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Focusing on Legislative Representation

LEGISLATIVE REPORT April 4, 2025

The last several weeks have been a whirlwind at the General Assembly! Last week was the Senate bill filing deadline kicking things into high gear and burying us under almost 400 bills filed just last week. On the last day allowed for filing a bill, March 25th, Senators introduced 283 bills, bringing the total to 760 legislative proposals for this session. While we tried to read and digest all those bills, committees continued and work on the budget is moving as well.

This week is the House's bill filing deadline. While filed bills aren't the only policy initiatives that spring up in a session, it does help show legislator's priorities for the session. We expect even more bills to be filed by the House this week so bear with us as we get through them. The report below is based upon bills filed last week from 3/24 through 3/26.

SENATE MAJORITY LEADER STEPS DOWN

Senate Majority Leader Paul Newton has stepped down from the NC Senate to take on a new role as general counsel and vice chancellor at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Newton made the announcement in a release on Tuesday, revealing that he would resign from the Senate effective Wednesday. "It has been an honor of a lifetime to serve the people of Cabarrus County for nearly a decade," Newton said in a statement, going on to say he's "been able to play a small role in so many consequential pieces of legislation that have made an incredible impact on the lives of North Carolinians — from significantly reducing the tax burden for all families and supporting businesses of all sizes, to expanding educational opportunities." He shared that he learned about the job opening several weeks ago and received the offer just this past Monday. Newton, a graduate of UNC-Chapel Hill and a retired Duke Energy executive, has served in the Senate since 2017 and became majority leader after the 2022 elections. He also has deep ties to the university, as the father of four UNC-Chapel Hill graduates. Chancellor Roberts said Newton, who begins the job April 21st, "brings exceptional skills and deep experience in law, business and government to our University" and "is passionate about returning to his alma mater and contributing to our success."

Republicans in Senator Newton's Cabarrus County district will select a replacement to fill his seat until the end of 2026. This week Senate Republicans announced that their new majority leader, will be Senator Michael Lee from New Hanover County. Senator Lee will work closely as a key ally to Senate President Pro Tempore Phil Berger.



NORTH CAROLINA COLLEGE OF EMERGENCY PHYSICIANS



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THE BATHROOM BILL RETURNS

The bathroom bill controversy from 2016 is making a return in North Carolina with the introduction of Senate Bill 516, the "Women's Safety and Protection Act," filed by Sen. Vickie Sawyer. This bill includes a provision restricting transgender individuals from using restrooms corresponding to their gender identity, reminiscent of the state's previous "bathroom bill," HB 2. That law, passed in 2016, sparked widespread debate and legal challenges and resulted in the loss of corporate expansions, the NCAA tournament that year, and more. In addition to its bathroom regulation, Senate Bill 516 seeks to define sex strictly as male and female and would prevent individuals from changing the gender on their birth certificates or driver's licenses after undergoing gender reassignment surgery. "We need to be done with that," said Democratic Sen. Julie Mayfield. "We need to recognize who people are. We need to allow them to live their lives, and we need to be done with treating people as anything less than full human beings deserving of respect and dignity." Senate leader Berger defended the bill, stating that it mirrors legislation introduced in other states where it did not spark significant controversy. "We're in a totally different place as far as people's perceptions of some of those issues today than we were 10 years ago," he said.

SENATE BILL 316, LOWER HEALTHCARE COSTS, PASSES SENATE

The Senate has passed Senate Bill 316, a measure aimed at reducing healthcare costs, with a 46-2 vote. The bill, which incorporates provisions from Senate Bill 315, addresses issues like prior authorization practices used by insurers to limit access to expensive medical treatments. Bill sponsor Sen. Sawrey, called it "the first step in dismantling the unreasonably high healthcare costs in North Carolina."

Key provisions of the bill include requiring hospitals to disclose prices for common procedures, restrictions on facility fees, informing patients when doctors are outside their insurance network, and delaying debt-collection referrals until patients receive an itemized bill. It also mandates insurers to make coverage decisions quickly and gives patients the right to appeal to a licensed physician with expertise in the relevant field. The bill also proposes eliminating the state's certificate of need process for inpatient rehabilitation services and instructs the state auditor to evaluate charges for out-of-network and uninsured patients, with findings due in April 2026. Senate Democrats have largely expressed support for the bill, although some, like Sen. Lisa Grafstein, voiced concerns about facility fees, which hospitals use to offset costs for Medicaid and uninsured patients. Sen. Gale Adcock also raised similar concerns but ultimately voted in favor, hoping for more refinement of the bill's language regarding facility fees.

DHHS CUTS

The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services was a bit blindsided by the termination of funds from the Federal Government that they started receiving during the COVID pandemic. The Department announced that it will lose \$100 million in funding and will have to terminate 80 positions for work on infectious diseases, mental health and addiction treatment. The Department is also watching and waiting on reductions to Medicaid Funding that may impact North Carolina.

