



# TAXES DOWN, NC THRIVES

BY BRIAN BALFOUR

Reversing a trend, North Carolina has experienced 10 consecutive quarters of per capita income growth equal to or greater than the national average, the latest data show.

That and other facts highlight the economic hot streak North Carolina has enjoyed since the General Assembly and Gov. Pat McCrory instituted tax cuts and other fiscal reforms in 2013.

In an email regarding research he performed for the state legislature, Brent Lane, director of the UNC Center for Competitive Economies at Chapel Hill, cited “10 straight quarters of per capita income growth at rates equal to or exceeding the U.S. rate.”

Beginning in the fourth quarter of 2013, that is “the best stretch of comparative income growth since 1996,” according to Lane.

In simpler terms, North Carolina has seen its best stretch of economic growth – as measured by per capita income – in two decades. This three-year trend represents a significant reversal of fortune for the Tar Heel State.

For two decades, North

Carolina’s economy steadily fell further and further behind the national average in one of the most important economic indicators. After peaking in 1996-97 at 93 percent of the

North Carolina’s PCI has climbed to 85.5 percent of the national average, thanks to the 10 consecutive quarters of growth outpacing (or equaling) the U.S. rate.

The growth in income is not just benefitting the rich, as some of the left may suggest. Poverty in North Carolina is also declining faster than the U.S. average. In from 2012

And the good news keeps coming in. The U.S. Census Bureau released household income data that shed even more positive light on NC’s economy. Further analysis provided from Lane provides some highlights. (This data uses inflation-adjusted figures.):

- Over the past three years NC also recorded the highest median household income growth in the United States. NC’s median household income grew 18.42 percent since the beginning of 2013. That’s more than twice the national figure, which grew 7.31 percent over the same period.

- In contrast, since reaching its highest comparative level in 1997, between 1997 and 2012 NC’s median household income growth rate of 18.74% was 49th in the U.S.

- In the past year, U.S. median household income grew 5.21 percent, while NC’s grew 8.45 percent (ranked 8th).

- In 2012 NC’s median household income ranked 46th in the US. In 2015 NC ranked 37th.

- NC median household

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Gov. Pat McCrory has recently noted that “since 2013, North Carolina has one of the fastest growing economies in the nation, unemployment is at an eight-year low, and more than 300,000 jobs have been added.”

national per capita income (PCI) average, North Carolina’s growth lagged behind the national average, prompting the state’s PCI to fall to only 84.7 percent of the U.S. average in 2013, according to Lane’s calculations.

The latest data available for 2016, however, show that

That’s less than a 1 percentage point increase, you may say. No big deal.

But context is everything. Given the massive size of North Carolina’s economy, that 0.8 percent gain represents an additional \$4 billion in annual income for the state, according to Lane’s figures.

to 2015, NC’s poverty rate dropped two full percentage points, from 17.8% to 15.8%. That equates to roughly 25,000 North Carolinians climbing out of poverty. Conversely, the national poverty rate fell only one percentage point during that time, from 14.8% to 13.8%.

## The Truth on School Spending and Teacher Pay

BY BOB LUEBKE

Which North Carolina political party has increased the education budget by more than \$1.1 billion since 2011?

Answer: the Republicans.

Maybe that surprises you, but it’s just one of the real facts that undercut the Left’s myths about education in North Carolina.

You’ve heard the claim: Republicans have declared “war” on public schools. Their supposed weapons? Trimmed budgets and low teacher pay. Prominent progressives and liberal Democrats have parroted this narrative in the last two election cycles and will likely continue it for a third.

But is it true? How do Democrats and Republicans in North Carolina actually compare on the issue of funding for education?

In fact, Republicans have a very strong record. A comparison of recent budgets

shows why.

From 2006-2011 – when Democrats were in control of the General Assembly and the budget process – funding for K-12 education actually declined by \$540 million in inflation-adjusted dollars, or 13 percent.

when Democrat lawmakers mistakenly thought a surge in tax receipts would last forever. However, after the Great Recession hit, Democrats cut \$1.54 billion from the education budget to address funding shortfalls. Since taking office in 2011-12, Republicans

Under GOP leadership, K-12 appropriations have increased in five of the last six budgets.

Democrats counter that funding levels have not yet reached pre-recession levels. Yes, spending was higher in those years. However, much of the spending was for additional staff and bureaucracy – not important instructional time or materials.

Over the period 1992 to 2009, the number of students increased 36 percent while the number of non-teaching administrative staff increased 61 percent. Many say that per student state support is a better indicator of commitment to education. Yet even then the trends don’t change: State support per pupil declined during the last five years of Democrat control. In 2010-11, the last year of Democrat

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Yes, in the early years of the period, the budget increased about \$1 billion,

have increased the education budget by \$1.1 billion in inflation-adjusted dollars.



# How We Can Stop Being Half-Centered to Death

BY JAMES TYNEN

Picture this: Someone comes up to you and says, "I'll give you something totally useless that you will never use, and it'll only cost you a few cents ... but will add up to many dollars. Forever."

Wow, what a deal! But that's exactly what's on my ballot in November, and, sadly, is too often the kind of choice North Carolinians are offered by our free-spending governments.

The measure we in Wake County face is typical of the questions that appear on ballots:

## One-half Percent Local Sales and Use Tax

One-half percent (1/2%) local sales and use taxes, in addition to the current local sales and use taxes, to be used only for public transportation system.

- ( ) For
- ( ) Against

The first thing to remember: The taxes add up.

They'd better: They're a linchpin of the county's \$2.3 billion transit plan.

We all know the expression "being nicked and dimed to death." Well, taxpayers are being half-pennied to death.

Worse, these and other "little" tax increases come at us from all angles, and they never let up.

In the last two years, Wake County raised our property taxes by 1.35 cents and 3.65 cents per \$100 in valuation. Those cents sure add up.

And did I mention the county also reassessed – i.e., raised – the value of my home? That, of course, also raised taxes.

But when do our county and local taxes decline? I have discerned no sign they ever will go down or even just hold steady.

Fortunately, in NC we have proof it isn't physically impossible to cut taxes. The legislature and governor (as spelled out elsewhere in this edition) have actually cut income taxes for everyone in North Carolina.

That is such a miracle that

"Recommended Wake County Transit Plan," admitted, "Transit is currently used by just 1.1% of commuters across the county." You can do your own study: Check out local commuter buses and see how many are packed and how many are nearly empty.

## Better ways to get there

And it looks more likely than ever that the number of Americans who want or need

to take over if needed.

But it shows a very plausible way forward. The technology is in high gear. Ford, General Motors, Tesla and others are working hard to bring their own

exactly what will happen. It's entirely possible, however, that before Wake County has finished spending billions on mass transit, there will be a host of robo-cars humming along the streets of our

*"Innovation and free enterprise are moving ahead rapidly, while government bureaucracy trudges along, trying to impose obsolete technology on us."*

it bears being repeated: State taxes have been cut since 2013.

So cutting taxes is not impossible. But will our county and local officials do it? How can we send them a message that enough is enough?

to ride a bus or commuter train will dwindle away. That's because on Sept. 14, the ride-sharing company Uber debuted an experiment with a self-driving taxi service in Pittsburgh.

People in that Pennsylvania

autonomous cars into use. Ford is claiming it will have a fleet of robo-taxis in use in five years.

And other countries are ahead of us. A similar experiment with self-driving cars was launched in August in Singapore.

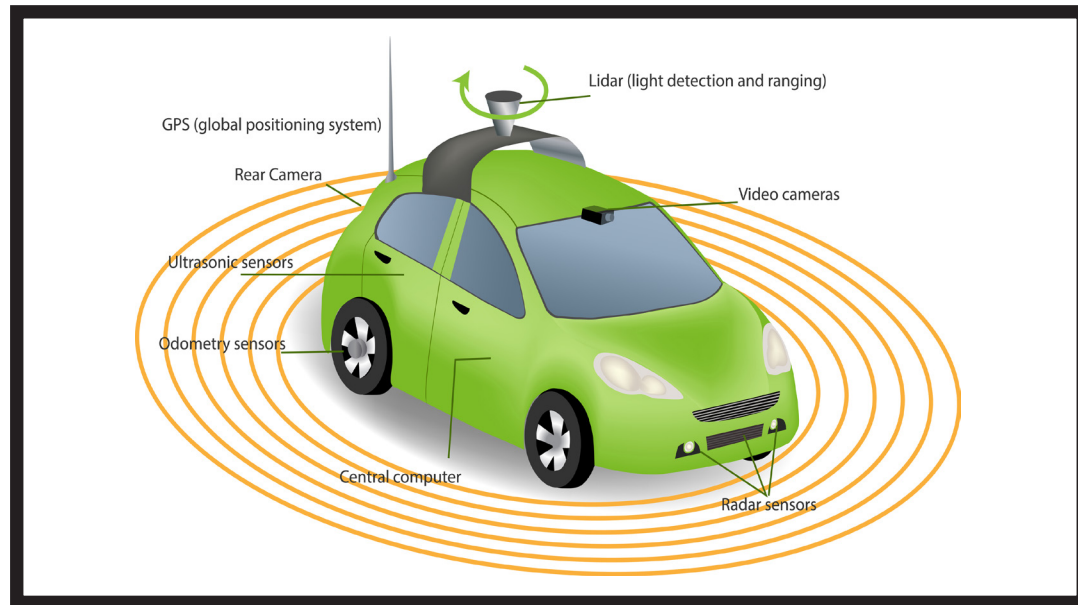
cities, moving people far more conveniently and economically than buses or trains ever could.

If there is such progress, people will no longer need to rush to a bus stop or train station at a precise time, ride along while the vehicle stops and starts, then trudge from the final transit stop to their real destination. Dial up a self-driving car, and it will take you where you want to go.

The era of mass transit has ended. The era of personalized transit is beginning.

Every NC taxpayer should remember that when the establishment presses them to spend more, more, more on outmoded forms of transportation. In November, Wake County voters now have one more reason to vote against a rise in the sales tax on the November ballot.

That in turn could be an opportunity of its own: to tell government we won't tolerate the wasteful taking of more of our money, even a half-cent at a time. ■



The first argument that comes up from the establishment is that our taxes fund things we need. Often, that isn't so.

That's especially true of mass transit. A December 2015 report,

city will be able to call for autonomous Volvos that will automatically drive them to their destinations. It's still an experiment: Uber employees will be in the front seats of the cars

Innovation and free enterprise are moving ahead rapidly, while government bureaucracy trudges along, trying to impose obsolete technology on us.

