

Julie von Haefen

**Media Report**

**Draft**

**May 10, 2022**

# Part I Introduction

This report reviews electronically available news stories on Julie von Haefen, a member of the NC House from Wake County. This is an update of a report done originally in 2018 for an IE.

The Table of Contents in **Part II** of the report is a useful guide to the entire report and can be used as a stand-alone summary. In one section, it surveys the bulk of the news file, through the headlines we have assigned to each item.

**Part III**, the **Greatest Hits** section, identifies key points taken from available media articles.

**Parts IV**, **The News File**, contain edited copies of the most relevant electronically available stories.

We hope you find this useful.

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## Part III Von Haefen: Greatest Hits from Media

### Background

The only background write-up about von Haefen in databases comes from the liberal Watauga Watch Blog. A more detailed one can be found on her website.

- Julie von Haefen, is a Parent Teacher Association (PTA) leader at the school, county and state level and a fierce advocate for North Carolina's public schools, she is running for the North Carolina State House of Representatives in the 36th District.
- Julie and her husband, Dr. Roger von Haefen, a professor at NC State University, moved to Apex in 2005 and have lived in House District 36 for 13 years. They have three children, ages 13, 11 and 9, all of whom are students in the Wake County Public School System.
- Julie became involved in her local PTA when the oldest of her three children entered the Wake County Public School System. She went on to become the PTA President at Washington GT Magnet Elementary School in Raleigh for two years. She currently serves as the President of the Wake County PTA Council.
- In addition to her work with PTA, Julie is a certified Guardian ad Litem in Wake County and is a Meals on Wheels volunteer. Julie and her family are members of St. Andrew's Catholic Church in Apex. She received her bachelor's degree from Ohio University and her law degree from Case Western Reserve University. She practiced law for 10 years in a variety of areas including criminal law, medical malpractice defense, municipal law and education law. ([Campaign Website](#))

### Education as Primary Issue

#### Pre-2018 Election

Because of her involvement with the local and then County PTA, almost all articles we found on von Haefen from prior to 2018 concerns the issue of education, specifically her passion for public education and the desire to maximize funding for it.

- A March 29, 2017 article in the *News-Observer* pushes the importance of art classes for students, and calls the hold up of HB 13 damaging to Wake County's ability to set its budget for students. (RNO, 3/29/17)
- In late 2017, she called for a mobilization of parents against new mandates on limiting class sizes in kindergarten through third grade classes. From von Haefen's perspective, the new mandates would mean having to spend more to hire more K-3 teachers and cutting back on arts programs.

- "We feel like we have to speak out," said **Julie von Haefen**, president of the Wake County PTA Council and chairwoman of the state PTA's advocacy committee. "If we sit and wait around for it to happen, this won't be good for any of our schools."..... She said state lawmakers need to hear from parents about what could happen if the new class-size rules aren't changed. (RNO, 12/4/17)

A letter to the editor detailed further her objections to the mandate.

- "I fear that our national ranking will slip even further after the devastating effects of the mandate implementation are felt statewide - the loss of art, PE and music teachers, the overcrowding of fourth and fifth grade classrooms, and the potential elimination of needed pre-K programming.
- "The lack of funding for the mandate and the overall decline in education funding from the state legislature both have dire consequences that will adversely affect students, diminish their educational experience and negatively affect their learning environments. The costs are simply too high for our children. (RNO, 1/24/18)

She thinks Republican policies have been "dismantling" public education.

- ".....changes have been especially apparent in K-12 education for the more than 1.7 million children enrolled in public, private and home schools. There are more charter schools, families are getting taxpayer money to help them attend private schools, public schools are evaluated differently and the way teachers are paid and hired has changed. Conservatives praise what they consider long-overdue education reforms in the state.....But supporters of traditional public schools say the changes have dealt one blow after another to public education.
- "To me as a parent, it's been the gradual dismantling of the public education system," said Julie von Haefen, president of the Wake County PTA Council. "If you look at each little thing, it doesn't look bad. But when you put it all together, it's demoralizing the teachers." (RNO, 2/15/18)

Her devotion to public schools means she doesn't like seeing homeschooling expand significantly.

- Though the number of N.C. homeschools has steadily grown over the last 30 years, Julie von Haefen is an avid supporter of the public school system. "It is a great equalizer," von Haefen said. "I believe in my heart that it's the one thing that gives all kids the exact same opportunities from hopefully even before they start kindergarten.....Public schools have to offer the same things to all kids," von Haefen said. "They have to offer meals, they have to offer transportation, and they have to offer special education services. So that's why public school is so important and why I think it needs to be supported much more than it has been." (Charlotte Post, 3/8/18)

She thinks the lower tax burden in Wake County is an impediment to schools prospering.

- “We are fortunate in Wake to have robust job growth, a vibrant housing market, a temperate climate, a moderate cost of living, and one of the lowest property tax rates of any metropolitan area in North Carolina. **While the lower tax burden may make Wake appealing to some, it is also what is holding this area back from addressing some pressing problems.**
- **“Commissioners must weigh using tax dollars and county reserve funds to address critical issues exacerbated by growth such as education, transit, public health, and housing. With limited ways to generate revenue, mainly property taxes, the commissioners are wise to carefully review all requests that incur higher expenditures.**
- “While it is reasonable for the commissioners to be informed before making budget decisions, it is equally reasonable for them to use gathered data from the school system to act in the best interest of our community, our economy, and our schools. (RNO, 6/11/18)

## 2018 Election

Ultimately, von Haefen felt the key to winning a competitive district against the established incumbent Nelson Dollar was to stress more spending for public education, along with expansion of Medicaid.

- Democratic candidates say they can win enough seats campaigning on issues such as raising teacher pay and per-pupil spending to the national average and expanding Medicaid. “It’s going to take a lot of hard work,” said Julie von Haefen, a Democrat running for the District 36 House seat in Wake held by Republican Nelson Dollar. “It’s not something that can really happen with us just sitting back. (RNO, 7/21/18)

School funding was why she chose to run.

- School funding is a big reason that Democrat Julie von Haefen, a former Wake PTA president, decided to run against Dollar. “I know for a first-hand fact that it’s inadequate,” said von Haefen, 47, whose three children attend public school. The legislature has not devoted enough to classroom resources and teacher raises, she said in a phone interview.
- Last year, von Haefen said, her daughter’s fifth-grade teacher told the class she had run out of pencils. Schools are still getting less from the state than they did before the recession, she said. Per pupil spending is below pre-recession spending when adjusted for inflation. (RNO, 10/29/18)

Von Haefen won the election. She benefited from a Democrat wave year that ended the GOP super-majority and also out-raising Dollar.

- Seven-term incumbent Nelson Dollar of Cary, the chief budget writer in the House, raised more than \$500,000, with \$57,400 coming from his state party. Democrat Julie von Haefen raised about \$800,000, with nearly \$538,000 coming from state Democrats. (RNO, 11/9/18)

### **Education Issues in House**

As a member of the House, Von Haefen has been at the front of a number of public education issues. In 2019, she came out for a cap on the number of charter schools. Failing that, she argued for greater transparency and accountability in them. ”

- “I feel we have gotten away from some of the accountability of those programs,” Rep. Julie Von Haefen, D-Wake, said in a segment on the statewide television show “Education Matters.” Von Haefen said she supports reinstating a cap on the number of charter schools. The cap was removed in 201. Since then, the number of charter schools has grown to 185. ”If we’re not going to do that, then I feel we need to increase the accountability of those schools,” Von Haefen said. (Laurinburg Exchange, 1/25/19)

In 2019, she co-sponsored several bills aimed at increasing teacher benefits as well as public school employee pay.

- HB 359. Called for a \$15 minimum wage for non-certified public school employees. (Died in Committee)
- HB 457 and 890 were aimed at restoring “education based salary supplements” for teachers that had been eliminated in recent years. (Died in committee).
- HB 790 called for restoring medical retiree benefits to teachers hired after the cut-off date established several years later to save costs the state had been paying into the system for years. (Died in committee).

In 2020, during the Budget standoff that developed, she cited the impact on education funding and charged the GOP with shirking the responsibilities to education funding under the Leandro decision.

- The group said the budget stalemate has roiled the public education system. School districts can’t fill vacancies. School support staff and educators are forced to work multiple jobs in order to survive. Retirees aren’t able to keep up with inflation. ”Funding education isn’t up for debate. It’s required by the state constitution and protected by the court,” Von Haefen said, referencing the Leandro court decision requiring the state to provide every student with access to a sound, basic education. (Forest City Daily Courier, 3/12/20)

Later in 2020, she sponsored HB 1129 and HB 1130 aimed at increasing more for education despite a budget shortfall. Von Haefen saw it as necessary to meet court mandated standards under Leandro.

- Education activists and Democratic lawmakers want to spend more on education, even as the state faces a massive budget shortfall and is entering a potentially disastrous hurricane season. Every child in North Carolina has a right to a sound, basic education, according to the landmark Leandro case. The state for years has grappled with how to meet that standard.
- Parties to the case released an action plan on Monday, June 15, detailing the first steps in complying with Leandro, which includes a \$427-million price tag. The plan comes as lawmakers and financial analysts warn of how COVID-19 could result in a deficit for the budget year starting July 1 approaching \$5 billion.
- The parties had 60 days to present a short-term plan, but the deadline was extended to June 15. The presiding judge, David Lee, is expected to soon disclose his order outlining the state's obligations in complying with Leandro. The Leandro action plan calls for the state to invest an additional \$426,990,610 in the new budget year to satisfy the court's mandate.
- The action plan considers budget constraints, but it says the state should commit "to meeting the actions in a future fiscal year of the eventual eight-year plan."
- A handful of Democratic representatives introduced two bills to spend a combined \$141 million more on public education as a first step toward complying with the Leandro standards. House Bill 1129 and House Bill 1130 would allocate money to expand a variety of education programs and job positions.
- "The biggest problem facing our communities' schools is lack of resources and support," Rep. Julie von Haefen, D-Wake, said Tuesday during a news conference on the bills. "Funding public education is necessary to ensure each child gets the instruction and attention they need to be fully prepared for success in life." (Laurinburg Exchange, 6/18/20)

In 2021 she reintroduced her 2019 bill calling for the restoration of retiree medical benefits for future teacher hirings.

- This week, North Carolina representative Julie von Haefen introduced a bill that she's all too familiar with. "Well, actually, this is a bill that I introduced last session in 2019. We tried to get it to stop before it went into effect," she said. The bill? House Bill 147.
- "Our state has already put so many burdens on teachers in the last decade or so," von Haefen said. The proposal would rescind the elimination of retiree medical benefits for new North Carolina teachers who started on or after Jan. 1, 2021.
- According to the Associated Press, the change, which also includes state employees, was included in the 2017 state budget law. They report Republicans who backed it said it was needed to rein in future anticipated costs which were calculated in the tens of billions of dollars. (WNCN, 2/21/21)

Clashes between Democrats and Republicans over the Leandro decision and school funding have continued into 2022. Republicans in 2021 were balking at the court ordered mandate for more spending to bring things in line with Leandro while Democrats like Von Haefen praised it.

- State Superior Court Judge David Lee has given state lawmakers an Oct. 18 deadline to fully fund the first two years of a plan that calls for at least \$5.6 billion in new education funding by 2028. Republican lawmakers have balked at the court order, so Lee has said that he'll consider at the 10 a.m. hearing how he can force the General Assembly to fund the plan.
- Here's what you need to know heading into Monday's court hearing in the long-running Leandro school funding case. How does school funding work? The state funds the cost of operating schools, which includes salaries for most school employees. Counties are responsible for funding school construction and maintenance but also can supplement what the state provides for operations. A wide disparity in funding has emerged between rural and urban school districts.
- The Leandro school funding case was initially filed in 1994 by low-wealth school districts to get more state funding. The case is named after a student from Hoke County who has since graduated from college.
- The state Supreme Court has ruled that the state constitution guarantees every child "an opportunity to receive a sound basic education" and that the state was failing to meet that obligation. Lee is in charge of overseeing the case.
- The Leandro plan developed by the State Board of Education and Democratic Gov. Roy Cooper's administration calls for around \$1.7 billion in new state funding over the next two years. The budgets adopted by the state House and Senate provide only a small percentage of that amount. At a September court hearing, Lee said what lawmakers are providing is "woefully short of what is necessary to fund the constitutionally mandated requirement."
- Leaders of the Republican-controlled General Assembly say Lee is overstepping his authority. GOP lawmakers also say more state money is not necessarily the answer and that schools should tap into their federal COVID relief aid first.
- "The North Carolina State constitution gives the legislature, not the courts, the authority to appropriate funds," Demi Dowdy, a spokeswoman for House Speaker Tim Moore, said in a statement in September. "This is an arbitrary deadline that does not have the force of law."
- But the Leandro plan has been embraced by Democratic lawmakers and public school education advocacy groups. They point to how the state has more than \$6 billion in unspent money that could be used to fund the plan. "We've waited long enough," state Rep. Julie von Haefen, a Wake County Democrat, said at a news conference last week. "We've waited 30 years or so for this to be implemented and the time for waiting is over." (RNO, 10/18/21)

Lee's ruling ordering the spending was blocked on appeal as the GOP charged the judge with exceeding his authority. Then in March 2022, Lee was removed and replaced by a Republican, which Von Haefen and Democrats objected to.

- A Superior Court judge who had ordered state leaders to transfer \$1.7 billion to increase funding for North Carolina's public schools has been removed from the Leandro school funding case.
- N.C. Supreme Court Chief Justice Paul Newby issued a court order Monday naming fellow Republican Michael L. Robinson as the new trial judge overseeing the Leandro case. Robinson will replace fellow Superior Court Judge David Lee, a registered Democrat, who had accused GOP lawmakers of failing to provide students with the opportunity to receive a sound basic education.....
- The change in judges was criticized Tuesday by Democrats. "This is akin to a losing basketball team changing out a referee in its favor," Sen. Jay Chaudhuri, a Wake County Democrat, tweeted Tuesday. Rep. Julie von Haefen, a Wake County Democrat, tweeted Tuesday that "I guess if you don't like how the game is going, you just change the rules instead." (RNO, 3/22/22)

## **Abortion**

On abortion, Von Haefen has shown herself to be an extremist. Hence her endorsement by Planned Parenthood in 2018.

- "Nelson Dollar could not be further from the truth in claiming to be an advocate for women or women's healthcare. In reality, as a senior member of the House, Dollar led the conservative majority in passing some of the most stringent anti-women's health legislation in the country," Paige Johnson, Planned Parenthood Votes! South Atlantic vice president of external affairs, said in a statement. The organization has endorsed Dollar's Democratic opponent Julie von Haefen. (RNO, 11/1/18)

She supported Governor Cooper's veto of the Born-Alive bill which would penalize doctors who let babies that survive abortions die.

- Among Cooper's Democratic supporters was Rep. Julie von Haefen of Apex, a freshman Democrat who defeated a long-serving Republican last fall. "I think it's an unnecessary bill designed to threaten and scare doctors," von Haefen said in an interview before Wednesday's vote. "It's also political, to make us out as against babies and mothers, which is not the case." (RNO, 6/5/19)

She was for removing all remaining restrictions to getting an abortion in a 2021 bill she sponsored.

- Democratic leaders in the N.C. House introduced the Remove Barriers and Gain Access to Abortion Act, or the RBG Act, on Monday that would eliminate many restrictions preventing women in the state from getting an abortion.

- If passed, the bill will also allow advanced practice clinicians and other medically trained professionals to perform the procedure, increasing the number of providers in the state who are not physicians, according to Rep. Julie Von Haefen, a Democrat who represents Wake County, is one of the sponsors of the bill. Von Haefen, along with other lawmakers and health advocates, held a virtual press conference Monday to discuss the details of the bill.
- "As North Carolinians, we should be focused on making healthcare more accessible and more equitable," Von Haefen said. "We should be finding ways to eliminate barriers and increase the number of supportive policies in our state, instead of continuing to place barriers to accessing healthcare. This is particularly important during the pandemic." (Fayetteville Observer, 3/2/21)

Von Haefen has been a fierce opponent of funding for pro-life pregnancy centers, denouncing them as "fake clinics" in a 2021 guest column.

- Buried deep in the budget proposed by state House Republicans is a \$9 million appropriation of taxpayer money to fund three anti-abortion franchises - unlicensed and largely unregulated organizations that pose as health care providers for pregnant people.
- These facilities - known as crisis pregnancy centers (CPCs)- do not provide substantive medical care or clinical services and have been condemned by physicians, legislators, academics, and reproductive rights organizations for their coercive and misleading practices.
- CPCs, first introduced in the 1970s, have only ever existed to block, intimidate, and shame people out of accessing abortion care. Their strategy, as seen in their billboards that say "Scared? Pregnant? Call..." is to prey on people who feel in crisis and are looking for information and options. North Carolina is home to approximately 100 CPCs that are often purposefully located next door or near actual abortion providers to deceive patients and create confusion.
- CPCs take advantage of the fact that North Carolina, a state where Medicaid has still not been expanded, is shamefully home to over 600,000 residents who don't have access to affordable healthcare. These residents may see such advertisements, located throughout vulnerable communities, and be deceived into thinking that is where they can access the care they seek.
- An examination of the reports filed by anti-abortion fake clinics with NC DHHS reveals many troubling features. First, their own reports indicate that these clinics see a very small number of clients in proportion to the amount of money given to them by the state. Second, CPCs do not report offering actual healthcare and overwhelmingly do not refer their clients to family planning services or adoption agencies. Third, CPCs have offered no evidence of improving maternal/infant health outcomes, a critical metric in North Carolina, as our state has one of the highest maternal/infant mortality rates in the country, especially among Black families.
- Public money should not be diverted from legitimate state departments and healthcare organizations that provide actual care, have proven results of reducing maternal and infant mortality, and offer comprehensive and medically accurate reproductive health care.

- If the \$9 million in the 2021-2022 House budget currently proposed for CPCs were instead given to Family Planning Medicaid services, that money would provide actual health services to 75,000 women of reproductive age in North Carolina. Shamefully, efforts in the North Carolina Senate to redirect funding for CPCs back to legitimate programs that address disproportionate maternal mortality among historically marginalized populations have been dismissed.
- It is critical for North Carolina to take back taxpayer dollars from exploitative anti-abortion CPCs and return it to actual evidence-based reproductive health care programs that provide comprehensive contraceptive methods and counseling services. Sadly, not expanding Medicaid, cutting funding to reproductive healthcare programs, and giving money to fake clinics tells us one thing: Women's reproductive healthcare is not a priority for NCGA Republican leadership. (Durham Herald, 8/31/21)

Related to this, Von Haefen has also sponsored a bill in which insurance would be required to cover non-prescription contraceptives.

- Rep. Julie von Haefen, a Wake County Democrat, introduced a bill that would have specifically addressed the affordability aspect. In addition to empowering pharmacists to dispense birth control without a prescription, House Bill 817 would have required insurers to cover both prescription and nonprescription contraceptives. Unfortunately, the bill did not gain any traction in the Republican-controlled legislature.
- "I'm not sure if the bill drafters of the other bill that ended up passing really thought through whether that would affect the health care coverages, because it's not technically a written prescription from a doctor," von Haefen said. "The reason I did my bill was mostly to eliminate the co-pays for any kind of hormonal contraceptives." (Charlotte Post, 2/2/22)

## **Miscellaneous Issues**

### **Environment**

In 2021, she was among those who signed a letter calling for "robust infrastructure" spending to help improve the environment.

- A group of over 360 local elected officials from across the United States, including North Carolina, called on President Biden and Congress for robust infrastructure funding to make our communities healthier and protect the environment.....North Carolina local elected officials understand the need to invest in the kinds of infrastructure that will put our nation's communities on a visionary and sustainable path. We must invest in infrastructure that makes us healthier and safer, and prioritizes "fix it first" over flashy new structures.

- "From the mountains to the sea, North Carolina is home to some of the most diverse natural environments in the United States. We're proud of the rivers and waterways that make our state one of the most beautiful and attractive mainland tourist destinations in the country. Despite that, our state has yet to make investments in the essential infrastructure needed to sustain these locations," said Representative Julie von Haefen. "We have known for years that toxic chemicals like PFAS are leaching into waterways and water supplies in local communities across our state. Clean water should not be a luxury. We must act now so that future generations have a chance to grow up safely and in good health, with access to quality drinking water," noted von Haefen. (Press Release, 3/23/21)

Related to this she introduced an unsuccessful bill in 2019 calling for the banning of PFAS in the manufacturing of fire retardant foam. (HB 560)

Von Haefen also attempted to introduce a bill to relax the state's ban on direct car sales in order to benefit an electric car manufacturer that ultimately chose not to set up a plant in NC because of the ban on direct car sales without a dealership network.