GENERAL INTEREST BILLS

House Bill 484, Honoring NC's Contributions to Civil Rights, would authorize the African American Heritage Commission to study the feasibility of establishing monuments commemorating events and persons relating to the civil rights movement in the state and

appropriate funds to the Commission to place markers at sites along North Carolina's civil rights trail.

House Bill 492, Repeal Parents' Bill of Rights, would repeal Session Law 2023-106, the Parents' Bill of Rights, and make conforming changes.

House Bill 493, Gen. Assembly/Safe Workplace Policies, would create a confidential process for reporting and resolving incidents of sexual harassment and other improper workplace behavior in the General Assembly, require training to prevent workplace harassment and other improper workplace behavior in the General Assembly, adopt clear sanctions, and appropriate funds.

House Bill 494/Senate Bill 382, Mental Health Protection Act, would enact provisions restricting conversion therapy.

House Bill 499/Senate Bill 480, NC Paid Family Leave Insurance Act, would enact the North Carolina Paid Family Leave Insurance Act.

House Bill 500/Senate Bill 438, NC Adopt ERA, would ratify the Equal Rights Amendment to the Constitution of the United States of America.

House Bill 502, Gender-Affirming Rights Act, would repeal the prohibition of Gender Transition Procedures on Minors Act and the expenditure of state funds on those procedures.

House Bill 503/Senate Bill 482, Don't Tread on Me Act, would enact the Don't Tread on Me: An Individual Freedoms Act, which would recognize nine listed fundamental rights that cannot be violated absent a compelling State interest.

House Bill 507/Senate Bill 483, The Children First Act, would prioritize the well-being of children by expanding access to affordable, high-quality child care for North Carolina families; establish an employer-provided child care credit; implement workforce development and licensing reform strategies to eliminate the child care workforce shortage; enhance child health and safety protections; address infant and fetal mortality prevention; establish a child Care Innovation Task Force to improve the child care landscape in North Carolina; and appropriate funds for these purposes.

House Bill 508, Lower Cap on Credit Card Interest, would lower the cap on credit card interest and make technical changes.

House Bill 520, Abuse and Deception by Telemarketers, would address abuse of privacy and acts of deception from telemarketers by displaying phone numbers that are fraudulent and misrepresentative of the actual caller.

House Bill 521/Senate Bill 635/Senate Bill 622, Healthy Families & Workplaces/Paid Sick Leave, would provide for healthy families and healthy workplaces by ensuring that all workers have earned paid sick days to address their own health needs and the health needs of their families.

House Bill 529, Clean Repeal of HB2, would repeal Article 81A of GS Chapter 143, which preempts State agencies and local governments from the regulation of access to multiple occupancy restrooms, showers, or changing facilities except in accordance with a legislative act. The bill would also repeal GS 95-25.1(d), which provides the Wage and Hour Act preempts and

supersedes any local government acts or policies that regulate or impose any requirement on an employer pertaining to employee compensation, with some exceptions.

House Bill 537, Alena's Law, would allow for a presumption of death in instances where the disappearance and continued absence of a person coincides with a disaster declaration.

House Bill 538/Senate Bill 381, Equality for All, would protect all North Carolinians against discrimination in all walks of life. The bill would define "protected status" as a person's race, color, national origin, religion, age, disability, sex, marital status, familial status, sexual orientation, gender identity, military or veteran status, or genetic information.

House Bill 541, Opt. Top-2 Same-Day Primary Runoff/Elections, would allow political parties the option of using a top-two, same-day runoff method in selected primaries that may trigger a runoff.

Senate Bill 386, Whiz Kids/Slow Pokes Voter Registration, would ensure procrastinators their right to vote by establishing same-day registration on election day and to engage overachieving teenagers in voting by recodifying the program to preregister individuals sixteen and seventeen years of age.

Senate Bill 389, Add Home Schools to Opportunity Scholarships, would permit opportunity scholarships to be awarded to students in home schools and appropriate funds for that purpose.,

Senate Bill 392, Safeguard Fair Elections, would provide increased protections for voters and elections officials against various forms of interference with an election and appropriate funds.

Senate Bill 393, Betting and Addiction in Pers. Finance Course, would require instruction on the costs of gambling, including sports betting and gambling addiction, in financial literacy instruction.

Senate Bill 395, Disaster Relief Eviction Moratorium Act, would allow the Governor to issue an executive order enforcing a residential eviction moratorium in declared states of emergency.

Senate Bill 398, Prohibit Weapons at Voting Place, would prohibit the possession or carrying of a dangerous weapon at or within a certain distance of a voting place.

Senate Bill 407, Prohibit Defense Based on Sex or Gender, would prohibit a defense to homicide or assault based on the discovery of, perception of, or belief about another person's sex, gender, gender identity, or sexual orientation.

Senate Bill 408, No High Risk Apps/Gov't Networks & Devices, would prohibit the use of TikTok on government devices and during participation in state-funded programs.

