



Just like the weather in North Carolina, the timeline for the budget as well as other bills keeps changing from week to week, day to day and sometimes within the same day. Although changing plans is quite common in North Carolina politics, this is quite unusual. Legislative leaders had planned to reconvene last week for voting sessions, specifically to take up override votes of outstanding vetoes. They placed bills on the calendar for last week and talked about trying to have the budget if not completed – close. Last week that all changed and it was announced that there would be no legislative activity last week and that they will now come back into session today, Wednesday, August 16<sup>th</sup> for veto over-ride votes. Several days later House Speaker Moore unexpectedly announced that there would not be a budget before September! This just after announcing that they were going to try to resolve the budget so that Medicaid Expansion could begin by October 1<sup>st</sup>. Of course, there is much conjecture about what is holding up the progress, whether the House or Senate has the upper hand, etc. We just know it is seemingly taking forever!

Governor Cooper and Democratic Legislators are holding press conferences and making statements about the delay and trying to pressure Republicans into finalizing the budget. They are raising issues about the problems for hospitals, patients, teachers, and schools and the many other state agencies that do not know what their budget looks like as they continue to operate not knowing what their bottom line will be and how to plan for the future.

#### CONGRESSMAN DAN BISHOP ANNOUNCES RUN FOR NC ATTORNEY GENERAL

Congressman Bishop announced this week that he'll be leaving the Hill behind to return to North Carolina and run for Attorney General. The Union County-based Republican broke the news on a local radio station Thursday morning. "I think it's a particular time to reinforce support for prosecutors and front-line law enforcement officers," Bishop told the hosts. "I think there's an opportunity to use the influence of that office to restore law and order to our cities like Asheville, in particular, Charlotte, and some others." Bishop has served in the U.S. House of Representatives since 2019. Prior to his election to Congress, Bishop served as a member of the state Senate from 2017 to 2019, the state House from 2015 to 2017, and on the Mecklenburg County Commission from 2005 to 2009.



#### NORTH CAROLINA COLLEGE OF EMERGENCY PHYSICIANS



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## CASINO PROPOSAL

While budget negotiations are ongoing, there's one provision that has caught many people's attention that may not make the final cut: the building of new casinos throughout the state. "Nothing concerning gaming is presently in the budget. I've been very transparent about that. Anything that we do as the House in terms of gaming will be subject to and only after approval by the caucus," Speaker Moore told reporters. While it is not presently in the budget, there is still an opportunity for it to be added if enough of the Republican caucus gets behind the idea. The draft language floating around sets the stage for casinos to be built in Anson, Nash, and Rockingham counties. Last week, one of those county's Boards of Commissioners voted nearly unanimously to hold a referendum on whether the county should be home to a casino complex or not. While Nash County has often been mentioned as a location by legislators, the Board's Chairman acknowledged in their meeting that no one has come to them in any official capacity about a casino being located there.

Speaker Moore and Senate leader Berger have both indicated that they would be open to "mini" budget bills again if a full budget can't be reached in the coming months. While leaders are still hoping for a full budget, this would help alleviate some of the pressure caused by delays to school funding, teacher raises, and state employee raises. While details of the raises have not been released, Speaker Moore says the agreed-upon raises are "significant." Many of the raises will be targeting hard to fill positions, as well. "There are some positions that — like for example, in the community colleges, we know it's difficult to get nursing teachers, nursing professors in community colleges — there are examples of those around the state where there's additional funds allowed to be able to fund that," said Speaker Moore. Speaker Moore said the raises would be retroactive to start at the beginning of the fiscal year July 1<sup>st</sup>.

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