



2017 LEGISLATIVE ACCOMPLISHMENTS



CONTENTS

Economy & Jobs	2
Regulatory Reform.....	2
Right to Work.....	4
Broadband Access.....	4
Budget & Taxes.....	5
Low Income North Carolinian Taxes	6
Bond Ratings	6
Savings Reserve Requirements.....	7
Debt Reduction & Capital Funding.....	7
2017 Budget	8
Education	11
Teacher Pay	12
Teaching Fellows	12
Class Sizes	12
Workforce Development and Apprenticeship	13
21 st Century Skills	13
Career Readiness.....	14
Protecting Our Citizens.....	14
Raise the Age	14
Disaster Relief	15
Opioid Epidemic.....	15
Child Welfare	16
Gang Crimes.....	17
Constitutional Liberties	17
Freedom of Speech	17

NORTH CAROLINA: MOVING ONWARD

The 2017 Legislative Session of the North Carolina General was very productive for our Republican members as we continued to build on the campaign promises we made in 2010. Our hard work and dedication to conservative principles continue to move North Carolina onward.

“We are here to help North Carolina’s economy grow by being good stewards of public dollars, offering students an excellent education system and providing middle-class tax relief wherever we can. The House agenda is focused on the prosperity of our people – North Carolina natives and new arrivals alike – and making the tough choices and key reforms necessary to improve state government and secure a prosperous future for our citizens. Thanks to the hard work of the Republican-led General Assembly, North Carolina families can have confidence that they live in one of the best states to build a high quality of life – one with sound financial footing, low taxes and record savings that prepare us for emergencies. Republicans’ pro-growth tax relief, education investments and economic reforms allow small businesses to invest with the assurance that North Carolina offers a well-trained workforce and top-tier opportunities for job creation.” House Speaker Tim Moore (R-Cleveland)

CAMPAIGN PROMISES

ECONOMY & JOBS

Unleashing the power of the free market has been a top priority of House Republicans. The government does not create jobs, but it can sure be an obstacle to job creation and economic growth. We strive to enact policy that removes those barriers and fosters an environment conducive to growth and prosperity.

REGULATORY REFORM

“One of the House’s top priorities is to identify regulatory reforms that remove barriers to economic growth and reduce the cost of doing business in North Carolina. “I am proud the North Carolina House has approved yet another proposal to fix burdensome regulations, enhance transparency and improve public input on the state’s rulemaking process. The House’s latest proposal to reform excessive and unnecessary regulations empowers North Carolina taxpayers with a louder voice in the government process while increasing flexibility for businesses to grow and create jobs.” House Speaker Tim Moore (R-Cleveland)

House Republicans continue our efforts to streamline the state’s rulemaking process, simplify bureaucratic procedures and update government regulations facing citizens and businesses across the state.

SB 16 Regulatory Reform Act of 2017 embraces recommendations from the Joint Administrative Procedures Oversight Committee, legislative proposals, and suggestions from state policy stakeholders. Simply put, this legislation eliminates and improves excessive, duplicative and onerous regulations that burden North Carolinians and the state’s economy.

“The Regulatory Reform Act of 2017 continues House Republicans’ commitment to improving the state’s regulatory process to better protect North Carolinians and prevent unintended consequences of bad policies. Reducing red tape remains a top priority of North Carolina House Republicans. Fixing broken bureaucratic processes and eliminating bad policies encourages economic growth and allows legislators to focus on important rules that are necessary and have a major impact on our state.” Rep. Chris Millis (R-Pender)

SB 16 removes hurdles for North Carolinians to petition for judicial review of regulations by eliminating the requirement that a person or party petition an agency through the rules review process before seeking relief in court.

“Streamlining the procedure for citizens to challenge agency regulations in court empowers taxpayers with a louder voice in the enforcement of state policies. Improving the periodic review and public input process for state regulations is a significant part of House Republicans’ commitment to rulemaking reforms this decade. “We want to get government out of the way of businesses so the economy can thrive.” Rep. John Bradford (R-Mecklenburg)

SB 16 ensures that all objections to agency rules are recorded as public comment, expanding the impact of citizens and businesses who wish to file on-the-record complaints about state regulations.

The regulatory reform legislation expands public notice requirements of proposed rule changes to keep North Carolinians more informed and allow citizens time to submit comments and have input on the regulatory process.

“This regulatory reform bill enhances rulemaking transparency to ensure stakeholders have proper time to respond to agency meetings and policies proposed in the bureaucratic process.” “North Carolina would provide a one-stop-shop for businesses and families to review state regulations with the improved public notice process in SB 16.” Rep. Dennis Riddell (R-Alamance)

SB 16 would ease regulatory hurdles facing small business in acquiring stop-loss health insurance for their employees, conforming North Carolina law with all of its regional neighbors who do not specify the number of employees required to qualify for stop-loss health insurance coverage.

“Reducing this regulatory hurdle for small businesses provides health coverage flexibility for their employees, who will have additional options to self-insure as premiums are expected to continue rising under Obamacare.” Rep Chris Millis (R-Pender)

SB 16 also helps agencies prioritize critical reports to ensure impactful regulations receive the highest scrutiny from agency officials and the legislature.

It reforms regulations that oversee state agencies, bed and breakfasts, alarm system salespeople, pet kennels, vehicle salvage dealers, and businesses that provide automatic customer contract renewals.

The bill also clarifies stormwater laws and reduces duplicative requirements on coastal redevelopment of residential projects.

SB 16 further proposes legislative studies of regulatory barriers in coastal economies, electrical safety for swimming pools, the use of ungraded lumber, the frequency of vehicle inspections, and mediation of disputes between local governments and property developers.

North Carolina Regulatory Reform Since 2011

SB 16 was the second regulatory reform proposal of the 2017 North Carolina House session. The Regulatory Reform Act of 2016-17 passed the House on April 6, 2017.