Senate Bill 409/House Bill 545, Ban Ghost Guns & Undetectable Firearms, would prohibit the sale or possession of ghost guns and undetectable firearms.

Senate Bill 416, Personal Privacy Protection Act, would enact The Personal Privacy Protection Act to prohibit public agencies from collecting, disclosing, or releasing personal information about members, volunteers, and financial and nonfinancial donors to 501(c) nonprofit organizations, except as required by law.

Senate Bill 417, Posting of State Costs, would require that payments made by state entities be made available for public inspection.

Senate Bill 433, Restore Educator Longevity, would restore longevity payments for educators.

Senate Bill 434, School Workers Fair Pay Act, would require the hourly rate of the minimum salary for noncertified public school employees to be at least \$17.00 per hour.

Senate Bill 435, Restore Master's Pay for Teachers & ISP, would reinstate education-based salary supplements for teachers and instructional support personnel.

Senate Bill 437, Middle Class Momentum Act, would increase the standard income tax deduction.

Senate Bill 441, Revive High-Need Retired Teachers Program, would revive and expand the program to allow retired educators to return to work in high-need schools.

Senate Bill 442/House Bill 560, Parents Protection Act, would make various changes to laws affecting the care of juveniles and the adoption of children.

Senate Bill 443, Local Govts/Compensation Disclosure, would provide that counties and cities shall require benefit providers to submit an annual compensation disclosure.

Senate Bill 449, Fiscal Responsibility and K-20 Tech Planning, would require all public schools, community colleges, and constituent institutions of the University of North Carolina to require minimum considerations on technology costs and public schools to report on break/fix rate.

Senate Bill 450, Novel Opioid Control Act of 2025, would update the Controlled Substances Act, including expanding the definition of opiates under the list of Schedule I controlled substances to include 45 additional chemical designations and to change the alternative names for certain fentanyl derivatives.

Senate Bill 452, End Child Marriage, would provide that only individuals eighteen years or older may lawfully marry.

Senate Bill 455, Main Street Resilience Act, would provide income tax relief to small businesses to allow an income tax deduction of up to \$75,000 of net business income the taxpayer received during the taxable year if the tax payer is a small business, and for a married couple filing jointly, if both spouses receive or incur net business income, the maximum amounts apply separately to each spouse's net business income, not to exceed a total of \$150,000.

Senate Bill 457, Automatic Voter Registration, would provide for automatic voter registration at driver's license offices, public agencies, community colleges, and colleges and universities of the University of North Carolina and require the State Board of Elections to implement an outreach campaign informing citizens about automatic voter registration.

Senate Bill 458/House Bill 398, Enact KinCare & Safe Days, would amend the Wage and Hour Act to allow employees to use sick leave for the care of family members.

Senate Bill 459, Constitutional Repeal of Art. XIV Sec. 6, would amend the North Carolina Constitution and repeal a constitutional provision that recognizes marriage between one man and one woman as the only domestic legal union that is valid or recognized by the state.

Senate Bill 462, Const Amend: Legislative Terms/Compensation, would amend the State Constitution to modify the length of terms of members of the General Assembly, the compensation of members of the General Assembly, and the length of the sessions of the General Assembly.

Senate Bill 468, Alternative Additional Registration Fee, would authorize an alternative additional registration fee for electric vehicles and plug-in hybrid vehicles.

Senate Bill 469, Improper Action Claims Act, would enact the Improper Action Claims Act to allow citizens of the State who become aware of actions by a public entity that do not comply with legislation enacted by the State to have a cause of action against the public entity to cure noncompliance and to provide remedies in the form of damages.

Senate Bill 471, Horse Race Wagering Modification, would authorize certain pari-mutuel wagering and horse racing.

Senate Bill 473, Capital for Communities Act, would establish the Capital for Communities Special Fund to be used solely for the purpose of economic development projects occurring within the State, including the awarding of grants for a project, that fall into one or more of the following categories: (1) creation of affordable housing; (2) creation of child care centers or schools; (3) creation of specialized ambulatory care facilities designed specifically to reduce a healthcare disparity or shortage, such as a birth center; (4) support and furtherance of groundbreaking medical research; (5) workforce development; (6) creation of jobs that offer a living wage no less than the median salary of a teacher in this State; and (7) building a nonprofit education facility.

Senate Bill 474, The DAVE Act, would establish a Division of Accountability, Value, and Efficiency within the Department of the State Auditor, direct each State agency to report to the Division on its use of public monies and the status of its vacant positions, and direct the Division to assess the continued need of each State agency and the vacant positions within each State agency.

Senate Bil 484, Workplace Violence Prevention/Mass Picketing, would amend workplace violence prevention laws to cover mass picketing.

Senate Bill 487, Require Legislative Sponsors/Appropriations, would provide that an appropriation enacted in the Current Operations Appropriations Act is not legally valid unless (i) the appropriation is sponsored by a member of the General Assembly and (ii) the name of the sponsoring legislator is stated in the text of the appropriation.

