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Focusing on Legislative Representation

LEGISLATIVE REPORT April 23, 2025

We're now just shy of 2,000 bills filed this session — a mountain of policy proposals, all hoping to become law this biennium. The final wave of filings from the House offered a window into even more policy initiatives that are up for discussion this session. Among the latest: on-site child care for state workers, a crackdown on slow drivers hogging the left lane, new protections in child custody cases, and a proposal to let private school or homeschool students take public school classes part-time. While other new bills tackle more controversial territory — like tightening abortion laws, banning gender-affirming care lawsuits, and reshaping the state's approach to cryptocurrency and artificial intelligence. And for anyone wondering whether the General Assembly might weigh in on video gambling, Sunday liquor sales, or crypto tax payments — yes, there's a bill for that too.

As the session moves forward, we're keeping an eye on which proposals start to move, which fade out, and how the legislature prioritizes its near-2,000-entry policy buffet.

MEDICAID WORK REQUIREMENT BILL MOVES FORWARD

Senate Bill 403 would authorize North Carolina's Division of Health Benefits to work with the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to create a plan for implementing Medicaid work requirements. Bill sponsor, Sen. Hise presented the bill in Senate Health Care this week, emphasizing that these requirements have always been part of the state's Medicaid expansion strategy. Under this bill, legislators would be notified within 30 days once negotiations with CMS began. Although other states are exploring similar measures, none have formally submitted plans. Georgia remains the only state currently enforcing work requirements. Supporters argue the bill introduces needed accountability, while opponents caution that many Medicaid recipients already work. Since Medicaid expansion in December 2023, 650,000 North Carolinians have gained coverage, according to Governor Stein and the NC Department of Health and Human Services. The bill is now on its way to the Senate Rules Committee.

GOVERNOR STEIN'S FIRST 100 DAYS

Governor Stein hits the 100-day milestone in office, and both Republicans and Democrats are calling it a promising start — so far. Stein, a Democratic governor with a near-Republican



NORTH CAROLINA COLLEGE OF EMERGENCY PHYSICIANS



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supermajority legislature, has taken a more collaborative, less combative approach, and so far, it appears to be paying off. Rather than clashing with lawmakers, Stein has leaned into common ground — supporting Republican-led initiatives like school cellphone regulations, Hurricane Helene recovery efforts, and fiscally conservative spending. His willingness to work across the aisle even extends to the federal level, where he’s been actively engaging with the Trump administration and recently praised its focus on storm cleanup in Western North Carolina. Stein has been quick to signal support for bipartisan efforts, even signing the Helene relief bill just hours after it cleared the legislature — a move that drew praise from both sides, including Speaker Hall, who now meets with Stein regularly.

Still, challenges lie ahead. The upcoming Senate budget proposal could be the first real test of this cooperative strategy, especially if it includes controversial policy items historically used to weaken the governor’s authority. Stein has indicated he’s open to negotiations, with legislative leaders echoing the desire to find consensus before airing disagreements publicly. While some progressive Democrats hoped for a bolder liberal agenda, others, like Rep. Harrison, see Stein’s moderation as strategic in a purple state. “He’s actually threaded that needle pretty well,” she said. At least for the first 100 days, things are looking good amongst our state’s top politicians.

MEASMER TAPPED TO FILL NEWTON’S SENATE SEAT

Cabarrus County Commissioners Chairman Chris Measmer has been chosen by the local Republican Party to fill the state Senate seat vacated by Paul Newton, pending formal appointment by Governor Stein. Measmer wasn’t Newton’s preferred successor; the outgoing senator had recommended a woman for the role, though he didn’t name her publicly. Reports suggest Harrisburg Mayor Jennifer Teague may have been that candidate. Sen. Newton’s departure prompted a lengthy closed-door selection process by the Cabarrus GOP, during which several candidates were interviewed. Cabarrus GOP Chair Lanny Lancaster praised Measmer’s record on fiscal issues, calling him “a champion for the taxpayers.” The candidate pool also included notable local figures such as former Rep. Kevin Crutchfield, former judges, local officials, and others with political and civic backgrounds.

NICKEL ANNOUNCES US SENATE RUN

Former Democratic U.S. Rep. Wiley Nickel has announced his bid for US Senate, marking the first Democrat joining this race. Nickel, who opted not to seek reelection in 2024 due to redistricting, announced his plan to challenge Republican Sen. Tillis in 2026, saying North Carolina needs “a fighter for what’s right” and criticizing Tillis for supporting Donald Trump’s agenda. Meanwhile, some Republicans have criticized Tillis from the right, questioning if he’s loyal enough to Trump. Tillis, whose previous Senate wins were close, is already fundraising for 2026. Democrats see the seat as a potential pickup, with other potential candidates still eyeing this race. Former Gov. Roy Cooper, widely seen as the party’s most popular figure in the state, is considered a top potential contender. Though currently teaching at Harvard, Cooper is reportedly weighing his next steps, according to adviser Morgan Jackson. Meanwhile, a few lesser-known Republicans have entered the race, potentially challenging Tillis from the right in a primary. This contest is shaping up to be one of the key Senate races to watch in 2026.

SENATE BUDGET

The Senate has passed its proposed \$66 billion two-year state budget, setting the stage for what could be a lengthy negotiation process with the House. The plan includes a mix of tax cuts and agency reductions, with significant focus on Hurricane Helene recovery and rebuilding the state’s reserves. The proposal sets out spending \$32.6 billion in the first year and \$33.3 billion in the

second. A key priority is restoring the state's rainy-day fund to its pre-Hurricane Helene level of \$4.75 billion. The plan also adds \$700 million to the Helene recovery fund and reallocates \$633 million from transportation budget cuts to support recovery efforts.