- Rivian, an electric-vehicle maker with the backing of both Amazon and Ford, held conversations last year with North Carolina recruiters about building a manufacturing plant in the state with the potential of employing more than 10,000 employees. But the conversations apparently never progressed, in part because of the state's ban on direct-car sales, which would bar Rivian's ability to sell and service cars throughout North Carolina without a dealership network, according to records released to The News & Observer. Ultimately, Rivian selected Georgia for its manufacturing expansion — announcing in December it would build a \$5 billion plant with up to 7,500 jobs outside of Atlanta.....
- North Carolina's laws apparently presented a large stumbling block for landing the Rivian plant, according to the records, which the N&O obtained through a state public records request. And the state's conversations with Rivian never reached advanced stages.....
- In North Carolina, a law passed in 2019 granted Tesla an exemption, allowing it to have six direct sales and servicing centers in the state. But, as state recruiters noted, North Carolina is one of four states that ban not only direct sales but direct car servicing as well. These laws are designed often to protect locally owned car dealerships, the N&O previously reported.
- Records show that state Rep. Julie von Haefen, a Wake County Democrat, planned to introduce a bill that would relax North Carolina's direct-car sales laws, but the effort never made it through the N.C. General Assembly. (RNO, 3/4/22)

## **Gun Control**

In 2021, she was backing two gun control bills pushed by the Democrats.

- House Democrats are pushing for the North Carolina General Assembly to debate two bills that would change gun laws in the state. House Bill 525 would allow North Carolina residents to stop other people from obtaining a firearm in certain situations. House Bill 623 would require a permit for “long guns,” or long-barrelled guns.
- Democrats have pushed for the legislation in previous sessions after gun violence incidents. House Democrats filed discharge petitions to move the bills out of committee and to the full House for debate this week. ”This is common-sense gun safety legislation to prevent suicides and gun violence,” Rep. Marcia Morey, D-Durham, said regarding HB 525. “We need 61 members to get this bill debated.”
- Republicans hold the majority in both chambers of the Legislature. There are 52 Democrats and 68 Republicans in the House. Democrats have not been able to successfully move a bill from committee for the past few years, Rep. Julie von Haefen, D-Wake, said last week during a news conference.
- Under HB 525, a law enforcement officer or “concerned citizen” can file a petition to temporarily halt another’s person’s right to have a firearm. It allows North Carolinians to file for Extreme Risk Protection Orders, which would stop a person who appears to be a risk to themselves or others from obtaining a firearm.
- Backers of the bill said it would reduce gun deaths and injures. Nearly 20,000 Americans were killed by gun violence in 2020, according to the Gun Violence Archive. As of Monday, 4,467 North Carolina residents have died from gun violence in North Carolina since 2014, according to the archive. (Washington Examiner, 9/21/21)

## ERA

Von Haefen has also pushed the legally dubious assertion that the Equal Rights Amendment should be now considered ratified (a sentiment even the late Justice Ginsburg rejected)

- The Equal Rights Amendment was passed by Congress in 1972, and in 2020 Virginia became the 38th and final state to ratify the amendment, fulfilling all constitutional requirements set forth in Article V of the U.S. Constitution. Jan. 27, 2022 marks the two-year anniversary of Virginia’s ratification, and it’s the date the ERA should go into effect across the country. Despite meeting all of the necessary requirements for ratification, the ERA has yet to be published in the Federal Register as the 28th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.
- Why not? Because an Office of Legal Counsel opinion written by the Trump administration in January 2020, instructed the National Archives, the agency in charge of publishing ratified amendments, not to publish the ERA. Nevertheless, we, as N.C legislators — along with many constitutional scholars — believe the ERA is the 28th Amendment and is fully enforceable, even without publication. (RNO, 1/26/22)

## Part IV Von Haefen: The News File, 2015-22

**2015**

### **MAR 2015 PTA President**

No one at Washington Elementary School could resist the small cups of colorful powder that beckoned from a table in the school's cafeteria.

Some people dabbed a line or two of red or yellow onto their forehead or blue or green onto their cheeks, while others smeared colors all the way down their necks and across the fronts of their shirts.

Though their techniques varied, they all were united in their desire to welcome spring in a riot of color as they celebrated the Hindu festival of Holi.

Students, parents and teachers of various religious traditions and ethnic backgrounds embraced the holiday's traditions through the colored powder.

Second-grader Nidhi Patel, 8, grinned as she dabbed a line of red into teacher Dawn Swartz's hairline. Nidhi said she enjoyed sharing the festival with her school friends and teachers.

"I liked when we threw the color because that's what I usually do on Holi with my family," she said.

The holiday is celebrated in India, where customs differ by region, and has spread to countries all over the world. Washington Elementary took the holiday as its theme during an evening Indian cultural program on Tuesday.

The school, home to a gifted and talented magnet program, is among the area's most diverse. About a third of the school's students are Indian-American, with most entering the school through the magnet program, said principal Bob Grant.

Grant said families are drawn to the school by word-of-mouth recommendations about its academics, electives and arts programming. Many also like the pathway students will follow through the school system if they attend Washington, with many attending Ligon or Carnage for middle school and Enloe for high school, he said.

Each magnet school also has a "draw area" that sets out which schools families within the area can apply to. Washington's includes parts of western Wake, where the Indian-American population is larger than in other parts of the county.

"Tonight is a way of learning about culture but also celebrating and really honoring it," Grant said as he waited in line for a home-cooked buffet of samosas, curries and other Indian dishes.

Families cooked all of the food, preparing the meals several weeks in a row as snow days forced organizers to reschedule the event.

The wait was worth it, said participants, who watched students perform traditional songs and Bollywood-inspired dances and sing the Indian national anthem.

Kuntal Gandhi, a Washington parent, finished the evening with a sprinkling of every colored powder at the table across his gray dress shirt.

He said he was thrilled with the turnout, and the willingness of families, teachers and staff who weren't familiar with Holi to embrace its traditions.

"It's a festival of colors and having all the people here – that makes Holi," he said.

Julie von Haefen, president of the PTA, said the school was able to host the event after winning a grant from the National PTA for "Take Your Family to School Week." This year, the week focused on how to support student success, including promoting cultural awareness.

Washington was one of only 50 schools across the country to win the grant. The school also hosted an event where parents who are Spanish speakers could eat dinner and listen to a speaker about how best to support their children in school when English is not their first language.

Von Haefen said the school's diversity is an asset, one she hopes will be celebrated in more culturally themed events. "I think that diversity is part of why so many families come here," she said (RNO, 3/11/15)

**2017**

**MAR 2017 Letter to Editor Pushes School Arts Funding**

Arts empowers students

Regarding the March 24 news article "Groups lobby to save art, music, PE, foreign language teachers": As a board member of Wake County PTA Council, I have seen firsthand the difference that the arts have made in students' lives in schools across Wake County: Special education students learning new skills in art class, students who use tools for the first time while building sets for school musicals, excited kids performing in band and orchestra concerts and a drama teacher encouraging students to share their personal creations at a poetry slam.

I see students' confidence grow. I see them willing to take risks and step out of their comfort zones. I see empowered, strong students who have been given those opportunities through the arts programs.

House Bill 13 has been sitting in the Senate Rules Committee since Feb. 20. Meanwhile, WCPSS is scrambling to plan its 2017-18 budget without any clear direction on how to fund the 400 additional teachers and 20 additional schools it would need in order to comply with the class size limits as they currently stand.

Wake County PTA supports the passage of HB 13, and we implore the state Senate to quickly pass HB 13 to save our important arts programming.

Julie von Haefen (RNO, 3/29/17)

**OCT 2017 Tweets Over "Class Size Chaos" in Elementary Schools**

An effort to delay new smaller elementary school class sizes that school districts have warned could lead to actions such as losing art and music classes and students changing schools died in the state legislature this week.

State House members dropped Wednesday a plan to delay the new class sizes set to begin in 2018 after the Senate objected to the change. Lawmakers are now talking about potentially revisiting the issue in the spring, a time when schools are busy planning for next school year.

"I'm clearly frustrated and at this point the Senate's position and the Senate's action is literally indefensible," said Renee Sekel, a Cary parent who helped organize a rally Tuesday outside the Legislative Building calling for lawmakers to "fix" the class-size issue. "There's no logical or truthful argument that can be made against changing the class-size law."

In addition to the rally, several groups held a "tweet storm" on Wednesday afternoon urging people to go on Twitter to ask state lawmakers to address the "class size chaos."

Choosing between having PE, Art, Music, & World Language and lower class sizes is a false dichotomy. To fix #ClassSizeChaos we should say: pic.twitter.com/Lrr4dORPWC-- Justin Karr Conley (@JustinConley) October 4, 2017 //

”smaller class size” means 22% of our students have to leave next year? Unacceptable. Fix #ClassSizeChaos now! @johnalexanderNC #WeAreJGMES-- Jeffreys Grove Elem (@JeffreysGroveES) October 4, 2017 //

Hey, Ollie. What do you think about having 45 kids in your 4th grade class cuz @ncleg forgot to think through their mandate? #ClassSizeChaos pic.twitter.com/Zkd0C11tw-- Brandy Mann (@BrandyEMann) October 4, 2017 //

@ChadBarefoot PLEASE step up to fix #ClassSizeChaos NOW! The families of Wake County need you to support them!-- Gary A. Lewis (@Gary4Wake) October 4, 2017 //

@ChadBarefoot @tamarabarringer @JohnAlexanderNC Wake County can not build 14 new elementary schools by August. Solve #ClassSizeChaos now!-- **Julie von Haefen** (@thevons5) October 4, 2017 //

Elementary schools around North **Carolina** are preparing to implement a new requirement that starts next school year that drops average class sizes in kindergarten through third grade to roughly 17 students. It was at 21 students last year.

Senate Republican leaders say the smaller class sizes are needed to help younger students learn. They’ve accused school districts of not properly using the money that’s been given to them over the years to reduce class sizes.

”I don’t imagine we’re going to do much to change the class size,” said Sen. Harry Brown of Jacksonville, who is the Republican majority leader. “I think we’ve made it pretty clear what we feel on the class size.”

School districts have warned that they might have to cut art, music and physical education teachers to come up with the money to hire more K-3 teachers. School leaders have also raised concerns about their ability to find space for the thousands of new classrooms needed.

Amid the concerns, the General Assembly agreed this year to delay the new class sizes until 2018 and to study providing state funding to separately fund arts and physical education teachers.

As districts prepare for the changes, Wake County school leaders have taken a variety of steps to limit how many students can attend some elementary schools to keep their class sizes down. Elementary schools are also planning to take steps such as converting art and music rooms to regular classrooms, putting two classes in the same room, combining classes with students from different grade levels and increasing class sizes for fourth and fifth grades.

Amid the lobbying from school districts and parents, the House Appropriations Committee had planned Wednesday to consider a bill making technical corrections to the budget. Among the changes would have been to delay next year’s implementation of the smaller class sizes.

After behind-the-scenes negotiations, the House and Senate held a joint appropriations committee meeting Wednesday night on a technical corrections bill that didn't include the new K-3 class-size wording. The House wording would have "taken the teeth" out of the class-size reductions, according to Sen. Jerry Tillman of Archdale, who is the Republican majority whip.

"In the lower grades, it's critical for smaller class sizes," said Tillman, a retired school administrator. "That's why we didn't go along with the House bill."

Rep. David Lewis, a Republican from Harnett County and vice chairman of the Appropriations Committee, said they "can return and take an additional look at this important issue during next year's budget cycle."

Next year's budget won't be introduced until sometime after the short session begins in May.

The General Assembly wasted a "perfect opportunity" this week to address the class-size issue, according to Sen. Jay Chaudhuri, a Raleigh Democrat.

"The longer we wait, the more anxiety it creates for parents and children, and the more problems it creates for school boards around the state to comply with the law," he said. (RNO, 10/5/17)

### **DEC 2017 Needs to "Speak Out" on Class Sizes**

Smaller class sizes are great, PTA volunteer Ann Spencer told parents at Combs Elementary School on Monday, unless they lead to consequences such as losing art and music classrooms.

Spencer and other PTA volunteers at the Raleigh magnet school urged Combs parents waiting in the carpool line to lobby state lawmakers to back off from requiring smaller class sizes in kindergarten through third grade starting next year. Monday's effort at Combs is just one example of how PTAs across North **Carolina** are mobilizing parents to advocate on the issue of class sizes.

"This is not just affecting Wake County," Spencer said to fellow Combs parents as she walked along the line of more than 300 cars parked around the school. "This is affecting the whole state. We need to fix this for everybody. Please contact your legislators."

PTA volunteers and other education groups are urging state lawmakers to act in the January special session to provide relief from the potential negative effects of reducing K-3 class sizes. Advocates don't want lawmakers to wait until May because they say it will be too late to help the year-round schools that begin the new school year in July.

The state PTA is holding a webinar Thursday on how parents can advocate on the class-size issue.

"We feel like we have to speak out," said **Julie von Haefen**, president of the Wake County PTA Council and chairwoman of the state PTA's advocacy committee. "If we sit and wait around for it to happen, this won't be good for any of our schools."

Elementary schools throughout North **Carolina** are preparing to implement a new requirement that starts in July that drops average class sizes in kindergarten through third grade to roughly 17 students. It was at 21 students last year.

The House had been willing to provide relief in October, but Senate Republican leaders balked at the change, saying the smaller class sizes are needed to help younger students learn.

”Giving up now could mean failing to help students receive more personalized instruction and improve their academic performance,” Senate Majority Leader Harry Brown said in a statement Monday. “Everyone should be able to agree that a system where teachers can focus more of their attention on fewer students should lead to better outcomes in our schools.”

School districts have warned that they might have to cut art, music and physical education teachers to come up with the money to hire more K-3 teachers. School leaders have also raised concerns about their ability to find space for the thousands of new classrooms needed.

In Wake County, the state’s largest school district, school officials say it would cost \$24.6 million to hire 431 classroom teachers to get class sizes down while still keeping art, music and physical education teachers.

Wake school officials say finding enough space is another problem. They’re making changes such as forcing some students to switch schools, placing enrollment limits on schools, converting art and music spaces to regular classrooms, raising class sizes in the upper grades to more than 30 students and having two different classes share a classroom at the same time.

”As a PTA, we’ve been watching our administration continue to prepare for the changes for next year and we’ve realized that there’s no way for them to meet these expectations without really drastically altering the quality of our school,” said Tappan Vickery, advocacy chairwoman of Combs’ PTA.

The Wake PTA Council has distributed a flier to school PTAs about the class-size changes. The Wake PTA Council and Public Schools First NC have been hosting informational meetings for individual school PTAs explaining the impact of the class-size changes and what they can do to advocate on the issue.

With the exception of not endorsing candidates, von Haefen said PTAs have a lot of flexibility in advocating on education issues. She said state lawmakers need to hear from parents about what could happen if the new class-size rules aren’t changed.

Several Wake school PTAs have already been actively reaching out to parents on the “Class Size Chaos” issue. Von Haefen said the Apex Elementary School PTA set up a website explaining how the smaller class sizes could hurt the school.

”We hope that with more pressure on lawmakers to take action on the issue that they will,” she said.

Despite the warnings, Brown, the Senate Majority Leader, said schools can make the smaller class sizes work.

”While we admire and appreciate these parents advocating for their local schools, the law requires school systems to reduce their student to teacher ratios, not to build more classrooms,” Brown said. “Many school districts have the class space to achieve lower student to teacher ratios through class size reductions, but all districts can achieve lower student to teacher ratios through team teaching, combination classes or other innovative and effective approaches.” (RNO, 12/4/17)

**2018**

**JAN 2018 Letter to Editor Rips Class Size Mandate**

"North Carolina slips in national ranking on public education" (Jan. 19) reminded me of why PTA members, parents, teachers and community members across our state must continue to fight for full funding of our public schools. The PTA mission is to speak with one voice for every child.

For months, we have been advocating and educating others about the impending K-3 class-size mandate. PTA supports lower class sizes, but without the funding to hire additional teachers and to build the infrastructure needed to house additional classrooms, the mandate will only hurt our state's children.

I fear that our national ranking will slip even further after the devastating effects of the mandate implementation are felt statewide - the loss of art, PE and music teachers, the overcrowding of fourth and fifth grade classrooms, and the potential elimination of needed pre-K programming.

The lack of funding for the mandate and the overall decline in education funding from the state legislature both have dire consequences that will adversely affect students, diminish their educational experience and negatively affect their learning environments. The costs are simply too high for our children.

Julie von Haefen

President, Wake County PTA Council (RNO, 1/24/18)

**FEB 2018 Blasts GOP Over Public Education**

In 2011, Republicans said they wanted to change the status quo when they took control of North **Carolina's** state legislature for the first time in more than 100 years.

Seven years later, the changes have been especially apparent in K-12 education for the more than 1.7 million children enrolled in public, private and home schools. There are more charter schools, families are getting taxpayer money to help them attend private schools, public schools are evaluated differently and the way teachers are paid and hired has changed.

Conservatives praise what they consider long-overdue education reforms in the state.

"The Republicans have definitely made some fundamental changes to North **Carolina's** public education system," said Terry Stoops, vice president of research for the conservative John Locke Foundation . "That's what they were elected to do. That was the expectation, that they'd make changes that were consistent with what they felt would be best for public schools."

But supporters of traditional public schools say the changes have dealt one blow after another to public education.

”To me as a parent, it’s been the gradual dismantling of the public education system,” said **Julie von Haefen**, president of the Wake County PTA Council . “If you look at each little thing, it doesn’t look bad. But when you put it all together, it’s demoralizing the teachers.”

The changes are happening as Republicans and Democrats argue about whether enough money is being spent on education. Republicans point to how the \$9 billion provided annually by the state for K-12 education is the highest amount ever, while Democrats say it’s less than what was spent per pupil before the Great Recession of the late 2000s when adjusted for inflation.

Republicans across the country have argued that traditional public schools aren’t meeting the needs for all children. They say schools need to be reformed and families should be given more freedom to choose the education options that work best for them.

That ideology has set the GOP at odds with Democrats, who have traditionally enjoyed the support of teacher groups and public education advocates. (RNO, 2/15/18)

### **FEB 2018    Running For State House**

Organizations that have challenged North **Carolina** redistricting plans are going back to state court over the General Assembly’s redrawing last year of election districts — this time with a new lawsuit challenging four state House districts in Wake County.

The challengers are arguing that lawmakers violated the state constitution when they redrew Wake County election districts mid-decade when federal judges had not ordered them to do so to correct other districts ruled to be racial gerrymanders.

”Voters in North **Carolina** have a state constitutional right to have their legislative districts changed only once a decade. This is an important protection in state law – one that many states don’t have – and its clear purpose is to prevent the ills of gerrymandering and political gamesmanship present here,” Allison Riggs, senior voting rights attorney for the Southern Coalition for Social Justice and lead attorney in the case, said in a statement after the lawsuit was filed.

”When tasked with fixing racially gerrymandered districts in 2017, the legislature made no secret of using politically-motivated and illegal changes throughout the county, violating the North **Carolina** Constitution in the process. Swapping one constitutional violation for another is not acceptable, and we expect the state courts to vigorously protect the state constitutional rights of our clients.”

The districts at the core of the lawsuit — N.C. House Districts 36, 37, 40 and 41 — currently are held by Democrats Joe John and Gale Adcock and Republicans Nelson Dollar and Linda Hunt Williams.

Hunt Williams has announced she won’t seek another term. A Democrat, Sydney Batch, and a Republican, John B. Adcock, are running for that seat.

**Julie von Haefen**, a Democrat and president of the Wake County PTA Council , announced her plans to challenge Dollar on Wednesday. Republican former Rep. Marilyn Avila is challenging John, who also

faces Libertarian David Ulmer. Gale Adcock has drawn challenges from Emmanuel Wilder, a Republican, and Liam Leaver, a Libertarian. (RNO, 2/21/18)

### **FEB 2018 Puff Profile From Liberal Blog**

Democrat **Julie von Haefen**(which my computer wants to auto-correct to “von Heaven”) is president of the Wake County PTA Council and has three school-age children in the Wake County public schools. She scorched Dollar in her filing announcement for what his state budgets have done to public education:

“From the expansion of school vouchers and charter schools to the failure to pay our teachers and principals what they deserve, Representative Dollar and his legislature have harmed our students and our schools. Most recently, their reckless and unfunded K-3 class size mandate caused unnecessary stress for school districts across the state. It is time to put our teachers and our children ahead of partisan politics. North **Carolina’s** students deserve better than they are getting from our legislature. They deserve increased funding for school counselors and nurses. And they deserve a public school system with the funding and resources it needs to prepare them for the future. We owe it to our students, and to the economy, and to the state.”

Von Haefen is married to an NC State professor, and they have lived in Apex for the last 13 years. She trained as a lawyer and practiced law for 10 years. (Watauga Watch Blog, 2/27/18)

### **MAR 2018 Defends Public Education; Critical of Homeschooling**

Though the number of N.C. homeschools has steadily grown over the last 30 years, **Julie von Haefen** is an avid supporter of the public school system.

”It is a great equalizer,” von Haefen said. “I believe in my heart that it’s the one thing that gives all kids the exact same opportunities from hopefully even before they start kindergarten.”

Von Haefen has three children enrolled in Wake County public schools. She also serves as the president of the Wake County Parent-Teacher Association.

”Public schools have to offer the same things to all kids,” von Haefen said. “They have to offer meals, they have to offer transportation, and they have to offer special education services. So that’s why public school is so important and why I think it needs to be supported much more than it has been.”

Von Haefen serves as a liaison between the 182 smaller PTA groups across the county and the Wake School System. She also serves on a committee working to generate more family and community involvement in the public school system.