Of course, it's hard to predict

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NC Capitol Connection is a publication of the Civitas Institute

The Civitas Institute is a 501(c)(3) non-profit dedicated to advancing conservative and free-market principles in the state of North Carolina.

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# State Leaders Blast NCAA's Action over House Bill 2

BY MATT CAULDER

Gov. Pat McCrory decried the NCAA decision to pull all seven scheduled post-season games from North Carolina over HB 2, saying in September that the issue is best handled by the courts.

"The issue of redefining gender and basic norms of privacy will be resolved in the near future in the United States court system, for not only North Carolina, but the entire nation," he said in a press release.

"I strongly encourage all public and private institutions to both respect and allow our nation's judicial system to proceed without economic threats or political retaliation toward the 22 states that are currently challenging government overreach. Sadly, the NCAA, a multibillion dollar, tax-exempt monopoly, failed to show this respect at the expense of our student athletes and hard-working men and women."

Civitas President Francis De Luca also criticized the NCAA's action.

"This decision from the NCAA is shameful," he said. "It is clear they do not understand real discrimination. China, where true discrimination and human rights violations occur, is OK for games, but a state that is just trying to protect young girls and women is somehow off-limits.

"Between this and their choice to do nothing about schools graduating athletes who can't read, and to do nothing about the rape of females by athletes at Baylor, it is clear the NCAA is a bunch of hypocrites. It shows they're more interested in politics than academic and athletic excellence."

Lt. Gov. Dan Forest also said, "The NCAA's action sends a message to every female athlete and female fan attending their events that their privacy and security in a bathroom, shower or locker room isn't worth the price of a ticket to a ballgame. We have seen the NCAA's attitude toward women before when they stood by and did nothing during the rapes at Baylor.

"For years, we've seen the NBA turn a blind eye toward women victims of domestic abuse at the hands of their star players. Why should we be surprised now at the NCAA continuing this pattern of discrimination and degradation of women? The line has now been drawn in the sand, first by Hollywood, now by the NBA and NCAA, either accept their 'progressive

sexual agenda' or pay the price. North Carolina will not play that game. We value our women too much to put a price tag on their heads."

The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) has filed a civil rights lawsuit against the state, calling the law a violation of the Civil Rights Act and Title IX of the Education Amendment of 1972.

The state responded and filed a suit against the DOJ and Attorney General Loretta Lynch for declaratory and injunctive relief for its "radical reinterpretation of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which would prevent plaintiffs from protecting the bodily privacy rights of state employees while accommodating the needs of transgendered state employees."

Last month a federal judge ruled that two students and an employee of the University of North Carolina must be allowed to use the bathroom that matched the gender they have chosen to identify as, but the full case won't be heard until November.

Under U.S. District Judge Thomas Schroeder's ruling, which temporarily blocked that portion of HB 2, he said there was a good chance the state would lose a Title IX argument in the case.

Title IX was originally passed in 1972 to give women equal access to education by requiring equity in any educational program that receives federal funding.

The North Carolina Republican Party responded to the NCAA decision not long after it was announced.

"This is so absurd it's almost comical," Kami Mueller, NCGOP spokeswoman, said.

"I genuinely look forward to the NCAA merging all men's and women's teams together as singular, unified, unisex teams. Under the NCAA's logic, colleges should make cheerleaders and football players share bathrooms, showers and hotel rooms. This decision is an assault to female athletes across the nation. If you are unwilling to have women's bathrooms and locker rooms, how do you have a women's team?" ■

This article is adapted from stories that originally appeared online in NC Capitol Connection (nccapitolconnection.com).

## Monthly Petition

# Tell Roy Cooper: Do Your Job or Resign

North Carolina Attorney General Roy Cooper has repeatedly ignored his sworn duty to defend the laws of our state. In order to appeal to his liberal base of supporters in his gubernatorial bid, Cooper has declined to defend several North Carolina laws and the State Constitution.

He refused to defend a state constitutional amendment, approved overwhelmingly by the voters, that defined marriage as a bond between one man and one woman. He refused to appeal a lower court ruling blocking the Opportunity Scholarship Program, which helps low-income families go to the schools of their choice. He also refused to appeal a ruling that wouldn't let North Carolina drivers select "Choose Life" as a motto on their license plates.

Now he has done it again. According to the Associated Press, Cooper declined to represent you and the state and appeal the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals' outrageous decision to overturn the Voter ID law, since it's no longer politically convenient for him to defend the duly passed North Carolina Voter ID law.

Not only do North Carolina's citizens deserve the right to have their legitimate votes not be cancelled out by fraudulent ones, we also have the right to an Attorney General who defends the laws of our state and upholds his sworn duty.

But after the Fourth Circuit decision and Cooper's dereliction of duty – **we have neither.**

Now Cooper has a decision to make: Do his job or resign his office.

Sign the petition below and tell Roy Cooper to defend the state law – **or resign!**

After signing the petition, call Roy Cooper's office at (919) 716-6400 and tell him to get to work or get out!

## Petition to Roy Cooper: Do Your Job or Resign!

Attorney General Roy Cooper has declined to further defend North Carolina's 2013 Election Reform Law that eliminates same day registration and requires a photo ID to vote. We, the undersigned, demand that Roy Cooper do his job and promise to defend the laws of North Carolina, or resign his office!

Name (First, M.I., Last)

Street Address

City

State, Zip

County

Email

Phone

Cell

Home

Business

Signature

Date

Cut out and mail to: Civitas Institute, 805 Spring Forest Rd Ste 100 Raleigh, NC 27609  
 or Email to: [signups@nccivitas.org](mailto:signups@nccivitas.org) Please make copies of this form for others to sign

# North Carolina Cuts Taxes; Economy Hits Hot Streak

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

income in 2015 is still \$6,000 behind the national figure. But the gap is closing fast: In 2012 the gap was \$10,000.

Now we have significant positive data for both per capita income and median household income, with marked improvements beginning once the 2013 state tax reforms were implemented.

Readers should at this point recall that 2013 was the year North Carolina passed historic tax reforms, reducing personal and corporate income taxes in what many hailed at the time as the largest tax cut in the state's history.

Also, in 2013 the state implemented unemployment insurance reforms that enabled North Carolina to pay back roughly \$2.5 billion in debt

to the federal government far earlier than the original payback plan, a move that has paid off with major tax relief for employers.

Looking at job numbers since 2013 also yields impressive results. From mid-2013 to the summer of 2016, job growth in North Carolina has outpaced regional and national averages, with the broadest measure of employment indicating one of the top 10 strongest labor market improvements in the country during that time.

Income growth means middle-class households are better able to make ends meet, and lower-income households have more opportunities to make a better life for their families. Job growth means more opportunities for

everyone.

Such broad-based gains underscore the importance of policies designed to increase incomes and encourage job growth statewide compared with targeted economic development programs.

"I am unequivocal in citing that the economic significance of even slight gains in relative PCI is superior to high-profile economic development 'successes' in achieving statewide economic well-being improvements," emphasized Lane.

State lawmakers would be wise to focus on continuing down the path of broad-based tax rate reductions and scrapping taxpayer subsidies and targeted tax credits for specific businesses. Such

government handouts and privileges may buy nice headlines at ribbon-cutting ceremonies, but they fail to generate the sort of widespread economic gains realized by tax cuts across the board.

To its credit, the state legislature delivered more tax cuts last year, dropping the income tax rate further while raising the standard deduction for all taxpayers, and ensuring the corporate tax rate continues to fall.

The sales tax base was broadened slightly to include some services in order to better reflect the modern economy. On net, these tax changes are projected to save taxpayers nearly another \$400 million over the biennium.

The evidence is becoming

more convincing by the quarter that the 2013 reforms played a role in the thriving economy, though of course observers will keep monitoring the latest statistics.

As Lane put it: "Ten consecutive quarters is approaching a significant correlation to that policy shift, though evidence of causality is only anecdotal and impossible yet to parse out from a complicated combination of economic factors."

As the positive economic news continues to roll in, it will become harder to deny that the 2013 tax cuts are living up to their promises. ■

## Edmunds, Morgan Battle in State High Court Race

BY NCCC STAFF

More than half of North Carolina voters remain undecided about one of the most important races on the November ballot – the election to the state's highest court.

Our September Civitas Poll asked 600 likely voters:

If the election for North Carolina Supreme Court were being held today and you had to make a choice, for whom would you vote?

21% Michael R. (Mike) Morgan

22% ... or Robert H. (Bob) Edmunds

53% Lean/ Undecided

Morgan is a judge on Wake County Superior Court. Edmunds is a current justice on the NC high court.

The legal battles in the news this year underscore the importance of the election. Though technically state Supreme Court races are nonpartisan, the current court has four justices, including Edmunds, who are identified as Republicans, and three as Democrats.

Morgan is identified as a Democrat, so if he defeats Edmunds, the court will shift to a 4-3 Democrat advantage.

One insight into the two candidates can be gleaned from past stories in this newspaper. As we said in our August issue, Morgan was originally assigned as the Superior Court judge who would hear a challenge by liberal groups to the state's commonsense election reform

laws – laws that could have an impact on the upcoming elections, including the Supreme

General Assembly passed a law saying that state Supreme Court justices who had their seat due

voters." Edmunds recused himself from the case when it went to the state Supreme Court,



Judge Mike Morgan

Court election.

But in March, when Morgan filed to run for the Supreme Court, he failed to recuse himself from the election laws case.

There were other factors that could have raised questions. In addition to the state case Morgan was to hear, liberal groups also challenged the election reforms in federal court. One of those groups was the state NAACP. Morgan, according to his campaign website, is a life member of the NAACP.

But though his political future and his personal views might be seen as impinging on the voter ID issue, he steadfastly refused to recuse himself.

However, in August, after a federal court ruled against the state, Morgan said the case would not move forward unless the U.S. Supreme Court stepped in, and that court deadlocked on the case in late August.

In 2015 Edmunds was faced with a similar situation. The

to a previous election would no longer face opponents in an election, but would run in a retention election, in which voters have the choice of whether or not the justice would keep his seat.

The law was challenged on the grounds it clashed with the state

because it plainly could affect the nature of his election. As the final ruling states, "Justice Edmunds took no part in the consideration or decision of this case."