Senate Bill 491, NC Debt Settlement Services Act, would license, examine, and regulate debt settlement services in the State of North Carolina.

Senate Bill 499, Allow Housing Near Jobs, would allow by right residential development and use in all areas zoned for commercial use.

Senate Bill 514, Social Media Control in IT Act, would combat social media addiction by requiring that social media platforms respect the privacy of North Carolina users' data and not use a North

Carolina minor's data for advertising or algorithmic recommendations, and appropriating funds for that purpose, and make willful violations of data user privacy an unfair trade practice.

Senate Bill 516, Women's Safety and Protection Act, would enact the Women's Safety and Protection Act to: (1) clarify and reconcile the meaning of the terms biological sex, gender, and any other related terms in State law; and (2) provide protections for women against sexual assault, harassment, and violence in correctional facilities, juvenile detention facilities, domestic violence centers, dormitories, and restrooms, or where women have been traditionally afforded safety and protection from acts of abuse committed by biological men.

Senate Bill 522, Thrive at Midlife Act, would expand access to affordable, comprehensive healthcare for women in midlife through improved health insurance and Medicaid coverage; provide for programs to expand access to essential midlife healthcare services; provide tax credits for individuals and businesses for midlife healthcare expenses; expand access to providers trained in essential midlife healthcare services; provide for public awareness and outreach and better data collection and oversight; establish a Midlife Health Advisory Council; and appropriate funds for these purposes.

Senate Bill 524, Community Safety Partnership Act, would enhance public safety by incentivizing community participation in neighborhood watch programs and providing a state-mandated bonus for police officers engaged in community outreach activities.

Senate Bill 525, Living Wage Guarantee Act, would establish a State minimum wage of \$15 per hour, incorporate automatic inflation adjustments, and ensure economic stability for workers in North Carolina.

Senate Bill 526, The Hands Free NC Act, would make it unlawful to use a wireless communication device while operating a motor vehicle on a public street, highway, or public vehicular area.

Senate Bill 533, Vaping & Gambling Addiction Prev. Strategies, would raise the minimum age to access tobacco products, including smart vapes and other vapor products, from 18 to 21; broaden the required vapor products license requirement; and provide funding for gambling addiction education and treatment programs through gaming revenues collected by the Lottery Commission.

Senate Bill 545, State Auditor to Audit General Assembly, would direct the State Auditor to periodically audit the General Assembly.

Senate Bill 556, Revise Buffer Zone Limitations/Elections, would increase the dimensions of buffer zones at voting locations that are set by county boards of elections and require boards to set increased limits from 50 feet to 100 feet from voting place entrances and minimum distances from voting place entrances would increase from 25 feet to 75 feet.

Senate Bill 638, Fair Maps Act, is identical to House Bill 20, summarized in the February 3, 2025, Legislative Report.

Senate Bill 652, Voter Fraud Prevention Act, would require a special election when an elected or appointed member of the General Assembly changes party affiliation during the member's term in office with more than six months of the term remaining and require the return of campaign contributions upon the request of the contributor.

Senate Bill 708, Working Families Act, would: (1) reduce parent copayments for subsidized child care, reenact the child tax credit; (2) increase the State minimum wage to \$15 per hour on Labor Day 2025 and grant local governments flexibility to set a higher local minimum wage; (3) increase the income eligibility limit for the property tax homestead circuit breaker; (4) create a homebuyers' assistance program with the North Carolina Housing Finance Agency for first-time homebuyers who work as public servants; and (5) enact the North Carolina Paid Family Leave Insurance Act to help working families and create the Employer Grant Fund to offset costs incurred by employers and appropriate funds for that purpose.

Senate Bill 439, Moratorium on Opportunity Scholarships, would impose a moratorium on the award of new opportunity scholarships, reduce funds for opportunity scholarships, and reallocate additional funds made available from opportunity scholarships to support public schools.

Senate Bill 456, Healthy Start NC, would implement the Healthy Start NC Program to reduce maternal mortality and childhood poverty and offset costs by modifying the corporate income tax rate so as to keep the effective tax rate for corporate taxpayers more closely aligned with that which is required of individual taxpayers of the state.

Senate Bill 607, Equal Pay Act, would prohibit discrimination in the payment of wages on the basis of the gender of the employee.