The budget accelerates personal income tax rate reductions, bringing the rate down to 2.99% by 2028—two years earlier than previously planned. It also doubles the tax rate on sports betting operators, from 18% to 36%. On education, the budget includes pay raises for teachers—an average of 2.3% in the first year and 3.3% over two years—along with \$3,000 in bonuses. Funding is also allocated for a teacher leadership program, additional science-of-reading training for middle school educators, and the development of a new children's hospital by Duke Health and UNC Health. The plan also cuts tens of millions from K-12 administrative spending and roughly \$90 million from community college and university budgets. Most state employees would receive a 1.25% raise, plus a \$3,000 bonus over two years. Higher increases are reserved for law enforcement and corrections officers. The budget also funds severance packages to encourage voluntary departures from tenured faculty positions at public universities as part of a proposed "faculty realignment." Health care receives a significant share of spending. The budget includes Medicaid funding, child care subsidies, mental health support, and repeals the state's Certificate of Need law. It also increases unemployment benefits from a weekly maximum of \$350 to \$400 and provides funding for GLP-1 weight loss drugs under the State Health Plan. The Senate plan calls for the elimination or consolidation of several state programs. It also adds \$6 million to expand the State Auditor's office, creating a division to review the efficiency of state programs.

During a lengthy floor debate, most Democratic amendments were rejected. However, one from Sen. Blue, which adds five assistant district attorneys in Wake County, was adopted. An attempt by Sen. Hanig to preserve free coastal ferry rides failed after a vote allowed Republicans to table the amendment. Sen. Hanig later voted against the final budget, joining most Democrats in opposition. Democrats criticized the budget for underfunding public services and pushing forward with tax cuts despite projected revenue declines. Gov. Stein called the plan inadequate, citing a need for greater investment in teacher pay, community colleges, and public safety. However, Republican leadership have defended the proposal. Senate leader Berger described the budget proposal as a continuation of the state's long-term strategy of tax reduction and fiscal discipline. He said the plan reflects a deliberate effort to cut outdated or inefficient programs while still investing in core areas like education, health care, and disaster recovery. Responding to criticism about the revenue forecast and potential shortfalls, Berger dismissed concerns, pointing to past economic growth following previous tax cuts. "Notwithstanding those cries of gloom and doom," he said, "what we have seen is the state's economy continue to grow and flourish."

The House is expected to release its version of the budget in late May. Though both chambers are controlled by Republicans, past negotiations have revealed differences in spending priorities. This year appears to be no different, with some House Republicans already indicating they have concerns with the Senate's proposal, especially around aggressive cuts to the state income tax rate. When asked what was negotiable from the Senate's proposal, Senate leader Berger shied away from specifics. "Oh, gosh, I don't know that I want to talk too much about what's negotiable or non-negotiable," he said. Time will tell if the General Assembly is able to reach a final agreement before the new fiscal year begins on July 1.

LEGISLATIVE SCHEDULE

Jones Street will take a breather this week as the hustle and bustle of session pauses for the General Assembly's scheduled break. The legislature will be officially closed for the entire week—doors locked and lights off. This will give us a chance to get through all the filed bills so after this report

there will be one more this week. When the legislature gets back next week it will be very intense as both chambers work to get bills approved by the Crossover deadline on May 8.

GENERAL INTEREST BILLS

House Bill 645, Friendly NC Act, would make a variety of changes to the laws regarding hate crimes, including modifying the categories under which a crime will be elevated to a higher level offense as a hate crime to encompass those crimes motivated, in whole or in part, by a victim's actual or perceived personally identifying characteristic. The bill would also direct the State Bureau of Investigation to collect, analyze, and disseminate information regarding the commission of offenses punishable under the hate crime statutes.

House Bill 663, Living Donor Protection Act, would protect living donors from potential insurance discrimination, provide an income tax credit for unreimbursed medical expenses resulting from certain organ and marrow donations, and provide up to thirty days' paid leave to state employees and other state-supported personnel who serve as living organ donors and up to seven days' paid leave for bone marrow donors.

House Bill 665, DPI Disaster Preparedness Fund, would establish the Public School Disaster Preparedness Fund, administered by the Department of Public Instruction, to provide funds to schools in areas at high risk of experiencing natural disasters to improve or replace existing school structures in an effort to mitigate the damage to those structures from future weather events.

House Bill 690, The Citizens Support Act, would: (1) direct the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Commerce, the Housing Finance Agency, and local housing authorities to develop, implement, and report on a plan to ensure that state-funded benefits provided by or through these state and local agencies are available only to United States citizens and noncitizens residing in the United States with legal permission; (2) direct state-funded institutions of higher education to adopt and implement a policy to verify that all applicants are legally authorized to reside in the United States; and (3) direct the Department of Commerce, Division of Employment Security, to adopt and implement a policy to verify that all applicants for benefits are legally authorized to reside in the United States.

House Bill 691, Voter Protection and Reliance Act, would enact the Voter Protection and Reliance Act to ensure challenges to the rules and practices governing elections are made well in advance of each election by (i) prohibiting the discounting of ballots cast in compliance with the laws established and understood at the time of an election and (ii) accelerating litigation filed shortly before a pending election or after an election is held. The bill also would provide that a protest challenging a voter's registration will be sustained to invalidate a cast ballot or prevent a voter from voting where the alleged error in an accepted registration is a technical or clerical error, such as an incomplete form, on which the voter detrimentally relied, unless the protester demonstrates that the voter was in fact ineligible to vote at the time of registration.

House Bill 711, Recovery Support Via Revenue Stabilization, would repeal the corporate income tax phaseout and set the tax rate at 2.25%.

House Bill 712, Universal Income/Pay-It-Forward Fund, would establish the NC Universal Income Program (NCUIP) in the Department of Commerce to incentivize individuals having difficulty finding good permanent employment to volunteer in the community and to receive retraining, and

establish the Pay-It-Forward Fund to support the NCUIP. The Department would focus on public-private partnerships, tax incentives, and other methods appropriate to obtain the resources required to fund the NCUIP and to provide valuable volunteer opportunities for the community and employment retraining to participants. In consultation with the NC Department of Revenue, the Department would implement a repayment program for NCUIP graduates to pay an extra 1% in State individual income taxes, with that revenue going into the Fund to provide the universal income to others in the program. By January 1, 2026, the NCUIP would provide a monthly income of up to \$3,000 per month, for up to five years, to eligible individuals who are receiving job training, performing volunteer work, or both, in accordance with the requirements of the program.