- 2011 HB 268 Reclaimed Water Rules/Storm Debris Cleanup
- 2011 HB 209 Amend Solid Waste Financial Assurance Requirements
- 2011 HB 609 Promote Water Supply Development/Efficiency
- 2011 HB 952 State Air Toxics Program Reforms
- 2011 HB 45 Accelerate Cleanup of Industrial Properties
- 2011 HB 119 Amend Environmental Laws 2011

- 2012 HB 953 Amend Environmental Laws 2
- 2013 HB 74 Regulatory Reform Act of 2013
- 2014 SB 734 Regulatory Reform Act of 2014
- 2015 HB 44 Local Government Regulatory Reform 2015
- 2015 HB 765 Regulatory Reform Act of 2015
- 2017 SB 131 Regulatory Reform Act of 2016-17

RIGHT TO WORK

We proposed a constitutional amendment to strengthen protections for working North Carolinians against forced unionization.

HB 819 Protect Right to Work Constitutional Amendment is sponsored by Rep. Justin Burr (R-Stanly), Rep. Jimmy Dixon (R-Duplin), Rep. Kyle Hall (R-Stokes) and Rep. Jason Saine (R-Lincoln), and would let voters decide whether to strengthen workers' rights in a ballot referendum during the November 6, 2018, election.

The proposed constitutional amendment would protect North Carolina's 'Right to Work' status by prohibiting employers from forcing workers to join a union or pay union dues as a condition of employment.

“This legislation is vital to continue our state’s reputation as favoring workers’ choice, especially given the broad efforts of international labor unions to undermine current statutes and ultimately open up North Carolina to widespread, economically damaging unionization.” Rep. Justin Burr (R-Stanly)

The first section of the proposed constitutional amendment reads as follows:

“The right to live includes the right to work. The exercise of the right to work must be protected and maintained free from undue restraints and coercion. It is hereby declared to be the public policy of North Carolina that the right of persons to work shall not be denied or abridged on account of membership or nonmembership in a labor organization.”

BROADBAND ACCESS

House Republicans proposed **HB 68 BRIGHT Futures Act** to connect rural residents of the state to broadband services and help underserved regions attract economic development opportunities of the 21st century.

The BRIGHT Futures Act stands for Broadband, Retail, Internet of Things, Gridpower, Healthcare, and Training – emerging markets of the digital age that are critical to creating jobs and spurring economic investment in North Carolina.

HB 68 BRIGHT Futures Act is sponsored by Reps. John Szoka (R-Cumberland), Rep. Jason Saine (R-Lincoln), Rep. Susan Martin (R-Wilson) and Rep. Brenden Jones (R-Columbus). It facilitates the development of digital infrastructure in rural areas by allowing local governments to partner with private internet providers and bring wired services to their residents.

“Rural and underserved areas have historically been left behind when key technology and infrastructure have been required for economic development. This bill clarifies the ability of public-private partnerships to find ways to develop this critical infrastructure, and continues the tradition that led to innovative business models in the past.” Rep. John Szoka (R-Cumberland)

The legislation would accelerate economic investment and grow rural economies by providing digital infrastructure to help businesses expand across North Carolina. The BRIGHT Futures Act addresses gaps in digital infrastructure that affect more than 3 million North Carolinians in 85 counties.

“In an economy increasingly based on knowledge, the opportunity to access information is critical. The BRIGHT Futures Act is a crucial component to meeting that need.” Rep. Jason Saine (R-Lincoln)

“I represent some of the lowest income areas in the state and access to broadband is extremely limited. It is vital that citizens living in our rural and underserved areas have access to technology tools of the 21st century.” Rep. Brenden Jones (R-Columbus)

The expansion of digital infrastructure will provide long-term benefits by encouraging population growth in rural regions, permitting work-from-home opportunities that increase per-capita income and growing the state’s Gross Domestic Product.

“The BRIGHT Futures Act will help expand broadband access to citizens in rural communities by encouraging partnerships between local governments and private companies. I believe this is a critical component that will help expand economic development, provide greater access to healthcare, and increase educational and training opportunities.” Rep. Susan Martin (R-Wilson)

Ensuring connectivity of underserved areas will help students learn from home, allow medical professionals to provide telehealth options and create infrastructure jobs by enabling local governments to lease excess infrastructure to internet providers.

HB 68 is permissive legislation that allows local governments to partner with private industry without creating a mandate, subsidy, or tax. It does not allow cities or counties to provide broadband services directly or compete with private industry.

ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

In July 2017 North Carolina received four national economic distinctions as the [#1 state for starting a business](#) in a study released July 3, [the #5 best state for business](#) in CNBC rankings on July 11, [one of only twelve states with a unanimous ‘AAA’ bond rating](#) on July 6, and on July 11 was reported as the [#5 state for budget solvency](#) by a George Mason University Mercatus Center study.

- [North Carolina #1 for Starting a Business](#) – The Fit Small Business study released on July 3 cited “the state’s labor market and taxes as driving an ideal environment for business owners.” Fit Small Business in New York conducts research for small businesses.
- [North Carolina #5 Best State for Business](#) – The rankings for CNBC’s ‘America’s Top States for Business’ were scored on 66 different measures of competitiveness and an array of input from business and policy experts, official government sources, the CNBC Global CFO Council and the states themselves.
- [North Carolina 1 of 12 Unanimous ‘AAA’ States](#) – A Fitch’s rating agency financial memo released by the State Treasurer on July 6 credited North Carolina’s “conservative financial operations and long-term prospects for continued economic expansion,” “rebuilt rainy day fund,” “demonstrated controls over spending” and “revenue growth” as strong factors in the state’s financial flexibility. “Recent economic growth in North Carolina has been accelerating and future growth is expected to be stronger,” the financial memo supporting the state’s ‘AAA’ bond rating said.
- [North Carolina #5 for Budget Solvency](#) – The Mercatus Center at George Mason University noted North Carolina’s state revenues exceed budget expenses by 12 percent and the state has amassed substantial revenue surpluses and a \$1.8 billion rainy day reserve fund. North Carolina ranked #15 overall for financial health.