The justices deadlocked 3-3, meaning that the election would take place under the old rules,



Justice Bob Edmunds

constitution, which says justices "shall be elected by the qualified

setting up the race between Edmunds and Morgan.

Robert H. "Bob" Edmunds Jr. is a graduate of the University of North Carolina School of Law. A Navy veteran, he served as a U.S. attorney, practiced law privately, was as state Court of Appeals judge, and was first elected to the state Supreme Court in 2000.

Michael R. "Mike" Morgan received his law degree from the North Carolina Central University School of Law. He served as a state assistant attorney general, an administrative law judge, a District Court judge, and, since 2005, a Superior Court judge.

On his campaign website, Edmunds says: "With all my heart I believe that only legislators should make law. If you review my work as a justice on the Supreme Court of North Carolina and as a judge on the North Carolina Court of Appeals, you will find a record of fairness, impartiality, devotion to the rule of law, and good old-fashioned hard work."

Morgan, on his website, says: "I am unusually seasoned and qualified to capably address the variety of legal matters which come before the Supreme Court. I shall continue my judicial commitment to steadfastly strive to promote society's well-being through the fair and impartial administration of justice, while enhancing the people's confidence in and respect for the effectiveness of North Carolina's system of jurisprudence." ■

# The Truth on School Spending and Teacher Pay

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

legislative control, per student state spending was roughly 5.7 percent lower than it was five years prior, after adjusting for inflation.

Conversely, in the five years since legislative control shifted to Republicans, per student support has increased by 6.3 percent, even after adjusting for inflation. (Data is not yet available for the 2016-17 school year.)

Furthermore, with the addition in the current budget of \$314 million more for K-12 education, there is a good chance for another healthy increase in per student support yet again for 2016-17.

Teacher pay is another area where Democrats have sought to differentiate themselves from Republicans. Have Republican policies on teacher pay really hurt teachers? Again, the facts get in the way of the liberal narrative.

Let's compare two recent six-year periods. The final six years under Democrats (2005-6 to 2010-11) produced four pay

raises, totaling 21.1 percent in increases. Similarly, teachers received pay raises in four of the last six budget years under Republican control, totaling 15 percent.

Indeed, average teacher pay is

Crowding out the ability to devote more dollars to salary increases, however, is the rising value of benefits such as health insurance, retirement benefits and Social Security.

These benefits have increased

the average teacher's total compensation is worth over \$67,000.

It's a reality that has largely escaped notice, and it puts teacher pay in an entirely different light.

the last 40 years underscore that truth.

Nor am I arguing that Republicans ought to further many of the same policies that Democrats had laid out.

Local control, expanded flexibility for districts, school choice and greater accountability are characteristics that help define the Republican vision for education.

No matter what the Left tries to say to the contrary, dismantling public education via trimmed budgets and low teacher pay are not part of that vision.

Charges about a Republican war on public education have no basis in fact. It's a war that is fabricated to energize a dormant political base and one where truth is an early casualty. ■

This article was originally published in the News & Observer.



up almost \$10,000 – more than 20 percent – since the 2013-14 school year. This ranks North Carolina's teacher pay increases among the highest such raises in the country during this time.

steadily in periods of both Republican and Democratic control, reaching about \$17,600 in 2016 – an alarming increase of 74 percent in 10 years. Adding in benefits,

I am not arguing for more money and resources for public education. Money is important. However, money does not equate to quality public schools. The failures of

## Average Wake County Teacher Salary Is Now Above \$53K

BY BOB LUEBKE

Teacher pay is a topic that just won't go away. After continued public discussion, the legislature this year approved teacher pay raises that would – on average – increase teacher pay 4.7 percent statewide, and, according to the McCrory administration and legislative leadership, for the first time, increase average teacher pay above \$50,000.

But how much do you know about teacher pay – at least in the state's largest school district, Wake County? For instance, what percentage of Wake County teachers make more than \$50,000? What is the average salary for Wake County teachers?

To answer such questions, we obtained through a public records request 2016 salary data for teachers from Wake County Public School (WCPSS).

The salary data we analyzed is for WCPSS full-time teachers (defined as 90 percent time or greater). Salary figures are annualized and include state, local (in 2015-16 WCPSS local salary supplement was \$6,975) and other financial supplements (i.e., doctoral supplement, master's supplement, NBPTS certification, etc.).

What did we find?

- Wake County has 9,991 full-time teachers
- Average teacher salary is \$53,605
- 57 percent of WCPSS teachers make more than \$50,000

- About one-quarter (23 percent) of WCPSS teachers earn between \$40,000-\$45,000
- 34 percent of WCPSS teachers (3,361) earn between \$50,000-\$60,000
- 13 percent of WCPSS teachers (1,308) earn \$65,000 or more

Points worth noting:

**Average Salary and Size:** The column with the salary range with the highest number of teachers was \$40,000-\$45,000, which suggests a very young teaching faculty. WCPSS has attracted young teachers because of the quality of the district and the pay scale, but also because it's a growing district. Those factors would contribute to tamping down average teacher salaries.

**Teachers and Additional Salary.** Fifty-seven percent of WCPSS teachers earn more than \$50,000. Many of these teachers' salaries include supplemental pay through longevity and pay differentials. While new teachers are not eligible for pay differentials offered for masters or doctoral degrees, teachers can receive a supplement for masters and doctoral degrees. In addition, certification by the Office of National Board of Professional Teachers Standards boosts pay by 12 percent. Accessing pay differentials is one route through which teachers have significantly increased pay levels.

What is happening? Teacher pay in Wake County Public Schools is rising. An analysis

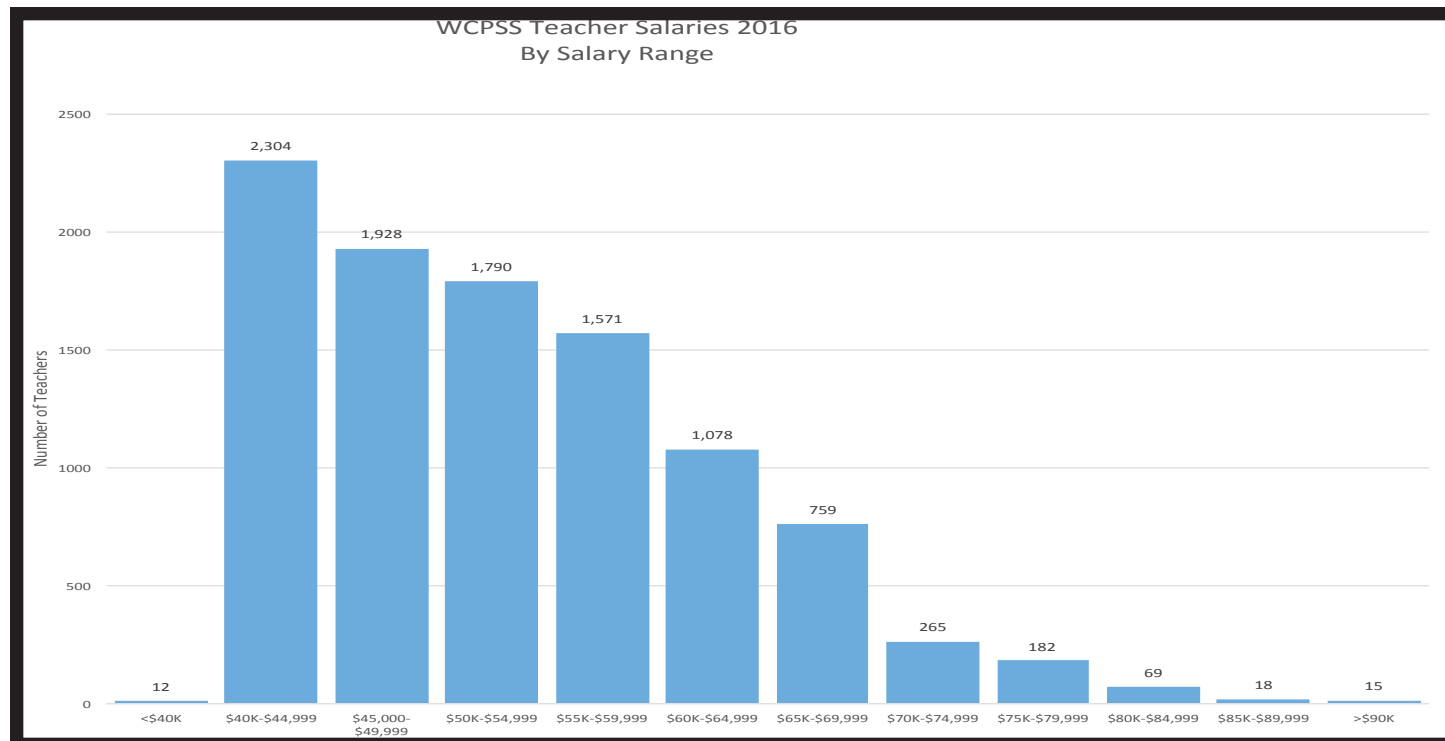
of 2015 data revealed 53 percent of teachers earned less than \$50,000. In addition, almost 2,100 teachers of the second lowest salary range (\$40-000 to \$45,000) – about 55 percent of all teachers in that group – earned the exact same salary, \$40,162.50. That aberration no longer exists, in large part to salary increases.

Are higher teacher incomes a Wake County phenomena? WCPSS also employs about 10 percent of all public school teachers in North Carolina. WCPSS teachers certainly benefit from the local supplement. However, about 75 percent of all teachers in North Carolina are funded by taxpayers across the state.

**Context:**

- Average WCPSS Teacher Salary: \$53,605
  - Median WCPSS Teacher Salary: \$52,361
  - Average Household Income in NC: \$62,851
  - Average Household Income in Wake County: \$85,245
  - Median Family Income in Wake County: \$66,579
  - Median Family Income in NC: \$46,693
- (Above facts from U.S. Census Bureau)

Teacher pay is improving in Wake County and North Carolina. While we continue to work to improve salaries, we hope accurate data informs and guides those discussions. ■



# The Ballot Battle: Do You Have Enough Time to Vote?

BY SUSAN MYRICK

After the progressive Left in North Carolina prevailed in their lawsuit against the State of North Carolina in regards to election reforms passed in 2013, you probably thought the battle over voting is finished.

Not so fast! The battle is not over. And maybe you haven't quite come to terms with why they call the radical Left "progressive" – they never quit and they're always out for more.

The Left always wants more time to vote, and it always wants to remove even the most basic, commonsense safeguards to the ballot box.