House Bill 713, Universal Free Breakfast and Lunch, would provide breakfast and lunch in public schools at no cost to students.

House Bill 730, Comprehensive State Communications, would require State-provided information about State services to be available in the five most common non-English languages spoken at home by residents of North Carolina and appropriate funds to the Department of Administration for translator services.

House Bill 732, Common Sense Gun Regulations, would:

- require a permit for the purchase of an assault weapon or long gun;
- require a 72-hour waiting period before a purchased firearm may be delivered or otherwise possessed;
- prohibit the sale of an assault weapon or long gun to persons under a certain age;
- prohibit the sale or possession of a bump stock or trigger crank;
- require the safe storage of a firearm;
- revise reciprocity law for a concealed handgun permit; require the reporting of a lost or stolen firearm;
- require any person who owns a firearm to carry firearm liability insurance;
- limit the size of ammunition magazines;
- repeal the preemption of local regulation of firearms;
- allow the destruction of a seized firearm;
- require the Department of Public Safety to develop a roster of handguns that meet certain design and safety standards and prohibit the sale, transfer, ownership, or possession of handguns that are not included on the roster;
- repeal the "stand your ground laws" and codify common law regarding use of force against an intruder;
- prohibit leaving a firearm in an unattended motor vehicle unless firearm is safely stored;
- prohibit the sale or possession of ghost guns; prohibit possession of a semiautomatic firearm by persons under twenty-one years of age;
- require the sheriff upon denial, revocation, or refusal to renew a concealed handgun permit or pistol permit to transmit the prohibition record to the National Instant Criminal Background Check System;
- direct the State Treasurer to divest the pension fund of gun stocks;
- authorize the issuance of an extreme risk protection order to restrict temporarily a person's access to firearms if there is evidence that the person poses a danger of physical harm to self or others; and
- require a court to order the seizure of any firearm, ammunition, or permits a defendant fails to surrender after the issuance of an emergency or ex parte domestic violence protective order.

House Bill 734, Modernize Debt Settlement Prohibition, would modernize and expand the prohibition of debt settlement by: (1) making debt settlement an unfair trade practice; (2) defining *debt settlement* as the business whereby any person holds themselves out as acting for consideration as an intermediary between a debtor and one or more of the debtor's creditors for the purpose of reducing, settling, or altering the terms of the payment of any debt of the debtor; (3) expanding civil remedies available to debtors; and (4) limiting debt settlement acts that are authorized.

House Bill 744, Fertility Preservation Pilot Program, would establish a Fertility Preservation Pilot Program for the period commencing July 1, 2025, and ending June 30, 2032, to assist individuals whose future fertility is in jeopardy as a result of a cancer diagnosis or cancer treatment with obtaining any combination of in vitro fertilization (IVF) or intrauterine insemination (IUI) services; fertility preservation services; or fertility storage services. The bill would provide \$2.25 million to the Office of State Budget and Management to be awarded as directed grants in equal amounts to the following entities for the Program: (1) Duke University School of Medicine's Onco-Fertility Program; (2) The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Medicine's Fertility Clinic/Fertility Preservation Program; and (3) The Atrium Health Levine Cancer Center's REhope Cancer Fertility Treatment Program.

House Bill 761, Limit Session Length, would amend the State Constitution to limit the number of days the General Assembly can be in regular session in odd-numbered years to 90 legislative days and in even-numbered years to 45 legislative days. Any reconvened session or extra session would be excluded from the calculations. No valid action, other than a resolution of adjournment, could be taken by the General Assembly in regular session after the time limits have expired.

House Bill 767, Market Rate Teacher Pay Study, would establish the Joint Legislative Commission on Market Rate Compensation for Teachers to study and report on public school teacher compensation in North Carolina as compared to other states nationwide. The Commission would submit a final report, including any legislative recommendations, by the end of the 2026 Regular Session of the General Assembly.

House Bill 772, North Carolina Student Lifeline Act, would require all schools, including North Carolina universities and community colleges, to share the suicide and crisis lifeline phone number in various ways.

House Bill 774, School Breakfast for All, would provide breakfast to public school students at no cost to the students and establish the farm-to-table initiative, which would incorporate locally sourced and fresh ingredients into the universal breakfast program.

House Bill 775, Criminal History Checks for School Positions, would require criminal history checks for the initial members of a charter school board of directors, applicants for educator licensure, and applicants for employment with a public school unit and consolidate the statutes regulating criminal history checks for school personnel.

House Bill 784, Prohibit Assault Weapons, would make it unlawful for a person in this State to (i) manufacture, transfer, or possess a semiautomatic assault weapon or (ii) transfer or possess a large capacity ammunition feeding device.

House Bill 786, Working Families Act, would: (1) reduce parent copayments for subsidized child care; (2) reenact the child tax credit; (3) raise the State minimum wage in phases up to fifteen dollars per hour; (4) allow a higher local minimum wage; (5) increase the income eligibility limit for the property tax homestead circuit breaker; (6) create a Homebuyers' Assistance Program with the North Carolina Housing Finance Agency for first-time homebuyers who work as public servants; and (7) 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.

House Bill 787, Revise NC 529 Program, would direct the State Education Assistance Authority to establish a matching program for contributions made by eligible persons who open an education savings and investment plan account qualified under section 529 of the Internal Revenue Code to contribute funds to the Parental Savings Trust Fund for qualifying students. As part of the Program, the Authority would provide matching contributions of \$100 for every \$50 contributed by an eligible person, up to \$500 per year. Matching funds would be provided up to a maximum of \$1,500 per qualifying student. The bill also would create a new tax deduction of up to \$2,000 for individuals who file as single and up to \$4,000 for a couple filing a joint return for contributions to an account in the Parental Savings Trust Fund.