“North Carolina’s four top-tier economic rankings in July show our state remained on the right track this legislative session with tax relief, smart spending and billions in savings reserves. I’m

proud of the hard work and smart decisions made by the North Carolina General Assembly that produced these promising results for families, businesses and all citizens of our state.” House Speaker Tim Moore. (R-Cleveland)

BUDGET & TAXES

North Carolina’s economy is expanding rapidly after Republicans in the state General Assembly cut billions in personal income and business taxes while changing bad government regulations to improve the state’s jobs climate since 2011. North Carolina had the fastest-growing state economy in the country since 2013. The jobs announcements below speak for themselves.

LOW INCOME NORTH CAROLINIANS’ TAXES

The Fiscal Research Division of the North Carolina General Assembly projected this week that hundreds of thousands of low-income taxpayers will no longer owe any state income tax by 2019 thanks to Republican tax relief.

A July 17, 2017 memo from the Fiscal Research Division’s head economist notes “of the nearly 4 million tax returns anticipated for tax year 2019, we estimate the number of returns will decrease an estimated 230,000 when compared with the expected number if the 2012 tax laws were still in effect. The increase in these no-tax-liability returns will be due primarily to the increase in the standard deduction.”

North Carolina lawmakers have tripled the standard deduction for married families filing jointly since 2013, an approach to tax relief that helps those who earn the least, the most, by significantly reducing or altogether eliminating the percentage of their income paid to the state.

“Helping hundreds of thousands of low-income North Carolinians no longer owe any income tax is an outstanding achievement that proves Republican tax reforms are providing relief to citizens who need it most. These include parents and young people, long-time residents and newcomers who will get a break from owing any income tax because we put average people first with relief that works for the workforce and helps low-income families keep more of their earnings.” House Speaker Tim Moore (R-Cleveland)

BOND RATINGS

North Carolina’s financial stability in 2017 stands in stark contrast to 2011, when Republicans gained control of the state General Assembly and began repaying a \$2 billion debt from last decade. By repaying the debt ahead of schedule and saving \$1.8 billion in rainy day reserves, North Carolina has made a \$4 billion swing from debt to savings in six years, while lowering sales tax rates, income tax rates, and corporate tax rates over the same period.

The nation’s three major bond rating agencies – Fitch, Moody’s and S&P – have all reaffirmed the state’s “AAA” bond rating, making North Carolina one of only 12 states to obtain a unanimous top-tier evaluation.

The ratings included praise for North Carolina’s recent “conservative financial operations,” “demonstrated controls over spending” and “rebuilt rainy day fund.”

“North Carolina’s unanimous “AAA” bond rating is a powerful endorsement of the Republican-led General Assembly’s smart spending strategies, record savings reserves and unyielding commitment to our state’s financial security this decade. As one of only 12 states to obtain an “AAA” bond rating by all three major agencies, North Carolina can save taxpayers tens of millions of dollars through lower interest rates, continue to attract rapid job growth and safeguard our citizens with one of the most fiscally sound governments in the United States.” said House Speaker Tim Moore.

The fiscal evaluations, all of which forecast stable financial outlooks for North Carolina's "AAA" ratings, were in preparation for the upcoming sale of general and limited obligation bonds scheduled to be sold later this month, taking advantage of lower interest rates to reduce interest costs for taxpayers.

While the Moody's and S&P ratings were issued in copyrighted press releases, Fitch's analysis was made public and included a glowing confirmation of the state's financial strategies:

- *"North Carolina's 'AAA' GO bond rating reflects its low liabilities, conservative financial operations and long-term prospects for continued economic expansion and diversification."*
- *"The state has rebuilt its rainy day fund, another source of financial flexibility."*
- *"North Carolina has a very strong ability to close budgetary gaps during a cyclical downturn, based on its demonstrated controls over spending."*
- *"Stronger economic growth has taken hold, contributing to revenue growth that exceeded forecast in each of the last three fiscal years, including in fiscal 2017."*
- *"Recent economic growth in North Carolina has been accelerating, and future growth is expected to be stronger."*
- *"Pension funding is among the strongest of the states."*

SAVINGS RESERVE REQUIREMENTS

The North Carolina House of Representatives voted on legislation to strengthen **North Carolina's Savings Reserve, HB 7**. The bill is part of an ongoing effort by House Republicans ensure the state saves responsibly and prepares for potential emergency funding or disaster recovery needs.

HB 7 provides that the Governor's Recommended State Budget must include a transfer to the Savings Reserve of 15% of the estimated growth in state tax revenues for each fiscal year of the upcoming biennium.

North Carolina now has over \$1.8 billion in its Savings Reserve account.

"This is a commonsense and bold bill that puts into the law our strong principles of good government and fiscal discipline. This is about accountability to our children and being responsible with what we have been blessed with, with a look to the future. If we do not save for future economic downturns, we will have to cut potentially vital and important government functions. This bill attempts to avoid that situation. If we save responsibly now, we can have the peace of mind knowing that we will not have to make those tough decisions later on, those tough decisions to cut services we all believe in. Saving for the future is a basic financial principle we teach our children, so we ought to practice it in state government as well. This bill is a step forward in doing so." Rep. Dean Arp (R-Union)

DEBT REDUCTION & CAPITAL FUNDING

North Carolina House Appropriations Chairman Dean Arp (R-Union) and Deputy Majority Leader Stephen Ross (R-Alamance) introduced **HB 583 Pay-As-You-Go Capital & Infrastructure Fund**. The legislation to improve the state's approach to long-term funding of public roads and buildings.

