to information, that the individual acquired while employed or retained by the State in the described contexts, unless disclosure reflects official public records or otherwise publicly disseminated information or documents;
- authorize a judge to compel disclosure of documents acquired by a legislative employee (currently limited to information) if necessary to the administration of justice, subject to legislative privilege and immunity laws.

**Introduced by Representatives Everitt and Autry and referred to the House Rules Committee.**

HOUSE BILL 518, Equality for All, adds age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, military or veteran status and genetic information, and changes the verbiage of “handicapping condition” to “disability” in the definition of protected categories in several statutes prohibiting discrimination, including those for housing, employment, education and insurance. The bill also requires places of public accommodation to provide bathroom facilities based on a person’s gender identity. **Introduced by Representatives Alston, Harrison, Buansi and Price and referred to the House Rules Committee.**

HOUSE BILL 519, Mental Health Protection Act, would prohibit the following professionals from engaging in conversion therapy with an individual under 18 years of age or an adult under guardianship: (1) licensed clinical social worker; (2) licensed marriage and family therapist; (3) licensed clinical mental health counselor; (4) licensed psychiatrist; or (5) licensed psychologist. Conversion therapy practiced by any of these professionals would be considered unprofessional conduct and subject each licensed professional who engages in the practice of conversion therapy to discipline under their respective licensing entity. The Department of Health and Human Services would report to the appropriate licensing entity any professional found to be in violation, and could adopt rules to set forth and implement reporting requirements of violations. The bill would further prohibit State funds, or any funds belonging to a municipality, agency, or political subdivision of this State, from being expended for the purpose of conducting conversion therapy, referring an individual for conversion therapy, health benefits coverage for conversion therapy, or a grant or contract with any entity that conducts conversion therapy or refers individuals for conversion therapy. **Introduced by Representatives Ball, Harrison, Butler, and Price and referred to the House Rules Committee.**

HOUSE BILL 520, Prohibit Defense Based on Sex or Gender, would prohibit, notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, the discovery of, perception of, or belief about another person's actual or perceived sex, gender, gender identity, or sexual orientation, whether or not accurate, is not a defense to a prosecution for homicide or assault and is not provocation negating malice as an element of murder. The provision could not be construed as precluding the admission of evidence of a victim's or witness's conduct, behavior, or statements that is relevant and otherwise admissible. **Introduced by Representatives Autry, Butler, Ball, and Staton-Williams and referred to the House Rules Committee.**

HOUSE BILL 523, First Responders Mental Health, would establish a supplemental insurance policy for first responders diagnosed with mental health conditions. **Introduced by Representatives Clampitt, White, Saine, and Reeder and referred to the House Health Committee.**

HOUSE BILL 533, Human Life Protection Act of 2023, would prohibit a person from knowingly performing, inducing, or attempting an abortion. The prohibition would not apply if all the following requirements are met:

- the person performing, inducing, or attempting the abortion is a licensed physician;
- in the exercise of reasonable medical judgment, the pregnant female on whom the abortion is performed, induced, or attempted has a life-threatening physical condition aggravated by, caused by, or arising from a pregnancy that places the female at risk of death or poses a serious risk of substantial impairment of a major bodily function unless the abortion is performed or induced. the requirement does not include any situation where the risk of

death or substantial impairment of a major bodily function arose from a claim or diagnosis that the female would engage in conduct that may result in the female's death or in substantial impairment of a major bodily function;

- the person performs, induces, or attempts the abortion in a manner that, in the exercise of reasonable medical judgment, provides the best opportunity for the unborn child to survive unless, in the reasonable medical judgment, that manner would create either of the following: (1) a greater risk of the pregnant female's death; or (2) a serious risk of substantial impairment of a major bodily function of the pregnant female.

Medical treatment provided to a pregnant female by a licensed physician that results in the accidental or unintentional injury or death of an unborn child would not constitute a violation. A violation that results in the death of an unborn child would be a Class B1 felony, and any other violation would be a Class B2 felony. A person who violates this section would be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$100,000 for each violation. The Attorney General would file an action to recover a civil penalty assessed and could recover attorney's fees and costs incurred in bringing the action. In addition to any other penalty that could be imposed, the appropriate licensing authority would be required to revoke the license, permit, registration, certificate, or other authority of a physician or other health care professional who performs, induces, or attempts an abortion in violation of this section. **Introduced by Representatives Kidwell, Moss, and Goodwin and referred to the House Rules Committee. This is NOT the bill that we expect the Republican Majority to move this session.**

HOUSE BILL 541, Economic Security Act, would seek to advance economic security for all in North Carolina by:

- increasing the State minimum wage in phases to \$15 per hour over five years;
- mandating equal pay for equal work;
- requiring paid sick leave and family medical leave;
- restoring unemployment insurance benefits adjusted for inflation and studying unemployment insurance benefits for app-based "gig economy" workers;
- increasing the tipped minimum wage;
- ending wage theft;
- requiring the fair assessment of persons with criminal histories by "banning the box";
- repealing public employee collective bargaining restrictions;
- reenacting the earned income tax credit and tax credits for child and dependent care expenses;
- creating a rebuttable presumption that first responders, health care workers, and essential service workers infected by the coronavirus contracted the disease in the course of employment;
- requiring that local government employers credit first responders and health care workers for leave taken while quarantined during the coronavirus pandemic;
- mandating hazard pay for essential State employees fighting the pandemic and appropriating funds for that purpose;
- directing the Legislative Research Commission to study the provision of hazard pay to private and local governmental employees; and
- appropriating funds to settle pandemic-related State employee workers' compensation claims.

**Introduced by Representatives Harrison, Morey, T. Brown, and A. Baker and referred to the House Rules Committee.**

HOUSE BILL 543, 2023 Youth END Act, is identical to Senate Bill 116, summarized in the February 21, 2023, Legislative Report. **Introduced by Representatives Cervania, Lambeth, K. Baker, and Ball and referred to the House Appropriations Committee.**

SENATE BILL 370, Mobile Drivers License, would authorize the Commissioner of Motor Vehicles to Commissioner to issue a mobile driver's license treated as the legal equivalent of the valid license. The mobile driver's license would be a supplemental digital version of a valid driver's license that is (1) approved by the Commissioner of Motor Vehicles; (2) issued by the Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV); (3) comprised of the same data elements as are found on a valid driver's license; and (4) capable of, and limited to, being linked to, and displayed by, a mobile device owned by the person to whom the valid driver's license is issued. The Division of Motor Vehicles would study and provide a plan for implementing mobile drivers licenses as authorized and report its findings of this study, including any legislative recommendations, to the chairs of the Joint Legislative Transportation Oversight Committee, and the Fiscal Research Division no later than January 1, 2024. **Introduced by Senators Johnson and Moffitt and referred to the Senate Rules Committee.**

SENATE BILL 371, Opioid Overdose Prevention Act, appropriates \$15 million annually to the Department of Health and Human Services for opioid antagonists for local health departments. **Introduced by Senators Batch, Garrett and Robinson and referred to the Senate Rules Committee.**

SENATE BILL 375, Health Care Freedom Act, would prohibit a health care provider from refusing to provide health care or professional services to an individual seeking a health care treatment or an emergency medical condition due to the individual's vaccination status at the time health care treatment is requested or during the course of health care treatment. "Vaccination status" would mean an indication of whether an individual has received a vaccine of any kind. An individual could bring a civil action against a health care provider for a violation, and a prevailing plaintiff would be entitled to one or more of the following: (1) damages, including punitive damages and actual damages; (2) injunctive and any other court-approved relief; and (3) reasonable attorney fees and costs. A health care provider who violates this section would be guilty of a Class 2 misdemeanor and would be referred to the appropriate licensing agency for disciplinary action. **Introduced by Senator Johnson and referred to the Senate Rules Committee.**

SENATE BILL 380, Physician Passive Income Prohibited, prohibits physicians from requiring or receiving payment under a collaborative practice agreement with a nurse practitioner or a supervision agreement with a nurse midwife. Violations would be a Class 2 misdemeanor subject to a \$1000 fine for a first violation and \$5000 for subsequent violations, and would be considered unprofessional conduct subject to grounds for discipline. **Introduced by Senators Adcock, Hise and Krawiec and referred to the Senate Rules Committee.**

SENATE BILL 385, Anesthesia Care/TEFRA Compliance, requires anesthesiologists supervising certified registered nurse anesthetists performing anesthesia care to follow certain requirements to bill for services. Requirements include performing a pre-anesthetic examination, prescribing the anesthesia plan, personally participating in the most demanding procedures, and monitoring the course of anesthesia administration. An insurer shall reimburse claims for medical direction of a nurse anesthetist at 50 percent of what the anesthesiologist would have received if personally performing the services. The insurer shall require an anesthesiologist to follow the required



procedures for supervision to be reimbursed. **Introduced by Senators Krawiec, Hise and Adcock and referred to the Senate Rules Committee.**

SENATE BILL 389, Raise the Age for Donating Blood, raises the age for donating blood from 16 to 18 years old. **Introduced by Senators Hise and Mayfield and referred to the Senate Rules Committee.**

SENATE BILL 392, NC Time Zone/Observe DST All Year, is identical to House Bill 326, summarized in the March 26, 2023, Legislative Report. **Introduced by Senators Hise and Sawyer and referred to the Senate Rules Committee.**