House Bill 788, Fix Our Democracy, would: (1) amend the North Carolina Constitution to establish a nonpartisan redistricting process; (2) reenact legislation that established a nonpartisan method for judicial elections; (3) extend the waiting period for former legislators who become lobbyists; (4) provide for online voter registration, and appropriating funds for that purpose, and automatic voter registration; (5) increase transparency by requiring adequate notice of meetings of all legislative committees and sessions occurring in the legislative complex and require live video and audio streaming of all legislative committee and commission meetings and sessions occurring in the legislative complex; (6) ensure voting places on certain college campuses; (7) prohibit voter roll purging; (8) make various changes to the campaign finance laws regarding transparency in sources of spending, digital advertisement campaigns, protections against foreign interference in elections, and limiting super PAC influence; (9) reestablish public financing for judicial campaigns; and (10) restore citizenship rights of certain offenders.

House Bill 799, Ensure Nondiscrimination in Government, would provide that it is the public policy of this State that State employee hiring, promotion, and training shall be without regard to race or ethnicity, religion, or sex and that applications for State employment shall not inquire about race. The bill would prohibit the following concepts from being promoted in State, city, or county government workplaces or included as part of any employee training program: one race, religion, ethnicity, or sex is inherently superior to another race, religion, ethnicity, or sex; an individual, solely by virtue of his or her race, religion, ethnicity, or sex, is inherently racist, sexist, oppressive, or inherently victimized; an individual should be discriminated against, receive adverse treatment, or receive favored treatment solely or partly because of his or her race, religion, ethnicity, or sex; an individual's moral character is necessarily determined by his or her race, religion, ethnicity, or sex; an individual, solely by virtue of his or her race, religion, ethnicity, or sex, bears responsibility for actions committed in the past by other members of the same race, religion, ethnicity, or sex; any individual, solely by virtue of his or her race, religion, ethnicity, or sex, should feel entitlement or feel discomfort, guilt, anguish, or any other form of psychological distress; a meritocracy is inherently racist or sexist; the United States was created by members of a particular race, religion, ethnicity, or sex for the purpose of oppressing members of another race, religion, ethnicity, or sex; the United States government should be violently overthrown; particular character traits, values, moral or ethical codes, privileges, or beliefs should be ascribed to a race, religion, ethnicity, or sex

or to an individual because of the individual's race, religion, ethnicity, or sex; the rule of law does not exist but instead is a series of power relationships and struggles among racial, religious, ethnic, or other groups; all Americans are not created equal and are not endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, including life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; and governments should deny to any person within the government's jurisdiction the equal protection of the law. The bill would prohibit a State agency, unit of local government, or non-State entity from using any State funds or public monies to promote, support, fund, implement, or maintain discriminatory programs (a program promoting the concepts listed above).

House Bill 802, Nicotine & Vaping Prevention in Schools, would require schools to provide evidence-based nicotine, hemp, and vape product materials and direct disciplinary repercussions for students found vaping.

House Bill 805, Prevent Sexual Exploitation/Women and Minors, would prohibit an online entity operator from publishing or allowing a user to publish a pornographic image to the online entity unless the operator has verified that each individual appearing in the pornographic image: (1) was not less than 18 years of age when the image was created; (2) has provided explicit written evidence of consent for each act of sexual activity in which the individual engaged during the creation of the pornographic image; and (3) has provided explicit written consent for the distribution of the specific pornographic image. Consent to the sexual act would not constitute consent to the distribution of the pornographic image. The online entity operator would have to establish a procedure for removing a pornographic image from the online entity at the request of a person and to designate one or more employees of the operator to be responsible for handling requests for removal of pornographic images. The bill would also allow for civil actions against the online entity operator for violations.

House Bill 812, UNC-Pembroke Presidential Library Funds/DJT, would provide \$10 million to the University of North Carolina at Pembroke to construct a presidential library in honor of President Donald John Trump.

House Bill 815, Voucher School Accountability Act, would revise eligibility requirements for the Opportunity Scholarship Program and increase accountability and reporting standards for nonpublic schools receiving opportunity scholarship funds.

House Bill 816, Voucher School Transparency Act, would increase accountability and reporting standards for nonpublic schools receiving opportunity scholarship funds and require the State Auditor to annually review audits of at least three nonpublic schools receiving opportunity scholarship funds.

House Bill 821, Driver's License Expiration Moratorium, would provide that a Class C driver's license will remain valid for a period of up to two years after its expiration. This section would not apply to either of the following: (1) to any driver's license that is currently canceled, revoked, or suspended; or (2) a Real ID compliant driver's license that has been valid for a period of eight years or more. The purpose of this temporary moratorium on license expiration would be to eliminate the current backlog of drivers unable to renew their drivers licenses in person.

House Bill 825, Election Improvements, would: (1) prohibit ranked choice voting (a method that allows a voter the option to rank candidates for office in the voter's order of preference) from being used in any referendum, primary, or other election or appointment to any board or commission; (2) allow political canvassing in the area adjoining, rather than adjacent to, the buffer zone around

a voting place; (3) change the earliest permitted start date for the early voting period from the third Thursday before an election to the second Thursday; (4) require, as part of the “reasonable impediment” document concerning voter identification, the last four digits of the voter’s Social Security number and, as one of the three additional data points to be provided by the voter, the voter’s date of birth; and (5) require the last four digits of the voter’s Social Security number as part of the request form for an absentee ballot.

House Bill 828, Prohibit Prop Bets on College/Amateur Sports, would prohibit proposition wagers on college and amateur sports and prohibit in-person sports wagers at a sports facility hosting a college sports event before and during the event.

House Bill 844, Finding Grace Family Bill, would amend abortion laws to:

- make it unlawful to procure or cause a miscarriage or abortion in the state after the sixth week (was, the twelfth week) of a woman’s pregnancy;
- change one of the listed circumstances where it is lawful to procure or cause a miscarriage or an abortion in the state to allow the procedure during the first six weeks (was, 12 weeks) of a woman’s pregnancy, when the procedure is performed by a qualified physician licensed to practice medicine in a hospital, ambulatory surgical center, or clinic certified by DHHS to be a suitable facility for the performance of abortions or during the first six weeks (was, 12 weeks) of a woman’s pregnancy when a medical abortion is procured;
- require a qualified physician who advises, procures, or causes a miscarriage or abortion after the sixth week (was, twelfth week) of a woman’s pregnancy to record the listed procedure information and record of findings and analysis the physician based the determination that there was a medical emergency, life-limiting anomaly, rape, or incest and provide all of this to DHHS; and
- allow a physician to perform a surgical abortion in a listed facility during the first six (was, twelve) weeks of pregnancy and prohibiting physicians from performing a surgical abortion or dispensing abortion-inducing drugs as permitted under state law in any facility other than a hospital after the sixth (was, twelfth) week of pregnancy.