The bill provides a state debt reduction plan and funding mechanism to provide \$3 billion in much-needed capital investment in K-12 school construction, public building repair and renovations, transportation, university and community colleges and the National Guard, among other areas.

The additional funding would not require voter approval because it does not issue any debt but would reduce the total state debt by 62% over the next ten years.

According to the lawmakers, this legislation would not affect the voter approved, \$2 Billion Connect NC Bond, but merely provides an additional \$3 billion in capital and infrastructure investment over the next ten years without raising taxes or incurring any additional debt.

“This is a new vision for North Carolina and a paradigm shift in the way we provide long term funding for our capital, infrastructure, and transportation needs. It makes a commitment to our children that we will wisely invest in their future, now.” Rep. Dean Arp (R-Union)

This simple, common sense plan applies basic financial principles, provides 150% more funding than the Connect NC Bond, and would not require North Carolina to take any additional debt or raise taxes.

“This investment will ultimately create jobs in North Carolina by improving our infrastructure and educational facilities to foster better learning environments and transportation resources that connect all of North Carolina.” Rep. Stephen Ross (R-Alamance)

As the bill is currently written, the proposed fund may be used for the following purposes:

- New State capital projects
- Repair and renovation of existing capital assets
- Grants to public schools and community colleges for school construction and renovations
- Economic development infrastructure projects, water, and sewer
- Transportation capital improvement projects
- Early repayment of outstanding General Fund debt

2017 BUDGET

The budget proposal includes a plan to cut personal income tax rates and raise the standard deduction to add 95,000 North Carolinians to the zero-tax bracket, building on Republicans’ tax relief and reform already provided to North Carolinians since 2011.

As a result, millions of middle-class families and job-creating small businesses will keep more of their earnings under this year’s plan. Budget officials expect 99 percent of taxpayers to either pay less or no state personal income taxes at all under the 2017 tax relief plan.

“Gov. Cooper will sign this budget if he cares about increasing the zero-tax bracket for low-income North Carolinians, keeping a long-term commitment to increasing teacher pay, providing disaster relief to hurricane-hit regions and protecting the state from future emergencies through smart savings and responsible spending.” House Speaker Tim Moore

The Republican-led General Assembly has generated hundreds of millions of dollars in budget surpluses – and billions in savings reserves – through tax relief, balanced budgeting and economic growth since 2011.

Last decade, North Carolinians were dealt teacher pay cuts and billions in budget deficits despite Democrats’ raising sales tax rates in 2003, 2005, 2007 and 2009.

Additional key provisions of the budget include:

SALARIES & BENEFITS

- Keeps the plan to dramatically increase average teacher pay from last year’s budget, investing more than \$100 million in the first year alone. This is in addition to the substantial teacher pay raises legislators passed in 2014, 2015 and 2016.
- Incorporates a new plan to let highly-qualified new teachers begin at a higher pay grade on the salary schedule, providing a financial incentive to those who accept positions in low-performing schools, are licensed in special education or STEM classes or meet other criteria.

- Includes roughly \$25 million to expand a performance-based bonus program to top-performing 4th and 5th-grade reading teachers and 4th-8th-grade math teachers, based on EVAAS growth scores.
- Allocates \$10 million over two years for a bonus program for veteran teachers with more than 25 years of experience.
- Provides more than \$35 million to substantially increase principal and assistant principal pay, including funds for performance bonuses for principals.
- Includes \$10 million in additional compensation for community college employees.
- Provides a \$1,000 salary increase to state employees.
- Offers experienced-based step increases to teachers, State Highway Patrol troopers, clerks, and magistrates.
- Provides \$10 million in the biennium toward hard-to-hire positions across state government, such as health care technicians and nurses.
- Designates roughly \$4 million to allow Gov. Cooper to increase the base salary ranges for many state workers.

EDUCATION

- Increases funding for public education by nearly \$700 million over two years.
- Fully funds K-12, community college, and public university enrollment growth.
- Allocates more than \$100 million from lottery funds over the biennium for grants to economically struggling, rural counties to assist with critical public school building needs.
- Invests an additional \$11 million in textbooks and digital resources and increases funding for children with disabilities.
- Codifies the legislature's intent to use data it is currently gathering from local school systems in accordance with state law to fund a new salary allotment for kindergarten through fifth-grade program enhancement (music, arts, physical education) teachers beginning in the 2018-2019 school year.
- Supports the new N.C. Teaching Fellows Program through the N.C. Education Endowment Fund.
- Restores funding to Eastern North Carolina STEM and extends the "TA to Teacher" pilot program in the 14 local school districts originally designated for expansion.
- Protects the Read to Achieve, Teach for America, and Communities in Schools programs from being cut by the Department of Public Instruction to fund bureaucracy.
- Provides additional assistance to community colleges for workforce training programs.
- Honors the commitment to fully fund the N.C. Promise Program, which guarantees in-state undergraduate students at three schools across the state pay just \$500 per semester for tuition.
- Includes over \$18 million in new funding for medical education, including funding increases to the UNC School of Medicine and to the school's Asheville campus.
- Provides additional stabilization funds to Elizabeth City State University to help get the school on solid financial ground.
- Offers \$2.5 million each year of the biennium to support doctoral programs at North Carolina A&T University.
- Directs \$1.5 million to the Cheatham-White Scholarship Program, which will provide state matching funds for up to 20 scholarships at both North Carolina Central University and North Carolina A&T University, beginning in the 2018 fall semester.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

- Provides more than \$27 million over two years to add 3,525 new pre-K slots – eliminating 75 percent of the waitlist for at-risk children.
- Upgrades the Controlled Substance Reporting System that will use advanced analytics to detect and fight prescription drug abuse.