Von Haefen said every child and family has their own needs, and homeschooling may be a fitting alternative for some children across the state. However, von Haefen feels public schools offer unique, important experiences.

"I feel like they're getting such a great education with the diversity and the richness that a public education brings," she said. (Charlotte Post, 3/8/18)

### **MAY 2018 District Called Competitive**

The Civitas calculation of the most competitive districts is narrower than one Jonathan Kappler at the NC Free Enterprise Institute worked out.

For example, Kappler calls the House district in which Dollar is facing Democratic challenger **Julie von Haefen** a competitive district. Libertarian Robyn Haley Pegram is also running.

Kappler said he thinks about issues such as population shifts and how district lines have changed as he determines if districts favor one party or the other. (RNO, 5/11/18)

### **JUN 2018 Guest Column on Funding Schools**

Each year around this time, there's a great deal of interest and discussion about how public schools are funded.

The Wake County Board of Education adopts a budget proposing a funding increase to maintain current levels of service to students and to add or expand programs. The school board's requested increase is more than what the commissioners want to spend and a debate ensues.

Continuing population growth in Wake County demands additional school services and growth does not pay for these additional services through increases in the tax base alone. Wake County's prosperity does give its leaders the capacity to generate new revenue needed to fund our school system's needs and request.

We are fortunate in Wake to have robust job growth, a vibrant housing market, a temperate climate, a moderate cost of living, and one of the lowest property tax rates of any metropolitan area in North **Carolina**.

While the lower tax burden may make Wake appealing to some, it is also what is holding this area back from addressing some pressing problems.

Commissioners must weigh using tax dollars and county reserve funds to address critical issues exacerbated by growth such as education, transit, public health, and housing. With limited ways to generate revenue, mainly property taxes, the commissioners are wise to carefully review all requests that incur higher expenditures.

While it is reasonable for the commissioners to be informed before making budget decisions, it is equally reasonable for them to use gathered data from the school system to act in the best interest of our community, our economy, and our schools.

The data on the achievements and accolades of Wake Public Schools is impressive. WCPSS had its highest graduation rate ever last year. It continues to have the nation's highest number of National Board-certified teachers. Yet, WCPSS success continues despite changes in state and federal laws that reduce spending flexibility and cut direct overall funding while increasing the need for more teachers to meet reduced K-3 class size mandates. Wake struggles to deal with the constant impact of student enrollment growth.

To continue its successes and to meet expanding state requirements, the school board has asked for \$48 million to maintain WCPSS's current level of service, and an additional \$11 million to add teachers for academically gifted students to meet demand, and to hire more counselors, social workers, and psychologists.

The budget request aligns with WCPSS's goal to graduate 95 percent of students ready for productive citizenship, as outlined in the school system's strategic plan (Vision 2020). This strategic plan shows a commitment to excellence, not mediocrity, and its vision is touted by both business leaders and economic development recruiters.

WCPSS's continued growth has made it the largest school district in NC and the 15th largest in the nation all the while earning an exceptional reputation for maintaining high standards, creating innovative models, and achieving great outcomes. Our school system has long been the heart and soul of this county, its chief economic driver. The first question asked by every prospective employer is always about our public schools.

If we want to maintain WCPSS's reputation of achieving greatness and overcoming adversity, it will require a commitment to adequately fund its successes as well as its challenges.

At the commissioners' public hearing, business leaders, employers, parents and students as well as educators all demonstrated their support for public education. The message was clear: fund our schools, pay our teachers and give all students the best opportunity to become productive and contributing citizens.

It is time to substantially advance our children and this county's future. It's time for commissioners to stop asking: "Aren't our schools funded well enough?" and time to start asking: "Are we funding the school system our children and our county deserve, the school system our citizens demand and expect?"

Our organizations support giving WCPSS the \$48 million it needs to maintain current levels of service. Now that the legislature has approved much-deserved raises for our teachers, this requires commissioners to dig deep to fund the local cost of these raises. Finally, we strongly believe that the school system has made an effective case for improving the ratio of students per counselors, social workers and psychologists.

C. Steve Parrott is the president of WakeEd Partnership , the business champion for public education Wake County. Yevonne Brannon is the Chair of Great Schools in Wake/Public Schools First NC. **Julie von Haefen** is the president of the Wake County PTA Council. (RNO, 6/11/18)

## **JUL 2018    Thinks Can Win on More Education Spending and Medicaid Expansion**

Democratic candidates say they can win enough seats campaigning on issues such as raising teacher pay and per-pupil spending to the national average and expanding Medicaid .

”It’s going to take a lot of hard work,” said **Julie von Haefen**, a Democrat running for the District 36 House seat in Wake held by Republican Nelson Dollar. “It’s not something that can really happen with us just sitting back.

”That’s why we’re here today, and we’re going to keep working and knocking those doors and calling people and engaging with the voters from now until November.” (RNO, 7/21/18)

## **SEP 2018    Race Overview**

State Rep. Nelson Dollar, a powerful Republican budget writer and redistricting chairman who has been an architect of some of the party’s policy priorities, touts his role in boosting teacher pay. In an interview with The Washington Post, Dollar also said he would vote to let North Carolina expand Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act — something he has opposed since Republicans took over in 2010.

Dollar, 57, who lives in Cary, a moderate suburb of Raleigh, is facing a challenge from a high-profile opponent, Julie von Haefen, a Democrat and past president of the Wake County PTA who has led the charge against the legislature for what she describes as inadequate public-school funding and an unfunded mandate, since adjusted, to reduce class size that prompted local rebellions across the state.

”That law threw all the schools in Wake County into what we call class-size chaos,” said von Haefen, 47. “It was going to require many school districts to fire our art, music, PE and other special teachers. And it would have required Wake County to build 15 schools in one year, which is absolutely impossible.”

Dollar takes credit for brokering a compromise on class size, but von Haefen likes to point out he was also responsible for the original law. (Washington Post, 9/10/18)

## **OCT 2018    School Funding Issue**

Suburban Wake County voters are being treated to some of the most competitive legislative races in the state.

Voters are finding their mailboxes stuffed with ads, canvassers at their homes, and their Facebook feeds filled with candidates’ messages.

The stakes are high. Republicans have a tight grip on the legislature and winning in Wake would help them keep it, while Democrats are looking to win at least enough seats so that they and Democratic Gov. Roy Cooper have a stronger hand in shaping state laws and policies.

Republicans' veto-proof majorities in the state House and Senate mean they can ignore Cooper's ideas and impose their will. Democrats need to net four more seats in the 120-member House and six more in the 50-member Senate to end the veto-proof Republican majorities.

Republican legislators are working to hang on to three of the four House seats and the two Senate seats in the Wake districts where the battles are most intense. A Democrat is looking for re-election to a House seat he won two years ago by defeating a longtime incumbent Republican.

#### Education at stake

Support for public education is a bedrock campaign theme for candidates of both parties.

Some Democratic candidates say they want to end gerrymandering, a practice in which the party with the most legislative seats draws election boundaries that help their party keep its majority. Candidates of both parties are talking about ways more people can have health insurance coverage.

Republicans are touting a five-year string of teacher raises and increased spending on education.

Democrats say the GOP hasn't done nearly enough for classrooms or for veteran teachers who have worked for more than 25 years and are not eligible for annual state raises.

Base pay for teachers with bachelor's degrees and 15 to 24 years is \$50,000 a year, and is \$52,000 for teachers with 25 years or more.

Average teacher pay, which includes bonuses and local supplements, was \$51,144 in the last school year, according to the state Department of Public Instruction . North Carolina ranked fifth among southeastern states, according to the National Education Association .

Republicans made investments in public education that Democrats never did when they were in charge, Rep. Nelson Dollar, a Cary Republican, said in a phone interview. In addition to the raises, he said, the Republican-led legislature lowered tuition at three state universities to \$500 a semester and guaranteed tuition at the others, so families know how much college will cost over four years.

"I think the Republican record in education is an outstanding record," said Dollar, 57, who is senior chairman of the House budget-writing committee. "It's outstanding for teachers. It's outstanding for parents, It's outstanding for our school children." He's running for an eighth term from House District 36, which runs along Wake's southeast border and into Apex.

Democrats contend that Republicans have shorted public education, skirting opportunities to have schools benefit fully from the state's recovery from the Great Recession.

Many school districts, teachers and parents were in an uproar earlier this year as they stared down a deadline to comply with a legislative mandate to reduce K-3 class sizes. Republicans said they had been paying for the extra teachers needed, but school districts said they could not afford the teachers or the additional classrooms.

Anxiety grew until Republicans yielded earlier this year and agreed to gradually reduce class size averages for K-3 students.

School funding is a big reason that Democrat Julie von Haefen, a former Wake PTA president, decided to run against Dollar.

"I know for a first-hand fact that it's inadequate," said von Haefen, 47, whose three children attend public school. The legislature has not devoted enough to classroom resources and teacher raises, she said in a phone interview.

Last year, von Haefen said, her daughter's fifth-grade teacher told the class she had run out of pencils.

Schools are still getting less from the state than they did before the recession, she said.

Per pupil spending is below pre-recession spending when adjusted for inflation. (RNO, 10/29/18)

### **NOV 2018 Planned Parenthood Endorsement**

Political ads with messages on women's health and safety are landing in voters' mailboxes in the suburban Wake County districts where candidates are competing for white women's votes.

State Democratic Party mailers targeting Rep. Nelson Dollar and Sen. Tamara Barringer, both Cary Republicans, claim the politicians did not provide money to test a backlog of 15,000 rape kits. The ad targeting Dollar says he "refused to provide funding." The mailer on Barringer said she "voted to deny funding."

In an interview, Dollar called the ad about him "a total lie" because there are fewer than 15,000 kits to be tested and the legislature has directed money in past years to reduce backlogs. Dollar is the senior budget writer in the House.

Barringer said she had not seen the ad, but called its assertions described to her in a telephone interview "absolutely false."

"I think it reflects a lack of respect for the facts and a lack of respect for women to put out something so blatantly false," she said. Barringer is seeking her fourth full term.

Voters are also getting bombarded with ads about Dollar and his support for women's health care. The seven-term incumbent is either a champion for women's health or an enemy, depending on who's doing the talking.

The NC Democratic Party mailers about the rape kits are rooted in Democratic Attorney General Josh Stein's objection to Republicans' decision to not include \$2 million for rape-kit testing in the state budget this year.

A statewide inventory of rape kits in the possession of law enforcement agencies across the state found 15,160 untested, The News & Observer reported. Of those untested kits, 3,820 were connected to cases where investigations determined the allegations were unfounded, and another 2,741 were connected to cases that were resolved. That left about half, or 7,545 kits in neither category.

Stein said he wanted all kits tested regardless of the category, The N&O reported.

The lack of funding for rape-kit testing was developing as a campaign issue during the short session. After Stein's criticism, seven female Republican senators, including Barringer, sent out a statement criticizing Stein's predecessor in the Attorney General's office, Gov. Roy Cooper, for allowing the backlog to grow despite state funding.

"Under Democratic and Republican budgets dating back to the 2003-04 budget, state taxpayer money was set aside to test these rape kits," they wrote.

The legislature later passed a law to track rape kits, but did not include any funding for testing. A House Democrat was blocked from proposing an amendment that would have provided \$2 million for testing, WRAL reported.

Dollar said not all 15,000 kits need to be tested, that the state had put more than \$18 million directly and indirectly toward the backlog since 2014. Dollar counted money appropriated for a new State Crime Lab in western North Carolina, which opened last year.

The law will track every rape kit, Dollar said, then the state will know which need to be tested. "When we get this system in place, we will be able to do the disposition on all these cases, on all these rape kits," he said. "We as Republicans inherited a horrendous problem and we have put funding and the mechanism in place to permanently solve this problem."

The State Republican Party sent a strikingly pink mailer to voters in Rep. Nelson Dollar's district to highlight his successful push to raise money for breast and cervical cancer prevention programs. Dollar sponsored a law last year for a check-off box on tax returns that allows filers to direct part or all of their refund to the state's Breast and Cervical Cancer Prevention Program, which the state Department of Health and Human Services administers.

The program provides early detection for low-income women, Dollar said. "It's one of the things I'm proudest of because I know it will save lives," he said.

"I take a back seat to no one in the General Assembly in working on issues specific to women's health care," Dollar said. "I've been doing that for pretty much the entirety of my career in the General Assembly."

Dollar appears in a TV ad with voice-over narration that calls him "a leading advocate for women's health."

State Democrats followed the Republican mailer with their own that has a Photoshopped image of Dollar standing between two women, one in a lab coat looking at another sitting on an exam table. The text says

Dollar voted to interfere with women's health care by limiting access to breast and cervical cancer screenings, limiting access to birth control, defunding teen pregnancy prevention programs and forcing doctors to send ultrasounds to the Department of Health and Human Services in Raleigh.

The ad references the 2015 budget bill, which prohibited the state from paying an agency to offer birth control services or run pregnancy prevention or parenting programs if the agency also provided abortions. Another law prevented state money from paying for teen pregnancy prevention programs run by organizations that provide abortions. A third law required doctors to send to DHHS ultrasounds of miscarriages or abortions after 16 weeks of gestation.

"Representative Dollar is desperate to save his seat after spending a decade pushing some of the most dangerous women's health legislation in the country," State Democratic Party Executive Director Kimberly Reynolds said in a statement. "'Dollar even denied a simple request to completely clear the rape kits backlog, deciding to instead leave thousands untested. We believe voters, especially women, will agree that his decision and record speak louder than some election year pandering."

In response to Dollar's TV ad, the political arm of Planned Parenthood South Atlantic began distributing a digital ad saying Dollar is "trying to come off as something he's not."

The ad criticizes Dollar for defunding Planned Parenthood and for voting against Medicaid expansion.

"Nelson Dollar could not be further from the truth in claiming to be an advocate for women or women's healthcare. In reality, as a senior member of the House, Dollar led the conservative majority in passing some of the most stringent anti-women's health legislation in the country," Paige Johnson, Planned Parenthood Votes! South Atlantic vice president of external affairs, said in a statement.

The organization has endorsed Dollar's Democratic opponent Julie von Haefen. Libertarian Robyn Pegram is also running in the district.

EMILY's List, a political action committee that supports Democratic women candidates, derided Dollar's claim that he is a champion for women's health.

Dollar supported anti-abortion laws that included a 72-hour waiting period and mandatory ultrasounds, EMILY's List said in a statement, and he funneled more than \$1 million in state money to counseling clinics that discourage women from getting abortions.

Abortion-rights groups say these clinics, which used to be called crisis pregnancy centers, masquerade as abortion clinics that then try to coerce women out of the procedure, The News & Observer reported.

"Nelson Dollar's claim that he is a 'leading advocate for women's health' is laughable and insulting to the women of North Carolina," Christina Reynolds, EMILY's List vice president of communications, said in a statement.

EMILY's List has also endorsed von Haefen. (RNO, 11/1/18)

### **NOV 2018 Defeats Dollar**

In the House, Democrats were able to upset key Republican incumbents in several highly contested seats. For instance, Republicans lost three key seats in Wake County. Rep. Nelson Dollar, the chief budget writer in the House lost his re-election to newcomer Julie von Haefen. Rep. Chris Malone lost to Terence Everitt, and recently-appointed John Adcock lost in a tightly contested race to Sydney Batch. Meaning there will be no Republican representing Wake County, the second largest county in North Carolina, in the House. (JD Supra Blog, 11/8/18)

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Rep. Nelson Dollar (R) of Wake County lost a closely watched race to Julie von Haefen, garnering only 47 percent of the vote. Dollar is the chief budget writer in the House and has been influential in writing health care policy since Republicans took the majority in 2011. (JD Supra Blog, 11/8/18)

### **NOV 2018 Outraised Dollar**

In Wake County, Sydney Batch raised more than \$1 million, with more than \$595,000 of her total coming from the Democratic Party . Her opponent, Republican incumbent John Adcock, raised about \$237,000, with about \$80,000 coming from the state GOP .

Seven-term incumbent Nelson Dollar of Cary, the chief budget writer in the House, raised more than \$500,000, with \$57,400 coming from his state party. Democrat Julie von Haefen raised about \$800,000, with nearly \$538,000 coming from state Democrats.

Incumbent Republican Chris Malone raised about \$250,000, while Democrat Terence Everitt raised nearly \$800,000, including Democratic Party support that reached nearly \$490,000.

”It was a huge difference,” Jackson said of the money. “Look, money matters. Money allows you to get your message out to voters. ... We had to overcome a built-in advantage in gerrymandering Republicans have. And the only way to do that was through money.” (RNO, 11/9/18)

## 2019

### **JAN 2019 For Cap on Number of Charter Schools**

It's safe to say the 2019 legislative session will see clashes between Democratic and Republican lawmakers, and a few of these will probably revolve around education and school choice.

Although school choice isn't entirely a partisan issue, the parties tend to disagree on how best to hold accountable school choice initiatives, such as the Opportunity Scholarship program or Innovative School Districts.

"I feel we have gotten away from some of the accountability of those programs," Rep. Julie Von Haefen, D-Wake, said in a segment on the statewide television show "Education Matters."

Von Haefen said she supports reinstating a cap on the number of charter schools. The cap was removed in 201. Since then, the number of charter schools has grown to 185.

"If we're not going to do that, then I feel we need to increase the accountability of those schools," Von Haefen said.

It's National School Choice Week, and thousands of events are being held by schools, communities, and organizations across the country, including rallies in Raleigh, Wilmington, and Fayetteville.

A representative from the office of Rep. Tim Moore, R-Cleveland, the Speaker of the House, said to expect the House to continue increasing investments in the Opportunity Scholarships and working on refining classroom accountability measures.

Democratic lawmakers have long argued programs such as Opportunity Scholarships, which provide vouchers to low-income families to send their children to private schools, aren't properly held accountability to taxpayers.

Terry Stoops, vice president of research and director of education studies at the John Locke Foundation, said Democratic lawmakers will probably challenge these programs.

"Under the guise of enhancing transparency and accountability, Democratic lawmakers will file bills to impose additional restrictions on charter schools and the state's three private school choice programs," Stoops said. "For charters, this may include mandating weighted lotteries and transportation and food service requirements."

Rep. Craig Horn, R-Union told Carolina Journal a lot of people use accountability to criticize their opponents, but it tends to mean something different to different people. He's interested in clearing up some of the confusion.

"We have a group of people who in my opinion improperly defined what accountability means," Horn said. "We need to come to some agreement so we can stop the political hyperbole, so we can give parents the opportunity to make legitimate comparisons, and they can find what works best for their kids."

Some groups are less interested in reforming or expanding those programs than they are in repealing them.

The N.C. Association for Educators listed some of its 2019 legislative priorities on its website, a few of which target school choice initiatives. Included in the list is a goal to phase out and repeal the Opportunity Scholarship program, and to dedicate that money to low-performing schools.

The NCAE also wants to see an end to the Innovative School District, a pilot program in which chronically low-performing schools are turned over to an outside operator for five years and given charter-like flexibility to help improve academic performance.

Conversely, the N.C. Association for Public Charter Schools is pushing to expand school choice programs. Other legislative priorities include expanding Transportation Grant funding to allow more charter schools to offer transportation services and allowing county commissioners to fund charter school capital projects.

The left has opposed further expanding the program to include more families and forward funding it for the next 10 years. That includes Gov. Roy Cooper, who has repeatedly challenged the program and has advocated defunding it.

”Governor Cooper’s budget will discontinue funding to expand private school choice programs for low-income and special needs children,” Stoops said. “I do not think that Republicans will play along.” (Laurinburg Exchange, 1/25/19)

### **MAY 2019    Raises Questions About Budget Money For Anti-Abortion Birth Care Group**

#### Anti-abortion group

Under Health and Human Services’ budget, an anti-abortion nonprofit called the Human Coalition would receive \$1.2 million to expand a pilot program statewide. Money would be used to “encourage healthy childbirth, support childbirth as an alternative to abortion, promote family formation, assist in establishing successful parenting techniques, and increase the economic self-sufficiency of families.”

When the budget came through committee, Rep. Gale Adcock and Rep. Julie Von Haefen, both Wake County Democrats, raised questions. Von Haefen wanted to know who would oversee spending for the group, which would provide “crisis pregnancy” services.

Adcock said that what she read about the group online seemed one-sided, and asked why that group was getting funds.

Rep. Josh Dobson, a Marion Republican, said it was just part of the continuum of care and that the budget was using a “comprehensive approach.” (RNO, 5/3/19)

### **MAY 2019    Amendment to Remove DMV Funding for Move Defeated**

An attempt to remove more than \$9 million earmarked to move the state Division of Motor Vehicles headquarters to Rocky Mount was thwarted on Thursday, in part due to a delegation of area legislators.

In what Rep. James Gailliard, D-Nash, called a surprise move, the N.C. House's Wake County caucus proposed an amendment to House Bill 966, the Appropriations Act, or "budget bill." The amendment, filed by Rep. ***Julie von Haefen***, D-Wake, would have removed more than \$9.3 million in funding for the DMV move to Rocky Mount and reallocated the money to the N.C. Division of Highways Maintenance Fund.

The Wake delegation argued that the move would be detrimental to current employees, and that state offices should remain in Raleigh since the current location was in a low-wealth empowerment zone in need of the jobs that would be lost.