SENATE BILL 393, CRNA Supervision Modifications, requires certified registered nurse anesthetists to be under direct supervision of an anesthesiologist when conducting anesthesia activities during surgical procedures. **Introduced by Senators Burgin, Krawiec and Corbin and referred to the Senate Rules Committee.**

SENATE BILL 394, Legislative Reform Commission, would establish the Commission on Legislative Reform to study and make recommendations regarding modifications to the North Carolina Constitution with regard to: (1) the length of terms for members of the General Assembly; (2) term limits for members of the General Assembly; (3) limitations on the length of legislative sessions; (4) legislative compensation; and (5) legislative per diem and mileage allowances. The Commission would report no later than April 15, 2024, to the President Pro Tempore of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the majority and minority leaders of both the Senate and the House of Representatives, and the chairs of the Appropriations Committees on its findings and recommendations. **Introduced by Senators Burgin, Corbin, and Woodard and referred to the Senate Rules Committee.**

SENATE BILL 396, Compact to Award Prizes for Curing Diseases, establishes the Solemn Covenant of the States to Award Prizes for Curing Diseases compact, and establishes a commission to administer and govern the compact upon enactment of such a law by at least six states. The purpose of the compact is to incentivize research and development for a cure for devastating diseases. **Introduced by Senators Burgin, Krawiec and Corbin and referred to the Senate Rules Committee.**

SENATE BILL 399, Mental Health Protection Act, is identical to House Bill 519, summarized above in this Legislative Report. **Introduced by Senators Marcus, Murdock, and Chaudhuri and referred to the Senate Rules Committee.**

SENATE BILL 400, Prohibit Defense Based on Sex or Gender, is identical to House Bill 520, summarized above in this Legislative Report. **Introduced by Senators Mayfield and Grafstein and referred to the Senate Rules Committee.**

SENATE BILL 402, Full Repeal of HB2, is identical to House Bill 356, summarized in the March 22, 2023, Legislative Report. **Introduced by Senators Meyer, Mayfield, and Grafstein and referred to the Senate Rules Committee.**

SENATE BILL 403, Prohibit Weapons at Voting Place, would make it a Class 1 misdemeanor for a person to possess or carry, whether openly or concealed, any dangerous weapon (i) at a location used as a voting place, (ii) within 100 feet from the door of entrance to a location used as a voting place, or (iii) while in line to vote at a location used as a voting place. The prohibition would only

apply while the location is open and being used as a voting place, and would not apply to a law enforcement officer acting in discharge of the officer's official duties. **Introduced by Senators Marcus, Mayfield, and Grafstein and referred to the Senate Rules Committee.**

SENATE BILL 407, Uterine Fibroid Research and Education Act, directs the Department of Health and Human Services to conduct and support research and to provide information on uterine fibroids. The bill appropriates \$500,000 annually to conduct these activities. **Introduced by Senators Murdock and Salvador and referred to the Senate Appropriations/Base Budget Committee.**

SENATE BILL 410, Expand Certain APA Standing Provisions, creates a rebuttable presumption under the Administrative Procedures Act for associations, organizations, societies, or other entities collectively representing persons to have standing to represent their members. **Introduced by Senators Moffitt, Sawyer and Buck Newton and referred to the Senate Rules Committee.**

SENATE BILL 416, Popular Election, is identical to House Bill 191, summarized in the February 28, 2023, Legislative Report. **Introduced by Senators Waddell, Murdock, and Applewhite and referred to the Senate Rules Committee.**

SENATE BILL 418, NC Paid Family Leave Insurance Act, would enact the North Carolina Paid Family Leave Insurance Act to provide family and medical leave insurance benefits payable to an individual who:

- meets the definition of "covered individual" as defined; and
- meets one of the following requirements:
  - because of birth, adoption, or placement through foster care, is caring for a new child during the first year after the birth, adoption, or placement of that child;
  - is caring for a family member with a serious health condition;
  - has a serious health condition;
  - is caring for a covered service member who is the covered individual's next of kin or other family member; or
  - because of any "qualifying exigency leave" arising out of the fact that the family member of the covered individual is on active duty (or has been notified of an impending call or order to active duty) in the Armed Forces.

The bill includes provisions regarding the duration and amount of benefits, payroll contributions, reduced leave schedule, leave and employment protection, prohibited retaliatory personnel actions, coordination of benefits, notice, enforcement, erroneous payments and disqualification for benefits, and federal income tax. Beginning January 1, 2026, the Division would report to the General Assembly by April 1 of each year on projected and actual program participation by purpose, gender of beneficiary, premium rates, fund balances, outreach efforts, and, family members for whom leave was taken to provide care. **Introduced by Senators Batch, Meyer, and Salvador and referred to the Senate Rules Committee.**

SENATE BILL 426, State Auditor/Access to Medical Board Records, directs the NC Medical Board to make available for review by the State Auditor non-public investigative information. **Introduced by Senators Krawiec, Hise and Adcock and referred to the Senate Rules Committee.**