- Allocates \$15 million over two years to community health centers, rural health centers, free clinics and other health services providers in rural and underserved areas that assist the uninsured.
- Invests \$18 million to improve North Carolina's child welfare program, including new training and prevention programs, and nearly \$4 million to improve accountability and oversight of the system.
- Earmarks close to \$3 million to provide support for additional foster children in the system.
- Continues preparing for the transition to Medicaid reform by allocating \$75 million to grow the Medicaid Transformation Reserve.
- Includes more than \$12 million for 400 new innovation waiver slots for people with intellectual and other related developmental disabilities that are at risk for institutional care.
- Designates \$10 million for opioid and substance abuse treatment statewide.
- Allocates \$19 million from the sale of the Dorothea Dix property to fund behavioral health beds.

JUSTICE & PUBLIC SAFETY

- Begins the process to "raise the age" in North Carolina, ensuring 16- and 17-year olds suspected of misdemeanor offenses and less serious felonies would be tried as juveniles instead of adults by December 2019, and establishes a Juvenile Jurisdiction Advisory Committee to develop specific plans for implementation.
- Strengthens laws against human trafficking and funds signage to increase awareness of the warning signs of trafficking.
- Funds needed additional positions in the state court system, including dozens of new deputy clerks of court and assistant district attorneys.
- Provides more than \$4 million for law enforcement training for North Carolina officers.

TAXES & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Reduces the tax burden on North Carolina families and small businesses by cutting the personal income tax rate from 5.499 to 5.25 percent in 2019, and by increasing the amount of income that is exempt from state income tax.
- Lowers the corporate income tax rate from 3 percent to 2.5 percent in 2019, continuing the business tax reforms that have helped create more than half a million new jobs since Republicans took control of the state legislature in 2011.
- Simplifies and reduces the franchise tax on small businesses by cutting what is effectively a statewide property tax on small businesses and creating a flat \$200 tax on the first \$1 million of a business's net worth.
- Provides over \$4 million to support tourism advertising as well as domestic and international advertising to promote economic development.
- Allocates close to \$4 million for revitalization grants in towns and cities across the state.

AGRICULTURE & ENVIRONMENT

- Increases funding for the Clean Water Management Trust Fund, the Tobacco Trust Fund and the Agricultural Development and Farmland Preservation Trust Fund.
- Expands support for the aquaculture industry and provides funding for dredging to ensure valuable economic activity at the North Carolina coast can continue.
- Allocates over \$750,000 to expand international marketing of North Carolina agricultural products.
- Provides funding for engineers to improve dam safety and review emergency action plans to help prevent catastrophic flooding.
- Sets aside \$2.3 million to purchase a new firefighting aircraft in the wake of devastating wildfires in Western North Carolina.
- Provides \$250,000 to the Department of Agriculture to continue fighting against federal overreach in the form of the new Waters of the United States definition after the Cooper Administration withdrew from the federal lawsuit challenging this unprecedented land grab.

TRANSPORTATION

- Increases funding for the Strategic Transportation Investments Program (STIP) by \$320 million over two years, which will allow 100 new highway projects to be added over a ten-year period.
- Includes \$241 million to improve structurally deficient bridges across the state, adds \$143 million to improve the condition and safety of existing roads, increases contract resurfacing by \$20 million and increases funding for pavement preservation by \$30 million, extending the life of thousands of miles of roads.
- Invests \$100 million to fund immediate need construction projects across the state that improve mobility and safety, reduce congestion and spur economic development.
- Includes \$208 million over two years for a Roadside Environmental Fund dedicated to ensuring the safety and beautification of the state's highways.
- Modernizes the state's transportation network by providing additional funding to airports across the state for infrastructure improvements, and to the State Ports Authority for infrastructure and dredging needs.

OTHER BUDGET PRIORITIES

- Brings the rainy day fund to \$1.838 billion, or 8.2 percent of last year's budget – the largest dollar amount and percentage in state history.
- Adds \$125 million to make needed repairs and renovations to state and university facilities.
- Helps preserve North Carolina's military operations by allocating \$2 million for the next Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC).
- Continues the commitment to improving government transparency by funding a website that makes every state agency, county, and local school district budget available for citizens to view online.
- Aims to make government operations more efficient by investing in a fully-consolidated statewide Enterprise Resource Planning system.
- Helps the office of the State Auditor conduct more specialized audits and allocates funding to assist the state Department of Revenue and Department of Insurance in identifying and preventing fraud.

EDUCATION

For too long Democrats decided their education policy based on the whims of teachers' unions and unelected, unaccountable bureaucrats. These policies left our children woefully undereducated and struggled to succeed in life. We believe education should be measured by the success of our children.

House Republicans shook up the education system to put the education of our children the most important priority and to empower parents to have more say in their child's education. We believe that allowing parents to have a choice in their children's education is vital as no one understands the needs of their child than their parents.

House Republicans transformed educational outcomes to ensuring that every student willing to work hard has the path to succeed. To do so, we have enacted a performance pay that rewards our very best educators, provided opportunity scholarships for disabled students and those in schools that are not meeting their educational needs, and lifted the cap on the number of charter schools to allow innovation and modernization in our education system. Most importantly, we have prioritized programs to guarantee that all students can read competently in the early part of their educational journey.

We truly value the dedication to our children demonstrated by our teachers. Contrary to the propaganda perpetrated by out-of-state labor unions and Democrats, we gave teachers their first significant raise in years – 7% or more than \$3,300 per teacher. We will continue to reward teachers for their hard in educating our next generation.

Simply put, we have put more money directly into the classrooms to ensure they are benefiting our children.