Republicans and Democrats were divided on the issue. Rep. John Torbett, R-Gaston, defended the DMV move, saying, "This horse has already left the barn."

Gailliard spoke out against the amendment from the House floor.

"This decision is a result of a thorough RFP (request for proposals) process and is clearly detailed by the deputy chief engineer in a previously published 2018 relocation study," Gailliard said. "After 12 potential sites, Rocky Mount was determined the most suitable location. The second location was over \$3 million more and was only a five-minute shorter commute time from the centroid address provided based on current employee demographics. This decision was then approved by House committees, with input from the DMV, DOT, Department of Administration and a unanimous vote from the Council of State. This is just another effort by Wake County officials to reverse a well-vetted process. When a Tier 1 county proves they can compete in an open RFP process against a Tier 3 county, we don't need to move the finish line."

In the end, the amendment was defeated by a 63-52 vote, with the Rocky Mount delegation — Gailliard, Rep. Lisa Stone Barnes, R-Nash, and Rep. Shelley Willingham, D-Edgecombe — all voting against the amendment and in support of the DMV move remaining fully funded.

Neighboring county Reps. Jean Farmer-Butterfield, D-Wilson, and Raymond Smith, D-Wayne, also voted against the amendment.

After the voting session Gailliard said, "As we move forward, particularly following the next census, there will be increasing challenges with the rural-urban divide in N.C. In the same way, large cities are voting in block, we must also have strong regional alliances supporting infrastructure, job creation, education, health care and workforce development." (Spring Hope Enterprise, 5/7/19)

### **JUN 2019    Supports Cooper Veto Of "Born Alive" Abortion Ban**

A controversial abortion-related bill prompted North Carolina lawmakers to vote to uphold a veto from Gov. Roy Cooper for the first time during his tenure.

The NC House on Wednesday failed to block Cooper's veto of Senate Bill 359, which would bring new penalties for medical professionals who allow abortion survivors to die. Lawmakers debated for more than an hour before voting 67 in support and 53 against, falling short of securing the supermajority needed to override the veto.

Abortion opponents and women's rights advocates watched from the gallery as House Speaker Tim Moore and other Republicans debated the bill, also known as the "Born Alive Abortion Survivors Act." It would require medical professionals to provide life-saving care specifically to infants who survive an abortion and to report instances of such births. Medical professionals and hospital employees who don't comply with the law could face felony charges, prison time and up to \$250,000 in fines.

Democrats generally opposed the bill on grounds that it would bring more bureaucracy into complicated medical situations and may discourage abortions that are medically necessary. Republicans, meanwhile, believe more should be done to prevent infant deaths and hold doctors accountable.

The GOP -controlled NC House and Senate approved the bill before Cooper, a Democrat, vetoed it. But the Senate voted last month to override him, and the House could've enacted the bill Wednesday if 60 percent of its members supported an override.

The legislature had canceled most of Cooper's vetoes in his first two years, although it allowed a few to stand without votes. But Cooper benefited from gains made by Democrats in the 2018 election, when the party broke the Republican supermajority in the legislature. All but two Democrats — Charles Graham of Robeson County and Rep. Garland Pierce of Scotland County — voted to support Cooper.

Among Cooper's Democratic supporters was Rep. Julie von Haefen of Apex, a freshman Democrat who defeated a long-serving Republican last fall.

"I think it's an unnecessary bill designed to threaten and scare doctors," von Haefen said in an interview before Wednesday's vote. "It's also political, to make us out as against babies and mothers, which is not the case." (RNO, 6/5/19)

## 2020

### **MAR 2020 Budget Impasse on Teachers**

Teachers and retirees are suffering without a budget in place, two freshman Democratic lawmakers said during a Tuesday, March 10 news conference. A spokesman for the Republican leader of the Senate said the General Assembly has passed a budget, but obstinate Democrats - including Gov. Roy Cooper - continue blocking the spending plan from taking effect.

Rep. Julie Von Haefen, D-Wake, and Sen. Wiley Nickel, D-Wake, spoke to a mostly empty room on how the ongoing budget impasse has harmed teachers and retirees.

The two lawmakers called for Senate leader Phil Berger, R-Rockingham, to sit down with Cooper to negotiate a budget compromise. But Pat Ryan, a spokesman for Berger, said the two leaders have been talking and chided the Democratic lawmakers for being unaware of those discussions.

Joining the legislative pair was Willie Ramey, President of N.C. Retired School Personnel; Kristin Beller, president of the Wake chapter of the N.C. Association of Educators; Wake County teachers Laura Woods and Kim Mackey; and Lisa Mead, advocacy chair of the Wake County PTA Council.

The group said the budget stalemate has roiled the public education system. School districts can't fill vacancies. School support staff and educators are forced to work multiple jobs in order to survive. Retirees aren't able to keep up with inflation.

"Funding education isn't up for debate. It's required by the state constitution and protected by the court," Von Haefen said, referencing the Leandro court decision requiring the state to provide every student with access to a sound, basic education.

"The problem is Republicans want it their way or the highway," the Wake senator said. "They have presented only one option and that's their budget."

The governor has provided a compromise budget, but Republicans haven't responded, Nickel said.

"Senator Berger spoke with Governor Cooper last week," Pat Ryan, a spokesman for Berger said in an email. "We're sorry to see Senator Nickel wasn't kept in the loop on those developments."

The General Assembly is scheduled to return April 28 for a short session. No agenda for the short session has been released.

Nickel and Von Haefen want lawmakers to act sooner. Before the end of the month, the General Assembly should return to pass mini budgets covering teacher pay raises and cost-of-living adjustments for retirees, Nickel said.

Democratic and Republican lawmakers have been locked in a stalemate since June, when Cooper vetoed the \$24 billion General Fund budget. Cooper wanted more money for teacher pay raises and school construction, as well as funds to expand Medicaid.

The House managed to override the veto Sept. 11, 2019, but most Democratic representatives weren't in the chamber. House Democrats said they were told no votes would be held that morning, but the Republican leadership has been adamant that it was just a misunderstanding.

The Senate hasn't tried an override vote, though it almost happened during a one-day session in January. Some Senate Democrats would have had join Republicans to override the veto, but Berger couldn't get any Democrats to go along.

In October lawmakers passed Senate Bill 354, the Strengthening Educators' Pay Act, one of several mini budgets. S.B. 354 would have given educators the pay raises that were outlined in the budget. Cooper vetoed the bill.

An attempt to override the veto failed. Senate Democrats said the pay raises Republicans offered were inadequate and didn't do enough to help support staff including bus drivers and janitors.

"It's rich to get lectured about the importance of teacher pay by somebody who single-handedly blocked a teacher raise," Ryan said of Nickel. "If he'd just voted yes, then teachers would be earning more money right now."

Ryan isn't optimistic a bipartisan teacher pay increase will happen in the short session.

"Senate Democrats have opposed every Republican-sponsored teacher pay raise in the last 10 years, including the highest raise in the country," Ryan said. "There's no Republican-sponsored raise they'd ever support." (Forest City Daily Courier, 3/12/20)

## **JUN 2020 Education Funding**

The following information was released by the North Carolina Democratic Party:

North Carolina House Democrats today held a press call about HB 1129 and HB 1130 and the goal to ensure and invest in a Sound Basic Education for all of North Carolina's Children.

"The biggest problem facing our communities' schools is lack of resources and support," said Rep Julie von Haefen (HD-36), sponsor of HB1130. "Funding public education is necessary to ensure each child gets the instruction and attention they need to be fully prepared for success in life. As a former education lawyer and Parent Teacher Association leader, I am proud to be a sponsor of this legislation."

This legislation benefits both our teachers and our students. The bills allow high performing teachers to receive raises so our best teachers can stay in the classroom. It also allocates funds to make sure we train and keep educators through Expanded Early Childhood Pipeline and Teaching Fellows programs.

"We must fight to ensure that all children are given a great education and that our teachers are respected as professionals," said Rep Rosa Gill (HD-33), sponsor of HB1130. "As an educator, a mother and a legislator, I know the value of highly qualified teachers and a good education. Public education plays a

vital role in creating a well trained workforce that will help recruit and retain new businesses and give our children their best chance at success.”

To ensure each student has a sound and basic education, this legislation increases supplemental funding for low-wealth school districts and eliminates the antiquated A-F grading system which unfairly downgraded underprivileged schools. Additionally, these bills rebuild the state’s capacity to provide turnaround assistance for chronically low-performing schools with funding and flexibility.

”North Carolina was once known nationwide for its commitment to education, from pre-K to our top-notch university system,” said Rep Raymond Smith (HD-21), sponsor of HB1129. “It is more important than ever that we renew North Carolina’s commitment and make a sound and basic education for all a top priority again. I represent a school district named in the case, it is time that we make these changes, actually it’s far past the time.” (Press Release, 6/16/20)

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Education activists and Democratic lawmakers want to spend more on education, even as the state faces a massive budget shortfall and is entering a potentially disastrous hurricane season.

Every child in North Carolina has a right to a sound, basic education, according to the landmark Leandro case. The state for years has grappled with how to meet that standard.

Parties to the case released an action plan on Monday, June 15, detailing the first steps in complying with Leandro, which includes a \$427-million price tag. The plan comes as lawmakers and financial analysts warn of how COVID-19 could result in a deficit for the budget year starting July 1 approaching \$5 billion.

The parties had 60 days to present a short-term plan, but the deadline was extended to June 15. The presiding judge, David Lee, is expected to soon disclose his order outlining the state’s obligations in complying with Leandro.

The Leandro action plan calls for the state to invest an additional \$426,990,610 in the new budget year to satisfy the court’s mandate.

The action plan considers budget constraints, but it says the state should commit “to meeting the actions in a future fiscal year of the eventual eight-year plan.”

A handful of Democratic representatives introduced two bills to spend a combined \$141 million more on public education as a first step toward complying with the Leandro standards. House Bill 1129 and House Bill 1130 would allocate money to expand a variety of education programs and job positions.

“The biggest problem facing our communities’ schools is lack of resources and support,” Rep. Julie von Haefen, D-Wake, said Tuesday during a news conference on the bills. “Funding public education is necessary to ensure each child gets the instruction and attention they need to be fully prepared for success in life.” (Laurinburg Exchange, 6/18/20)

**JUN 2020 Chief Sponsor HB 1130**

North Carolina's Republican lawmakers have presented the state's teachers with a measure of their appreciation.

It's a \$350 bonus, before taxes.

That's what the Senate majority approved Monday night and the House passed on Wednesday. Most Democrats rightly dismissed the bonus as paltry and the North Carolina Association of Educators called it an "egregious" display of disrespect.

Teachers received no raise this year because a deadlock over teacher pay and Medicaid expansion has blocked the adoption of a new state budget. Democratic Gov. Roy Cooper's budget proposed raising teacher pay by an average of 9.1 percent over two years. The Republicans wanted 3.9 percent over the same period.

Meanwhile, teachers saw their schools abruptly shut down in mid-March to slow the spread of COVID-19. They had to scramble to complete the school year with online instruction, and it's still unclear if and how schools will reopen in August.

After all that, teachers deserve a boost. Instead, the Senate Bill 818 offers a bonus that won't cover what most teachers spend out of pocket on school supplies. The House failed to make the bonus meaningful. The governor likely would veto this token offer by Republicans in an election year if it stood alone. Unfortunately, the bill also contains funding for regular step raises for some teachers, which will complicate Cooper's decision.

The meagerness of the Senate proposal is not a surprise. Republican lawmakers are reluctant to give teachers the kind of boost that would put their compensation ahead of inflation. They're stingy about increasing pay for non-teacher school personnel too. Investing in education is just not as satisfying as passing tax cuts and you can't really do both.

This has become a tiresome issue. The Republicans didn't want to truly lift public education even when the economy was booming. They're surely not interested with the COVID-19 pandemic taking a big bite out of state tax revenues.

Fortunately, there's an election coming and with it hope for a new Democratic-led legislature committed to the idea that the best money the state can spend is on educating children.

As Republicans, and some Democrats, raised their hands to give teachers a feeble bonus, several House Democrats pushed bills this week that call for the state to live up to its constitutional obligation to provide every North Carolina child with a sound, basic education.

The Democratic bills won't go anywhere in this legislature. But they do provide a vision of what the future could be with political leadership committed to responding to the Leandro court decision that found public schools in North Carolina unequal in their funding and, in many cases, inadequate in their instruction.

The first of the two bills, House Bill 1129, would increase pay for highly effective teachers so they could afford to stay in the classroom rather than have to move into administration for better pay. It seeks ways to increase the diversity of teachers, it changes the A to F school grading system that stigmatizes schools serving children from low-income families, and it would end state vouchers for private school tuition.

The second bill, House Bill 1130, would pour money into early childhood education and restore the Teaching Fellows Program that the legislature foolishly ended in 2011.

Rep. Julie von Haefen, a chief sponsor of HB 1130, said it's time for North Carolina to take up the work the Leandro ruling has put before the state.

"We have an obligation to invest in our teachers with long-term solutions, not one-time bonuses," she said.

That's true, but it won't change until the General Assembly does. Fortunately thoughtful and responsible lawmakers are already mapping the path that change should take. (RNO, 6/19/20)

### **AUG 2020 Bill to Provide More CARES Act Funds to Child Care Providers**

North Carolina reported its first coronavirus-related death connected with a daycare center this week in Eastern North Carolina.

Grace Filled Beginnings, located in the town of Plymouth in Washington County, reported one of its staff members died, according to the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services' Tuesday update on clusters in child care centers and schools. The report also shows eight cases among staff and two cases among children.

A cluster is considered at least five cases.

Grace Filled Beginnings declined to comment for this story. DHHS declined to share additional information about the case in order to protect the privacy of the family.

As of Aug. 6, there are 19 clusters and 173 cases associated with child care facilities. A new report will be released Friday afternoon. DHHS began publicly reporting clusters in child care and school settings in late June, as more child care centers began reopening and in anticipation of future school reopening.

Grace Filled Beginnings is a five-star licensed child care center, according to the N.C. Division of Child Development and Early Education database. In North Carolina, centers can receive one to five stars for quality of care. The center received a Superior rating in a December inspection report.

It has a capacity of 60 children ages 12 and younger for each of the center's shifts, according to the database.

The state has strict guidelines for child care centers that have reopened, including the requirement to report coronavirus cases to public health officials.

According to a May executive order by Gov. Roy Cooper, child care programs are required to conduct daily health screenings of any person entering the building. Staff and children are not permitted to enter the facility for at least 10 days after first experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19, and all staff and children over 11 are required to wear a face covering when they are within six feet of another person.

But Michele Rivest, policy director at the North Carolina Early Education Coalition, said assistance and resources to help child care centers implement safety protocols have been limited.

Each county has been assigned a health consultant to assist with COVID-19 safety in child care facilities. But consultants for some smaller counties have been assigned to work with multiple counties. The consultant for Washington County, where Grace Filled Beginnings is located, is responsible for overseeing safety in child care facilities across 10 counties.

"I don't know how many [consultant] visits this particular program received to make sure they had access to everything. Did they get the protective equipment and supplies?" Rivest said. "Sometimes it's something very basic and simple like a mask, hand sanitizer, a nurse to check on the children. We're asking child care staff and teachers to be nurses now. They need to check the status and health of every child and person that comes in. But they're not health professionals."

Limited assistance to help facilities comply with safety guidelines puts staff at these facilities at greater risk.

"Many of them have their own health conditions. They tend to be older, they are underpaid, and they don't necessarily have access to health insurance or sick leave. So maybe they're coming to work when they're sick," said Rivest. North Carolina child care workers earn on average around \$21,000 annually.

In May, Democratic N.C. Reps. Julie Von Haefen, Mary Belk, Susan Fisher and Rachel Hunt, proposed a bill that would have appropriated additional CARES Act funds to child care providers. The \$121 million would increase bonuses for child care staff, provide PPE to child care centers, and designate an additional 52 local child care health consultants.

The bill stalled in committee and has not received a vote. (RNO, 8/7/20)

### **SEP 2020 Concerned About Loose Rules For Child Care Facilities**

Some child care facilities in North Carolina will be able to operate with little oversight during the pandemic.

Under a coronavirus relief package set to become law, some child care facilities won't require background checks for employees or be required to report COVID-19 cases to public health officials. Staff members also won't be required to be certified in CPR or first aid.

"In a rush to pass this bill in two days without a lot of input, we've created these huge loopholes," Rep. Julie von Haefen, a Democrat from Wake County, told The News & Observer. "Child care to me is a huge

issue during the pandemic. The system operates on very thin margins. Now we're allowing more child care with less parameters.”

The provision, which was included in the bill that distributed North Carolina's federal coronavirus funds, has raised concerns. It allows “community-based organizations,” such as YMCAs, YWCAs, Boys and Girls Clubs and parks and recreation programs, to provide care for school-aged children at a “remote learning facility” during states of emergency like the coronavirus pandemic.

Previously, they could operate as unlicensed, full-day summer programs or after-school care programs, with some exceptions. But they needed the help of lawmakers to be able to provide care for children who need to participate in remote learning. (RNO, 9/7/20)

### **OCT 2020 RNO Re-Election Endorsement**

House 36. First-term Democratic Rep. Julie von Haefen wants the legislature to crack down on corporate polluters, eliminate cash bail and protect women's reproductive rights. The Republican challenger is Kim Coley, a real estate investor, whose priority is getting the state economy moving again. Also in the race is Libertarian Bruce Basson. We recommend Julie von Haefen. (RNO, 10/12/20)

### **NOV 2020 Wins By Ten Points**

House District 36

— Republican: Kim Coley (43.10%)

— Democrat: Incumbent Julie von Haefen (53.26%) (JD Supra Blog, 11/5/20)

## 2021

### **FEB 2021 Vaccines For Wake County**

Wake County is set to receive North Carolina's highest volume of new COVID-19 vaccine doses next week, according to North Carolina House Rep. ***Julie von Haefen***.

von Haefen represents North Carolina's 36th district, which encompasses a southern portion of Wake County.

The news was shared via von Haefen's Facebook page.

"I was notified today by NC DHHS that Wake County will receive the highest volume of vaccine doses in the state next week- a total of 19,800," von Haefen said in the Facebook post.

The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services has not confirmed whether Wake County will get that amount of vaccine doses.

According to von Haefen, the doses will be divided between the Wake County Public Health Department, area hospitals (WakeMed, UNC Rex and Duke Raleigh) and federally qualified health clinics in the area. (WNCN, 2/5/21)

### **FEB 2021 For Doula Services Being Covered by Medicaid**

North Carolina state Sen. Natalie Murdock, a Democrat from Durham, said that Adams and Harris, who is now vice president, inspired her to make improving Black maternal health outcomes part of her campaign platform.

In the 2020 legislative session, Murdock filed a bill that would have allowed doula services to be covered by Medicaid. The legislation did not receive a vote.

Doulas provide support and guidance to mothers and families during pregnancy, labor, delivery and postpartum. Studies show doulas can improve birth outcomes; labor support can also provide cost savings to Medicaid programs.

"We want to continue to build upon this work by taking that previous bill that was filed last cycle and file that again this biennium, and to also title it North Carolina's version of a 'Momnibus' bill," Murdock said.

Rep. Julie von Haefen, an Apex Democrat, and Rep. Zack Hawkins, a Durham Democrat, plan to sponsor a bill in the House, Murdock said. Sen. DeAndrea Salvador, a Charlotte Democrat, will join Murdock in filing a bill in the Senate. (RNO, 2/10/21)

## **FEB 2021    Against Bill to Reopen All Schools in Person**

The North Carolina House passed a bill Thursday that would require the state's K-12 public schools to offer in-person instruction.

It would also require an option for special needs students to have in-person, daily learning. The Senate already passed the bill, but because the House changed it, it needs to vote once more before it goes to Gov. Roy Cooper — who is likely to veto it.

The House passed the bill 77-44. About two hours later, the Senate decided against taking its final vote. Instead, lawmakers from both chambers will negotiate over the weekend and come up with a new version. That new version could be voted on by both chambers on Monday night.

Rep. John Bradford of Mecklenburg County argued against several Democrat-proposed amendments during the House floor debate Thursday, which all failed. Some extended time or asked to include charter schools.

"I maintain we need to open schools sooner than later," Bradford said.

Bradford, who said his children go to a charter school, said that charter schools don't need to be included because parents can "vote with their feet" and go to a traditional public school that is open if they don't like their charter being closed to in-person.

Rep. Julie von Haefen, a Wake County Democrat, said that fewer than 20 districts are still remote, and that some are already in the process of moving to reopen.

"This bill is absolutely unnecessary and a legislative overstep," von Haefen said. (RNO, 2/11/21)

## **FEB 2021    HB 147; Restore Medical Benefits For New Teachers**

This week, North Carolina representative Julie von Haefen introduced a bill that she's all too familiar with.

"Well, actually, this is a bill that I introduced last session in 2019. We tried to get it to stop before it went into effect," she said.

The bill? House Bill 147.

"Our state has already put so many burdens on teachers in the last decade or so," von Haefen said.

The proposal would rescind the elimination of retiree medical benefits for new North Carolina teachers who started on or after Jan. 1, 2021.

According to the Associated Press, the change, which also includes state employees, was included in the 2017 state budget law. They report Republicans who backed it said it was needed to rein in future anticipated costs which were calculated in the tens of billions of dollars.