SENATE BILL 430, Eliminate Participation Trophies, would prohibit youth sports or other youth recreation activities operated under the authority of a local government from including awards for participants based solely on their participation in the sport or other activity. Awards provided in

connection with the activity, if any, would be required to be based on identified performance achievements. **Introduced by Senators Moffitt, Settle, and Hanig and referred to the Senate Rules Committee.**

SENATE BILL 440, Increase NC Minimum Wage/\$15, would increase the State minimum wage from \$6.15 to \$15 per hour. **Introduced by Senators Waddell and Hunt and referred to the Senate Rules Committee.**

SENATE BILL 447, Up Minimum Wages/No Subminimum or Exemptions, would: (1) increase the minimum wage to \$15 per hour by 2025, and then adjust the minimum wage automatically each year by increases in the cost of living; (2) end the subminimum wage for persons with disabilities; (3) phase out the subminimum wage for tipped employees; and (4) end the exemption for agricultural, domestic, and incarcerated workers. **Introduced by Senators Murdock, Mayfield, and Grafstein and referred to the Senate Rules Committee.**

SENATE BILL 453, Supporting Law Enforcement, would:

- amend the statute that sets out when a law-enforcement officer is justified in using deadly physical force, by: (1) adding that the use of deadly force includes strangleholds, lateral vascular neck restraints, carotid restraints, or any other tactics that restrict oxygen or blood flow to the head or neck; and (2) requiring in all circumstances in which a law-enforcement officer uses force of any kind, that a law-enforcement officer use the minimum amount of force reasonably necessary to accomplish the law-enforcement action and attempt to use de-escalation tactics;
- require the Attorney General, in consultation with the North Carolina Sheriffs' Association and the North Carolina Association of Chiefs of Police, to develop uniform use-of-force policies that may be adopted by all law enforcement agencies in the state, and require the policies to be submitted to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Justice and Public Safety by December 1, 2024, published on the Department of Justice's website, and distributed digitally to all law enforcement agencies in the State; and
- authorize the North Carolina Criminal Justice Education and Training Standards Commission and the North Carolina Sheriffs' Education and Training Standards Commission the power to establish minimum: (1) age requirement of for qualification for entry level employment; (2) mental health screening protocols that must be met to qualify for entry level employment and retention, to include a psychological screening within one year prior to certification; and (3) annual mental health screening protocols.

**Introduced by Senators Batch, Garrett, and Smith and referred to the Senate Rules Committee.**

SENATE BILL 458, Good Samaritan Law, broadens limited immunity for certain drug-related overdose offenses and establishes limited immunity for those seeking medical assistance for themselves or another person experiencing an overdose. **Introduced by Senators Hanig, Moffitt and Adcock and referred to the Senate Rules Committee.**

SENATE BILL 459, Exempt Vascular Access Providers from CON, provides that a person who provides vascular access for hemodialysis shall not be required to obtain a certificate of need for licensure as an ambulatory surgical facility under certain limited circumstances. **Introduced by Senators Hise and Krawiec and referred to the Senate Rules Committee.**

## BILL UPDATES

HOUSE BILL 172, Samantha Rose Davis Act, was modified by the House Education K-12 committee to replace the entirety of the language. The new bill requires the State Board of Education to establish a medical condition action plan to be implemented by each public school district for each student at risk for a medical emergency, and to establish the required response of public school employees when a student has a medical emergency not covered by such a plan. At least one public school employee per school shall be trained in first aid and seizure recognition. **The bill as amended was approved by the House Education K-12 Committee and will next be considered by the House Rules Committee.**

HOUSE BILL 382, Registered Nurses in Schools, was modified by the House Education K-12 committee to replace the original bill language. The bill now strikes current law allowing school nurses employed before 1998 to continue work without national certification. The new language allows nurses licensed as a registered nurse with at least two years of licensed experience to be employed as a school nurse without any further certification. **The bill as amended was approved by the House Education K-12 Committee and the full House and will next be considered by the Senate.**

SENATE BILL 41, Guarantee 2nd Amend Freedom and Protections. This bill to authorize concealed carry permit holders to carry firearms on certain school property at certain times, authorize concealed carry for certain law enforcement facility employees, and repeal pistol purchase permits was vetoed by the Governor on March 24th. In his veto, Governor Cooper writes, “Eliminating strong background checks will allow more domestic abusers and other dangerous people to own handguns and reduces law enforcement's ability to stop them from committing violent crimes. Second Amendment supporting, responsible gun owners know this will put families and communities at risk.” The Senate voted to override the veto on March 28<sup>th</sup> (30-19), and the House voted to override the veto on March 29<sup>th</sup> (71-46). **The bill became law notwithstanding the Governor’s objections on March 29, 2023.**

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