House Bill 846, Teacher Retention and Recruitment, would provide a tuition waiver for children of eligible veteran teachers, reinstate education-based salary supplements for teachers, codify and expand the teacher bonus program, revise the teaching fellows program, revive the retired teachers program, provide for teacher licensure reciprocity, and strengthen reporting requirements for threats and assaults on teachers.

House Bill 852, Safe Dogs, Safe Owners, would mandate strict civil liability for dog bites when a dog injures a person or domestic animal while running unleashed in public and prohibit a person from allowing his dog over six months old to run at large. "At large" would refer to a dog not under the reasonable, physical control of an owner or some other person by the owner's permission, including, but not limited to, instances of a dog escaping an inadequately built or maintained outdoor enclosure, a dog wandering off the premises of an owner unaccompanied, a person walking a dog off leash in public and relying on verbal commands, a person using a leash that is too long to allow for sufficient control to prevent or end an attack, and a person walking a dog with a restraint system that cannot be managed by the person having such dog in charge. "At large" would not apply to (i) a dog being used by a law enforcement officer to carry out the law enforcement officer's official duties and (ii) a dog actively being used in a lawful hunt.

House Bill 871, North Carolina Microplastics Study Act, would direct the North Carolina Collaboratory at UNC - Chapel Hill to investigate the potential impact of plastic particles on waters of the State and develop strategies to address the impacts of plastic particles.

House Bill 878, Increased Academic Transparency, would require a public school's governing board to make sure the following is prominently displayed on the school website, organized at least by subject area and grade level: (1) all *lesson plans*, as defined, used must be posted online no later than 10 days after the lesson was given; (2) for all public school units, any procedures for the documentation, review, or approval of the lesson plans, including course materials identified in those plans, by the principal, curriculum administrators, or other teachers; (3) for all public school units, the procedure established by the governing board for requesting an in-person review of course material not publicly available on the internet; and (4) for all public school units, a list of teacher and staff training materials and activities used at each school during the current school year.

House Bill 881, PFAS Free NC, would ban the manufacture, use, and distribution of PFAS and PFAS-containing products within the state, implement measures to prevent and address contamination from the discharge of PFAS and 1,4-dioxane in the state, and direct various agencies to study matters associated with PFAS contamination in order to protect the public health.

House Bill 882, Break Free from Plastic & Forever Chemicals, would establish extended producer responsibility for certain producers of packaging materials, ban certain toxic substances in packaging materials, and ban intentionally added PFAS in covered products.

House Bill 891, Civil Actions/State Agency and AG Litigation, would make it state public policy that its General Court of Justice maintain primary jurisdiction to hear civil actions involving the State or one of its local political subdivisions, as follows: (1) for matters where a State court has concurrent jurisdiction with a federal court, an action brought by the State or a local political subdivision of the State must be brought in State court; (2) allows a State or local political subdivision to file a civil action in federal court instead of State court if the federal court has exclusive jurisdiction over the subject matter; and (3) in any case where the State or a local political subdivision is the defendant in a civil action, it must not seek to remove, or consent to removal of, the action from State court to federal court. The bill also would require the Attorney General to initiate actions on behalf of the State to enforce or defend State laws and prohibit the Attorney General from advancing an argument in an action pending in any jurisdiction (was, state) that would invalidate a statute enacted by the North Carolina General Assembly.

BILLS OF INTEREST

House Bill 213, Post NC Veterans' Benefits, was amended in the House Commerce and Economic Development Committee to amend the existing requirement of employers to post notice of state laws relating to the employment of adults and children and the regulation of hours and working conditions to specify that the statute applies to employers who have five or more employees and to require the Commissioner of Labor to furnish digital forms of the required notice on its website or printed forms upon request. **The bill as amended was approved by the House Commerce and Economic Development and Rules Committees and the full House. The bill will next be considered by the Senate Rules Committee.**

House Bill 219, Counties/Franchise Ambulance Service. This bill was amended to make the repeal of the current statute, which allows local governments, by ordinance, to franchise ambulance service, applicable to any franchise agreement or contracts for ambulance service initiated or renewed on or after the date that the bill becomes law. **The bill as amended was approved by the Emergency Management and Disaster Recovery Committee and will next be considered by the House State and Local Government Committee.**

House Bill 439, Allow Concealed Carry of Knife, was amended in the House Judiciary 2 Committee to add eight conditions that must be met for the exemption to apply, including that the person: (1) is not a fugitive from justice; (2) is not an unlawful user of or addicted to any controlled substance; (3) has not been adjudicated as mentally defective and has not been committed to any mental institution at 16 years of age or older; (4) is not an alien, either illegally or unlawfully in the United States; (5) has not been discharged from the Armed Forces under dishonorable conditions; (6) having been a citizen of the United States, has not renounced their citizenship; (7) is not subject to a court order that restrains the person from harassing, stalking, or threatening their intimate partner or child, or engaging in other conduct that would place an intimate partner in reasonable fear of bodily injury to the partner or child; and (8) has not been convicted in any court of a misdemeanor crime of domestic violence. **The bill as amended was approved by the House Judiciary 2 Committee and will next be considered by the House Rules Committee.**

House Bill 576, Department of Health and Human Services Revisions -AB. This bill provides a wide variety of changes to the laws regarding the Department of Health & Human Services including allowing the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), on a temporary basis, to utilize the federally facilitated marketplace (Marketplace), also known as the federal health benefit exchange, to make Medicaid eligibility determinations until June 30, 2028.

The bill would also conform North Carolina law to Federal requirements for Medicaid categorical risk levels for provider screenings and authorize DHHS to inspect residences or facilities believed to be operating as adult care homes without a license and increase penalties for unlawful adult care home operations.