One of the results of this latest court battle was re-instituting an additional seven days of in-person early voting (one-stop voting), bringing the total days of one-stop voting days to 17, up from 10.

With that, the Left was successful in returning elections to the way they were before the 2013 legislation was enacted – with no safeguards, no voter ID, open registration with no way to verify eligible voters, and open precincts. The result? General chaos.

In a recent article written by Colin Campbell for the News & Observer detailing the process by the county boards of elections to determine early voting sites and schedules, Campbell went to the mainstream media's darling on liberal election policy, Bob Hall.

Hall is director and lobbyist for Democracy NC, a liberal advocacy group that specializes in community organizing. He is also the architect of North

Carolina's most liberal election laws and is the behind-the-scenes collaborator who long has been the go-between for liberal activist groups, liberal legislators and the State Board of Elections (SBE).

In the article, Campbell wrote, "Hall said some of the schedules could be challenged in court if the state board upholds plans that limit minority voting by dropping Sunday voting or polling sites in African-American communities."

Note the threat of lawsuits. Lawsuits are all that liberals

voting as if it is a standard and statutorily recognized voting process, it is not and never has been. Sunday voting has always been a possibility during early voting if a county board votes to open sites on Sundays. Interestingly enough, the first Sunday voting occurred in 2008, the same time same-day registration (SDR) was implemented.

You might well live in a county whose board doesn't think it needs Sunday voting to accommodate all the county's

however, is a drain on local election boards in both money and manpower. With 17 straight days of voting, the human beings who run the polls need both some days to rest and time to audit their work in preparation for Election Day.

## So why is Sunday voting so important to the Left?

Sunday voting is just a tool by which liberal activist groups can more easily accomplish their mission of turning out voters who traditionally vote for Democrats, all the while disparaging those who don't believe the practice is warranted for voters in their county. Many of the activist groups receive millions of dollars from foundations to turn out targeted groups, mostly minorities.

While Hall and his other left-wing comrades lambaste Republicans on the issue, it's the Democrats on the SBE who have shown their partisan bias in the last four years. They are the ones that have made decisions regarding early voting sites (always toward the liberal agenda), often times without considering facts.

## The underlying issues

All this highlights the real issues. As for "minority voting sites," there should be no such thing. Voting sites should be made as accessible as practically possible to all voters no matter what color, gender or age.

This last battle over election reform is between, on one side, liberal groups (including

the NAACP-NC, Southern Coalition for Social Justice, ACLU and the League of Women of Voters) who believe that everyone (regardless of eligibility and jurisdictional assignment) should be able to vote whenever and wherever they choose, and, on the other side, conservatives who believe that security in the form of voter photo ID and eliminating dangerous practices such as same-day registration are reasonable and would ensure accuracy and integrity in our elections.

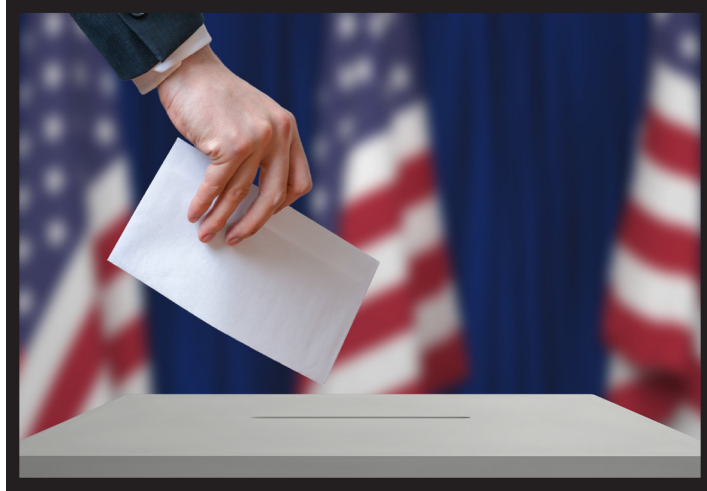
In fact, North Carolina's election laws are some of the loosest in the nation.

How much time do North Carolinians have to vote in this year's presidential election? Voting by mail starts 60 days before Election Day. That means any registered voter may now request a ballot to be mailed to him or her – wherever they are.

In-person early voting (one-stop) begins the third Thursday before Election Day. That means a 17-day window of voting at a site in the county where the voter resides and is registered to vote. And then there's the last day to vote – once called Election Day. Election Day offers 13 hours of voting at a voter's assigned precinct.

Ask yourself: Do you have enough time to vote, or do you feel disenfranchised because your county does not have Sunday voting?

If you do, why is more time needed for registering special classes of voters, and treating their voting patterns differently? ■



have left in North Carolina politics. They have essentially been voted out of the majority in the legislature, key Council of State seats and Congress since 2010.

Were such threats effective? In fact, the SBE met in early September and voted to restore Sunday early voting hours in counties that previously had the option under the 2012 voting plan, but not for counties that did not offer early voting under the old election law.

While Hall speaks of Sunday

voters. According to the N&O article, 75 out of North Carolina's 100 counties have never opened a site on Sunday.

All that brings up the real problem: There's really no need or benefit for Sunday voting. It has been found that neither early voting nor Sunday voting increases overall turnout. In fact, some elections experts even say early voting can decrease overall voting by draining some of the excitement that "Election Day" generates.

Pushing Sunday voting,

## Find One-Stop Voting Sites

To locate the One-Stop Voting Sites in your county, go online to: [vt.ncsbe.gov/ossite/](http://vt.ncsbe.gov/ossite/)

You can also contact the State Board of Elections at:  
441 North Harrington St, Raleigh, NC 27603  
Phone: (919) 733-7173  
Or (866) 522-4723

**Email:** [elections.sboe@ncsbe.gov](mailto:elections.sboe@ncsbe.gov)

# 21 General Assembly Races to Watch in November

BY SUSAN MYRICK

Democrats believe they can make inroads into the Republican majorities in the General Assembly this year. No one's talking about Democrats regaining the majority in either chamber of the legislature, but they have their sights on ending GOP supermajorities.

A closer look at the key races will shed light on to whether Democrats can make that happen.

As it stands today, Republicans hold the majority in the state House, with 75 seats out of 120, and the state Senate, holding 34 seats out of 50.

Using the 2012 Civitas Partisan Index (CPI), we have winnowed down the key races to 21 races to watch in November.

The CPI compares the average number of votes cast for statewide races in each NC legislative district to the average votes cast statewide. The end result is a letter (D or R) followed by a number, indicating the extent to which each district leans one way or the other relative to the state as a whole.

For example, a district whose voters gave 5 more percentage points to the statewide Democratic candidates compared to the statewide vote average for those Democratic candidates receives an index score of D+5.

A rating of "+0" indicates voters in that district vote for one party more than the state as a whole, but by less than 1 percent.

Of the 21 races we have chosen to watch, it's interesting to note that five of the 14 state House districts and three of the seven state Senate districts are in Wake County.

But for one exception, the races to watch are in districts that have a CPI score of D+4 to R+4, meaning neither party has a strong "home field advantage" there. The exception is House District 51, which has a CPI score of R+5 but is held by a Democrat.

## State House Summary

In the House, only 63 out of 120 districts will be contested in November 2016. Forty-one state House contests were decided before the March primary and 16 contests were decided after the votes were counted in the primary.

Of the 63 House contests that will include more than one candidate in November, the CPI points to only 14 that fall in the category of races to watch. It's worth noting that all but two of these races include incumbents and the power of incumbency is real and often hard to overcome.

## State House Races to Watch

**District 2 (D+0)** Incumbent Larry Yarborough (R-Person), won by 56.7 percent in 2014 after then-Rep. Winkle Wilkins (D) decided not to run in 2014. Wilkins won the district in 2012 by with 56.7 percent of the vote. Yarborough will face Democrat Joe Parrish in the General Election.

**District 6 (R+4)** Given that incumbent Paul Tine (U-Dare) is not seeking election in 2016, District 6 is an open seat. Republican Beverly Boswell, who won her three-way primary with 39.3 percent of the vote, will face Warren Judge, who won the Democratic primary with 71.7 percent of the vote.

**District 8 (R+1)** Susan Martin (R-Wilson), the incumbent, was first elected to the House in 2012, when she garnered 57.2 percent of the vote. She gained strength in 2014 when she won re-election with 60.8 percent of the vote. Martin's opponent in November is Democrat Charlie Pat Farris.

**District 9 (R+4)** While Greg Murphy (R-Pitt) is officially the incumbent, he was appointed to the seat in October 2015 after Rep. Brian Brown left office to work for U.S. Sen. Thom Tillis. Murphy will face Brian Farkas, who won the Democratic primary with 61.6 percent of the vote.

**District 35 (R+4)** Incumbent Chris Malone (R-Wake) has served two terms in the state House. In 2012 he won by 50.8 percent of the vote; in 2014 he widened the winning margin with 56.3 percent. Malone will face Democrat Terrence Everitt in the General Election.

**District 36 (R+4)** Nelson Dollar (R-Wake) has served six terms in the State House. In 2012 he won with 55 percent of the vote and in 2014 he won with 54.4 percent of the total vote. Dollar won his primary in March with 55.7 percent of the vote and will face Jennifer Ferrell, who won her primary with 75.2 percent of the vote, and Libertarian Brian Irving.

**District 40 (R+3)** Five-term incumbent Marilyn Avila (R-Wake) won the 2012 and 2014 elections by carrying 53.9 percent and 54.4 percent of the vote, respectively. She will face former judge Democrat Joe John in the General Election.

**District 41 (R+0)** Democrat incumbent Gale Adcock (D-Wake) beat two-term Republican Rep. Tom Murry in 2014 by winning 51.3 percent of the votes. One of the Democrats in an "R+" district, Adcock will face Republican Chris M. Shoffner in the General Election.

**District 45 (R+3)** Two-term incumbent John Szoka

(R-Cumberland) was unopposed in the 2014 election. He won his first election in 2012 with 56.4 percent of the vote. Szoka will face Democrat Roberta Waddle in the General Election.

**District 49 (R+1)** Republican incumbent Gary Pendleton (R-Wake) was appointed in August 2014 to replace Dr. Jim Fulghum, who died while in office. Pendleton won with 51.6 percent of the vote in 2014. (Fulghum won 54 percent of the vote in District 49 in 2012.) Pendleton will face Democrat Cynthia Ball and Libertarian David Ulmer in November.