TEACHER PAY

“Thank you to all North Carolina teachers for your immeasurable contribution and tireless efforts impacting the lives of our students, ensuring the success of our schools and improving the quality of education systems across our state. The North Carolina House will maintain its teacher appreciation agenda in 2017 by building on the nation’s fastest growing teacher pay since 2014, keeping public school investments a priority and passing education reforms to boost student achievement at every grade level.” House Speaker Tim Moore (R-Cleveland)

House Republicans increased education funding by more than \$818 million and affirmed our dedication to our teachers by giving them a fourth conservative pay raise – nearly 10% over ten years. North Carolina had the fastest rising teacher pay in the nation since 2014.

TEACHING FELLOWS

The North Carolina House Committee on Higher Education approved legislation on Tuesday to re-establish the state’s Teaching Fellows program. The proposal would provide a student loan forgiveness program for educators in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) subjects who commit to teaching in the state.

HB 339 North Carolina Teaching Fellows was co-sponsored by more than 70 members of the North Carolina House of Representatives and would offer a similar benefit to special education teachers. The loan forgiveness would cover tuition, books, and fees for STEM and special education teachers in North Carolina.

The legislation was announced earlier in March at a press conference with state Superintendent Mark Johnson, UNC System President Margaret Spellings and primary bill sponsor Rep. Craig Horn (R-Union).

“North Carolina has a rich and proud heritage of quality education. We believe that the North Carolina Teaching Fellows will play a substantial role in raising the bar even further by supporting strong educator preparation programs that develop strong educators in our classrooms.” Rep. Craig Horn (R- Union)

CLASS SIZES

To achieve smaller class sizes in kindergarten, first, second and third grades – which research shows lead to improved student outcomes, **HB 13** allows districts to comply with a district average of 20 students per class and an individual class maximum of 23 students for the 2017-18 school year.

It also requires public schools in 2018-19 to meet the class size reduction targets that were required before HB 13, with an individual class maximum of 3 above that figure.

HB13 further adds accountability measures that will require local superintendents to report information on student/teacher ratios, and other statistics related to K-12 class size flexibility.

The state House of Representatives agreed to a class size compromise this week that provides further flexibility in how public schools set class sizes and spend hundreds of millions in increased education funding provided by Republicans in the North Carolina General Assembly since 2012.

“Our class size compromise responds to local education leaders and provides more transparency to taxpayers on how public schools spend hundreds of millions in increased funding provided by North Carolina House Republicans since 2012.” House Speaker Tim Moore (R-Cleveland)

- House Republicans increased teacher pay in North Carolina faster than any other state since 2014, according to PolitiFactNC and National Education Association Data.
- House Republicans increased state textbook spending in North Carolina from \$2.5 million in 2010-2011 to \$23.4 million in 2011-12, \$52.3 million in 2015-16 and \$71.5 million in 2016-17.
- House Republicans increased flexibility for textbook spending in K-12 schools with HB 44 Transition to Digital Learning in Schools, now Session Law 2013-12.
- House Republicans increased total education spending by hundreds of millions of dollars every budget cycle since 2012.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND APPRENTICESHIP

The state House of Representatives passed **HB 646 ApprenticeshipNC** addressing a growing demand for skilled workers to help place North Carolina students into high-paying jobs.

Sponsored by Rep. Susan Martin (R-Wilson), Rep. Craig Horn (R-Union), Rep. Debra Conrad (R-Forsyth) and Rep. Mark Brody (R-Union), HB 646 would “coordinate workforce education and customized training tools to fill talent pipeline gaps with local business and industry.”

The legislation would place the administration of “ApprenticeshipNC” within the Community Colleges System Office, where existing infrastructure is in place to connect students with stakeholders working in local industries and leverage the collaborative structure of community colleges.

The bill’s sponsors point to the program’s growth potential and ability to leverage existing resources in advanced manufacturing, healthcare, and information technology industries that offer high-paying jobs.

“Improving our workforce and providing students with 21st-century skills is a top priority. HB 646 will help students realize their professional potential at an earlier age by increasing student engagement in apprenticeship programs.” Rep. Susan Martin (R-Wilson)

HB 646 allows ‘ApprenticeshipNC’ to be marketed as a component of work-based student opportunities in community colleges that also include internships and cooperative learning programs across North Carolina.

Currently, 55 of North Carolina’s 58 community colleges enroll students in work-based learning programs, and much of the related instruction for the ApprenticeshipNC program is already provided by the North Carolina Community College System.

HB 646 would officially place ApprenticeshipNC under the community college system, which is better equipped to train students to qualify for state and industry-recognized credentials.

“House Republicans are committed to educating North Carolina students through real solutions that accommodate work-based training and facilitate job placement in a rapidly changing economy.” House Speaker Tim Moore (R- Cleveland)

21ST CENTURY SKILLS

Students in North Carolina public high schools and middle schools could take computer coding as a course elective under **HB 534 Computer Coding Course Elective** Rep. Jason Saine (R-Lincoln) and Rep. Jeffrey Elmore (R-Wilkes).

The bill directs the State Board of Education “to identify and develop academically rigorous courses in computer programming” that would be offered as electives to middle and high school students across North Carolina.

“We need to ensure today’s students are learning the skills they need to compete in the workforce of tomorrow. Technology is a fundamental basis of our economy, and computer coding is an

essential skill in a variety of job fields today and the future. An early foundation in computer coding will help set students up for a successful career in high paying occupations while fostering an interest in technology will allow students to express themselves in new ways.” Rep. Jason Saine (R-Lincoln)

Computer coding is one of the most sought-after skills for candidates seeking high-paying jobs in manufacturing, healthcare, and finance, and has become a core qualification for students looking to increase their earning potential in a successful career.

“Computer programming jobs are in demand and highly lucrative. Given the number of technology companies based in North Carolina, the need could not be greater. Enabling students to lay the foundation to qualify for industry-recognized credentials can go a long ways in preparing our student for the jobs of the future.” Rep. Jeffrey Elmore (R-Wilkes)

CAREER READINESS

Legislation to provide workforce training and improve career readiness for students seeking jobs across North Carolina. **HB 450 Future Ready Student Act** is sponsored by Rep. Craig Horn (R-Union), Rep. Linda Johnson (R-Cabarrus), Rep. Jimmy Dixon (R-Duplin) and Rep. Linda Williams (R-Wake).