The bill would also require that each health care facility that provides a mammography report to a patient following a mammography examination shall include in the report information about breast density based on the patient's mammogram that is consistent with the federal regulations issued by the United 17 States Food and Drug Administration pursuant to the Mammography Quality Standards Act.

And finally, the bill would authorize magistrates to accept for filing petitions for adult protective services emergency orders after business hours and to hear ex parte motions regarding these petitions when a District Court Judge is unavailable. **The bill as amended was approved by the House Health Committee and will next be considered by the House Rules Committee.**

House Bill 591, Elec. Monitoring in Nursing/Adult Care. Homes, would enact the G.U.A.R.D. (Guaranteeing Uninterrupted Access to Resident Dignity) Act to permit residents of nursing homes and adult care homes, and their families, to monitor residents through the use of electronic monitoring devices at the expense of the residents; to require nursing homes and adult care homes to provide a power source and mounting space for electronic monitoring devices; to prohibit nursing homes and adult care homes from refusing to admit residents because of a request to install electronic monitoring devices; and to allow recordings from residents' electronic monitoring

devices to be admissible in criminal and civil actions. **Introduced by Reps. Willis, Loftis and referred to the House Rules Committee.**

House Bill 592, Toxic-Free Devices Act of 2025, would prohibit the manufacturing, selling, and distributing of intravenous solution containers and intravenous tubing that are intentionally made with DEHP. **Introduced by Reps. Reeder, Rhyne and referred to the House Health Committee.**

House Bill 614, The Michael Mitchke F.I.N.E. Law, would require the performance of an autopsy in any case related to a fire incident in which human remains are found. **Introduced by Rep. Almond and referred to the House Committee on Emergency Management and Disaster Recovery.**

House Bill 618, Ivermectin Access Act, would direct the State Health Director to issue a statewide standing order to allow pharmacists to dispense ivermectin without a prescription. The bill would also provide immunity from civil or criminal liability for the State Health Director and any pharmacist who dispenses ivermectin pursuant to the statewide standing order. **Introduced by Reps. Almond, Zenger, N. Jackson, and Rhyne and referred to the House Health Committee.**

House Bill 635, Increase Access to Fertility Treatment, would provide access to fertility diagnostic care, treatment, and preservation services under certain large group health benefit plans. **Introduced by Reps. T. Brown, Cotham, Helfrich, and Charles Smith and referred to the House Health Committee.**

House Bill 640, Public Assistance Verification Enhancements, provides that an individual may not be considered homeless to grant a work requirement exemption until the Department of Health and Human Services verifies that an individual has resided in a public shelter for a period of at least 30 days based on notarized documentation from a public shelter or certifies that there is no indoor shelter available. The bill also provides that the Department may not accept self-attestation of income, residency, age, household composition, caretaker or relative status, or receipt of other coverage without verification prior to enrollment or renewal of or in Medicaid. **Introduced by Rep. Stevens and referred to the House Judiciary 2 Committee.**

House Bill 658, Optometrists Telehealth Services, would allow licensed optometrists flexibility to provide telehealth services. **Introduced by Reps. Campbell, Huneycutt, Almond, and Lowery and referred to the House Health Committee.**

House Bill 664, Eliminate PET Scanners from CON Review, would eliminate the purchase of position emission tomography (PET) scanners from certificate of need review. **Introduced by Rep. Campbell and referred to the House Health Committee.**

House Bill 670, Workforce Credential Grant Program/CCP, would establish the Career and College Pathways Innovation Challenge Grant Program to meet statewide educational attainment and workforce development goals by developing local and regional partnerships that foster innovations to accomplish the following: (1) increase postsecondary enrollment and completion for both students enrolling directly from high school and adults returning to education; (2) ensure alignment between educational options provided and labor market needs; and (3) eliminate educational opportunity gaps where they exist. The bill would provide \$5 million to the Community Colleges System Office for the Program. The State Board of Community Colleges, in collaboration with the Department of Commerce, would report annually by July 15 to the Joint

Legislative Education Oversight Committee on the following information from the prior academic year: (1) the total dollar amount of grant funds awarded; (2) the total number of participating community colleges; and (3) the progress of each local and regional partnership that partnered with a participating community college, as reflected in high school graduation rates, postsecondary enrollment and completion, job growth, and labor market alignment, with data being disaggregated by income, race, ethnicity, and other demographic characteristics, where available. **Introduced by Representatives Willis, Pickett, Campbell, and Schietzelt and referred to the House Higher Education Committee.**

House Bill 672, Physician Assist. Omnibus/Team-based/Compact, would amend the supervision arrangement of physician assistants and make various changes to the licensure of physician assistants. The bill provides that in order to practice as a team-based physician assistant, a physician assistant must practice in team-based settings and have more than 4,000 of clinical practice experience and more than 1,000 hours of clinical practice experience within the specific medical specialty of practice with a physician in that specialty. The bill also states that physician assistants must clearly designate their credentials as a physician assistant in all clinical settings. The bill also includes provisions for a physician assistant licensure compact. **Introduced by Reps. Pare, Potts, Lambeth, Chesser and referred to the House Health Committee.**

House Bill 673, Neonatal Transport Assistance, would provide \$656,000 for each year of the biennium to support neonatal critical care transport to UNC Health Care System. **Introduced by Reps. Alston and T. Brown and referred to the House Appropriations Committee.**

House Bill 675, EMT Personnel Credentialing Modifications, would require the national registry of emergency medical technicians' examination for credentialing as various emergency medical services personnel instead of the State examination that is currently required. **Introduced by Reps. Pless and referred to the House Committee on Emergency Management and Disaster Recovery.**

House Bill 680, The Protect Children from Cannabis Act, would, among other provisions: (1) prohibit the sale of hemp-derived consumable products to a consumer in the State without a permit; (2) authorize the ABC Commission to administer the hemp-derived consumable product retail sales laws, provide for the enforcement of the retail sales laws in conjunction with the Alcohol Law Enforcement Division of the Department of Public Safety, and issue permits and impose sanctions against permittees; and (3) make it a Class 2 misdemeanor to sell, aid, assist, or abet any other person in selling hemp-derived consumable products to any person under 21, or purchasing such products on behalf of a person under 21, and make it an infraction for a person under 21 to purchase or accept, or attempt to purchase or accept, hemp-derived consumable products, not subject to a fine or court costs. **Introduced by Representatives Reeder, Chesser, and Cotham and referred to the House Rules Committee.**