BILLS OF INTEREST

House Bill 489, Insurance Coverage Emergency Ambulance Trans., would provide for a minimum allowable reimbursement rate under health benefit plans for emergency ambulance services provided by an out-of-network ambulance service provider. The coverage would be applied if a prudent layperson would have believed a delay would worsen the emergency and the covered person did not have a choice in the ground ambulance transportation. **Introduced by Reps. Loftis, Potts, Huneycutt and Lambeth and referred to the House Health Care Committee.**

House Bill 491/Senate Bill 403, Medicaid Work Requirements, would provide for the expedient implementation of Medicaid work requirements. **Introduced by Reps. Lambeth, Rhyne, White and Dixon and referred to the House Health Committee.**

House Bill 495, Accessing Midwives Act, would establish the certified professional midwives licensing act and allow them to practice in North Carolina. The bill provides for setting up a Midwives Council and the requirements of licensure. The bill does have the following provision regarding liability for physicians: "No health care provider or medical facility shall be liable for an injury to a woman or infant arising during childbirth and resulting from an act or omission by a midwife licensed under this Article, regardless of whether the health care provider has consulted with or accepted a referral from the licensee." **Introduced by Reps. Belk, Cunningham, Carney and Ball and referred to the House Committee on Rules.**

House Bill 504, Pilot Co-Responder Police Program, would provide \$474,680 to Mecklenburg County for a pilot program co-responder model designed to integrate mental health professionals with law enforcement responding to mental health related calls by people in distress needing assistance. The funds would be used to hire and integrate within each of the law enforcement agencies of the Towns of Matthews, Pineville, and Mint Hill one full-time mental health professional to be paired with law enforcement, either on a dedicated team or as part of a specialized unit, in responding to calls and incidences identified as involving mental health crises

or persons with mental health issues. **Introduced by Representatives Cotham and Budd and referred to the House Appropriations Committee.**

House Bill 509/Senate Bill 467, Right to Reproductive Freedom Act, would:

- prohibit the State from imposing an undue burden on the ability of a woman to choose whether to terminate a pregnancy before fetal viability;
- specify that the State may restrict the ability of a woman to choose whether to terminate a pregnancy after fetal viability, unless termination is necessary to preserve the woman's life or health;
- define undue burden to mean any burden that places a substantial obstacle in the path of a woman seeking to terminate a pregnancy;
- amend the statute regarding a medical emergency exception for parental consent/judicial bypass for abortions to allow persons qualified to practice medicine, a physician assistant, a nurse practitioner, or certified nurse midwife to fulfill the requirements for a physician to determine whether or not there is a medical emergency that requires an immediate abortion, and amends the law to extend immunity provided to physicians to these same healthcare professionals;
- amend the statute pertaining to a minor's ability to consent to medical treatment to remove language specifying that the section does not authorize abortion;
- amend the statute pertaining to certain prohibited abortions to amend the definition of abortion to mean use or prescription of any instrument, medicine, drug, or other substance or device intentionally to terminate the pregnancy of a woman known to be pregnant with an intention other than to increase the probability of a live birth; and
- repeal the statute banning sex-selective abortions; repeal the Woman's Right to Know Act, and repeal the statute limiting use of state funds for abortions.

Introduced by Representatives von Haefen, Butler, Greenfield, and Dew and referred to the House Rules Committee.

House Bill 512, Emer. Care/Animals/Vet. Practice, would provide an exemption to the practice of veterinary medicine for emergency personnel who render emergency medical services to an injured K-9 police animal or an injured search and rescue dog at the scene of an emergency.

Introduced by Reps. Gillespie, Lambeth, Goodwin and Huneycutt and referred to the House Health Committee.

House Bill 514, APRN Definitions, is the 2025 version of the SAVE Act which would allow advance practice registered nurses or "APRNs" to practice without the supervision of a physician and expand the scope of the definition of the practice of nursing to include diagnosis and prescribing. The bill defines the practice of nursing as a certified nurse midwife to include management, diagnosis and treatment of primary sexual and reproductive health and also ordering and performing diagnostic studies. The bill defines the practice of nursing as a certified nurse practitioner as including health promotion, disease prevention, health education, health assessments and screenings, and diagnosis. The practice of nursing as a certified registered nurse anesthetist would include selecting, ordering, procuring, prescribing and administering drugs and therapeutic devices and ordering, prescribing, performing, supervising, and interpreting diagnostic studies. The practice of nursing as a clinical nurse specialist would include diagnosing, disease management and prescribing. The practice of nursing as an advanced practice registered nurse would include the areas covered by an RN's scope and also include conducting advanced assessments; delegating and assigning therapeutic measures; and performing other acts that require education and training consistent with professional standards and commensurate with the APRN's

education, certification, demonstrated competencies and experience. **Introduced by Reps. White, Lambeth, Setzer and Cunningham and referred to the House Health Committee.**

House Bill 519, Parents' Medical Bill of Rights, would make many substantive changes to the law regarding when minors can give effective consent to medical treatments on their own authority and when parents are allowed access to minor's medical records. The bill provides that any minor may give effective consent to a physician licensed to practice medicine in NC just for the diagnosis and treatment of pregnancy. It removes the other areas currently listed in the law, including treatment for venereal diseases, controlled substances or alcohol and emotional disturbances. The bill also provides that a health care practitioner may conduct or continue to examine a minor without first obtaining written or documented consent from a parent if the health care practitioner has a reasonable believe that the examination will reveal information triggering an obligation to report. **Introduced by Reps. Balkcom, Loftis, Biggs and Potts and referred to the House Judiciary 2 Committee.**