**District 51 (R+5)** First-term incumbent Democrat Brad Salmon (D-Harnett) beat two-term incumbent Mike Stone in 2014 by 1,573 votes (53.9 percent of the vote). Stone first won the district in 2010 with 53.5 percent of the vote and again in 2012 with 52 percent. Salmon will face Republican candidate John Sauls in the General Election.

**District 92 (D+1)** A Republican in a "D+" district, Rep. Charles Jeter (R-Mecklenburg) won his primary by 35 votes. But resigned on July 25 and was replaced by Justin Moore. But Danae Caulfield has replaced Jeter on the ballot and will face Democrat Chaz Beasley in the General Election. While a HD 92 is a D+1 district, Jeter won with 51.4 percent of the vote in 2012 and with 52.5 percent of the vote in 2014.

**District 115 (R+1)** First-term incumbent John Ager (D-Buncombe) is one of the Democrats in an "R+" district. Ager upset a Republican incumbent in 2014 (Nathan Ramsey) by winning 50.8 percent of the vote. Ramsey had won an open seat (vacated by a Democrat) in 2012 with 54.3 percent of the vote. Ager will face the winner of the Republican primary, Frank Moretz, in November.

**District 119 (D+1)** Incumbent Joe Sam Queen (D-Haywood) has served two terms in the House. (He also served two terms in the state Senate). Queen won the 2012 race with 51.7 percent of the vote and the 2014 race with 52.5 percent of the vote. In November he will face Mike Clampitt, who he defeated in 2012 by a margin of 51.7 to 48.3 percent, and again in 2014 by 52.6 to 47.4 percent.

## State Senate Summary

There are 13 out of 50 state Senate districts where only one person filed to run in 2016, which means there were already 13 winners in the state Senate before the Primary.

Add two Senate districts where the Republican primary decided the winner because no Democrats or Libertarians filed to run, and that leaves 35 General Election contests for state Senate. Of those, seven meet our criteria as a race to watch. All seven district races include incumbents – and all seven are Republicans.

## State Senate Races to Watch

**District 1 (R+3)** Incumbent Bill Cook (R-Beaufort) has served two terms in the Senate and one in the House. Cook's first election to the Senate was in 2012, when he won by only 21 votes – garnering 50.01 percent of the vote. In 2014 Cook won with 53.4 percent of the vote. He will face Democrat Brownie Futrell in the General Election.

**District 9 (R+4)** Michael Lee (R-New Hanover), the Republican incumbent from Senate District 9, was first appointed to fill Thom Goolsby's unexpired term in August 2014. He ran for the office in November 2014 and won 55.4 percent of the vote. (Goolsby had won the district with 54.2 percent in 2012.) Lee will face Democrat Andrew Barnhill in the General Election.

**District 15 (R+2)** Incumbent John Alexander (R-Wake) has served only one term in the state Senate. He won the seat left open by retiring Sen. Neal Hunt in 2014 by getting 50.4 percent of the vote. Hunt won his last election in 2012 with 55.8 percent of the vote. Alexander will face Democrat Laurel Deegan-Fricke and Libertarian Brad Hessel in November.

**District 17 (R+3)** Tamara Barringer (R-Wake) is the incumbent in the state Senate District 17 race. Barringer was first elected to the Senate in 2012 with 53.7 percent of the vote. In 2014 she won with 58.4 percent of the vote. Barringer had no challenger in the March 15 Primary, but she will face Democrat Susan Evans and Libertarian Susan Hogarth in November.

**District 18 (R+1)** Incumbent Chad Barefoot (R-Wake) was first elected to the House in 2012 with 55.9 percent of the vote and won re-election in 2014 with 52.9 percent of the vote. Neither Barefoot nor his Democrat challenger in the General Election, Gil Johnson, had primary challenges.

**District 19 (D+3)** A Republican in a "D+" district, incumbent Wesley Meredith

(R-Cumberland) is in his third term in the state House. In 2012 he won with 53.9 percent of the vote and won re-election in 2014 with 54.5 percent. Meredith will face Democrat Toni Morris in the General Election.

**District 25 (R+3)** First-term incumbent Tom McInnis (R-Cumberland) beat one-term Rep. Democrat Gene McLaurin in 2014 with 50.4 percent of the vote. McLaurin won in 2012 with 53 percent of the total vote. McInnis will face Democrat Dannie Montgomery in November.

## About the CPI:

The CPI is a useful tool to take into account when looking at North Carolina's legislative political landscape. It is used to study voting tendencies within a district and to identify districts that swing, lean, or firmly trend towards one political party or the other.

Keep in mind that incumbency, turnout, candidates' experience and qualities, fundraising, and current political issues also play powerful roles in determining outcomes in elections.

The CPI is based on voter data from presidential election year results for governor and other Council of State offices.

## North Carolina's Changing Demographic

In 2012 the newly drawn legislative districts were applied to the 2012 vote for Governor and all Council of State races except the attorney general's race, which was uncontested. Though we couldn't compare individual districts in this CPI with the last one, because of redistricting, we were able to compare average voting patterns from 2008.

While it is true that historically in Council of State races North Carolinians tend to vote for Democratic candidates, in the 2012 CPI we saw a possible shift in that voting pattern.

In the 2008 election, the average Council of State vote (looking at only votes for Democratic or Republican candidates) was 53.4 percent Democratic and 46.6 percent Republican statewide; in the 2012 model, the average vote statewide was nearly even: 50.6 percent Democratic to 49.4 percent Republican. ■

To see more about how legislators voted, go to: [civitasaction.org](http://civitasaction.org)

# Latest Civitas Poll Highlights Statewide Elections

BY CIVITAS STAFF

The latest Civitas Poll shows that key statewide elections are strongly competitive, with a significant number of voters still undecided in many Council of State elections.

In the presidential race, Republican businessman Donald Trump is tied with the Democratic candidate, former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, a Democrat. Both were picked by 42 percent of the NC voters in the poll. Five percent of voters favored Libertarian Gary Johnson, ex-governor of New Mexico; 9 percent were undecided.

The survey of 600 likely NC voters had a margin of error of plus/minus 4 percent, and was in the field Sept. 11-12.

In the gubernatorial race, Gov. Pat McCrory led Attorney General Roy Cooper 45 percent to 43 percent. Libertarian Lon Cecil was chosen by 1 percent, with 9 percent undecided.

McCrory, a Republican, was mayor of Charlotte for 16 years and was elected governor in 2012. Democrat Cooper served as a state representative and a senator before being elected attorney general in 2000. Cecil's first foray into politics was in 2010 as the Libertarian candidate for a congressional seat.

In the U.S. Senate race, Republican Sen. Richard Burr was ahead of challenger Democrat Deborah K. Ross 44 percent to 39 percent, with Libertarian Sean Haugh at 2 percent and 15 percent undecided.

Burr was the 5th District congressman from 1995 to 2005. He was elected to the Senate in 2004 and re-elected in 2010. Ross is an attorney who had been state director of the ACLU and also was elected to the state House of Representatives.

Haugh, long active in the Libertarian Party, also was on the ballot for the Senate in 2014.

## Council of State

In the lieutenant governor's race, GOP incumbent Dan Forest was at 35 percent and his Democratic challenger, Linda Coleman, was at 39 percent. Libertarian Jackie Cole garnered 4 percent. Twenty-one percent of voters were undecided.

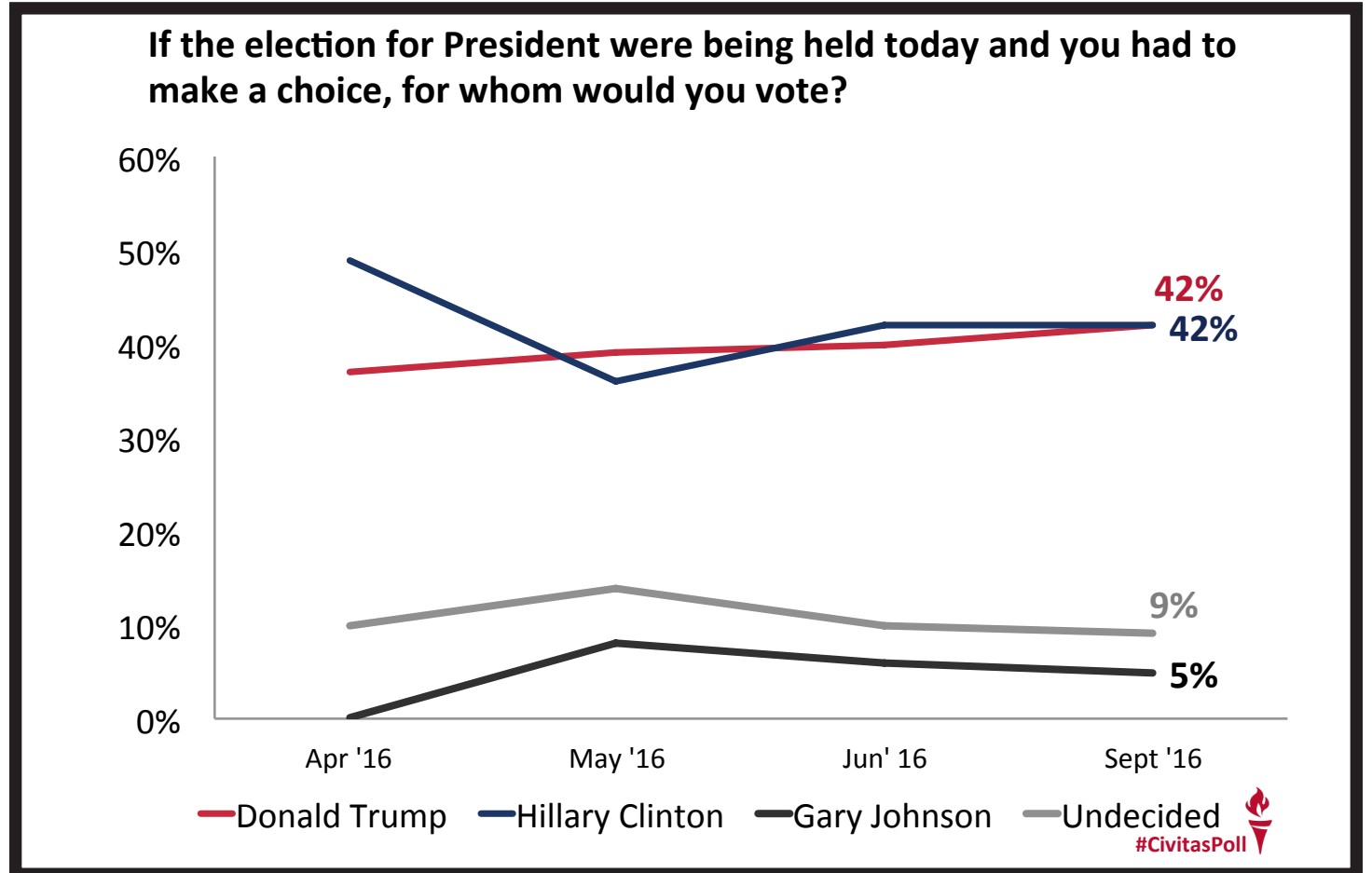
Forest, an architect, was elected lieutenant governor in his first try for elected office, in 2012. Coleman served on the Wake County board of commissioners, was elected to the state House, and headed the Office of State Personnel from 2009 to 2012, when she ran unsuccessfully

for lieutenant governor. Cole has worked at a technology company in sales and marketing.

commissioner, challenger Mike Causey, a Republican, trailed incumbent Wayne Goodwin 32

The Republican candidate for treasurer, Dale Folwell, was favored by 32 percent of the

charge of the state Division of Employment Security, where he spearheaded reforms of



In the attorney general race, Republican Buck Newton was the choice of 35 percent of the voters in our polls, while Democrat Josh Stein was favored by 37 percent. Undecided voters made up 26 percent of the sample.