House Bill 681, Update Opioid Abatement Treatment Prog. Rules, would direct the Commission for Mental Health Developmental Disabilities, and Substance Use Services to amend the rules regarding outpatient opioid treatment programs for greater consistency with federal regulations. **Introduced by Reps. Crawford, Reeder, and Chesser and referred to the House Health Committee.**

House Bill 692, AEDs and CPR in Schools, would require the placement of automatic external defibrillators (AEDs) in schools and provide training for school personnel on the use of AEDs and

CPR. Introduced by Reps. Clampitt, Campbell and Greenfield and referred to the House Education K-12 Committee.

House Bill 696/Senate Bill 332, Health Care Practitioner Transparency Act, would promote health care practitioner transparency through advertisement requirements. The bill provides that an advertisement for health care services that names a health care practitioner shall identify the type of license, certification, or registration held by the health care practitioner. The advertisement must not contain any deceptive or misleading information. **Introduced by Reps. Potts, Reeder, and Campbell and referred to the House Health Committee.**

House Bill 697/Senate Bill 668, NC Genetic Counselors Workforce Act, would establish the genetic counselor's licensure board and regulate the practice of genetic counseling. **Introduced by Reps. Reeder, Campbell, and Cervania and referred to the House Health Committee.**

House Bill 710, Mental Health Crisis Unit Pilot for LSAUs, would establish the mental health crisis unit pilot program. The bill provides that the State Board of Education must establish the Mental Health Crisis Unit Pilot Program to provide funds to establish at least one mental health crisis unit in each participating local school administrative unit. **Introduced by Reps. T. Brown, Lambeth, Cunningham and Cotham and referred to the House Appropriations Committee.**

House Bill 714, Universal Healthcare, would create access to affordable health insurance by authorizing the Commissioner of Insurance to establish and operate a universal healthcare benefit plan for residents of the state. **Introduced by Reps. Brockman and Cunningham and referred to the House Rules Committee.**

House Bill 736, Pharmacists/Test and Treat, would allow pharmacists to test and treat for influenza, COVID-19, pharyngitis caused by A streptococcus, and other health conditions screened by utilizing a CLIA-waived test. The bill would also provide reimbursement of health care services or procedures that are performed by the pharmacist. **Introduced by Rep. Huneycutt and referred to the House Health Committee.**

House Bill 746, Limited Immunity/Nurses, would provide limited liability against medical malpractice for registered nurses acting under the supervision of a health care provider. The bill references that this immunity is based on case law from the *Byrd v. Marion General Hospital* (1932) case. The bill provides that if a nurse acts at the direction of a supervising health care provider during the course of health care treatment then the nurse does not owe a separate duty of care to the patient, independent of the duty of care owed by the health care provider and that no recovery of medical malpractice action will be allowed against a nurse upon the sole grounds that the nurse owed a separate duty of care to the patient if the nurse was acting upon the direction of a health care provider. **Introduced by Reps. Carson Smith, White, and Lambeth and referred to the House Health Committee.**

House Bill 750/Senate Bill 352, Community Health Center Grants for LARCs, would appropriate funds to the Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health, to provide grants to nonprofit community health centers for the purchase and distribution of long-acting reversible contraceptives. The bill would appropriate \$2,500,000 in recurring funds for this initiative. **Introduced by Reps. Johnson-Hostler and Clark and referred to the House Rules Committee.**

House Bill 763, Neighbor State License Recognition Act, would provide for occupational licensure for individuals licensed in neighboring states who establish residence in this state without going through the licensing process in NC. The bill would not apply to chiropractors, dentists, optometrists, physicians, podiatrists, and veterinarians. **Introduced by Reps. Zenger, Tyson, Moss, Pless and referred to the House Rules Committee.**

House Bill 766, Expand Access to Teen Mental Health First Aid, would appropriate to DHHS \$1,873,863 in nonrecurring funds for the 2025-2026 fiscal year to expand access to Teen Mental Health First Aid training in North Carolina. **Introduced by Reps. Lofton, Lambeth, White, and Cunningham and referred to the House Appropriations Committee.**

House Bill 776, NC Religious Freedom Restoration Act, would provide that all cases where state action burdens the exercise of religion that strict scrutiny is applied. The bill also provides that a religious institution may be required to comply with neutral health, safety, or occupancy requirements during a state of emergency that are applicable to all organizations or businesses providing essential services if those requirements do not impose a substantial burden on religious services or if the state demonstrates that the burden is both (i) essential to further a compelling state interest and (ii) the least restrictive means of furthering that interest. **Introduced by Reps. Echevarria, Arp, N. Jackson, and Moss and referred to the House Rules Committee.**

House Bill 803, 3-Year FDA Approval for New Childhood Vaxx, would prohibit the Commission for Public Health from adding any new vaccines to the state's childhood immunization schedule unless the vaccine has either been approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration for a minimum of three years or, if FDA-approved for less than three years, upon the recommendation of both the NC Medical Society Board of Directors and the NC Pediatric Society Board of Directors. **Introduced by Reps. Blackwell, Biggs, Potts, and Rhyne and referred to the House Health Committee.**

House Bill 804, Human Life Protection Act of 2025, would prohibit a person from knowingly performing, inducing, or attempting an abortion regardless of the length of the pregnancy except as follows:

- 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; and
- 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: a greater risk of the pregnant female's death, or 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 is 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. In addition to any other penalty that may be imposed, the appropriate licensing authority would 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. **Introduced by Representatives Kidwell and Moss and referred to the House Rules Committee.**

House Bill 820, Prescription Eye Drop Early Refill Coverage, would require health benefit plans that provide coverage for prescription eye drops to also provide coverage for early refills. **Introduced by Reps. Reeder, Campbell, Rhyne, and Crawford and referred to the House Insurance Committee.**