House Bill 522, Crisis Pregnancy Center Fraud Prevention Act, would define as a deceptive or unfair practice the act of knowingly advertising that abortion or emergency contraceptive services are available when the person or entity publishing the advertisement does not provide those services. **Introduced by Reps. Von Haefen and Butler and referred to the House Rules Committee.**

House Bill 525, Reorganize and Fund Rare Disease Adv. Council, would revise the composition and duties of the Advisory Council on Rare Diseases and transfer the Council to the Department of Health and Human Services. The bill would also appropriate \$250,000 in recurring funds to cover this initiative. **Introduced Reps. Carney, Lambeth and Belk and referred to the House Appropriations Committee.**

House Bill 534, Funds for Sexual Assault Nurse Programs, would appropriate \$700,000 to the Community Colleges System Office in nonrecurring funds to be allocated to the Rowan-Cabarrus Community College and Wake Technical Community College in equal amounts to establish training sites for certification as a Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner. **Introduced by Reps. Campbell and Johnson-Hostler and referred to the House Appropriations Committee.**

House Bill 536, Physical Therapy Practice Act Mods, would add the "standards of acceptable and prevailing physical therapy practice" to the definition of physical therapy and would also add failure to refer to the appropriate healthcare profession to the unlawful practice section of the licensure law. **Introduced by Reps. Rhyne, Campbell, Lambeth and Chesser and referred to the House Health Committee.**

House Bill 542, Child Care and Behavioral Services Funds, would appropriate funds to the NC Partnership for Children to expand mental and behavioral health services for children, families and staff in child care facility settings. The bill would allow NCPC to be allowed to hold cash in excess of incurred expenditures at the end of each fiscal year up to \$5 million. **Introduced by Reps. Lambeth, Arp, Pare' and Rhyne and referred to the House Appropriations Committee.**

House Bill 553, Ensuring Patient Safety with Mail Order Meds, provides that before mailing or supplying an abortion-inducing drug that the physician or other health provider must inform the pregnant woman, in person of the information contained in the consent form. The bill also creates criminal liability for violation of the provisions in the bill. **Introduced by Reps. N. Jackson, Campbell, Potts and Balkcom and referred to the House Rules Committee.**

House Bill 558, Criteria for PHP Contract Procurement, would create criteria for procurement of future Medicaid prepaid health plan contracts. The bill provides that all standard benefit plan contracts must be to provide coverage to Medicaid recipients statewide and that there must be no standard benefit plan contracts for coverage of a region of the state that is not statewide. The bill also provides that there must be no more than four contracts between the Division of Health Benefits and PHPs. The bill also provides that the criteria the Division of Health Benefits uses to evaluate the responses to the RFPs to procure contracts under this subsection must assign higher weight to responses received from PLEs and bidders with higher provider satisfaction measures. **Introduced by Reps. Reeder, Potts and Lambeth and referred to the House Health Committee.**

House Bill 561, Youth End Nicotine Dependence Act, would establish the Tobacco Use Prevention Fund as an interest-bearing special fund in the Department of Health and Human Services and provide \$25 million in funding. **Introduced by Reps. Cervania, White and Lambeth and referred to the House Appropriations Committee.**

House Bill 562, Com. Coll. Behavioral Health Workforce Enhancement Act, would direct the Commission for Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Substance Abuse Services to engage in rulemaking to amend the staff definitions for certain qualified professionals to include graduates of community colleges. **Introduced by Reps. Campbell, Huneycutt, Lambeth and Potts and referred to the House Health Committee.**

House Bill 572, Veterans/eTMS Pilot Program, would authorize the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs to select a provider to establish a statewide pilot program to make electroencephalogram combined transcranial magnetic stimulation treatment available for veterans, first responders, and their immediate family members. **Introduced by Reps. Willis, B. Jones, Campbell and Chesser and referred to the House Health Committee.**

Senate Bill 190, Physician Assistant Licensure Compact, would allow Medical Services to be provided by PAs, via the mutual recognition of the Licensee's Qualifying License by other Compact Participating States. This Compact also adopts the prevailing standard for PA licensure and affirms that the practice and delivery of Medical Services by the PA occurs where the patient is located at the time of the patient encounter, and therefore requires the PA to be under the jurisdiction of the State Licensing Board where the patient is located. State Licensing Boards that participate in this Compact retain the jurisdiction to impose Adverse Action against a Compact Privilege in that State issued to a PA through the procedures of this Compact. **Introduced by Sens. Hise, Hollo and Galey and referred to the Senate Finance Committee.**

Senate Bill 316, Lower Healthcare Costs, would

- direct hospitals to file quarterly reports with the Department of Health and Human Services on cost data for common inpatient admissions, surgical procedures, and diagnostic procedures;
- require out-of-network healthcare facilities and providers to provide information to insureds seeking treatment;
- require healthcare facilities to provide good faith estimates and not send unpaid amounts to collections unless a line-item bill has been provided;
- prohibit facility fees from being charged in many circumstances;
- require the State Auditor to examine cost and billing transparency at health service facilities;