Newton heads up a law firm in Wilson and was first elected to the state Senate in 2010. Stein worked in the state attorney general's office before being elected in 2008 to the Senate.

Incumbent Democratic State Auditor Beth A. Wood is ahead of Republican challenger Chuck Stuber 37 percent to 30 percent in the race for that office. However, 31 percent of voters were undecided.

Stuber is a CPA and an attorney. As an FBI special agent, he worked on several high-profile corruption cases and most recently had been chief investigator for the State Board of Elections. Wood, a CPA, served in the State Treasurer's Office and in the State Auditor's Office before being elected state auditor.

The current agriculture commissioner, Republican Steve Troxler, has a 41 percent-to-33 percent edge over Democrat challenger Walter Smith. The undecided voters made up 25 percent of the response.

Troxler, a tobacco farmer, has served as the state's agriculture commissioner since 2005. Smith lost to Troxler in the 2012 election for the post. Smith has been a poultry farmer, U.S. Department of Agriculture employee, and mayor of Boonville.

In the race for insurance

percent to 38 percent, with 29 percent undecided.

A retired insurance agent, Causey has sought the office several times before.

A former state representative and also an assistant insurance commissioner, Goodwin was first elected insurance commissioner in 2008.

Republican incumbent Cherie Berry led Democrat Charles Meeker in the commissioner of labor race 41 percent to 35 percent. Nearly one-fourth of voters, 24 percent, were undecided.

Berry, a former businesswoman and state representative, has been labor commissioner since first being elected in 2000. Meeker was elected mayor of Raleigh five times.

Seeking election as secretary of state, Republican Michael LaPaglia trails Elaine Marshall, the Democrat who now holds the office, 31 percent to 42 percent, with 26 percent of those surveyed undecided.

LaPaglia is making his first bid for elected office. He owns a consulting firm. Incumbent Marshall is an attorney who also served in the state Senate.

In the superintendent of public instruction race, GOP challenger Mark Johnson was favored by 34 percent of the voters, while incumbent June Atkinson was supported by 42 percent. Twenty-three percent of the respondents were undecided.

Johnson, a lawyer, is also a member of the Winston-Salem/Forsyth School Board. A former teacher, Atkinson has headed the Department of Public Instruction since 2005.

voters. The Democrat candidate, Dan Blue III, was the choice of 37 percent, while 28 percent of voters were undecided.

A former state representative and House speaker pro tempore, Folwell most recently was in

the unemployment insurance system.

The son of the state Senate majority leader, Blue has been an attorney, investment banker and business executive. ■

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# NC Jobless Rate Dips Below the National Average

BY NCCC STAFF

North Carolina's seasonally adjusted July unemployment rate was 4.7 percent, decreasing 0.2 of a percentage point from June's revised rate, the state Commerce Department reported. This meant the NC unemployment rate was less than the U.S. rate, which was reported to be 4.9 percent.

The Old North State's July 2016 unemployment rate was 1.0 percentage point lower than it was a year ago. The number of people employed increased 114,518 over the year.

The number of people unemployed decreased 12,953 over the month to 225,934, and decreased 47,154 over the year.

According to news reports, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported North Carolina had one of the biggest decreases in

the unemployment rate in the nation during the past year.

The charts below show, first, the decline in the state unemployment rate, from one of the highest in the country at the start of 2013, to July of this

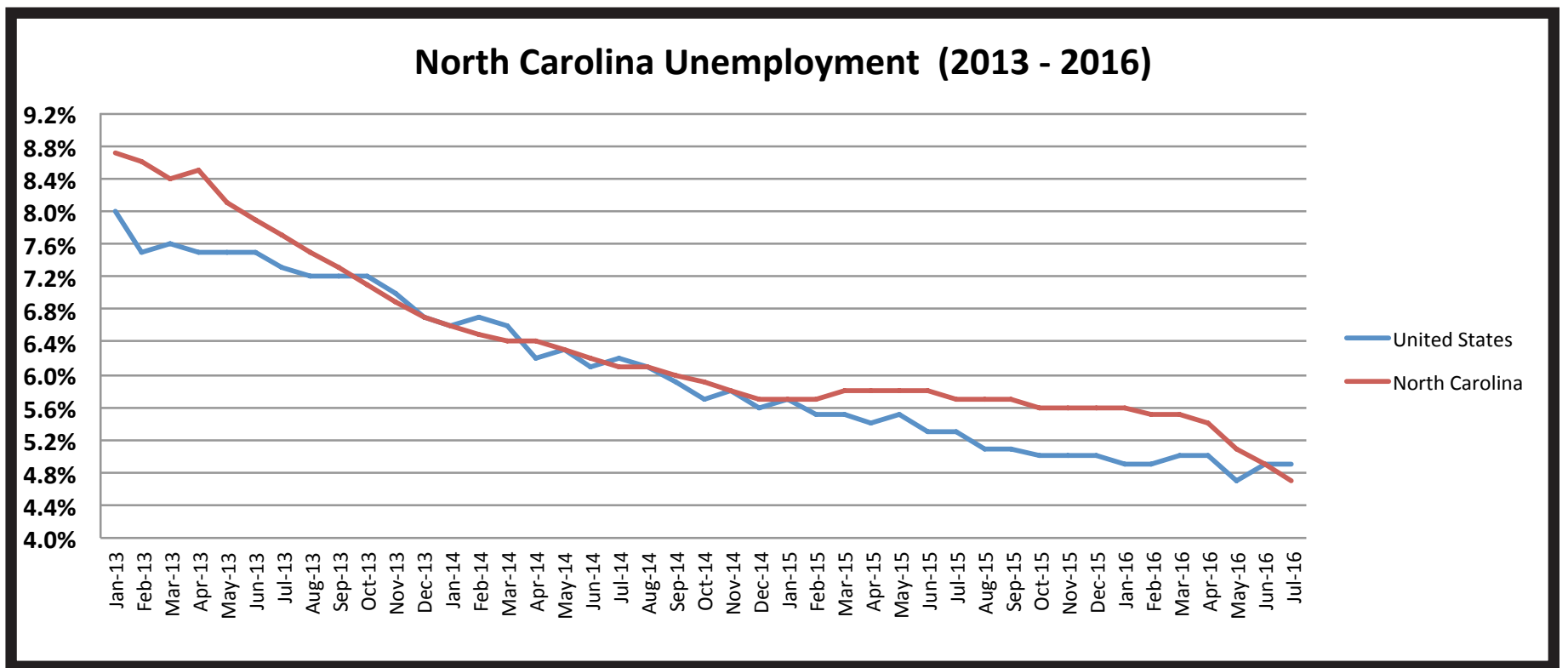
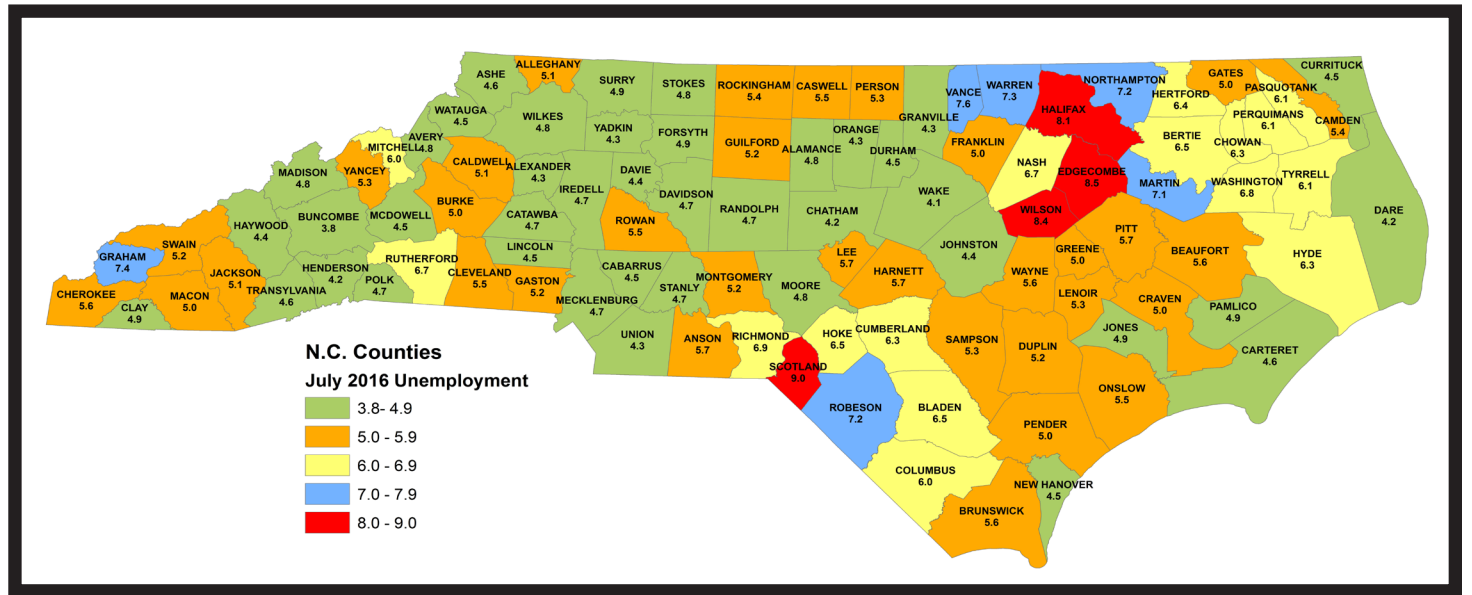
year, when (as mentioned above) it dipped below the national average.