House Bill 824, Expand Treatment Access/Opioid Use Disorder, would expand access to treatment to overdose and opioid use disorder by updating health benefit plan coverage of, and reimbursement for, overdose and substance use disorder medications and make technical and conforming changes to update the General statutes that relate to mental health coverage under health benefit plans. The bill provides that all requirements relating to the coverage of prescription drugs and pharmacy services that apply to health benefit plans are applicable to a pharmacy benefits manager in the same way they are applicable to the insurer. **Introduced by Reps. White and Huneycutt and referred to the House Insurance Committee.**

House Bill 826, No Retaliation Against Mandatory Reporters, would prohibit an employer from taking retaliatory action against an employee because the employee engages in a protected activity. An employer would take retaliatory action against an employee when the employee's protected activity is a substantial motivating factor in the employer's decision to take adverse employment action against the employee. If an employee is a mandatory reporter (an individual who is required by law to report suspected abuse, neglect, or dependency of children, disabled adults, or older adults or who is covered under one or more of the specified mandatory reporting statutes), the employer would provide notice to the employee of their rights and provide training on mandatory reporting obligations with 60 days of hiring and annually thereafter. To qualify for protection, an employee would have to document that they made a mandatory report, and an employee who believes that an employer has violated these provisions could file a written complaint with the Commissioner who would investigate and issue a determination within 90 days of receipt of the complaint. If the Commissioner determines that a violation has occurred, the Commissioner could take one or more of the following actions: (1) order the employer to cease and desist from the violation; (2) order reinstatement of the employee to the same position held before the retaliatory action or an equivalent position; (3) order compensation for lost wages, benefits, and other remuneration; or (4) assess a civil penalty against the employer not to exceed \$5,000 per violation. The bill would allow an employee to bring a civil action against the employer within one year after the alleged violation occurred or within 90 days of the Commissioner's determination, whichever is later, and allow the court to award reasonable costs and attorneys' fees to the prevailing party. **Introduced by Representatives Greenfield, Setzer, Lambeth, and White and referred to the House Rules Committee.**

House Bill 842, Vis. Hear. Dental Screenings Opt-Out, would clarify public school vision, hearing, dental and developmental screenings will be conducted without parental consent but that parents will be able to opt out and be provided information on the screenings. **Introduced by Reps. Helfrich, Carney, Crawford, and Greenfield and referred to the House Rules Committee.**

House Bill 851, Hospital Police Officer/Authority/Info Access, creates the new classification of hospital police officers as a type of company police officers. The bill would provide for the powers

of hospital police officers on hospital property and roads and highways passing through or adjoining the property. The bill would also allow a hospital governing board to enter into a mutual aid agreement with municipalities and sheriff's offices. It would also include hospital police agencies in the list of organizations eligible for tuition waiver/uniform registration fees for courses from the State Board of Community Colleges that support their training needs. **Introduced by Reps. Reeder, Miller, and Pyrtle and referred to the House Rules Committee.**

House Bill 860, Social Media Control in IT Act, is identical to Senate Bill 514, summarized in the April 4, 2025, Legislative Report. **Introduced by Representatives McNeely, Humphrey, Johnson, and Gable and referred to the House Commerce and Economic Development Committee.**

House Bill 886, House Bill AEDs and CPR in Public Schools, would require the placement of automatic external defibrillators (AEDS) in all schools in public school units and provide training for school personnel on the use of AEDS and CPR. **Introduced by Reps. Gable, Almond, Schietzelt, and Chesser and referred to the House Appropriations Committee.**

House Bill 888, Funds for NC Community Health Worker Assn., would appropriate \$1 million to the Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health, to support the NC Community Health Worker Association. **Introduced by Reps. Cervania, Wheatley, and Greenfield and referred to the House Appropriations Committee.**

Senate Bill 171, Modernize Reg/Master's Level Psychologists, amends the supervision provisions under the Psychology Practice Act by allowing a licensed psychological associate to be supervised by a qualified licensed psychological associate, in addition to licensed psychologist. The bill also clarifies that a licensed psychological associate needs supervision when they engage in psychology in accordance with the NC Psychology Board's rules. The bill also modifies the requirements for exemption under new GS 90-270.139(e1), (exempting certain licensed psychological associates from supervision) as follows: (1) increases the hours of postgraduate degree experience in the delivery of psychological services under the supervision of one or more qualified licensed psychologists from 3,000 to 4,000 within the specified time period and (2) now requires documentation that all performance ratings for the 4,000 hours of post-licensure experience have been average or above average. Removes provisions requiring the Board to approve a licensed psychological associate to engage in independent practice if the licensed psychological associate meets those requirements.

The bill also would allow a licensed psychological associate who possesses a certification as a health services provider psychological associate to provide health services without supervision upon meeting certain requirements. **During discussion on this bill in the Senate Health Committee reference was made to getting more patients out of the Emergency Department by allowing more outpatient care. The bill received a favorable report in Senate Health Committee and will next be considered by Senate Rules Committee.**

Senate Bill 335, Pharmacists/Test and Treat Influenza and Strep. This bill was amended to allow a pharmacist to order and perform a CLIA-waived test for strep infections and also clarifies that a pharmacist may initiate treatment for both flu and strep. The current provision requiring the State Health Director to consult with the Board of Pharmacy and Medical Board in developing statewide protocols for implementing the bill were also removed. **The bill as amended was approved by the Senate Health Committee and will next be considered by the Senate Commerce and Insurance Committee.**

Senate Bill 335, Pharmacists/Test and Treat/Influenza and Strep. The amended bill eliminates the requirement that a health benefit plan offered by an insurer in the State cover healthcare services provided by a pharmacist at least the same rate as any other healthcare provider performing the same service if two specified conditions are met. The new version of the bill generally requires such coverage if the two previously specified conditions are met, with no qualification as to coverage rates. The bill adds a directive requiring the State Health Director to issue a standing order, by October 1, 2025, authorizing a pharmacist to order and perform CLIA-waived test and initiate treatment for influenza and streptococcus. **The bill as amended was approved by the Full Senate and will next be considered by the House.**

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