- allow insurers to provide utilization review office contact information rather than the name, address, and phone numbers of the reviewers;
- eliminate certificate of need review for rehabilitation services, rehabilitation facilities, and rehabilitation beds;
- require that at the time a health service facility begins the provision of emergency services to an insured individual, if the facility does not have a contract with the applicable insurer, then the health service facility shall provide the insured individual with a written disclosure containing (1) a statement that the health service facility does not have a provider network contract with the applicable insurer and is considered to be a nonparticipating provider and (2) text, using a bold or other distinguishable font, that states that certain consumer protections available to the insured individual when services are rendered by a health service facility or healthcare provider participating in the insurer's healthcare provider network may not be applicable when services are rendered by a nonparticipating health service facility.

Introduced by Sens. Burgin, Galey and Sawrey. The provisions in Senate Bill 315 on prior authorization were also added to the provisions of this in the Senate Health Committee. The bill was approved by multiple committees as well as the full Senate.

Senate Bill 379, Senior Care Assurance Act, would enhance and expand access to affordable, high-quality healthcare for senior citizens through improved chronic care management, preventive services, and home-based care. The bill would also appropriate \$7 million to support these initiatives. **Introduced by Reps. Theodros and Smith and referred to the Senate Rules Committee.**

Senate Bill 396, Medical Board Licensing Efficiency Act, is identical to House Bill 480, summarized in the March 29, 2025, Legislative Report. **Introduced by Senators Britt, Sawrey, and Galey and referred to the Senate Rules Committee.**

Senate Bill 406, Allow ERPOs to Prevent Suicides & Save Lives, is identical to House Bill 166, summarized in the March 6, 2025, Legislative Report. **Introduced by Senators Mayfield and Bradley and referred to the Senate Rules Committee.**

Senate Bill 410, Hospital Petition/Discharge Incapable Adults, would authorize hospitals to petition the court for approval to discharge incapacitated adult patients in cases in which persons authorized to make health care decisions on behalf of these patients are willing to consent to discharge. **Introduced by Sens. Sawrey and Adcock and referred to the Senate Health Committee.**

Senate Bill 414, Pharmacists/Test and Treat, would allow pharmacists to test and treat for influenza and whooping cough with certain medications approved by the Board of Pharmacy and provide reimbursement of health care services or procedures that are performed by a pharmacist. **Introduced by Sens. Jones, Ford and Moffitt and referred to the Senate Rules Committee.**

Senate Bill 415, Patient Safety/Med. Imaging Radiation Therapy, would provide for educational and clinical licensure requirements for individuals who perform and administer medical imaging and radiation therapy procedures. **Introduced by Sens. Moffitt, Jones and Hanig and referred to the Senate Rules Committee.**

Senate Bill 418, NC Health Benefits Exchange Implementation, would allow the Commissioner of Insurance to establish and operate a state-run health benefits exchange. **Introduced by Sen. Burgin and referred to the Senate Rules Committee.**

Senate Bill 430, Revise Child Passenger Restraint System Law, would revise the law regarding the mandatory use of passenger restraint systems. The bill would change the law from a weight requirement of less than 80 pounds to a high requirement of less than 57 inches. **Introduced by Sens. Adcock, Holly and Brinson and referred to the Senate Rules Committee.**

Senate Bill 444, Controlled Substances Act – Updates, is identical to House Bill 330, summarized in the March 19, 2025, Legislative Report. **Introduced by Senator Hanig and referred to the Senate Rules Committee.**

Senate Bill 445, Reg. Relief for Hospitals in Disaster Zones, would provide for the automatic adoption of any temporary waiver or modification issued by the Secretary of the United States Department of Health and Human Services or the Centers for Medicare or Medicaid Services Under Section 1135 of 1812 (F) of the Social Security Act. **Introduced by Sen. Jarvis and referred to the Senate Regulatory Reform Committee.**

Senate Bill 460, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders Program, would direct the Department of Health and Human Services to establish and administer a statewide fetal alcohol spectrum disorders program and create a fetal alcohol spectrum disorders advisory committee. **Introduced by Sens. Murdock and Grafstein and referred to the Senate Rules Committee.**

Senate Bill 463, Medicaid Coverage for Doula Services, would require NC Medicaid to cover doula services during pregnancy and the postpartum period and also provide funding for support services to the doula workforce. **Introduced by Sen. Burgin and referred to the Senate Rules Committee.**

Senate Bill 464, Inmate Medicaid Suspension/Team-Based Care, would require team-based care coordination in Medicaid substance use treatment and would modify the Medicaid program to suspend rather than terminate Medicaid eligibility for incarcerated individuals. It would also require the Department of Health and Human Services to submit a report to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Medicaid on details on the new Medicaid service. **Introduced by Sen. Burgin and referred to the Senate Rules Committee.**