The legislation allows high school students to receive academic credit for pursuing career certifications and credentials required by either an industry or the state. Currently, high school students can only receive academic credit towards a career technical education certificate or diploma.

It would also establish business advisory councils to identify economic and workforce development trends, and that may improve training and contribute to learning needs of the local community.

“The Future Ready Students Act will improve work-based learning opportunities so more young students can find jobs across North Carolina. The legislation encourages local industry and business stakeholders to help students seek employment, develop career readiness pathways and facilitate a successful transition out of academics and into the workforce.” House Speaker Tim Moore (R-Cleveland)

The Future Ready Students Act also expands career and technical education to younger students and establishes the Career and Technical Education Grade Expansion Program to support local education services that increase career development efforts in public schools.

Finally, it requires local boards of education to offer on-the-job training through an internship, cooperative education, or an apprenticeship program and encourages local boards to adopt a 5th-grade career awareness program.

PROTECTING OUR CITIZENS

The primary role of government is to protect and serve all citizens of our great state.

RAISE THE AGE

The legislation that would raise the age of juvenile jurisdiction in North Carolina to include 16 and 17-year-olds accused of nonviolent crimes

HB 280 Juvenile Justice Reinvestment Act is sponsored by Reps. Chuck McGrady (R-Henderson), David Lewis (R-Harnett), and Susan Martin (R-Wilson). Its provision to raise the age of juvenile jurisdiction applies to crimes committed on or after December 1, 2019.

For serious crimes classified as A-E felonies in North Carolina, 16 and 17-year-olds could still be tried as adults in the state court system. Violations of motor vehicle law would also remain excluded from juvenile jurisdiction.

“The Juvenile Justice Reinvestment Act, I believe, will improve the justice system’s response to teenagers under the age of 18. Studies show recidivism is lower when teens are handled in the juvenile system than the adult system.” Rep. Chuck McGrady (R-Henderson)

The bill’s fiscal impact is estimated to cost about \$25 million per year in FY 2017-2018 and \$44 million by FY 2020-2021.

“We can afford this. Part of the issue in the past was we were trying to raise the age at a time the budget was in pretty poor shape.” Rep. Chuck McGrady (R-Henderson)

North Carolina recently reported a \$580 million budget surplus and has saved over \$1.2 billion in its savings reserve account after the Republican-led General Assembly paid down more than \$2.5 billion in debt since 2011.

“Children with disabilities already have a hard enough time successfully transitioning into adulthood, and our current approach makes it more difficult. More than half of those referrals come from schools.” Rep. Susan Martin (R-Wilson)

The Juvenile Justice Reinvestment Act also provides victims an opportunity to request reviews of decisions not to file juvenile petitions and increases the information available on juveniles for court proceedings,

HB 280 further authorizes statewide school-justice partnerships, requires juvenile justice training for law enforcement officers, provides enhanced sentencing for offenses committed as part of criminal gang activity and establishes a Juvenile Jurisdiction Advisory Committee.

DISASTER RELIEF

House Republicans directed \$100 million of disaster recovery funds in the state budget to aid Hurricane Matthew, tropical storm and wildfire recovery efforts spanning housing, infrastructure, agriculture, and education in communities across North Carolina.

SB 338 Disaster Recovery Act of 2017 also provides \$22 million to the State Emergency Response and Disaster Relief Fund to provide the state match for federal disaster assistance programs.

“Protecting the victims of natural disasters is a core responsibility of the North Carolina General Assembly, and we are well prepared to provide emergency relief thanks to responsible spending and record savings that ensure our state is in sound financial shape to serve citizens in times of crisis.” House Speaker Tim Moore (R-Cleveland)

In December 2016, the General Assembly also approved the Disaster Recovery Act of 2016, which appropriated \$100 million from the state’s Savings Reserve Account into the General Fund to assist with hurricane recovery efforts.

North Carolina has built a \$1.8 billion savings reserve, a state record in total dollars and percentage of the state budget, to prepare for future natural disasters. Our members continue to work with local, state, and federal agencies to ensure the funds are effectively and efficiently reaching the communities and people in need, instead of getting held up in the government bureaucracy.

OPIOID EPIDEMIC

In 2015, more than 1,400 of our fellow North Carolinians died because of a deadly epidemic sweeping the nation and walloping North Carolina – the opioid crisis.

Members of the North Carolina House Republicans have been working tirelessly in a bipartisan manner to develop legislative solutions to this ongoing epidemic. We have worked with stakeholders on all sides of the healthcare arena to ensure North Carolinians have the help they need to deal with this crisis.

“I believe this bill represents what is best about our form of government – we’ve had bipartisan support and stakeholders from many constituencies came together to express support and concerns. We’ve listened and this bill is an important step forward in combating our opioid crisis.” Rep. Greg Murphy

We authored and passed **Strengthen Opioid Misuse Prevention (STOP) Act**.

“It was a real honor and privilege in watching this bill develop. We came up with a great step to eradicate this very serious epidemic that is facing our state.” Rep. Ted Davis Jr. (R-New Hanover)

Here is what the STOP ACT does to help North Carolinians suffering from this epidemic:

- Extends standing orders for the opioid antagonist to community health groups. This helps first responders and physicians have in stock and administer life-saving drugs to reverse the impacts of opioids in an overdose situation.
- Requires supervising physicians to personally consult with physician assistants and nurse practitioners who prescribe prescription painkillers to patients.
- Requires electronic prescribing of certain prescription painkillers (opioids).
- Establishes maximum limits for the number of pills to be filled at a given time.
- Establishes civil penalties for pharmacies that employ dispensers who improperly report information to the controlled substance reporting systems.
- Expands the role of the NC Department of Health and Human Services in detecting and preventing fraud and misuse of the controlled substance reporting systems.
- Mandates dispensers and practitioners use the controlled substance reporting system.
- Funds community-based substance use disorder treatment and recovery services.

