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Focusing on Legislative Representation

LEGISLATIVE REPORT May 22, 2026

INTRODUCTION

It has been the week of Constitutional Amendments! It looks like there will be at least 2 and maybe more constitutional amendments on the ballot in the Fall. The first one will be about lowering the constitutional cap on income tax and lowers it by half and the second would limit how much local governments (towns, cities and counties) can increase property taxes.

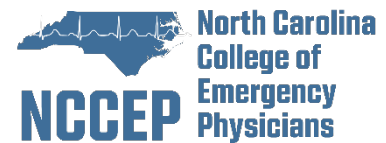
Not to sound cynical, but isn't the timing of these interesting? Most political pundits expect Democrats to have a very good election cycle in the Fall, and they also expect that many Republicans will not be motivated to vote considering the high cost of living and other issues that have lowered enthusiasm. By placing these constitutional amendments on the ballot in the Fall, could that encourage more folks to come out and vote – especially Republicans? I will let you think on that and decide whether there is more going on here.

The Legislature is taking next week off (no I am not kidding) after being in session only a month. They will then try to finish the budget and vote on it by the week of June 15th and finish session in early July. That is the goal, so we will see how things play out.

We hope you have a great Holiday weekend and enjoy time with family and friends!



NORTH CAROLINA COLLEGE OF EMERGENCY PHYSICIANS



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BILLS OF INTEREST

House Bill 1230, No Federal Interference in Elections, would prohibit a person, while acting in the performance of their official duties under the authority of a statute, ordinance, regulation, rule, proclamation, or order, from ordering or authorizing the presence of any troops or armed persons in the US or North Carolina civil, military, or naval service at any location used as a voting place, including any parking areas used for voting, beginning 17 days before an election through the close of the voting place on election day, unless such force is necessary to repel armed enemies of the United States. **Introduced by Representatives Morey, Butler, Cervania, and Harrison and referred to the House Rules Committee.**

House Bill 1231, No Voter Registration Changes At DMV, would eliminate the ability to update existing voter registration on the Division of Motor Vehicles' website or at DMV physical locations and require changes to be made at county boards of elections. **Introduced by Representatives Ward, Loftis, and Howard and referred to the House Rules Committee.**

House Bill 1232, Const. Amend./Life at Fertilization, would amend the State Constitution, if approved by the qualified voters of the State at the general election in 2026, to recognize that a distinct and separate human life begins at the moment of fertilization, and this individual person is entitled to the protection of the laws of the State from the moment of fertilization until the moment of natural death. The bill would provide that: (1) a person who willfully seeks to destroy the life of another person, by any means, at any stage of life, or succeeds in doing so, is accountable for attempted murder or for first degree murder, respectively; (2) a person has the right to defend his or her own life or the life of another person, even by the use of deadly force if necessary, from willful destruction by another person; and (3) the State has an interest and a duty to defend innocent persons from willful destruction of their lives and to punish those who take the lives of persons, born or unborn, who have not committed any crime punishable by death. **Introduced by Representatives Kidwell and Moss and referred to the House Rules Committee.**

Senate Bill 1082, NC Right to Work Amendment, would amend the State Constitution, if approved by the qualified voters of the State at the statewide general election to be held on November 3, 2026, to protect the right of North Carolinians to be employed without being forced to join and pay membership dues to a labor union or association. The bill would provide that the right to live includes the right to work, and that the exercise of the right to work must be protected and maintained free from undue restraints and coercion. It states that it is the public policy of the State that the right of persons to work may not be denied or abridged on account of membership or non-membership in any labor union or labor organization or association. **Introduced by Senators Ford, Alexander, and Jarvis and referred to the Senate Agriculture, Energy, and Environment Committee. The bill was approved by the Senate Agriculture, Energy, and Environment and Rules Committees and the full Senate. The bill will next be considered by the House Rules Committee.**

Senate Bill 1084, Reduce Early Voting Period, would allow early voting in person at the office of the county board of elections no earlier than the second (was, third) Thursday before an election in which a voter seeks to vote and no later than 3:00 P.M. on the last Saturday before that election. **Introduced by Senators Hollo, Daniel, and Overcash and referred to the Senate Rules Committee.**

BILL UPDATES

House Bill 122, NC Board of Integrative Therapies. This bill was amended to establish the NC Board of Integrative Therapies instead of establishing the NC Healing Arts Commission to regulate music therapists and reflexologists. The new version would expand the board's membership to include two licensed physicians who have experience with integrative therapies. **The bill as amended was approved by the House Regulatory Reform Committee and will next be considered by the House Rules Committee.**

House Bill 308, 2026 Criminal Law Changes, was amended in the Senate Judiciary Committee to enact the Halo Act to:

- define *first responder* to include a law enforcement officer, firefighter, emergency medical technician or medical responder, a probation or parole officer, or any person whose employment duties include the custody, transportation, or management of persons who are detained or confined to a detention facility, youth development center, or correctional institution operated under the jurisdiction of the State or a local government;
- define *harass* as willfully engaging in a course of conduct directed at a first responder which intentionally causes that responder substantial emotional distress and serves no legitimate purpose;
- make it a Class 2 misdemeanor for a person, after receiving a verbal warning not to approach from a person he or she knows or reasonably should know is a first responder, who is engaged in the lawful performance of a legal duty, to knowingly and willfully violate that warning and approach/remain within 25 feet of the first responder with the intent to either impede or interfere with the first responder's ability to perform his or her duty, threaten physical harm, or harass the first responder; and
- clarify that merely recording or taking photos of the first responder, without another overt act does not constitute harassment under the statute.

The bill as amended was approved by the Senate Judiciary Committee and will next be considered by the Senate Rules Committee.

House Bill 1090, RURAL Care Act. This bill was amended to modify the use of the Rural Healthcare Infrastructure Fund so that it provides the described grants and loans to support healthcare facilities. In addition, the new version of the bill changes the name of the entity that administers the Fund to the NC Rural Healthcare Infrastructure Council and extends the Council's deadline to submit the Plan to the specified General Assembly division and committee from January 15, 2027, to July 1, 2027. The bill also modifies what is required to be submitted as part of the Plan so that it now includes an assessment of rural healthcare infrastructure in the State. The bill also creates a seventeen-member council to work with DHHS to prepare the annual plan and administer the fund. **The bill as amended was approved by the House Health Committee and will next be considered by the House Appropriations Committee.**

LEGISLATION ENACTED

House Bill 1089, Const. Amend. Property Tax Levy Limit. This legislation will amend the State Constitution, if approved by the qualified voters of the State at the statewide general election to be held on November 3, 2026, to require limits on property tax increases by local governments. Introduced by Representatives Echevarria, Howard, Setzer, and Paré and was approved by the House and Senate. **Effective: May 21, 2026.**

Senate Bill 1080, Lower Taxes for All NC. This legislation will amend the State Constitution, if approved by the qualified voters of the State at the statewide general election to be held on November 3, 2026, to lower the cap on State income tax from 7% to 3.5%. **Effective: May 21, 2026.**

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