"What that signaled to me and other veteran teachers and educators is that the General Assembly doesn't plan on sustaining the teacher workforce," said Kristin Beller.

Beller is president of the Wake County chapter of the North Carolina Association of Educators. She said that teacher recruitment starts early.

"When we think about teacher pipeline, we have to think long term. We actually want high schoolers to see teaching as a profession that is worth dedicating their college term to," Beller explained.

Rep. von Haefen said the bill has been referred to the rules committee in the house.

"We already know that their salaries are low so we have to be able to compete with these large corporations," said von Haefen. (WNCN, 2/21/17)

### **MAR 2021 Loosen Abortion Restrictions**

Democratic leaders in the N.C. House introduced the Remove Barriers and Gain Access to Abortion Act, or the RBG Act, on Monday that would eliminate many restrictions preventing women in the state from getting an abortion.

If passed, the bill will also allow advanced practice clinicians and other medically trained professionals to perform the procedure, increasing the number of providers in the state who are not physicians, according to Rep. ***Julie Von Haefen***, a Democrat who represents Wake County, is one of the sponsors of the bill. Von Haefen, along with other lawmakers and health advocates, held a virtual press conference Monday to discuss the details of the bill.

"As North Carolinians, we should be focused on making healthcare more accessible and more equitable," Von Haefen said. "We should be finding ways to eliminate barriers and increase the number of supportive policies in our state, instead of continuing to place barriers to accessing healthcare. This is particularly important during the pandemic."

House lawmakers say the barriers to abortion and other reproductive healthcare disproportionately affect Black women and women who are poor or live in rural areas in the state. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, these roadblocks have only worsened.

"The public health crisis has limited access to healthcare dramatically at a time when family planning is more important than ever for people," Von Haefen said. "We must allow the people of North Carolina to make their own decisions about their bodies, their healthcare, and their lives without interference or restriction from our government."

The bill was also created to also honor the late Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg who championed women's rights and fairer abortion access in the country before her death in September. (Fayetteville Observer, 3/2/21)

## **MAR 2021 Against Grape Juice “Mandate” In Schools**

Legislation mandating the availability of muscadine grape juice in all public K-12 schools, colleges and universities cleared the state House on Tuesday.

House Bill 136, titled “Encourage Healthy NC Food in Schools,” has Rep. Julia Howard, R-Davie, as lead primary sponsor.

HB136 has the support of the N.C. Agriculture Department. If signed into law, the mandate would begin with the 2021-22 school year.

The bill passed by a 91-22 vote, with 25 of 46 Democrats who voted being in support, as well as all but one of the 67 Republicans voting.

The passage, however, wasn’t as smooth as the vote count might indicate.

After the bill sailed through three committees, there was an unexpected 22 minutes of debate centered on free market concerns about the mandate vs. supporting North Carolina farmers that could portend a stiff challenge in the state Senate.

The outstanding question remains - can you get students to drink a sweet juice compared with the typical apple and orange juice offerings?

Howard stuck to her script in citing the value of promoting muscadine grape juice sales for farmers and its nutritional value.

”It’s one of the good things we can do for the growers and producers in this state to make this product available in our schools,” Howard said. “It is the state fruit.”

According to online legislative media outlet NC Insider, Howard was asked during the K-12 committee meeting about what happens if muscadine grape juice isn’t selected by enough students to warrant being an option.

”If the kids would stop and try this, they would prefer it over apple and orange juice,” she told committee members.

Rep. Julie von Haefen, D-Wake, questioned the potential popularity of muscadine grape juice, saying “grape juice is the least preferred juice among all students in North Carolina.”

”If this juice isn’t chosen by students, it will go to waste and the school will not be reimbursed.”

Von Haefan said she prefers that muscadine grape juice be included in the state’s farms to schools nutrition program.

Howard responded by saying that “I want you to remember just one thing - we don’t grow oranges in North Carolina. We grow grapes, and that is what will help our growers and producers.”

Rep. Larry Pittman, R-Cabarrus, is among the more prominent Libertarian-oriented legislators.

"I can appreciate the desire to provide healthy options to children in school, but I see the word 'shall'" in this bill, Pittman said. "This is like creating a market that I don't think is our responsibility."

Rep. Jeff McNeely, R-Iredell, said the bill "represents the chance to support our No. 1 industry (agriculture)."

"Our farmers continue to struggle constantly. Here's another avenue to give them some revenue and income, so I would suggest you vote for N.C. farmers, not against them."

The bill would require the State Board of Education, local boards of education and charter schools to mandate that all public K-12 schools provide muscadine grape juice.

Not only would the schools' nutrition and lunch programs have to offer muscadine grape juice, but also school vending machines.

Public community colleges and universities would be required to offer muscadine grape juice in on-campus vending machines.

Davie is the home of Mighty Muscadine of Advance, which is affiliated with Le Bleu bottled water, and Vine Life Products of Bermuda Run, both of which promote muscadine grapes for food, health and wellness purposes.

Mighty Muscadine is owned by Jerry Smith. Smith provided Howard with a \$2,700 political donation in 2016, according to [opensecrets.org](http://opensecrets.org).

Muscadine grapes are grown primarily in eastern North Carolina. They also are used in jellies, jams, preserves, syrups and dessert toppings.

Muscadine grape juice would be added to the state's "Got to be NC" farm-to-school marketing program. The Scuppernong grape, a variation of the muscadine grape, is the state's official fruit.

The bill touts muscadine grape juice as "not needing added sugar" and "rich in healthy antioxidants."

The website [usualwines.com](http://usualwines.com) cautions that "the wine is packed full of sugar. These sugars are not naturally occurring - they are added throughout the production process to balance the natural bitterness of the grape."

The N.C. Wine and Grape Council touts several health and nutritional benefits of muscadine grapes, some of which share with the benefits of moderate consumption of wine.

Those includes: being fat free and high in fiber; assisting with weight control and lowering cholesterol levels; inhibiting the growth of some forms of cancer; and slowing the aging of skin. (Winston Salem Journal, 3/24/21)

### **MAR 2021    Calls For “Robust Infrastructure”**

Environment North Carolina issued the following news release:

A group of over 360 local elected officials from across the United States, including North Carolina, called on President Biden and Congress for robust infrastructure funding to make our communities healthier and protect the environment.

The national sign-on letter ([https://environmentamerica.org/sites/environment/files/Sign%20On\\_%20Local%20Elected%20Leaders%20for%20Infrastructure%20Funding%20\\_FINAL%203.11.pdf?\\_ga=2.179466528.569134224.1616498964-237131376.1616498964](https://environmentamerica.org/sites/environment/files/Sign%20On_%20Local%20Elected%20Leaders%20for%20Infrastructure%20Funding%20_FINAL%203.11.pdf?_ga=2.179466528.569134224.1616498964-237131376.1616498964)), released Monday by Environment North Carolina highlighted how infrastructure investment could unite a divided country and heal economic wounds caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. It called for investments - essential to protecting public health and addressing climate change - in five key areas: clean water; transportation; clean energy; nature-based resilience; and solid waste infrastructure.

North Carolina local elected officials understand the need to invest in the kinds of infrastructure that will put our nation's communities on a visionary and sustainable path. We must invest in infrastructure that makes us healthier and safer, and prioritizes "fix it first" over flashy new structures.

"From the mountains to the sea, North Carolina is home to some of the most diverse natural environments in the United States. We're proud of the rivers and waterways that make our state one of the most beautiful and attractive mainland tourist destinations in the country. Despite that, our state has yet to make investments in the essential infrastructure needed to sustain these locations," said Representative Julie von Haefen. "We have known for years that toxic chemicals like PFAS are leaching into waterways and water supplies in local communities across our state. Clean water should not be a luxury. We must act now so that future generations have a chance to grow up safely and in good health, with access to quality drinking water," noted von Haefen. (Press Release, 3/23/21)

### **APR 2021    “Momnibus Bill”**

Legislators in the North Carolina General Assembly plan to pass a collection of bills aimed at tackling the Black maternal health crisis in the state and addressing the gaps in reproductive healthcare during the pandemic.

The NC Momnibus Act was introduced in the state legislature April 6 and comprises multiple bills designed to confront the factors that contribute to disparities in maternal healthcare.

Following the example of the Black Maternal Health Momnibus Act of 2021 that was introduced in Congress by Reps. Alma Adams, D-N.C. and Lauren Underwood, D-Ill. in February, North Carolina’s omnibus bill will complement the federal efforts to improve maternal health and treatment for Black women.

On Monday, State Sen. Natalie Murdock of Durham and Rep. Julie Von Haefen of Wake County hosted a virtual press conference to discuss details of the bill with testimonies from health care workers and mothers who agreed the legislation would improve maternal mortality by eliminating factors that contribute to the issue at the root.

While maternal mortality is an issue that affects women across demographics and socio-economic backgrounds, Black women are two to three times more likely to die from pregnancy-related issues compared to White and Hispanic women, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

North Carolina ranks 30th out of the 50 states in high maternal mortality rates.

In 2020 during the pandemic, the state saw 112 deaths per 100,000 live births. This was an increase over previous years, according to federal data released in a report by America's Health Rankings.

"Unfortunately, far too many Black women may have had a near-death experience during birth or has had a friend or family member that almost lost their lives," Murdock said. "Maternal health outcomes in North Carolina need to improve."

Health experts and advocates say a number of social determinants such as the lack of health care, poverty and hunger, and racism all play a role in the death of Black moms in America.

More data is still needed to examine the extent of maternal mortality rates around the state, especially in rural areas, and the omnibus bill aims to improve data collection to help health leaders better service women.

"Some may wonder why its necessary to have a bill that addresses maternal health specifically for Black communities," said Breanna Lipscomb, a co-chair for the Black Mamas Matter Alliance. "Research shows that for Black and White women with the same risk factors, with the same pregnancy complications, Black women are still more likely to die."

This, according to Lipscomb, indicates that there are other factors that healthcare that influences mortality risks for Black women.

Two of the bills in the omnibus also seek to improve the COVID-19 response for women and birthing people, or those who identify outside of the gender binary who can give birth.

"This pandemic has shown us that if you are a birthing person there are specific needs that you may have during a pandemic that may make it a little bit more difficult for you to have access to the healthcare that you need," Murdock said.

Issues like transportation to hospitals and the lack of access to caregivers like doulas was a challenge during the pandemic.

Also included in the omnibus are protections for community-based programs and organizations working to fill the gap in reproductive health, according to Murdock.

Some of those organizations will receive grants under the bill, if passed.

”A lot of these community organizations are really stepping up to the plate, and quite frankly, engaging in activities that support moms that we should be doing as a state government,” Murdock said.

If passed, the bill would also make expansions to Medicare and mandate all healthcare providers to undergo implicit bias training to improve the treatment of pregnant Black mothers.

”There is a growing body of evidence showing that Black people are often treated unfairly and inequitably in the health care system,” said Von Haefen. “Health care providers in North Carolina are not required to undergo any implicit bias testing or training.”

The state also lacks a system used to track instances where implicit bias or stereotypes lead to negative birthing outcomes for Black women who have said that their problems have been dismissed or discredited by health providers.

Tomeka Isaac, a mother included in the press conference, founded Jace’s Journey in 2019 after she lost her baby due to a condition called Hemolysis Elevated Liver Enzymes Low Platelet, or HELLP, that could have been diagnosed by a urine or blood test — something Isaac did not receive during her pregnancy.

”Because of this broken system, I had to undergo seven surgeries developing in infections resulting in a 45 day hospital stay that forced us to miss Jace’s funeral,” Isaac said. “Black women shouldn’t be responsible for knowing as much as trained professionals in order to survive pregnancy. No amount of education or experience could change the way that my life and our son’s life was carelessly risked during my pregnancy.”

Isaac, like other leaders on the call, say legislation can help make necessary changes needed in hospital rooms.

Bipartisan support is needed for the bill to move forward.

”We will continue to work with our majority leaders, even if it isn’t the entire package,” Murdock said. “I’m confident that some of these provisions can move forward.”

The federal omnibus bill includes language for states to follow to make improvements for Black maternal health rates.

”It’s very difficult to have a federal package and not work at the state level to see how we can connect those dots,” Murdock said. “So we wanted the omnibus to serve as a roadmap to say when this federal legislation moves forward, in North Carolina this is how we can apply that to our state’s very specific issues to Black maternal health.”

Sponsors of the bill are in the Senate are Democrats Murdock, Sydney Batch of Wake County and Deandrea Salvador of Mecklenburg County. In the House, sponsors are Democrats Von Haefen, Carla

Cunningham of Mecklenburg County, and Vernetta Alston and Zach Hawkins of Durham County. (Fayetteville Observer, 4/13/21)

### **MAY 2021 For Biden “American Families Plan”**

In a press call this afternoon, NCDP Chair Bobbie Richardson, State Senator Sarah Crawford, State Representative Ashton Clemmons, State Representative Julie von Haefen, a North Carolina parent, and a child care center owner discussed the need for President Biden’s American Families Plan in North Carolina.

NCDP Chair Bobbie Richardson: “Right now, too many Americans are struggling to meet basic needs and cover basic expenses. An economy that fails so many of us is not only unfair, it’s unsustainable. The American Families Plan is a once-in-a-generation investment in the foundations of middle-class prosperity.”

State Senator Sarah Crawford: “The pandemic has resulted in lost wages and a decline in economic activity, but the American Families Plan works to provide economic security to families through two major investments: a national and comprehensive paid family and medical leave program, and tax cuts for families and workers...After the year we have all been through, it’s clear that it’s time to rebuild the backbone of this country: the middle class. This plan would be a game changer for the pocketbooks of North Carolina families, and I strongly urge its passage.”

State Representative Ashton Clemmons: “As a lifelong educator, administrator, and mom, I am frankly in awe of the types of investments laid out in this plan to make education more affordable and expand opportunity from preschool to higher education. Pre-school is critical to ensuring that children start kindergarten with the skills and support that sets them up for success in school, but right now, only 24 percent of the 248,600 3- and 4-year-olds in North Carolina are enrolled in publicly-funded pre-school. The American Families Plan will provide universal access to high-quality, free Pre-K for 3- and 4-year-olds, which is a huge step in ensuring children have a strong start in the fundamental first years of their life.”

State Representative Julie von Haefen: “When COVID-19 forced child care centers to shut down, the work of caring for and educating children fell to parents and especially to women. Our communities quickly learned that without child care, parents could not go back to work. But here in North Carolina, finding affordable child care is a hurdle for many families. The annual average cost of child care for a toddler in North Carolina is \$8,746 meaning that the average two-parent household spends 10 percent of their income on child care every year...The American Families Plan will make an extraordinary investment in child care affordability by enabling low and middle-income families to pay no more than 7 percent of their income on high-quality child care, generating lifetime benefits for 169,100 children under 5 in North Carolina and helping working families make ends meet.” (Press Release, 5/20/21)

## **MAY 2021 Sponsors “Remedial Plan” for Education Funding**

North Carolina can’t wait any longer on costly improvements to public education in light of court rulings that declare the state hasn’t met constitutional obligations, Democratic lawmakers and education advocates said Monday.

Sponsors of a House measure that would take the first steps to carry out a “comprehensive remedial plan” presented to a Superior Court judge in March held a news conference to urge the bill’s consideration by the Republican majority.

The remedial plan, which envisions spending over at least \$5.6 billion on new education expenditures through 2028, stems from school funding litigation known as “Leandro” that began in 1994. The legislation seeks to initiate and fund programs contained in the remedial plan for at least the next two years. Democratic Gov. Roy Cooper has backed the remedial plan and has sought funding in budget proposals this year.

By 2004, the state Supreme Court had declared in the Leandro litigation that the state’s children have a fundamental right to the “opportunity to receive a sound basic education,” and that North Carolina had not lived up to that mandate. Interest in compliance grew in 2019 when a consultant’s report declared little progress had been made to meet the constitutional directive. The COVID-19 pandemic laid bare educational inequities, said Rep. Rachel Hunt, a Mecklenburg County Democrat and bill sponsor.

”The urgency of this moment is now. And we have to be having this conversation at this crossroads,” Rep. Ricky Hurtado, an Alamance County Democrat and another sponsor, said during the virtual news conference.

The remedial plan presented to Judge David Lee included funding improvements to help low-income students and those with disabilities, and to hire more school support personnel. Increased pay for teachers, principals and assistant principals is included in the plan, but no dollar value for the increases has been set. The plan also focuses on increasing teacher diversity and competency and expanding prekindergarten access. Lee said last month he wouldn’t try to tell the General Assembly how much money they need to spend.

Other speakers said there was no time for more excuses about why at-risk children, including those in rural and poor settings and some immigrants, fail to receive the education they deserve, especially when the state’s coffers are flush.

”It is time for North Carolina to fulfill its promise to children,” said Patricia Beier, CEO of WAGES, an anti-poverty community action group based in Goldsboro. “Does leaving behind yet another generation of children from rural communities or from families with low wealth align with our values as a state?”

GOP House Speaker Tim Moore said in a written statement that while spending “is the purview of the legislature rather than the courts, some of the policy suggestions in the report are worthy of consideration.”

Moore also said House Republicans expect teacher pay and K-12 funding will continue on an upward trajectory. Republicans, particularly in the Senate, have been critical of declarations that education spending has declined over the past decade in real dollars, saying instead that K-12 spending actually increased cumulatively by billions in recent years.

The House bill currently sits in a committee where bills from the minority party often get parked during the two-year session. Rep. Julie von Haefen, a Wake County Democrat and a bill sponsor, said she was hopeful that GOP lawmakers would incorporate the bill's ideas into the chamber's two-year budget proposal, calling it a "once-in-a-lifetime opportunity," especially given the state's healthy fiscal condition.

"We cannot put it off any longer," she added. (AP, 5/24/21)

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bill sponsored by Democrats in the N.C. House would pump billions of additional dollars into public education over the next few years toward meeting the requirements of a new remedial agreement in the ongoing Leandro lawsuit.

House Bill 946 was assigned to the House Rules Committee, an indication that Republican leadership has no intention of bringing it up. But Democrats at a press conference on Monday hoped that some or all elements of the bill could end up in the budget for the new biennium.

"This is the first time in the history of the case where we have a truly comprehensive piece of legislation that provides specific actions the General Assembly needs to take to comply with Leandro," said Rep. Julie von Haefen, D-Wake, one of the bill's primary sponsors.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the inequities that are the focus of the Leandro case, particularly for students from low-income families, students with disabilities, and English-language learners," said Rep. Rachel Hunt, D-Mecklenburg. "If we truly want to serve our most marginalized students and prepare them for a more prosperous future, we don't have any time to waste."

"The urgency of this moment is now, and we have to be having this conversation at this crossroads, in this moment, to think about what the next 10, 20, even 30 years is going to look like for North Carolina," said Rep. Ricky Hurtado, D-Alamance.

Dr. Terry Stoops, director of the Center for Effective Education at the John Locke Foundation, pointed out that H.B. 946 has no Republican co-sponsors, even though such a large measure would need the backing of the GOP majority to become law.

"There was no indication that they tried to appeal to the hearts and minds of their political opponents. Republicans signaled their intentions by referring the bill to the legislative netherworld, the House Rules Committee," said Stoops.

The contents of H.B. 946 are built from multiple sources, including Gov. Roy Cooper's proposed 2021 budget, the nearly 300-page report from the California-based consulting firm WestEd, Cooper's

Commission on Access to Sound Basic Education, and an eight-year remedial plan agreed to by both the plaintiffs and defendants in the Leandro case.

H.B. 946 funds seven priority areas, including ensuring “well-prepared, high-quality” principals and teachers in schools, new mechanisms for measuring student performance, and support for low-performing schools.

During their news conference Monday, Democrats took time away from touting the bill to take aim at two of the GOP’s education priorities this year: Expanding school choice and keeping one-sided presentations of Critical Race Theory out of public school classrooms.

”Education in North Carolina is under attack,” Rep. Raymond Smith, Jr., D-Wayne. “These bills are taking away money from public education. These bills are trying to basically dictate what is being taught in the public schools, even though we have no control over what’s being taught in private schools, but that’s where we’re sending our money.”

”Shockingly, Representative Smith slammed Republicans for advancing school choice legislation even though disadvantaged families desire more educational options and are better served by having them,” Stoops said. “School choice empowers families. The Leandro plan outlined by Democratic lawmakers would empower the public school establishment.”

”If the goal was to convince Republican lawmakers to support House Bill 946, trashing school choice legislation sponsored by Republicans was a profoundly terrible idea,” Stoops added.

The Leandro lawsuit dates back to 1994, when five rural school districts sued the state over education funding. The N.C. Supreme Court has ruled twice since then - in 1997 and again in 2004 - that the state has a constitutional obligation to provide a “sound, basic education” to all students.

A major development came in April when N.C. Superior Court Judge David Lee - the presiding jurist in the Leandro lawsuit - said that he won’t tell lawmakers how to spend money on public education. By law, the General Assembly is the governing body with the sole authority to allocate funds, but Democrats had hoped that the judicial branch would impose funding requirements on lawmakers. (Laurinburg Exchange, 5/26/21)

### **JUN 2021 Against Delaying Social Studies Implementation (Which Means For CRT)**

North Carolina Republican lawmakers want to delay the use of new social studies standards that conservative critics say are too negative about the nation’s history.