The chart at the bottom of the page shows the county-by-county trends from October of 2008, just before that

presidential election; in January 2013, when Gov. Pat McCrory took office and Republican Party solidified its hold on the General Assembly; and today's figures.

The August unemployment figures, which will be reported

in the next NC Capitol Connection, are expected to show continued improvement in the unemployment statistics here. ■



## 2008 - 2013 - 2016 N.C. Unemployment Rate Comparison

County	10-08	1-13	7-16	County	10-08	1-13	7-16	County	10-08	1-13	7-16	County	10-08	1-13	7-16
Alamance	7.1	10	4.8	Cumberland	6.8	11	6.3	Johnston	6.1	8.9	4.4	Randolph	6.7	11.1	4.7
Alexander	7.9	10.2	4.3	Currituck	3.6	10.5	4.5	Jones	6.8	10.7	4.9	Richmond	9.5	13.6	6.9
Alleghany	6.6	12.6	5.1	Dare	4.2	20.1	4.2	Lee	8.2	12.7	5.7	Robeson	8.1	13.9	7.2
Anson	9.5	12.8	5.7	Davidson	7.4	10.7	4.7	Lenoir	7.8	10.8	5.3	Rockingham	7.9	11.7	5.4
Ashe	6.3	13.8	4.6	Davie	6.9	9.3	4.4	Lincoln	7.2	10.8	4.5	Rowan	7.2	10.3	5.5
Avery	5.6	13.7	4.8	Duplin	5.9	10.6	5.2	Macon	5.3	13.3	5	Rutherford	8.7	14.7	6.7
Beaufort	7.3	11.8	5.6	Durham	5.4	7.9	4.5	Madison	5.7	10.1	4.8	Sampson	5.4	9	5.3
Bertie	7.5	13.5	6.5	Edgecombe	11.4	16.6	8.5	Martin	6.9	12	7.1	Scotland	11.7	17.8	9
Bladen	8.1	13.6	6.5	Forsyth	6.3	9.4	4.9	Mcdowell	8.1	11.9	4.5	Stanly	7	10.1	4.7
Brunswick	6.9	12.2	5.6	Franklin	6.7	9.6	5	Mecklenburg	6.6	9.7	4.7	Stokes	6.1	9	4.8
Buncombe	5.1	8.1	3.8	Gaston	7.7	11.1	5.2	Mitchell	7.7	15.5	6	Surry	8.3	11.1	4.9
Burke	8.6	11.6	5	Gates	5.2	8.3	5	Montgomery	8.3	11.1	5.2	Swain	5.5	19	5.2
Cabarrus	6.4	9.4	4.5	Graham	8.2	20.4	7.4	Moore	6.4	10.1	4.8	Transylvania	5	11.5	4.6
Caldwell	8.3	12	5.1	Granville	7	10.3	4.3	Nash	8.6	12.7	6.7	Tyrrell	6	13	6.1
Camden	5.4	9.4	5.4	Greene	7	9.8	5	New Hanover	5.4	10.4	4.5	Union	6	8.6	4.3
Carteret	5	10.6	4.6	Guilford	6.7	10.3	5.2	Northampton	7.7	12.1	7.2	Vance	9.8	13.8	7.6
Caswell	8.2	10.4	5.5	Halifax	9.7	14.7	8.1	Onslow	5.8	9.6	5.5	Wake	5	7.8	4.1
Catawba	7.9	11.6	4.7	Harnett	7.1	11.5	5.7	Orange	4.2	6.6	4.3	Warren	9.7	12.9	7.3
Chatham	5.5	7.5	4.2	Haywood	5.7	10.2	4.4	Pamlico	5.7	11.2	4.9	Washington	7.2	13.5	6.8
Cherokee	8.7	14.1	5.6	Henderson	5.1	7.9	4.2	Pasquotank	6.4	12.4	6.1	Watauga	4.1	9.5	4.5
Chowan	8.5	11.3	6.3	Hertford	6.6	11.5	6.4	Pender	6.4	11.5	5	Wayne	6.3	9.8	5.6
Clay	6	10.6	4.9	Hoke	6.3	9.7	6.5	Perquimans	6.7	11.1	6.1	Wilkes	8.2	11.7	4.8
Cleveland	8.5	11.3	5.5	Hyde	4.6	15.7	6.3	Person	7.3	11.1	5.3	Wilson	7.9	13	8.4
Columbus	8.1	13.8	6	Iredell	6.5	10.4	4.7	Pitt	7	9.9	5.7	Yadkin	6.1	10.1	4.3
Craven	6.2	10.8	5	Jackson	4.3	11.3	5.1	Polk	5	8.2	4.7	Yancey	7.2	13.8	5.3

# Voter Registration Surge Less than in 2012

BY SUSAN MYRICK

As expected, voter registration drives are pushing the voter rolls higher in the months leading up to the General Election. But, the 2016 increase falls short of 2012 voter registration growth across the board.

This year, in the eight weeks between July 23 and September 17, voter rolls show a net gain of 79,360 voters. (See the chart on the opposite page for full details.)

Since July, Democrats have added 17,110 voters to their total, Republicans had a net gain of 14,075 voters, and the unaffiliated ranks have grown by a whopping 46,893 voters.

Democrats saw their numbers decrease in 52 counties, stay the same one and increase in 47 counties. Democrats are seeing the majority of their growth in large counties. They saw their numbers grow the most in Mecklenburg (6,009) and

Wake (2,400) and their numbers decrease the most in Robeson (-163) and Granville (-164).

the most in Mecklenburg (1,280) and Wake (817). The GOP's biggest losses were in

Mecklenburg Counties saw the greatest number of new unaffiliated voters: Wake added

decrease, but unfortunately can't determine where the voters are originating.

Are they new voters in the county? Or are they changing their party affiliation? The change in party affiliation is what we are missing from the routine reports offered by the State Board of Elections on their website, the data we use each week to update our [www.carolinatransparency.com/voterregistration](http://www.carolinatransparency.com/voterregistration) database.

In August we asked the SBE for a report to show us what has happened, specifically the changes in party registration, since November 2012 through mid-August 2016.

**While the report is detailed and provides data for all 100 counties, the data below shows the changes in voter registration among parties for existing voters.■**

	July 23 - Sept 17, 2016	July 21 - Sept 15, 2012
Total Change	79,360	137,695
Dem Change	17,110	38,499
Rep Change	14,075	29,497
Lib Change	1,282	2,217
Una Change	46,893	67,482

Republicans experienced net losses in three counties and increases in 97 of North Carolina's 100 counties. Republican numbers increased

Granville (-20) and Stokes (-11). The Unaffiliated ranks decreased in only one county – Rutherford lost a net 13 unaffiliated voters. Wake and

7,368 and Mecklenburg added 7,599.

Each week we see the voter registration numbers change. We observe the increase and the

dem_to_una	dem_to_rep	rep_to_una	rep_to_dem	una_to_dem	una_to_rep
79,871	41,273	50,359	14,734	43,823	31,036

## Let Your Legislator Know What You Think

**Step One:** Go to [civitasaction.org/find.php](http://civitasaction.org/find.php)

**Step Two:** Click on your home county to find legislators' names.

**Step Three:** Click on their names to see how they voted on key issues, and where you can reach them with a letter or email.

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Card No. \_\_\_\_\_

Amount: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ CVV: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Changes represent the difference in voter registration between July 23, 2016 and September 17, 2016