Senate Bill 494, Limit the Scope of Certificate of Need Laws, would eliminate certificate of need laws in all counties except those that have a population of less than one hundred thousand and at least one functioning hospital. **Introduced by Sen. Jarvis and referred to the Senate Rules Committee.**

Senate Bill 503, A More Efficient Office of Vital Records, would establish a deadline for processing birth and death certificate amendment requests and would prohibit the office of vital records employees from teleworking, except as necessary during emergencies. **Introduced by Sens. McInnis, Sawyer and Lazzara and referred to the Senate State and Local Government Committee.**

Senate Bill 517, Fair Pricing and Transparency/340B Covered Entities, provides that a covered entity that acquires a 340B drug for a discounted price under the 340B Program must not accept an amount greater than the acquisition cost for the drug as payment for dispensing, administering,

or otherwise delivering the drug to a patient. A violation of this provision would be an unfair and deceptive trade practice. **Introduced by Sens. Galey, Burgin and Sawrey and referred to the Senate Rules Committee.**

Senate Bill 523, Universal Basic Therapy Act, would create a pilot voucher system for mental health services and expand access to care. The bill would provide \$10 million in recurring funding to support a pilot voucher program in five counties. **Introduced by Sens. Theodros and Batch and referred to the Senate Rules Committee.**

Senate Bill 527, Modify Laws Applicable to LME/MCOs, provides that during the initial contract term for BH IDD tailored plans, the LME/MCOs operating BH IDD tailored plans must contract with an entity that holds a PHP license and that covers the services required to be covered under a standard benefit plan contract. After the initial contract term for BH IDD tailored plans, LMC/MCOs operating BH IDD tailored plans may contract with an entity that holds a PHP license that covers the services required to be covered under a standard benefit plan contract. **Introduced by Sen. Burgin and referred to the Senate Rules Committee.**

Senate Bill 531, Extended Inpatient Treatment Reimbursable, would reimburse private entities for inpatient treatment services performed on behalf of clients under a commitment order and extending beyond thirty days. **Introduced by Sen. Burgin and referred to the Senate Rules Committee.**

Senate Bill 536, Birth Freedom Act, would provide that all health benefit plans providing maternity coverage must ensure that this coverage includes all necessary services and care for births occurring, or planned to occur, under the supervision of a qualified healthcare provider, at home or at a birthing center. **Introduced by Sens. Chitlik and Murdock and referred to the Senate Rules Committee.**

Senate Bill 553, Save More Tatas Act, would provide health coverage parity for breast cancer diagnostic imaging and would appropriate funds to support availability of mammography technologists in rural and underserved areas of the state, and updating mammographic breast density patient notification requirements. **Introduced by Sens. Batch, Mayfield and Applewhite and referred to the Senate Rules Committee.**

Senate Bill 566, Parity Enhancement for Addiction Recovery, would conform to federal law the laws related to health benefit plan mental health benefits coverage and enhance coverage parity for addiction recovery. **Introduced by Sens. Meyer, Adcock and Batch and referred to the Senate Rules Committee.**

Senate Bill 607, Equal Pay Act, would prohibit an employer from discriminating in any way on the basis of gender in the payment of salary or wages, including benefits and other compensation, or pay any person salary or wage rates less than the rates paid to employees of a different gender for comparable work. The following variations in salary and wages, including benefits or other compensation, would not be prohibited if the variations are based upon:

- a bona fide system that rewards seniority with the employer, if time spent on leave due to a pregnancy-related condition and protected parental, family, and medical leave shall not reduce seniority
- a bona fide merit system;
- a bona fide system that measures earnings by quantity or quality of production or sales;

- the geographic location in which a job is performed;
- education, training, or experience to the extent such factors are reasonably related to the particular job in question and consistent with business necessity; or
- travel, if the travel is a regular and necessary condition of the particular job.

The bill would prohibit an employer from: (1) requiring employees to refrain from inquiring about, discussing, or disclosing wages; (2) screening job applicants based on their wage histories; (3) seeking the salary history of prospective employees from current or former employers; or (4) discharging employees for opposing acts made unlawful by this statute, complaining or causing a proceeding under this statute, testifying or otherwise participating in an investigation or proceeding under this statute, or disclosing wage information. An employer violating this statute would be liable to affected employees in the amount of the employees' unpaid salary or wages, including benefits and reasonable attorney's fees at the court's discretion. Any action would be commenced within three years after the date of the alleged violation. Employers would be required to post notice in their workplaces of employees' rights. **Introduced by Senators Salvador, Garrett, and Chitlik and referred to the Senate Rules Committee.**

Senate Bill 737, Medicaid Rates/Ambulatory Surgical Centers, would adjust the Medicaid rates paid to ambulatory surgical centers. **Introduced by Sens. Corbin, Barnes and Adcock and referred to the Senate Appropriations Committee.**

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