The state House voted 74-34 on Wednesday to pass a rewritten version of a COVID-19 relief bill that includes a one-year delay in implementing the social studies standards. Republicans say the delay is needed because the State Board of Education and the state Department of Public Instruction are still working on the documents that teachers will use.

”Could you imagine if you were in charge of curriculum at the local level and this is still not completed and it may be completed by the end of the month, that you have a month turnaround to turn that into a pacing guide and have some sort of staff development for your history teachers at the high school level,” said Rep. Jeffrey Elmore, a Wilkes County Republican.

”It doesn’t matter what’s in it. It’s just logistically impossible.”

Several Democrats objected on Wednesday, saying the last-minute change to this fall’s school schedules would negatively impact students and teachers. The challenge for Democrats is that the bill includes items that they support, such as \$100 million in extra pay for teachers and \$1,000 grants for families to help with learning loss.

”Delaying the implementation of these classes will cause even more work for our hardworking educators because of rescheduling, readjusting and rewriting their lesson plans for next year.” said Rep. Julie von Haefen, a Wake County Democrat.

On Wednesday, Elmore said DPI had requested the delay in social studies standards.

But State Superintendent Catherine Truitt said in a statement Wednesday that she had requested a delay earlier in the legislative session, but not recently.

Senate Bill 654 now goes back to the Senate to see if it supports the House’s changes.

Heated debate about new standards

In February, the State Board of Education voted 7-5 to adopt new K-12 social studies standards that call for teachers to more explicitly discuss racism and discrimination and the perspectives of historically marginalized groups.

Schools are supposed to begin using the new standards this fall.

The state board’s Democratic majority said the new standards would provide a fuller telling of the nation’s legacy. But the board’s Republican minority say the standards incorporate Critical Race Theory and paint an overly negative view of the nation’s history.

”Critical Race Theory” is a “scholarly framework that describes how race, class, gender, and sexuality organize American life,” according to the UNC-Chapel Hill history department. This view holds that systemic racism has been and continues to be a part of the nation’s history.

Last weekend, former President Donald Trump told North Carolina Republicans at their state convention that they need to fight against critical race theory in schools. Bills have been introduced in at least 15 states, including North Carolina, to restrict the use of critical race theory in schools.

House Republicans cited critical race theory for passing a bill last month that creates new rules on how schools teach about race and history, including not promoting teaching that would make students feel guilt or discomfort due to their race or sex.

House Republicans also raised questions about what teachers are doing by passing a bill last month that would require public schools to list online all the instructional material they're using, such as teacher lesson plans.

#### Impact of delay debated

Truitt, the superintendent, said schools "need clarity as soon as possible."

"While this proposed delay benefits the department to ensure we can provide the proper professional development and appropriate implementation of the new standards, as well as train our teachers for the new economic and personal finance course, I find it discouraging that it has unfolded at the 11th hour," Truitt said.

"The State Board of Education is required to move forward with implementation of these new history and civics standards per current statutory requirements and local school districts will potentially have to adjust schedules for nearly all 400,000 high school students."

Von Haefen cited Truitt's comments to unsuccessfully propose an amendment to remove the one-year delay.

"I ask for your support of this amendment to avoid these serious ripple effects across our state," von Haefen said. "The effect of delaying these classes will prevent students from graduating, create hours of extra work for administrators and teachers and throw students' schedules into chaos at every high school in North Carolina."

But Elmore said he doubted the delay would impact the ability of students to graduate. He also questioned how well teachers coming off a year dealing with COVID issues could be expected to teach the new classes so soon.

"I'm sorry that this might inconvenience Superintendent Truitt, the State Board of Education, the administrator of the computer program that does the scheduling," Elmore said. "What I'm concerned with is the actual instruction of these courses."

#### Money for teachers, parents

The House added \$340 million in federal COVID relief aid to the Senate's bill, bringing the total to \$359.9 million for the state's public schools.

The largest new pot of money is \$100 million to pay teachers an extra month of salary. Most teachers work under a 10-month contract. The bill would provide money for an extra month of pay.

This 11th month would be paid to teachers to help students address COVID-19 learning loss. Teachers with 25 years or more of experience or who have received certain bonuses in the past based on their students' test results would be eligible for the additional pay.

The House also included \$10 million to create a “Student Success” program that would allow low-to-middle-income parents to get a \$1,000 grant to help address COVID learning loss.

#### Delay in smaller kindergarten class sizes

The House also added Wednesday new language that elementary schools say would provide them potential relief this fall by delaying state-mandated kindergarten class-size reductions.

Elementary schools are bracing for a potential surge in kindergartners this fall after statewide kindergarten enrollment dropped 11.7% this year. Some families may have opted to wait a year because they didn’t want their children to attend in a virtual kindergarten environment.

Currently, no kindergarten class would be allowed to have more than 21 students this fall. But under the bill, kindergarten classes could have up to 23 students if a school district’s kindergarten enrollment is 5% more than the 2019-20 school year. (RNO, 6/9/21)

### **AUG 2021 House Budget Not Enough**

House Republicans are trumpeting their two-year North Carolina government budget proposal for an education construction spree and for state teacher raises at levels that are higher than what the Senate passed in June.

”It does take care of North Carolina from the mountains to the coast and everything in between,” House Speaker Tim Moore of Cleveland County said at a news conference this week unveiling the initial plan. “It recognizes probably the greatest investment that we’ve seen to ... improve the lives of ordinary North Carolinians that I’ve ever seen.”

But Democrats on Tuesday said the GOP spending for public education is not enough to meet requirements of the state constitution, and they’re using a judge’s order to press their case at a time of massive surpluses. The judge said recently the state should spend at least \$5.6 billion in new education funding through 2028, including well over \$1 billion this year and next to comply with Supreme Court rulings that say the state must provide every student the opportunity for a sound basic education.

The budget measure, which made its way through the House budget-writing committee on Tuesday with debate and amendments, falls well short on that mandate, said Rep. Julie von Haefen, a Wake County Democrat. The House Appropriations Committee debated amendments before approving the measure. It will the House floor on Wednesday for the first of two required chamber votes.

”The court has ordered this money to be appropriated, and this budget doesn’t even come close to doing what the first two years of the remedial plan required,” von Haefen told reporters. There’s plenty of money to meet these and other education needs pushed by Republicans, she added: “If that was our priority, we could do both absolutely.”

The order signed in June by Judge David Lee backs a plan from Democratic Gov. Roy Cooper and the State Board of Education to meet the requirements of the Leandro court rulings, named for an original plaintiff in litigation filed in the mid-1990s.

The remedial plan included funding improvements to help low-income students and those with disabilities, and to hire more school support personnel. Increased pay for teachers, principals and assistant principals is included in the plan, but no dollar value for the increases were set. The plan also focuses on increasing teacher diversity and competency and expanding prekindergarten access. Von Haefen and other House Democrats filed a bill designed to begin carrying out that plan and fund it.

Republican legislators said the judge can't force them to spend money, saying the power of the purse rests alone with the General Assembly, according to the state constitution. And the General Assembly hasn't been a legal party in the litigation and its aftermath.

But they said they have continued to increase public education spending in recent years and have focused on many policy prescriptions contained in the remedial plan. The House budget would spend over \$14.7 billion for public education this year, or 57% of the \$25.7 billion spending plan.

"We were not part of Leandro. We weren't brought in those discussions. So we've been handed a plan without our input," said Rep. Dean Arp, a Union County Republican and senior budget writer. But "I think when you look across the board, many things in Leandro" can be found in the budget, he added.

But von Haefen said the numbers don't bear that out. The North Carolina Justice Center, an advocacy group representing low-income residents, calculated that funding unrelated to salaries needed to meet the remedial plan's proposal is \$375 million this year and \$614 million next year. The House budget would cover 24% of those needs this year and 16% of the second-year requirement, according to the center's analysis. The percentages in the Senate budget are slightly less than the House in each year.

The House and Senate ultimately will negotiate a final spending plan to present to Cooper, who wants to inject enough of his own policy priorities in the ultimate budget that he can sign it. But he's unhappy with corporate tax cuts, which are contained in each bill, and a host of other proposals, including in education.

"The House budget is better than the bad Senate budget, but that doesn't make it good," Cooper tweeted. (AP, 8/11/21)

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The state House of Representatives was poised to take a key vote Wednesday on its version of the state budget as Democrats voiced opposition to several aspects of it, particularly related to education funding and policy changes.

Republicans unveiled their two-year budget plan earlier this week, calling for higher pay for teachers and other state workers as well as tax cuts for individuals and businesses.

State leaders learned earlier this year that North Carolina was projected to take in \$6.5 billion more than expected in the next two years, prompting Republicans to argue they should send some of that money back to taxpayers.

"But, we also want to keep in mind the taxpayer because that's the whole reason we're here, is to make sure that the people who pay the bills in this state have a place to grow," said Rep. Jason Saine (R-Lincoln).

Parents, teachers and other advocates for education came to the General Assembly Wednesday, saying state lawmakers should invest more in schools.

Rep. Julie von Haefen (D-Wake) said the proposed budget does not meet the requirements in a recent court order calling on the state to spend more to meet its constitutional obligation to provide a sound, basic education.

The Associated Press reported the judge called for at least \$5.6 billion in new spending through 2028.

Von Haefen said that represented "the floor, not the ceiling" of what the state should spend.

Susan Book of Cary said it's challenging for children like her son Emerson, who has autism, to get the help he needs in the classroom.

"For him to access education, he needs resources and services. And right now, they're sparse," she said. "Tax cuts are the wrong direction."

The budget plan includes one-time bonuses and pay raises for educators. K-12 teachers would see raises of 5.5 percent on average over the next two years. It also contains some provisions educators have wanted to see for years, including eliminating the requirement that teachers pay \$50 to help hire a substitute when they take a personal day and restoring the salary boost for teachers with master's degrees.

"Even though it has some things that we like, that the Governor has been pushing for, it really falls woefully short of where we need to be," said House Democratic Leader Rep. Robert Reives.

The budget also includes policy changes that Democrats say they oppose, including a new requirement that lesson plans and instructional materials be posted online to give people the opportunity to review them and potentially challenge them as being "unfit" for students. The move comes as Republicans have tried to pass bills addressing critical race theory in schools.

"To me, we've gotten to a scary point with education," said Reives. "You give the teachers a raise, but then you add another million bosses."

When asked why that's included, Rep. Saine said, "This is how laws get passed, and it's nothing new. It's the way things have always worked around here and it's nothing new." (WNCN, 8/11/21)

## **AUG 2021 Denounces “Fake Clinics” (I.E. Pro-Life)**

Rep. Julie von Haefen: “Not expanding Medicaid, cutting funding to reproductive healthcare programs, and giving money to fake clinics tells us one thing: Women’s reproductive healthcare is not a priority for NCGA Republican leadership.”

North Carolina Republicans’ budget proposal is a partisan wishlist that fails to provide access to health care and sufficiently fund our schools while instead dedicating \$9 million of taxpayer money to fund anti-abortion franchises.

These unlicensed and largely unregulated organizations do not provide medical care or clinical services instead trying to block, intimidate, and shame people out of accessing abortion care. Instead of funding legitimate programs that would address the disproportionate maternal mortality among historically marginalized communities the North Carolina Republicans insist on funding fake clinics which offer “no evidence of improving maternal/infant health outcomes, a critical metric in North Carolina, as our state has one of the highest maternal/infant mortality rates in the country, especially among Black families.” (Press Release, 8/31/21)

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Buried deep in the budget proposed by state House Republicans is a \$9 million appropriation of taxpayer money to fund three anti-abortion franchises - unlicensed and largely unregulated organizations that pose as health care providers for pregnant people.

These facilities - known as crisis pregnancy centers (CPCs)- do not provide substantive medical care or clinical services and have been condemned by physicians, legislators, academics, and reproductive rights organizations for their coercive and misleading practices.

CPCs, first introduced in the 1970s, have only ever existed to block, intimidate, and shame people out of accessing abortion care. Their strategy, as seen in their billboards that say "Scared? Pregnant? Call..." is to prey on people who feel in crisis and are looking for information and options. North Carolina is home to approximately 100 CPCs that are often purposefully located next door or near actual abortion providers to deceive patients and create confusion.

CPCs take advantage of the fact that North Carolina, a state where Medicaid has still not been expanded, is shamefully home to over 600,000 residents who don't have access to affordable healthcare. These residents may see such advertisements, located throughout vulnerable communities, and be deceived into thinking that is where they can access the care they seek.

An examination of the reports filed by anti-abortion fake clinics with NC DHHS reveals many troubling features. First, their own reports indicate that these clinics see a very small number of clients in proportion to the amount of money given to them by the state. Second, CPCs do not report offering actual healthcare and overwhelmingly do not refer their clients to family planning services or adoption agencies. Third, CPCs have offered no evidence of improving maternal/infant health outcomes, a critical metric in North Carolina, as our state has one of the highest maternal/infant mortality rates in the country, especially among Black families.

Public money should not be diverted from legitimate state departments and healthcare organizations that provide actual care, have proven results of reducing maternal and infant mortality, and offer comprehensive and medically accurate reproductive health care.

If the \$9 million in the 2021-2022 House budget currently proposed for CPCs were instead given to Family Planning Medicaid services, that money would provide actual health services to 75,000 women of reproductive age in North Carolina. Shamefully, efforts in the North Carolina Senate to redirect funding for CPCs back to legitimate programs that address disproportionate maternal mortality among historically marginalized populations have been dismissed.

It is critical for North Carolina to take back taxpayer dollars from exploitative anti-abortion CPCs and return it to actual evidence-based reproductive health care programs that provide comprehensive contraceptive methods and counseling services. Sadly, not expanding Medicaid, cutting funding to reproductive healthcare programs, and giving money to fake clinics tells us one thing: Women's reproductive healthcare is not a priority for NCGA Republican leadership.

State Rep. Julie von Haefen, a Democrat, represents the 36th District in the North Carolina House, covering portions of Cary, Apex and southern Wake County. She has served in the General Assembly since 2019. (Durham herald Services, 8/31/21)

### **SEP 2021 Concerned About Pro-Life Legislation**

North Carolina state lawmakers with opposing views on abortion agree on something: The U.S. Supreme Court's recent refusal to temporarily block Texas' sweeping, new abortion ban could mean the legislature has a shot at implementing similar restrictions here.

Now the toughest abortion restrictions in the country, the newly enacted Texas law bans the procedure after a fetus' heart rate can be detected at around six weeks of pregnancy and gives citizens the power to sue anyone who "aids and abets" a person getting an abortion.

The Supreme Court's 5-4 decision not to block enforcement of the law while courts determine whether it is constitutional is being hailed as a major victory by anti-abortion advocates across the country, including in North Carolina, where lawmakers are taking note of other states' successes and how the courts respond.

The court's ruling also comes as North Carolina's Republican-led state legislature is gearing up to draw political districts that will be used in elections for the next decade. How they draw those maps and the Supreme Court's ultimate ruling will determine whether conservative lawmakers can emulate Texas and pass a similar abortion ban as early as 2023.

Republicans need to win just a handful of seats in the 2022 elections to regain a supermajority. Such a victory would give the party enough conservative votes to override vetoes by the state's Democratic governor, who has blocked abortion restrictions in recent years.

”We’re all waiting to see what those maps are going to look like,” said Rep. Julie von Haefen, a Democrat who represents part of Wake County. “If they have a supermajority in 2022, I would be extremely concerned that they would further chip away at women’s reproductive rights here in North Carolina.” (RNO, 9/4/21)

## **SEP 2021    Gun Bill**

Thursday, Sep. 09 9:00 AM North Carolina legislators discuss gun safety legislation - North Carolina State Reps. Marcia Morey, Julie von Haefen, and Evelyn Terry discuss plans to file discharge petitions for ‘HB 525, Allow ERPOs to Save Lives & Prevent Suicides’ and ‘HB 623, An Act to Require a Permit for the Purchase of a Long Gun’ , via press conference

Location: North Carolina Legislative Building, 16 W Jones St, Raleigh, NC (AP, 9/9/21)

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House Democrats are pushing for the North Carolina General Assembly to debate two bills that would change gun laws in the state.

House Bill 525 would allow North Carolina residents to stop other people from obtaining a firearm in certain situations. House Bill 623 would require a permit for “long guns,” or long-barrelled guns.

Democrats have pushed for the legislation in previous sessions after gun violence incidents. House Democrats filed discharge petitions to move the bills out of committee and to the full House for debate this week.

”This is common-sense gun safety legislation to prevent suicides and gun violence,” Rep. Marcia Morey, D-Durham, said regarding HB 525. “We need 61 members to get this bill debated.”

Republicans hold the majority in both chambers of the Legislature. There are 52 Democrats and 68 Republicans in the House. Democrats have not been able to successfully move a bill from committee for the past few years, Rep. Julie von Haefen, D-Wake, said last week during a news conference.

Under HB 525, a law enforcement officer or “concerned citizen” can file a petition to temporarily halt another’s person’s right to have a firearm. It allows North Carolinians to file for Extreme Risk Protection Orders, which would stop a person who appears to be a risk to themself or others from obtaining a firearm.

Backers of the bill said it would reduce gun deaths and injuries. Nearly 20,000 Americans were killed by gun violence in 2020, according to the Gun Violence Archive. As of Monday, 4,467 North Carolina residents have died from gun violence in North Carolina since 2014, according to the archive.

Democrats filed a discharge petition for a similar bill during the 2019 legislative session, but it never cleared the House Committee on Judiciary. More than a dozen states have enacted similar laws dubbed red-flag legislation, and others proposed the restrictions when Democrats filed the petition in August 2019 in the aftermath of shootings in El Paso, Texas, and Dayton, Ohio.

Opponents of red-flag legislation argue they infringe on Americans' rights to bear arms.

The North Carolina Firearms Coalition said if the legislation passes, a person's enemy or ex-spouse could make false claims against them. The bill would implement a penalty for bogus claims, but the coalition said there is no "good version" of the legislation.

HB 623 would require North Carolinians to apply for a permit from a local sheriff's office to buy a "long gun" or rifle. Current law requires North Carolina residents to seek a permit for pistols. The General Assembly recently passed a bill, which Gov. Roy Cooper later vetoed, to eliminate the requirement.

Cooper, in his Aug. 30 veto message, said the permit laws reduce gun homicides, suicides and the availability of guns for criminal activity. Republicans said the governor's veto blocked North Carolinians' "fundamental constitutional rights" under the Second Amendment. (Washington Examiner, 9/21/21)

### **SEP 2021 Bill to Punish Those Who Park in Spaces for Electric Vehicles**

Rep. Harry Warren, a Republican from Rowan County, will host an Electric Vehicle Ride and Drive event today at the North Carolina General Assembly to raise awareness about the transition to clean transportation.

For the event, Warren will join the Southern Alliance for Clean Energy and Rep. Julie von Haefen, a Democrat who co-sponsored a bipartisan bill with Warren to prohibit and punish non-electric vehicle drivers from parking in spaces designated as electric vehicle charging stations.

The event, beginning at 10 a.m. and spanning until 4 p.m., will allow members and staff of the North Carolina General Assembly to test drive electric vehicles and learn more about the role they play in the state's transition to clean transportation. It will take place in front of the legislative building at 16 W. Jones St. in Raleigh.

"Until you drive an electric vehicle, it is difficult to understand what all the excitement is about," said Stan Cross, electric transportation policy director at the Southern Alliance for Clean Energy. "So we're putting policymakers in the driver's seat to experience the excitement first-hand and spur their enthusiasm for advocating for EV friendly policies that will grow North Carolina's burgeoning EV market."

In March, Warren and von Haefen's measure, House Bill 296, passed the House by a vote of 115-4, with four Republicans voting against the measure. The bill establishes a \$100 fine for violating the parking restriction and calls on the spaces to be designated by a sign. Similar to handicap parking restrictions, it would be enforced by any state, county, city or municipal authority tasked with overseeing other parking laws and ordinances.

The bill also restricts local governments from implementing any additional fees for violating the parking restriction. Additionally, electric vehicles must be connected to the recharging equipment while in the space.

The bill has not yet been scheduled for a vote on the Senate floor.

”The advent of the electric vehicle is upon us and it is inevitable that it will become a prominent feature on the highways,” Warren said in a statement about the event. “This event is a great opportunity for folks to become acquainted with electric vehicles if they haven’t had experience with one.” (Salisbury Post, 9/29/21)

## **OCT 2021 Education Funding Clash**

The future of how North Carolina funds public schools could change in a Wake County courtroom on Monday.

State Superior Court Judge David Lee has given state lawmakers an Oct. 18 deadline to fully fund the first two years of a plan that calls for at least \$5.6 billion in new education funding by 2028. Republican lawmakers have balked at the court order, so Lee has said that he’ll consider at the 10 a.m. hearing how he can force the General Assembly to fund the plan.

Here’s what you need to know heading into Monday’s court hearing in the long-running Leandro school funding case.

How does school funding work?

The state funds the cost of operating schools, which includes salaries for most school employees. Counties are responsible for funding school construction and maintenance but also can supplement what the state provides for operations.

A wide disparity in funding has emerged between rural and urban school districts.