County	Total Voters	Total Change	Democrats	Democrat Change	Republicans	Republican Change	Libertarians	Libertarian Change	Unaffiliated Voters	Unaffiliated Change
<b>STATE TOTAL</b>	6,636,667	79,360	2,659,143	17,110	2,017,603	14,075	28,225	1,282	1,931,696	46,893
ALAMANCE	96,696	1,207	38,249	330	32,052	229	357	23	26,038	625
ALEXANDER	23,837	73	6,567	-25	10,491	15	59	4	6,720	79
ALLEGHANY	7,273	52	2,819	-3	2,432	31	29	2	1,993	22
ANSON	17,152	26	11,902	-20	2,359	9	18	0	2,873	37
ASHE	18,593	101	5,659	-1	7,831	52	57	-1	5,046	51
AVERY	11,649	85	1,455	11	6,908	20	42	1	3,244	53
BEAUFORT	32,540	166	13,861	-36	10,454	65	86	2	8,139	135
BERTIE	14,128	11	10,327	-48	1,495	18	19	0	2,287	41
BLADEN	22,494	61	13,643	-81	3,198	64	28	0	5,625	78
BRUNSWICK	91,494	1,147	26,632	96	33,847	445	294	7	30,721	599
BUNCOMBE	191,292	1,839	76,236	419	46,725	73	1,154	51	67,177	1,296
BURKE	57,291	385	19,262	-14	20,053	142	237	6	17,739	251
CABARRUS	126,584	1,711	39,869	355	47,754	358	579	28	38,382	970
CALDWELL	54,132	164	15,171	-80	24,125	54	310	6	14,526	184
CAMDEN	7,481	83	2,519	-8	2,209	36	36	3	2,717	52
CARTERET	51,349	253	12,839	-35	21,395	141	210	4	16,905	143
CASWELL	15,339	54	8,221	-30	3,551	18	30	1	3,537	65
CATAWBA	101,504	782	27,090	88	43,535	255	340	19	30,539	420
CHATHAM	49,284	612	20,244	120	12,740	87	198	9	16,102	396
CHEROKEE	23,461	33	6,610	-46	9,700	17	110	3	7,041	59
CHOWAN	10,211	19	5,069	-20	2,570	6	19	1	2,553	32
CLAY	8,808	92	2,216	2	3,510	49	36	1	3,046	40
CLEVELAND	61,203	589	26,465	7	19,295	226	189	5	15,254	351
COLUMBUS	35,673	231	21,308	9	6,323	91	51	0	7,991	131
CRAVEN	69,703	604	25,043	71	23,801	255	309	14	20,550	264
CUMBERLAND	201,259	2,122	95,744	370	46,834	213	828	30	57,853	1,509
CURRITUCK	18,394	121	4,180	-18	6,482	77	117	5	7,615	57
DARE	28,756	241	9,206	-2	8,651	79	174	7	10,725	157
DAVIDSON	102,552	651	27,428	-13	47,594	260	378	4	27,152	400
DAVIE	28,847	126	5,692	-3	14,848	35	78	8	8,229	86
DUPLIN	29,425	151	14,394	-9	7,800	68	83	4	7,148	88
DURHAM	216,401	4,655	123,054	1,894	28,817	256	924	31	63,606	2,474
EDGECOMBE	38,045	116	27,329	-13	6,058	41	66	0	4,592	88
FORSYTH	243,360	3,523	101,923	1,177	75,154	344	1,022	31	65,261	1,971
FRANKLIN	41,793	474	18,356	-9	12,646	148	163	12	10,628	323
GASTON	135,984	1,645	44,959	291	51,857	439	514	27	38,654	888
GATES	8,448	5	4,727	-15	1,647	11	21	1	2,053	8
GRAHAM	6,346	11	2,037	-13	2,750	10	18	0	1,541	14
GRANVILLE	36,929	-136	18,947	-163	8,858	-20	128	3	8,996	44
GREENE	11,305	1	6,787	-57	1,968	13	27	-1	2,523	46
GUILFORD	347,270	3,537	160,927	1,195	93,594	300	1,481	54	91,268	1,988
HALIFAX	38,177	183	25,921	26	4,572	30	73	4	7,611	123
HARNETT	70,121	834	26,452	137	24,176	267	416	12	19,077	418
HAYWOOD	42,842	390	17,363	-10	12,643	180	183	7	12,653	213
HENDERSON	79,623	862	17,784	137	30,610	178	343	14	30,886	533
HERTFORD	14,892	27	11,080	8	1,411	3	34	-1	2,367	17
HOKE	30,860	191	15,000	41	6,436	62	141	8	9,283	80
HYDE	3,459	-13	2,101	-18	523	-2	8	0	827	7
IREDELL	113,532	1,153	30,665	111	47,043	436	471	5	35,353	601
JACKSON	26,756	600	10,266	90	6,855	150	117	18	9,518	342
JOHNSTON	117,103	1,317	38,049	194	44,923	420	540	30	33,591	673
JONES	7,346	11	3,794	-9	1,739	10	25	0	1,788	10
LEE	33,922	332	14,635	38	9,622	102	124	5	9,541	187
LENOIR	38,802	98	21,710	-26	9,447	32	89	4	7,556	88
LINCOLN	53,512	546	14,350	20	23,036	247	187	6	15,939	273
MACON	24,894	212	6,885	3	9,912	104	93	1	8,004	104
MADISON	16,332	126	6,752	-18	4,231	20	84	6	5,265	118
MARTIN	17,065	76	10,523	-6	3,274	22	40	0	3,228	60
MCDOWELL	28,408	126	8,852	-37	10,403	81	104	2	9,049	80
MECKLENBURG	671,959	15,154	300,963	6,009	168,018	1,280	3,200	266	199,778	7,599
MITCHELL	11,066	21	1,150	0	6,779	10	28	-1	3,109	12
MONTGOMERY	15,874	58	7,346	-59	4,684	51	44	1	3,800	65
MOORE	63,872	597	16,668	61	26,164	145	284	19	20,756	372
NASH	65,021	378	33,606	87	18,444	87	157	6	12,814	198
NEW HANOVER	161,234	1,134	53,144	125	51,835	252	994	14	55,261	743
NORTHAMPTON	14,623	55	10,824	-22	1,361	28	15	0	2,423	49
ONSLow	101,196	1,236	28,711	150	35,971	440	681	29	35,833	617
ORANGE	109,555	4,009	52,512	1,152	17,004	175	593	55	39,446	2,627
PAMLICO	9,527	66	4,005	14	2,954	30	31	-1	2,537	23
PASQUOTANK	27,779	39	13,498	-38	5,707	36	137	0	8,437	41
PENDER	38,128	549	12,961	-11	13,979	272	195	11	10,993	277
PERQUIMANS	9,948	98	4,303	10	2,551	33	31	3	3,063	52
PERSON	26,197	110	12,451	-25	6,356	28	84	4	7,306	103
PITT	116,720	1,668	55,080	369	30,512	362	566	36	30,562	901
POLK	15,647	115	4,587	-1	5,406	42	70	2	5,584	72
RANDOLPH	90,286	528	19,908	18	44,813	248	350	9	25,215	253
RICHMOND	30,032	134	17,369	-103	5,484	38	62	0	7,117	199
ROBESON	74,720	530	50,825	-164	9,255	107	165	4	14,475	583
ROCKINGHAM	59,290	265	23,897	-75	19,979	159	194	1	15,220	180
ROWAN	91,934	967	28,593	218	37,192	276	282	23	25,867	450
RUTHERFORD	43,996	227	15,971	-80	15,487	320	180	0	12,358	-13
SAMPSON	36,864	201	16,646	-19	13,344	76	91	5	6,783	139
SCOTLAND	22,293	179	13,173	26	3,470	67	41	2	5,609	84
STANLY	39,799	227	11,610	-25	17,289	97	109	0	10,791	155
STOKES	30,796	-40	8,326	-105	14,691	-11	138	6	7,641	70
SURRY	44,268	319	14,652	-32	18,204	151	121	-1	11,291	201
SWAIN	10,305	78	4,135	5	2,610	24	33	0	3,527	49
TRANSYLVANIA	24,719	276	6,910	66	8,070	28	105	3	9,634	179
TYRRELL	2,446	-2	1,482	-10	331	5	4	1	629	2
UNION	145,852	1,415	39,023	265	61,695	285	571	9	44,563	856
VANCE	29,637	87	20,006	-6	4,315	14	54	0	5,262	79
WAKE	675,519	10,769	257,975	2,400	185,725	817	3,695	184	228,124	7,368
WARREN	13,379	46	9,438	-6	1,691	20	33	1	2,217	31
WASHINGTON	8,571	53	5,975	-24	1,085	12	23	-1	1,488	66
WATAUGA	43,436	2,087	11,851	513	13,750	380	405	58	17,430	1,136
WAYNE	73,952	373	32,924	24	23,565	90	235	4	17,228	255
WILKES	41,916	249	10,317	9	21,470	126	112	1	10,017	113
WILSON	55,063	233	29,537	68	13,636	33	120	4	11,770	128
YADKIN	23,645	72	4,329	-30	13,131	39	64	0	6,121	63
YANCEY	13,672	106	5,314	2	4,829	31	37	-1	3,492	74

## Scandal

# Sen. Hartsell's Case Spotlights Questions About Campaign Finance Reporting

BY BOB LUEBKE

He's the longest-serving legislator in the North Carolina Senate. He's represented constituents in Cabarrus and Union counties for 13 terms -- over a quarter-century. Now Republican Sen. Fletcher Hartsell is under indictment.

That decision was handed down in late June by a Wake County grand jury alleging that he signed false campaign reports and misused campaign funds.

Hartsell said he will not seek re-election, but he will not resign. He also has vowed to fight the charges.

The Wake County indictment against Hartsell is based largely on a three-year investigation into his campaign spending that culminated in an 800-page report by the State Board of Elections (SBE). On June 17, 2015, the SBE voted 5-0 to refer its investigation to state and federal prosecutors.

In response to that decision, Hartsell issued the following statement: "Campaign finance laws allow legislators to claim costs associated with holding office in addition to campaign-related expenses. During the 2009-10 and 2011-12 legislative sessions, due to the busy legislative workload and a tremendous amount of time devoted to that work, I incurred

significant 'holding office' and campaign-related expenses."

The SBE report alleges that in 2009 and 2012 Hartsell filed false campaign expenditure reports and used \$109,000 of campaign money on personal expenses. Among other things, according to the report, Hartsell used campaign funds (often listed as payments to his law firm) to pay for shoe repairs, magazine subscriptions, upkeep

and maintenance of his property, and other services.

It should be noted Hartsell has been serving in the North Carolina General Assembly since 1991. Prior to 2006, candidates in North Carolina were allowed to use campaign funds for personal expenses. As might be expected, many candidates took advantage of the provision and purchased a variety of extravagances, including cars, trips and laptops.

The law was changed in 2006.

Elections Director Kim Strach is quoted in one news account as saying the day before the law took effect prohibiting candidates from using campaign money on personal expenses, Hartsell had more reported expenditures than any other candidate.

Commenting on the report in a local newspaper, SBE Executive Director Josh

If true, the allegations will certainly discredit Hartsell's quarter-century of service. A conviction might also impede his ability to practice law in North Carolina. While that's certainly concerning, equally concerning is how the charges were discovered.

Campaign expenditures are reviewed or audited by the SBE. However, none of this came to light until 2013.

Which brings us to the question: Does a law that requires no monitoring serve as a sufficient deterrent? In this case, you'd have to say no. Of course one alternative might be to change the law back to what it was prior to 2006. If voters don't like how their money is spent, they can make their sentiments known to the candidate -- or at the ballot box.

Hartsell is facing serious legal problems. If laws were violated, justice must not only be done and penalties be delivered.

That's only part of the problem, however. We should rethink the current reporting requirements facing candidates.

Is the current law necessary? Is it really better than the previous law that allowed candidates to spend campaign funds on nearly any personal expense?

Yet if we adhere to the current law, we need to ensure transparency and define who will monitor reports. North Carolinians deserve no less. ■

*"Prior to 2006, candidates in North Carolina were allowed to use campaign funds for personal expenses. As might be expected, many candidates took advantage of the provision and purchased a variety of extravagances, including cars, trips and laptops."*

Howard said, "I think we see a pattern here of opaque and circuitous disclosures. It bothers me that those go on when the official seems to have generated significant personal debt and is also spending campaign money on what appears to be purely personal purposes."

Hartsell's legal problems aren't limited to Wake County. A federal case against the Republican senator is also proceeding.

SBE officials said their probe was in large part initiated by a News & Observer investigation that highlighted questionable campaign expenditures by Hartsell. Heaven only knows what stories might be lurking in other reports.

Scandal is a regular column in *Civitas Capitol Connection* that will explore public corruption in NC Government.

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