We worked closely with our Senate colleagues to pass SB 734 in 2016, known as the Statewide Standing Order/Opioid Antagonist that ensured our citizens had access to life-saving drugs to reverse the effects of an overdose. This legislation has had a positive impact and [saved lives since becoming law](#).

Also, we filed legislation (HB 738) that gives patients the right to elect for nonopioid prescriptions

We have also worked with Congress and federal agencies to get access to \$30 Million in funding to help stem this epidemic.

We will continue to work with all stakeholders in a bipartisan manner to ensure we can do everything in our powers to protect North Carolinians.

CHILD WELFARE

Four Republican leaders filed legislation seeking to reform the state’s child welfare and social service systems to serve better and protect vulnerable citizens.

House Rules Chairman David Lewis (R-Harnett), Speaker Pro Tempore Sarah Stevens (R-Surry), Senior Appropriations Chairman Nelson Dollar (R-Wake) and Representative Jonathan Jordan (R-Ashe), Chairman of the House Homelessness, Foster Care and Dependency Committee, introduced **HB 608 the Family/Child Protection and Accountability Act**.

Lawmakers say the current child welfare system is insufficient and cannot meet its responsibilities because there is no consistent model of care across a fragmented system of 100 county social services agencies, complicating state oversight.

“Case workers and supervisors are overwhelmed by excessive caseloads as well as inadequate training and support. As a result of these problems, children are not receiving the care they need

to recover from abuse or neglect, and in some instances, are not being placed in safe environments. This bill would go a long way for the most vulnerable people in our state. It is high time we invest in key social services infrastructure to serve the needs of those who do not have a voice. We must not sit idly by while children suffer; instead, we must be proactive and tackle the issue head on with holistic reforms that solve the problem.” Rep. David Lewis (R-Harnett)

The Child/Family Protection and Accountability Act meets these challenges head-on with a measured and collaborative approach. The legislation enumerates a plan to consolidate the 100 county DSS agencies into no more than 30 regions by 2022. This will allow the state to standardize practice statewide effectively. The bill also gives the state greater authority to enforce safety and practice standards at the local level.

The legislation requires a third party entity to evaluate the current child welfare system and work with the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services to implement system-wide changes.

The bill also reduces the time to permanency for children removed from their homes, creates a council to align children services across all government systems, and establishes pilots to support access to driving for youth in foster care, as well as strengthening the overall foster care system.

“I am confident that this bill will improve the conditions of our child welfare system. We must fully commit to solving the problems our social services face, and this bill will certainly do that by creating a system in which foster children can succeed.” Rep. Sarah Stevens (R-Surry)

GANG CRIMES

House Republicans moved legislation to increase penalties and enhance prosecution for gang members who commit crimes associated with criminal gang activity in North Carolina.

HB 138 ‘Revise Gang Laws’ changes gang activity to a sentencing enhancement rather than a separate criminal offense in North Carolina. It strengthens state law by allowing prosecutors to increase penalties for gang activity without seeking separate convictions against gang members.

The legislation would increase both misdemeanor and felony convictions by one class if committed by a member of a gang as part of illegal gang activity. A crime would be enhanced by two classes if committed by a ‘gang leader.’

HB 138 also increases the penalty for threatening to retaliate or retaliating against an individual for leaving a gang or helping someone leave a gang.

Supporters of the bill say an existing anti-gang law in North Carolina is insufficient for prosecutors to seek successful convictions due to its overly broad language. The current statute provides separate felony offenses for taking part in or profiting from illegal gang activity but is rarely used and difficult to enforce.

“North Carolina has a gang problem, and I do not think anybody in this body would deny that we have a gang problem in North Carolina, and we need to deal with it.” Rep. Allen McNeill (R-Randolph)

Rep. John Faircloth (R-Guilford), Rep. Pat Hurley (R-Randolph) and Rep. Rena Turner (R-Iredell) are also primary sponsors of the legislation.

CONSTITUTIONAL LIBERTIES

FREEDOM OF SPEECH

House Republicans stood firm to protect your constitutional right to free speech. **HB 527 – Restore/Preserve Campus Free Speech**, sponsored by Rep. Chris Millis (R-Pender) and Rep. Jonathan Jordan (R-Ashe), directs the University of North Carolina Board of Governors to develop, adopt, and implement a systemwide policy preserving First Amendment protections at public universities.

“It is critical that we reverse the trend of free speech being impeded on public university campuses in North Carolina and preempt further violations of those rights by fostering an environment of open thought and expression in the halls of higher education across North Carolina. “Students and faculty should not be forced to resort to litigation to protect their own First Amendment rights.”
Rep. Chris Millis (R-Pender)

Under HB 527, the UNC Board of Governor’s systemwide policy must include at least the following:

- A statement that it is not the proper role of a university to shield individuals from speech protected by the U.S. Constitution.
- A prohibition on universities requiring students or faculty from expressing a certain view of social policy.
- A guarantee that students and faculty have the right to discuss any problem and engage in legal, peaceful demonstrative activity that is not substantially disruptive.
- A statement that parks, sidewalks, plazas and similar places on campuses are public forums.
- The affirmed right of invited speakers to be on campus subject only to minimal, reasonable restrictions.
- A disciplinary process for individuals interfering with the protected free expression rights of others.

HB 527 also directs the Board of Governors to form a Committee on Free Expression and report annually on the status of free speech at each institution, including a description of administrative handling of new policies.

The bill also requires each university to include these policies in freshman orientation and identify the individual on campus responsible for ensuring compliance with its provisions.