The Leandro school funding case was initially filed in 1994 by low-wealth school districts to get more state funding. The case is named after a student from Hoke County who has since graduated from college.

The state Supreme Court has ruled that the state constitution guarantees every child “an opportunity to receive a sound basic education” and that the state was failing to meet that obligation. Lee is in charge of overseeing the case.

The Leandro plan developed by the State Board of Education and Democratic Gov. Roy Cooper’s administration calls for around \$1.7 billion in new state funding over the next two years. The budgets adopted by the state House and Senate provide only a small percentage of that amount.

At a September court hearing, Lee said what lawmakers are providing is “woefully short of what is necessary to fund the constitutionally mandated requirement.”

Why it matters

Leaders of the Republican-controlled General Assembly say Lee is overstepping his authority. GOP lawmakers also say more state money is not necessarily the answer and that schools should tap into their federal COVID relief aid first.

”The North Carolina State constitution gives the legislature, not the courts, the authority to appropriate funds,” Demi Dowdy, a spokeswoman for House Speaker Tim Moore, said in a statement in September. “This is an arbitrary deadline that does not have the force of law.”

But the Leandro plan has been embraced by Democratic lawmakers and public school education advocacy groups. They point to how the state has more than \$6 billion in unspent money that could be used to fund the plan.

”We’ve waited long enough,” state Rep. Julie von Haefen, a Wake County Democrat, said at a news conference last week. “We’ve waited 30 years or so for this to be implemented and the time for waiting is over.”

The Rev. Paul Ford says how the state responds will show its level of commitment to educating its 1.5 million public school students. Ford is president of the board of directors of Action4Equity, which describes itself as a Black-led group advocating for equity for Winston-Salem/Forsyth County students.

”We have the resources, we have the money,” Ford said at a news conference last week in front of the Legislative Building in Raleigh. “We need to muster the will.” (RNO, 10/18/21)

### **NOV 2021 Mandatory Postpartum Medicaid Coverage**

Center for Reproductive: Over 150 State Legislators Sign Letter to Call on the Senate to Enact Permanent and Mandatory Postpartum Medicaid Investments in Build Back Better Act

Washington, Nov. 19 -- Center for Reproductive issued the following news release:

One hundred and fifty-two state legislators across 38 states signed a letter in solidarity to encourage congressional leadership to include permanent and mandatory postpartum Medicaid coverage for one year in the Build Back Better Act.

Extension of postpartum Medicaid coverage is critical to the health of many: nearly half of births in the U.S. are covered by Medicaid. Further, approximately 33% of pregnancy-related deaths occur within a week to a year after birth, disproportionately impacting Black and Indigenous women. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that 60% of maternal deaths are preventable. Despite this, only nineteen states have opted to voluntarily extend postpartum Medicaid coverage to 12 months without any additional eligibility criterion for the extended coverage. This varied uptake has resulted in disparate access to postpartum care across the nation. It is critical that Congress enact permanent and mandatory postpartum Medicaid coverage for one year to ensure more equitable care, regardless of zip code.

Congress must seize the opportunity to ensure quality healthcare access for pregnant and postpartum individuals in every state across the nation. Through a mandatory provision on postpartum Medicaid, state

officials can work to meet the needs of women and birthing people in the critical postpartum period. See the full text of the letter here. See what state legislators have to say about why permanent and mandatory postpartum Medicaid coverage for one year is critical to advancing healthcare in their state:

”As a labor doula practicing in hospitals during the COVID-19 pandemic, I can attest to the strength of growing families and will assert that they deserve to be respected by the state of Georgia’s Medicaid system in the form of postpartum support.” – State Representative Park Cannon, Georgia

”Despite studies that show that extending postpartum Medicaid coverage for one year would help address the maternal mortality crisis in Georgia, politics has gotten in the way and the coverage was only extended for six months. While six months is better than what was offered previously, it still falls short of addressing the issue to our fullest potential. This crisis, which disproportionately affects black women here in Georgia and across the country, deserves more than the bare minimum. That is why I support addressing maternal mortality by adding postpartum Medicaid extension into the Build Back Better Act.” – State Representative Jasmine Clark, Georgia

”True Reproductive health justice requires opportunities and access to health care before, during and after pregnancy. It is clear where we have fallen short in the past and where we should make fixes to provide complete and effective coverage for those who need it most. Postpartum Medicaid Extension- coverage for up to one year after giving birth- is necessary for birthing people, families, and communities to thrive regardless of the state in which they live. I join with my counterparts from around the country in urging Congress to take this seriously.” – State Representative Kam Buckner, Illinois

”I struggled with postpartum depression after the birth of my twins, and now how much harder that makes being present for your little ones. If we are serious about making sure our children have healthy early childhoods, then we must support mothers as they recover from their pregnancies and nurture their babies.” – State Representative Rebecca Millett, Maine

”With infant mortality amongst African American babies in the state of MS and MS African American mothers giving birth have the highest death rate in the nation, I stand strong with President Biden in expanding Medicaid. With this we ensure healthier babies and healthier mothers. This saves lives.” – State Representative Sonya Williams Barnes, Mississippi

”You cannot put a deadline on people experiencing complications and morbidities postpartum because everyone’s experience is deeply personal. Sixty days is not enough,” said New York State Assemblymember Jessica González-Rojas. “Our communities of color, women and people who give birth deserve a lot more than that. I join my colleagues in government across the nation in calling on Congress to enact permanent and mandatory postpartum Medicaid coverage for one year. Our bodies are not just machines for reproduction. Treat us with the respect we deserve.” – Assembly Member Jessica González-Rojas, New York

”NC has a high infant mortality rate. This extended coverage would help address that unfortunate reality and allow for healthy mothers and infants.” – State Senator Natasha Marcus, North Carolina

”Pregnancy puts a body under extreme stress and can cause serious health issues, including silent killers like high blood pressure, that need to be closely monitored after childbirth. But right now, Medicaid

coverage for new mothers ends just two months after a baby is born. Mothers are suffering. North Carolina ranks 30th in the country for its maternal mortality rates. Extending Medicaid coverage for a full year postpartum would drastically improve maternal health outcomes and save lives in our state and nationwide.” – State Representative Julie von Haefen, North Carolina (Life Feed News, 11/19/21)

**2022**

**JAN 2022 Attends January 6 Anniversary Event**

On Thursday night, Triangle Daily Call to Action will hold a candlelight vigil on Bicentennial Plaza.

The vigil is billed as an event to bring together lawmakers, activists, and voters across race, gender and party lines to renew their commitment to supporting voting rights. It will run from 5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m., and speakers will include Wake County lawmakers Sen. Jay Chaudhuri, Sen. Wiley Nickel and Rep. Julie von Haefen, as well as a 10-year-old from Spring Lake who will recite part of a speech given by the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. (RNO, 1/5/22)

**JAN 2022 Guest Column Pushes Illegal Idea that ERA is Already Ratified and Valid**

The Equal Rights Amendment was passed by Congress in 1972, and in 2020 Virginia became the 38th and final state to ratify the amendment, fulfilling all constitutional requirements set forth in Article V of the U.S. Constitution.

Jan. 27, 2022 marks the two-year anniversary of Virginia's ratification, and it's the date the ERA should go into effect across the country. Despite meeting all of the necessary requirements for ratification, the ERA has yet to be published in the Federal Register as the 28th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

Why not? Because an Office of Legal Counsel opinion written by the Trump administration in January 2020, instructed the National Archives, the agency in charge of publishing ratified amendments, not to publish the ERA.

Nevertheless, we, as N.C legislators — along with many constitutional scholars — believe the ERA is the 28th Amendment and is fully enforceable, even without publication.

Women have been fighting for the ERA for nearly 100 years. In that time, 38 states have voted to affirm that women are equal in the eyes of the law.

It's clear that although women were purposefully excluded from equal protections when the U.S. Constitution was first written, our nation has come a long way since then. Publishing the ERA as the 28th Amendment is long overdue, and the Biden administration has an opportunity to play a part in affirming, once and for all, that women should be guaranteed equal rights on the basis of sex.

Publishing the ERA would not be a symbolic gesture. Women have borne the brunt of the economic burden of this pandemic. Since March of 2020, women have left the U.S. workforce at significantly higher rates than their male peers, and in September 2021, McKinsey & Company reported that as many as 2 million women were considering leaving the workforce due to barriers they faced while trying to work and care for their families during the pandemic.

If we are going to prepare our economy for a full recovery, where women are able to fully return to the workforce, then we need to publish the 28th Amendment and force states, like North Carolina, to reckon

with their failure to pass laws that guarantee adequate accommodations for pregnant people in the workplace and paid family leave for parents with young children.

We've waited over a century for this moment. There is no more time to waste. President Biden must instruct his Office of Legal Counsel to take up the case for publishing the ERA. The 166 million women living in the U.S., including 5.4 million North Carolinians, deserve to celebrate their newly guaranteed right to equality.

The Trump administration's Office of Legal Counsel opinion is the only thing standing between the 166 million women living in the United States and a constitutional guarantee that they have equal rights under the law. President Biden should ensure gender equality in this country by acting within the full scope of his authority to undo the Trump administration's efforts to delay the publication of the Equal Rights Amendment.

von Haefen was elected to the NC House in 2018 and lives in Apex. Murdock was elected to the NC Senate in 2020 and lives in Durham. They are the primary sponsors in the NC House and Senate of the bill to ratify the ERA. (RNO, 1/26/22)

### **FEB 2022 Insurance Should Pay For Birth Control**

North Carolina isn't exactly considered a champion of reproductive rights.

So it may come as a surprise that North Carolinians can now get hormonal birth control without a doctor's prescription, thanks to a law initially passed last year by the state's Republican-controlled legislature and signed by Democratic Gov. Roy Cooper.

The law, which went into effect Tuesday, allows pharmacists to dispense birth control pills and patches without the signature of a patient's physician, removing a significant, unnecessary barrier that prevents many people from obtaining hormonal contraception.

It almost sounds too good to be true — and it very well may be.

The law is clear that people will now be able to obtain birth control without a prescription, but it's less clear whether their insurance will still have to pay for it.

Under the Affordable Care Act, most insurance plans are required to cover FDA-approved contraceptives with no out-of-pocket costs when prescribed by a health care provider. That provision significantly reduced the cost of birth control for many, but faced strong objections from conservatives. The Trump administration later undermined that mandate by allowing for broad religious and moral exemptions, which the U.S. Supreme Court eventually upheld in a 2020 ruling.

But the requirement doesn't seem to apply to contraceptives dispensed without a prescription — meaning that those who would benefit from getting birth control without the added trouble of a doctor's visit might still be shackled with the burden of paying for it. Without insurance, the birth control pill can cost as much as \$600 a year, an expense that is unmanageable for many people.

Since the law only went into effect this week, the state health director hasn't yet provided specific guidance — otherwise known as “standing orders” — that instructs pharmacists how to carry it out. That guidance should come quickly in order to clarify whether or not birth control dispensed without a prescription will result in co-pays or other out-of-pocket costs.

In other states where birth control is available without a prescription, such as California, the law was written to specifically mandate coverage for both prescribed and non-prescribed contraceptives. But North Carolina's law doesn't include such a provision.

It's not for lack of trying. Rep. Julie von Haefen, a Wake County Democrat, introduced a bill that would have specifically addressed the affordability aspect. In addition to empowering pharmacists to dispense birth control without a prescription, House Bill 817 would have required insurers to cover both prescription and nonprescription contraceptives. Unfortunately, the bill did not gain any traction in the Republican-controlled legislature.

“I'm not sure if the bill drafters of the other bill that ended up passing really thought through whether that would affect the health care coverages, because it's not technically a written prescription from a doctor,” von Haefen said. “The reason I did my bill was mostly to eliminate the co-pays for any kind of hormonal contraceptives.”

But Jillian Riley, the North Carolina director of public affairs for Planned Parenthood South Atlantic, said that birth control dispensed by a pharmacist could still be covered by insurance due to a different state statute that requires reimbursement when services normally covered by a person's insurance policy are performed by a different licensed health care provider.

Surprisingly enough, making hormonal birth control more accessible is something that has enjoyed a fair amount of Republican support over the years, particularly at the national level.

It was a big talking point for U.S. Sen. Thom Tillis when he first ran for office in 2014, as well as for a handful of other Republicans running in battleground states. It's even an issue that U.S. Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz famously — and strangely — agreed on back in 2019.

What Democrats and Republicans don't agree upon, however, is who should pay for it. While the GOP appears to support measures that make birth control more available, the party has been less enthusiastic about making sure everyone can afford it.

That's a problem, because affordability and accessibility go hand in hand. If the state health director decides that the law, as written, does not require insurance companies to cover the cost of birth control without a prescription, lawmakers should quickly craft stronger legislation that ensures contraception is both affordable and accessible for all North Carolinians. (Charlotte Observer, 2/2/22)

## **FEB 2022 Denounces Pregnancy Centers that Are Pro-Life**

Anti--abortion centers across the country are receiving tens of millions of tax dollars to talk women out of ending their pregnancies, a nearly fivefold increase from a decade ago that resulted from an often--overlooked effort by mostly Republican-led states.

The nonprofits known as crisis pregnancy centers are typically religiously affiliated and counsel clients against having an abortion as part of their free but limited services. That practice, and the fact that they generally are not licensed as medical facilities, have raised questions about whether it's appropriate to funnel so much tax money their way.

An Associated Press tally based on state budget figures reveals nearly \$89 million has been allocated to such centers across about a dozen states this fiscal year. A decade ago, the annual funding for the programs hovered around \$17 million in about eight states.

Estimates of how many abortions have been prevented by such programs are unknown because many states require only reports of how many clients were served.

"It's bad governing. We're supposed to be monitoring our taxpayer money, and we don't know where the money is going," said Julie von Haefen, a Democratic state representative in North Carolina, which has sent millions in public money to pregnancy centers. "These clinics don't provide medical care. They act like they do, but they don't."

What is clear is that taxpayer funding for the centers has spiked in recent years as more Republican-led states have passed legislation severely limiting access to abortion.

The centers also have been accused of providing misleading information about abortion and contraception -- for example, suggesting abortion leads to mental health problems or breast cancer.

Supporters hope to expand the number of centers if the U.S. Supreme Court overturns or significantly restricts abortion rights in a case to be decided later this year.

That momentum already is building in Texas, where a state law that effectively bans abortion at about six weeks -- before many women know they are pregnant -- has been in effect since September.

"We have seen women steadily seeking out resources and services," said Chelsey Youman, Texas state director and national legislative adviser for Human Coalition, a top contractor under the state's alternatives-to-abortion program.

The first state to enact an official abortion-alternatives program was Pennsylvania in the mid-1990s.

Then-Gov. Robert P. Casey, an anti-abortion Democrat, signed the crisis pregnancy center funding into law, barely a year after his administration fought to the Supreme Court to win a landmark 1991 ruling allowing states to impose restrictions on abortion.

Under the deal, Pennsylvania began subsidizing the program to appease opponents of a preexisting program that subsidized Planned Parenthood's services for women's health. Republican majorities in the Legislature have enforced the agreement ever since. (AP, 2/5/22)

### **MAR 2022 Bill to Relax Direct Car Sales Ban**

Rivian, an electric-vehicle maker with the backing of both Amazon and Ford, held conversations last year with North Carolina recruiters about building a manufacturing plant in the state with the potential of employing more than 10,000 employees.

But the conversations apparently never progressed, in part because of the state's ban on direct-car sales, which would bar Rivian's ability to sell and service cars throughout North Carolina without a dealership network, according to records released to The News & Observer.

Ultimately, Rivian selected Georgia for its manufacturing expansion — announcing in December it would build a \$5 billion plant with up to 7,500 jobs outside of Atlanta.

Georgia is currently considering a bill, introduced after Rivian selected the state, that would allow Rivian and other electric-vehicle makers to offer direct sales.

Many states limit the ability of carmakers to sell directly to consumers, pushing them instead to go through auto-dealership networks that have existed for decades.

#### Rivian concerns about EV Direct Sales ban

North Carolina's laws apparently presented a large stumbling block for landing the Rivian plant, according to the records, which the N&O obtained through a state public records request. And the state's conversations with Rivian never reached advanced stages.

In an email sent to the office of Gov. Roy Cooper last August, the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina, which handles recruitment for the state, said Rivian was not a fan of the state's current climate around direct sales.

"As you know, the foundation of our business model is direct-to-customer sales and service," a Rivian representative wrote to the EDPNC. "Unfortunately, North Carolina's law as it currently stands would prohibit us from being able to do that. This issue alone is making it very hard for us to dive deeper."

#### Tesla partially exempt from law

In North Carolina, a law passed in 2019 granted Tesla an exemption, allowing it to have six direct sales and servicing centers in the state.

But, as state recruiters noted, North Carolina is one of four states that ban not only direct sales but direct car servicing as well.

N.C. one of four states

These laws are designed often to protect locally owned car dealerships, the N&O previously reported.

Records show that state Rep. Julie von Haefen, a Wake County Democrat, planned to introduce a bill that would relax North Carolina's direct-car sales laws, but the effort never made it through the N.C. General Assembly.

Von Haefen was not immediately available for comment. (RNO, 3/4/22)

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An electric vehicle maker considered - and then rejected - North Carolina for a \$5 billion manufacturing plant, and public records show it likely came down to politics.

Rivian, an Amazon-backed company that in December confirmed plans for a 7,500-job facility near Atlanta, took North Carolina off the site list because a state bill it thought could pass was never brought forward.

While negotiating with the state over potential incentives, records obtained through a Freedom of Information request show Rivian, which is also backed by Ford Motor Co., was in contact with Wake County state Rep. Julie von Haefen on a measure that would allow certain automakers to sell directly to customers rather than through auto dealers - potentially leveling the playing field. Tesla had already negotiated the ability to have six direct sale centers in the state - that state law was passed in 2019. The new bill would have allowed Rivian Automotive Inc. (NASDAQ: RIVN) the same opportunity.

But it never materialized.

North Carolina is one of several states with restrictions on direct sales for automakers - it also bans direct auto servicing. Georgia lawmakers have introduced a bill to allow electric vehicle makers to have unlimited dealer locations. Like North Carolina, the state currently allows Tesla to have a limited number of locations.

Haefen was not available on March 4 to discuss the situation with Triangle Business Journal, but the fact that the bill was never introduced appeared to have damaged negotiations. On May 4, 2021, Rivian told the state that "the foundation of our business model is direct-to-customer sales and service."

"Unfortunately, North Carolina's law as it currently stands would prohibit us from being able to do that," the firm wrote the state. "This issue alone is making it very hard for us to dive deeper."

Rivian didn't completely rule out North Carolina - asking officials to provide background about how Tesla (NASDAQ: TSLA) got a carve out and what pathways could exist for Rivian to be able to sell here. But by July 30, the firm told the state that a "commitment to leveling the playing field" was the only way to move the needle.

Chris Chung, CEO of the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina, wrote in an email that the bill not going through "would almost seem a disqualifier" on Aug. 3.

”We’re still not sure why Rivian did not take us up on the offer for the Governor and legislative leadership (to) meet with them about this,” Chung wrote.

Similarly to other EV efforts - including a Ford (NYSE: F) project, which considered North Carolina but eventually picked Tennessee - Rivian’s interest seemed to quickly shift to other states .

”They haven’t taken us up on repeated invitations to meet, visit, engage, etc., i.e. the hallmarks of sincere interest in NC as a potential location,” Chung wrote Aug. 3.

The state had its kickoff meeting with company officials in December of 2020. By February, the firm had developed “working groups” around criteria to narrow its site selection. By April, the company told state officials they had “nine state proposals.” (Charlotte Business Journal, 3/8/22)

### **MAR 2022 CCSA Award**

- CCSA will recognize the impact of early childhood educators, public servants and advocates on young children and their families at the 2022 Triangle Child Care Awards.

Child Care Services Association (CCSA) will celebrate the impact of early childhood educators, public servants and advocates on young children and their families at the 2022 Triangle Child Care Awards tomorrow, Friday, March 18, 2022, with special recognitions of three early childhood champions and four award winners at the UNC-Chapel Hill Friday Center.

Many individuals and organizations in the Triangle are committed to the success and happiness of our children. While these efforts sometimes go unrecognized, they don’t go unnoticed. This year is unlike others as we will recognize three individuals as early childhood champions and received 13 nominations for the Mary Y. Bridgers Early Childhood Teacher Award, more than we have received in the recent past. This shows our teachers deserve more as they have done so much more these past two years since the pandemic, working directly with young children every day to create safe, nurturing and effective learning environments.

CCSA will recognize the three following individuals as early childhood champions: Congressman David Price, Representative Verla Insko and Michele Rivest.

These early childhood champions have gone above and beyond to support, advocate and bring real change to improve the lives of our young children and their early educators and who are stepping down or have stepped down in their positions. We know that they will never step away from caring about our communities and our children.

CCSA will also present three awards recognizing the impact of early childhood educators, public servants and advocates on young children and their families at the 2022 Triangle Child Care Awards.

