



## LEGISLATIVE NEWSLETTER LEGISLATIVE NEWSLETTER

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**Veto Overrides Growing:** The GOP-led House voted this week to override Democratic Gov. Beverly Perdue's vetoes on bills reorganizing the state's unemployment agency and placing restrictions on women seeking abortions, but fell short on a vote to cancel her veto of legislation requiring voters to show photo identification at the polls. After heated debate on the voter ID measure on Tuesday, the House voted 67-52 along party lines in favor of overriding Perdue – five votes short of what's needed to move it to the Senate. Republicans successfully performed a parliamentary gambit; however, that keeps the measure alive.

Republicans argued the photo ID mandate would minimize voter fraud and enhance the public's confidence in voting. "How can you possibly vote against a requirement where in one instance you have to show a photo ID (in Winston-Salem) to panhandle but not show a photo ID to do the most important and sacred thing that we do as citizens?" asked House Speaker Pro Tempore Dale Folwell, R-Forsyth.

Democrats said the requirement is needless because reports of fraud are few and that it would only lead to voter suppression, particularly among the elderly, minorities and women. "This bill is an insult to me. It's an insult to the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King," said Rep. Rodney Moore, R-Mecklenburg. "Right now, I feel like my rights have been raped. Yes I do because there is no substantive problem in North Carolina with voter fraud and this is purely, purely an attempt at voter suppression."

Perdue issued a statement commending the vote. "I want to thank the legislators who stood firm in the belief that every North Carolinian has the constitutional right to vote and that the state should not be creating obstacles to stop them," Perdue said. House Majority Leader Paul Stam, R-Wake, who voted with the minority to perform the procedural changes to keep the bill alive through the remainder of the 2011-12 session, said the bill wouldn't be reconsidered before the Legislature leaves town this week.

**Other Veto Overrides:** Other successful veto overrides this week included an environmental regulatory reform measure as well as placing financial limits on medical malpractice cases. Probably the most startling turn of events this week involved a debate-ending disclosure on the

abortion bill in which Rep. Ruth Samuelson, R-Mecklenburg, the chief sponsor of the bill and House majority whip, noted that she once had been raped. She was responding to some Democrats who maintained that the bill would traumatize rape victims and, in effect, gives rapists parental rights.

**Breaking Ranks:** Three House members broke caucus ranks during the vote this week on GOP-drafted House district maps. Rep. Bill Brisson, D-Bladen, was one of two Democrats who voted in favor of the plan, despite hours of speeches from his own caucus calling the map unfair and discriminatory. "I can live with my district," said Brisson, who also voted with Republicans last month to override Democratic Gov. Perdue's veto of a GOP-penned state budget. Rep. Dewey Hill, D-Columbus, was the other Democrat who supported the Republican proposal.

**Macon County Early Classes Update:** State Administrative Law Judge Joe Webster on Tuesday refused to block Macon County schools from starting classes next week. Webster declined to grant a preliminary injunction sought by a parent and a group challenging the State Board of Education's waiver to 10 of 11 of the district's schools, one of the broadest exceptions to a North Carolina law requiring a 10-week summer vacation. Webster ruled that a lawyer for the plaintiffs, who favor upholding the school calendar law, didn't persuade him of their hardship or that they were likely to prevail.

The judge's action paves the way for the Macon County schools to start classes on Aug. 4. The group Save our Summers-North Carolina said the exception watered down the prohibition against classes beginning before Aug. 25. "We believe it's clear there's been a violation of the law which can be shown on the merits," said Mitch Armbruster, the group's attorney.

**Job Losses Grow:** North Carolina lost 163,120 jobs between June 2006 and June 2011, making it one of the worst-performing states for job creation, according to federal data. On Numbers, a publication of The Business Journals, reported that North Carolina ranked 39th in the nation for raw change in job numbers during the five year period, based on the latest seasonally adjusted figures from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

South Carolina lost 63,100 jobs in the same period, placing the Palmetto state 30th. Texas was the best job performer, adding 537,500 nonfarm jobs between June 2006 and June 2011. That's nearly 10 times larger than the second-biggest increase, which was Louisiana's gain of 55,900 nonfarm jobs. North Dakota was third, with a raw increase of 41,700.

**Quote of the Week:** *"The right to be heard does not automatically include the right to be taken seriously."*

- Hubert Humphrey, 38th U.S. vice president

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