The first award, the Child Care Services Association Public Service Award, was created to honor and recognize volunteers and elected public officials who have demonstrated a commitment to improving the

quality of early education and have made a difference in the lives of young children in the Triangle. This year's winner is Representative Julie von Haefen. (Life Science News Feed, 3/17/22)

### **MAR 2022 Denounces Change in Judges on School Funding Controversy**

A Superior Court judge who had ordered state leaders to transfer \$1.7 billion to increase funding for North Carolina's public schools has been removed from the Leandro school funding case.

N.C. Supreme Court Chief Justice Paul Newby issued a court order Monday naming fellow Republican Michael L. Robinson as the new trial judge overseeing the Leandro case. Robinson will replace fellow Superior Court Judge David Lee, a registered Democrat, who had accused GOP lawmakers of failing to provide students with the opportunity to receive a sound basic education.

Newby gives no reason for the change in his order, only saying that he has the authority to make the switch.

The news of the change in judges was first reported Tuesday by the Carolina Journal.

Monday's order was issued the same day that the N.C. Supreme Court also agreed to hear an appeal of Lee's order to transfer the money. As part of that court order, the Supreme Court had directed the trial judge, now Robinson, to review whether to amend Lee's November order based on the recently adopted state budget.

The change comes as leaders of the Republican-controlled General Assembly have been critical of Lee and the Leandro school action plan. They argue that only the legislature has the constitutional authority to appropriate state money.

Any changes Robinson makes to the court order could lessen the ability of the Supreme Court's 4-3 Democratic majority to order the state to fund the Leandro plan.

Mike Robinson.jpg N.C. Supreme Court Chief Justice Paul Newby has named Superior Court Judge Michael L. Robinson to be the new trial judge presiding over the Leandro school funding court case.

Providing a sound basic education

The court order is the latest chapter in the long-running Leandro school funding case.

The Leandro case was initially filed in 1994 by low-wealth school districts to get more state funding.

Over the years, the state Supreme Court has ruled that the state Constitution guarantees every child "an opportunity to receive a sound basic education" and that the state was failing to meet that obligation. But the high court has held off on ordering the state to approve a specific funding plan.

Lee, a retired Union County judge, was assigned the case by the Supreme Court in 2016 after Superior Court Judge Howard Manning retired. Manning, a Republican, has criticized Lee's handling of the Leandro case.

In his Nov. 10 court order, Lee wrote that the courts had waited long enough for state lawmakers to act. He ordered the state treasurer, state controller and state budget director to transfer \$1.7 billion to fund the next two years of a multi-year action plan developed by an education consultant.

The consultant's plan includes things such as pay raises for principals and teachers, hiring more teacher assistants, increased funding for low-wealth school systems and expansion of the state's Pre-K program.

Soon after, a three-judge state Court of Appeals panel blocked enforcement of Lee's order. The two GOP judges on the panel said Lee exceeded his authority.

The plaintiffs appealed for the Supreme Court to intervene. State Senate leader Phil Berger and House Speaker Tim Moore asked that the case remain in the Court of Appeals, where there's a GOP majority, before moving to the Supreme Court.

Newby accused of changing the rules

Robinson unsuccessfully ran as a Republican for a seat on the state Supreme Court in 2014.

Robinson was sworn in as a Special Superior Court Judge for Complex Business Cases on July 1, 2016, with chambers at Wake Forest University School of Law in Winston-Salem. Robinson is a lifelong resident of Winston-Salem, according to the state court website.

The change in judges was criticized Tuesday by Democrats.

"This is akin to a losing basketball team changing out a referee in its favor," Sen. Jay Chaudhuri, a Wake County Democrat, tweeted Tuesday.

Rep. Julie von Haefen, a Wake County Democrat, tweeted Tuesday that "I guess if you don't like how the game is going, you just change the rules instead." (RNO, 3/22/22)

## Part V Leg Alert Bills

2019

### JAN 2019 HB 5-“Closing the Medicaid Gap”

Bill Id: 2019 NC H.B. 5 (NS)

Sponsor: Verla Insko,Marvin W. Lucas,Becky Carney,Jean Farmer-Butterfield,Susan C. Fisher,Michael H. Wray,Grier Martin,Garland E. Pierce,Pricey Harrison,Kelly M. Alexander, Jr.,Elmer Floyd,Darren G. Jackson,Rosa U. Gill,Ken Goodman,Charles Graham,Carla D. Cunningham,Yvonne Lewis Holley,Joe Sam Queen,Evelyn Terry,Graig R. Meyer,Robert T. Reives, II,Gale Adcock,John Ager,Cecil Brockman,Howard J. Hunter, III,Brian Turner,Shelly Willingham,William O. Richardson,John Autry,Cynthia Ball,Chaz Beasley,Mary Belk,Terry E. Garrison,Joe John,Amos L. Quick, III,Deb Butler,MaryAnn Black,Marcia Morey,Derwin L. Montgomery,Sydney Batch,Christy Clark,Ashton Wheeler Clemmons,Allison A. Dahle,Terence Everitt,Zack Hawkins,James D. Gailliard,Wesley Harris, PhD,Carolyn G. Logan,Brandon Lofton,Nasif Majeed,C. Ray Russell,Kandie D. Smith,Raymond E. Smith, Jr.,Julie von Haefen,Rachel Hunt

SUMMARY: AN ACT to close the medicaid coverage gap for families and individuals in north carolina.

Died In Committee.

### JAN 2019 HB 29-“ Standing Up for Rape Victims Act of 2019”

Bill Id: 2019 NC H.B. 29 (NS)

Sponsor: Verla Insko,Mitchell S. Setzer,Becky Carney,Jean Farmer-Butterfield,Susan C. Fisher,George G. Cleveland,Michael H. Wray,Grier Martin,Pricey Harrison,Kelly M. Alexander, Jr.,James L. Boles, Jr.,Rosa U. Gill,John Faircloth,Larry G. Pittman,Allen McNeill,Carla D. Cunningham,Yvonne Lewis Holley,Dennis Riddell,Joe Sam Queen,Evelyn Terry,Graig R. Meyer,Robert T. Reives, II,Gale Adcock,John Ager,Cecil Brockman,Howard J. Hunter, III,Brian Turner,Shelly Willingham,William O. Richardson,Kyle Hall,John Autry,Cynthia Ball,Chaz Beasley,Mary Belk,Kevin Corbin,Cody Henson,Joe John,Larry W. Potts,Amos L. Quick, III,Marcia Morey,Derwin L. Montgomery,Sydney Batch,Christy Clark,Ashton Wheeler Clemmons,Allison A. Dahle,Terence Everitt,Zack Hawkins,James D. Gailliard,Wesley Harris, PhD,Carolyn G. Logan,Brandon Lofton,Nasif Majeed,C. Ray Russell,Wayne Sasser,Carson Smith,Kandie D. Smith,Raymond E. Smith, Jr.,Julie von Haefen,Rachel Hunt

SUMMARY: AN ACT to require testing of all sexual assault examination kits.

Signed into Law, 9/18/19

**JAN 2019 HB 124-“Smart Start Funds”**

Bill Id: 2019 NC H.B. 124 (NS)

Sponsor: Verla Insko, Marvin W. Lucas, Becky Carney, Susan C. Fisher, Michael H. Wray, Garland E. Pierce, Pricey Harrison, William D. Brisson, Pat B. Hurley, Kelly M. Alexander, Jr., Elmer Floyd, Darren G. Jackson, Rosa U. Gill, John Faircloth, D. Craig Horn, Charles Graham, Harry Warren, Allen McNeill, Carla D. Cunningham, Donny Lambeth, Yvonne Lewis Holley, John Szoka, Stephen M. Ross, Josh Dobson, Graig R. Meyer, Robert T. Reives, II, John A. Fraley, Gale Adcock, John Ager, Brian Turner, William O. Richardson, Gregory F. Murphy, MD, Kyle Hall, Holly Grange, Cynthia Ball, Chaz Beasley, Cody Henson, Joe John, Brenden H. Jones, Amos L. Quick, III, Donna McDowell White, MaryAnn Black, Marcia Morey, Ashton Wheeler Clemmons, Allison A. Dahle, Bobby Hanig, Wesley Harris, PhD, C. Ray Russell, Wayne Sasser, Julie von Haefen, Rachel Hunt

SUMMARY: AN ACT TO PROMOTE YOUNG CHILDREN’S HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT through continued investment in the smart start program.

Died in Committee

**FEB 2019 HB 126-“Pay Increases For State Highway Patrol”**

Bill Id: 2019 NC H.B. 126 (NS)

Sponsor: Verla Insko, Julia C. Howard, Becky Carney, Michael H. Wray, Pricey Harrison, William D. Brisson, Pat B. Hurley, Pat McElraft, James L. Boles, Jr., John Faircloth, D. Craig Horn, Jimmy Dixon, Jon Hardister, Yvonne Lewis Holley, Stephen M. Ross, Joe Sam Queen, Evelyn Terry, Josh Dobson, Robert T. Reives, II, Gale Adcock, Cecil Brockman, Gregory F. Murphy, MD, Holly Grange, Joe John, Larry W. Potts, Donna McDowell White, Deb Butler, MaryAnn Black, Lisa Stone Barnes, Ashton Wheeler Clemmons, Allison A. Dahle, Edward C. Goodwin, Keith Kidwell, Wayne Sasser, Julie von Haefen

SUMMARY: AN ACT awarding legislatively mandated salary increases and special annual leave to the law enforcement officers of the state highway patrol.

Signed into Law, 8/30/19

**FEB 2019 HB 185-“SAVE Act”**

Bill Id: 2019 NC H.B. 185 (NS)

Sponsor: Verla Insko, Julia C. Howard, Mitchell S. Setzer, Marvin W. Lucas, Jean Farmer-Butterfield, Susan C. Fisher, George G. Cleveland, Garland E. Pierce, Pricey Harrison, William D. Brisson, Sarah Stevens, Frank Iler, John Faircloth, Chuck McGrady, Charles Graham, Phil Shepard, Carla D. Cunningham, Jon Hardister, Donny Lambeth, Yvonne Lewis Holley, Joe Sam Queen, Evelyn Terry, Josh

Dobson, Graig R. Meyer, Gale Adcock, John Ager, Howard J. Hunter, III, Brian Turner, Shelly Willingham, Holly Grange, John Autry, Destin Hall, Brenden H. Jones, Larry C. Strickland, Donna McDowell White, Lisa Stone Barnes, Christy Clark, Ashton Wheeler Clemmons, Allison A. Dahle, Terence Everitt, Nasif Majeed, C. Ray Russell, Wayne Sasser, Julie von Haefen

SUMMARY: AN ACT to deliver safe, accessible, value directed and excellent (SAVE) health care throughout north carolina by modernizing nursing regulations.

Died in Committee

**FEB 2019 HB 248-“Restore Longevity Pay For Teachers”**

Bill Id: 2019 NC H.B. 248 (NS)

Sponsor: Verla Insko, Garland E. Pierce, Pricey Harrison, Elmer Floyd, Rosa U. Gill, Charles Graham, Joe Sam Queen, John Ager, Howard J. Hunter, III, Joe John, Amos L. Quick, III, Marcia Morey, Christy Clark, Ashton Wheeler Clemmons, Allison A. Dahle, Julie von Haefen, Rachel Hunt

SUMMARY: AN ACT TO RESTORE LONGEVITY PAY FOR TEACHERS.

Died in Committee

**MAR 2019 HB 271-“Adopt the ERA”**

Bill Id: 2019 NC H.B. 271 (NS)

Sponsor: Verla Insko, Marvin W. Lucas, Becky Carney, Jean Farmer-Butterfield, Susan C. Fisher, Grier Martin, Pricey Harrison, Kelly M. Alexander, Jr., Darren G. Jackson, Charles Graham, Carla D. Cunningham, Yvonne Lewis Holley, Joe Sam Queen, Evelyn Terry, Graig R. Meyer, Robert T. Reives, II, Gale Adcock, John Ager, Cecil Brockman, Brian Turner, William O. Richardson, John Autry, Cynthia Ball, Chaz Beasley, Mary Belk, Terry E. Garrison, Joe John, Amos L. Quick, III, Deb Butler, MaryAnn Black, Marcia Morey, Derwin L. Montgomery, Sydney Batch, Christy Clark, Ashton Wheeler Clemmons, Allison A. Dahle, Terence Everitt, Zack Hawkins, James D. Gailliard, Wesley Harris, PhD, Carolyn G. Logan, Brandon Lofton, Nasif Majeed, C. Ray Russell, Raymond E. Smith, Jr., Julie von Haefen, Rachel Hunt

SUMMARY: AN ACT to RATIFY THE EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA RELATING TO EQUAL RIGHTS FOR MEN AND WOMEN.

Died in Committee

**MAR 2019 HB 362-“15 Point Scale For School Performance Grades”**

Bill Id: 2019 NC H.B. 362 (NS)

Sponsor: Verla Insko,Marvin W. Lucas,Jean Farmer-Butterfield,Susan C. Fisher,Michael H. Wray,Pricey Harrison,Pat B. Hurley,Elmer Floyd,Rosa U. Gill,D. Craig Horn,Jeffrey Elmore,Yvonne Lewis Holley,Dennis Riddell,Graig R. Meyer,John Ager,John Autry,Deb Butler,Ashton Wheeler Clemmons,Wesley Harris, PhD,Julie von Haefen

SUMMARY: AN ACT to adopt a fifteen-point scale in the determination of school performance grades, TO REQUIRE THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION TO ADOPT EMERGENCY RULES IN PREPARATION FOR PERMANENT RULE MAKING, AND TO DIRECT THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION TO STUDY THE REPORTING METHODS USED FOR SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY PURPOSES ON THE NORTH CAROLINA ANNUAL SCHOOL REPORT CARDS.

Signed into law, 7/22/19

**MAR 2019 HB 354-“Modifying/Weighing School Performance Grades”**

Bill Id: 2019 NC H.B. 354 (NS)

Sponsor: Marvin W. Lucas,Linda P. Johnson,Susan C. Fisher,Michael H. Wray,Garland E. Pierce,Pricey Harrison,Elmer Floyd,Rosa U. Gill,D. Craig Horn,Carla D. Cunningham,Dennis Riddell,Graig R. Meyer,David Rogers,Mary Belk,Terry E. Garrison,Amos L. Quick, III,Ashton Wheeler Clemmons,Julie von Haefen,Rachel Hunt

SUMMARY: AN ACT TO modify the weighting of the school achievement score and the school growth score in the calculation of school performance scores and grades.

Passed House, Died in Senate

**MAR 2019 HB 359-“\$15 Minimum Wage For Noncertified Public School Employees”**

Bill Id: 2019 NC H.B. 359 (NS)

Sponsor: Verla Insko,Marvin W. Lucas,Jean Farmer-Butterfield,Susan C. Fisher,Garland E. Pierce,Pricey Harrison,William D. Brisson,Elmer Floyd,Darren G. Jackson,Rosa U. Gill,Charles Graham,Phil Shepard,Carla D. Cunningham,Jon Hardister,Yvonne Lewis Holley,Rena W. Turner,Evelyn Terry,Graig R. Meyer,Cecil Brockman,William O. Richardson,John Autry,Cynthia Ball,Mary Belk,Kevin Corbin,Joe John,Amos L. Quick, III,Larry C. Strickland,Donna McDowell White,Deb Butler,Marcia Morey,Christy Clark,Ashton Wheeler Clemmons,Allison A. Dahle,Terence Everitt,Zack Hawkins,Nasif Majeed,C. Ray Russell,Raymond E. Smith, Jr.,Julie von Haefen

SUMMARY: AN ACT TO require the hourly rate of the minimum salary for NONCERTIFIED PUBLIC SCHOOL EMPLOYEES to be at least FIFTEEN DOLLARS per hour.

Died in Committee

**MAR 2019 HB 457-“Restore Master’s Pay For Certain Teachers”**

Bill Id: 2019 NC H.B. 457 (NS)

Sponsor: Mitchell S. Setzer,Marvin W. Lucas,Linda P. Johnson,Becky Carney,Jean Farmer-Butterfield,Susan C. Fisher,Michael H. Wray,Garland E. Pierce,Pricey Harrison,Rosa U. Gill,John Faircloth,D. Craig Horn,Harry Warren,Ted Davis, Jr.,Stephen M. Ross,Dennis Riddell,Joe Sam Queen,Josh Dobson,Graig R. Meyer,John A. Fraley,John Ager,Cecil Brockman,Howard J. Hunter, III,William O. Richardson,John Autry,Cynthia Ball,Mary Belk,Cody Henson,Joe John,Larry W. Potts,Amos L. Quick, III,Deb Butler,Marcia Morey,Derwin L. Montgomery,Sydney Batch,Christy Clark,Ashton Wheeler Clemmons,Terence Everitt,Zack Hawkins,James D. Gailliard,Wesley Harris, PhD,Chris Humphrey,Brandon Lofton,Nasif Majeed,C. Ray Russell,Julie von Haefen,Rachel Hunt

SUMMARY: AN ACT TO REinstate EDUCATION-BASED SALARY SUPPLEMENTS for certain teachers.

Died in Committee

**MAR 2019 HB 524-“More Funds For School Nurses”**

Bill Id: 2019 NC H.B. 524 (NS)

Sponsor: Verla Insko,Susan C. Fisher,Michael H. Wray,Garland E. Pierce,Pricey Harrison,Darren G. Jackson,D. Craig Horn,Larry G. Pittman,Carla D. Cunningham,Yvonne Lewis Holley,Robert T. Reives, II,Gale Adcock,Cynthia Ball,Kevin Corbin,Joe John,Amos L. Quick, III,Donna McDowell White,MaryAnn Black,Ashton Wheeler Clemmons,Allison A. Dahle,Zack Hawkins,Bobby Hanig,Nasif Majeed,Julie von Haefen

SUMMARY: AN ACT TO appropriate additional funds for school nurses.

Died in Committee

**MAR 2019 HB 516-“Mental Health Protection Act”**

Bill Id: 2019 NC H.B. 516 (NS)

Sponsor: Verla Insko,Becky Carney,Susan C. Fisher,Grier Martin,Garland E. Pierce,Pricey Harrison,Yvonne Lewis Holley,Cecil Brockman,John Autry,Cynthia Ball,Chaz Beasley,Mary Belk,Amos L. Quick, III,Ashton Wheeler Clemmons,Allison A. Dahle,Julie von Haefen

SUMMARY: AN ACT concerning the protection of minors and adults who have disabilities from attempts to change sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression.

Died in Committee

**MAR 2019 HB 560-“Ban PFAS in Fire Retardant Foam”**

Bill Id: 2019 NC H.B. 560 (NS)

Sponsor: Verla Insko,Marvin W. Lucas,Becky Carney,Susan C. Fisher,Grier Martin,Pricey Harrison,Elmer Floyd,Rosa U. Gill,John Faircloth,Chuck McGrady,Jon Hardister,Yvonne Lewis Holley,Evelyn Terry,Graig R. Meyer,Robert T. Reives, II,Gale Adcock,John Ager,Cecil Brockman,Brian Turner,Shelly Willingham,William O. Richardson,John Autry,Cynthia Ball,Amos L. Quick, III,Donna McDowell White,Deb Butler,MaryAnn Black,Christy Clark,Ashton Wheeler Clemmons,Allison A. Dahle,Terence Everitt,Nasif Majeed,C. Ray Russell,Julie von Haefen

SUMMARY: AN ACT to ban the manufacture, sale, or use of certain fire retardant foam containing PFAS.

Died in Committee

**APR 2019 HB 890-“Restore Masters Pay For Certain Teachers”**

Bill Id: 2019 NC H.B. 890 (NS)

Sponsor: Verla Insko,Marvin W. Lucas,Susan C. Fisher,Grier Martin,Pricey Harrison,Darren G. Jackson,Rosa U. Gill,Carla D. Cunningham,Graig R. Meyer,Robert T. Reives, II,John Ager,Howard J. Hunter, III,Cynthia Ball,Terry E. Garrison,Joe John,Ashton Wheeler Clemmons,Allison A. Dahle,Zack Hawkins,Wesley Harris, PhD,Nasif Majeed,C. Ray Russell,Julie von Haefen

SUMMARY: AN ACT TO REInstate EDUCATION-BASED SALARY SUPPLEMENTS for certain teachers.

Died in Committee

**APR 2019 HB 790-“Restore State Employee/Teacher Retiree Medical Benefit”**

Bill Id: 2019 NC H.B. 790 (NS)

Sponsor: Verla Insko,Marvin W. Lucas,Becky Carney,Susan C. Fisher,Garland E. Pierce,Pricey Harrison,Darren G. Jackson,Rosa U. Gill,Carla D. Cunningham,Yvonne Lewis Holley,Evelyn Terry,Robert T. Reives, II,Cynthia Ball,Mary Belk,Terry E. Garrison,Joe John,Amos L. Quick, III,Deb Butler,Sydney Batch,Christy Clark,Allison A. Dahle,Carolyn G. Logan,Nasif Majeed,C. Ray Russell,Raymond E. Smith, Jr.,Julie von Haefen,Rachel Hunt

SUMMARY: AN ACT to prevent the elimination of retiree medical benefits for members first earning service under the Teachers’ and State Employees’ Retirement System, the Consolidated Judicial Retirement System, the Legislative Retirement System, or the Optional Retirement Programs, established under G.S. 135-5.1 and G.S. 135-5.4, on or after January 1, 2021.

Died in Committee