



# Dennis Prager to Headline CLC

BY RAY NOTHSTINE

Nationally syndicated talk show host Dennis Prager is the Friday headliner for the evening portion of the Civitas' Conservative Leadership Conference in Raleigh on April 13. The two-day event will take place at the Raleigh Marriott Crabtree Valley.

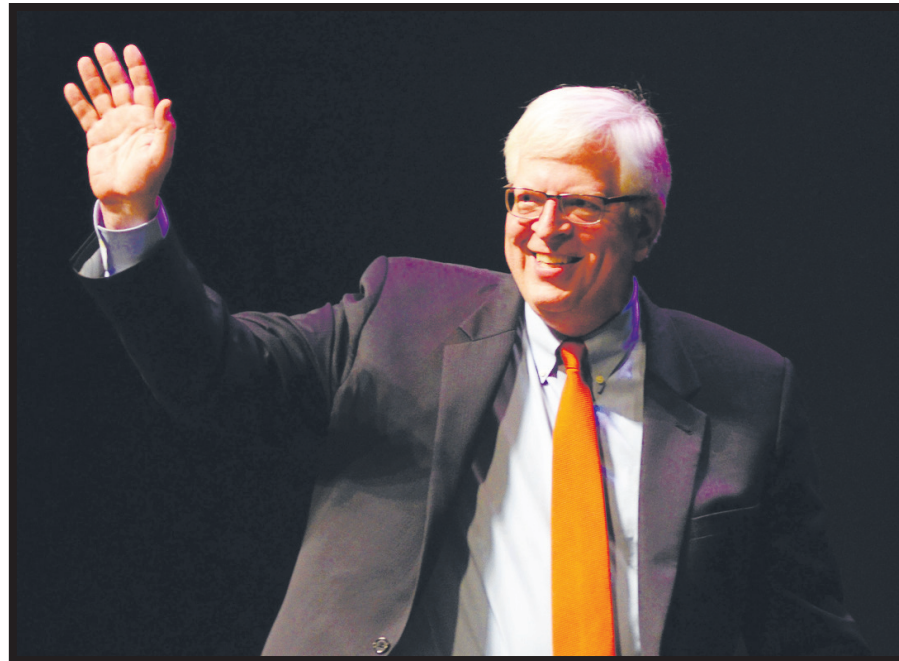
ToastMasters has named Prager "One of America's five best speakers." He is the author of several books including "Still the Best Hope: Why the World Needs American Values to Triumph" and the "Ten Commandments: Still the Best Moral Code."

Prager began broadcasting in 1982 in Southern California and his radio show has been syndicated since 1999. The Los Angeles Times called him "an amazingly gifted man and moralist whose mission in life has been crys-

tallized – 'to get people obsessed with what is right and wrong.'" VIP tickets to a private reception featuring Prager and other distinguished

guests are available for purchase at [civitasclc.org](http://civitasclc.org).

Prager epitomizes where conservatism "is going and how we can grow our base," said Civitas Communications Director Brooke Medina. "And that is crucial, for conservatives to stay not only relevant to their current base but to expand and win the college-aged generation and those coming up, maybe even Generation Z'ers."



Medina praised Prager's use of multimedia to reach an expanding and more youthful audience for conservatism. "The vid-

Some of the other speakers scheduled to appear at the conference include former South Carolina senator and senior adviser to

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Prager University produces explain really complex issues...that decimate lies and propaganda, peddled by the left. If you're concerned about the conservative movement reaching younger generations," added Medina "you will find a lot about Prager's style that will set your mind at ease."

the Convention of States Project, Jim DeMint, North Carolina Lt. Governor Dan Forest, State Treasurer Dale Folwell, and the creative producer John Papola. The infamous 2010 viral sensation video "Fear the Boom and Bust" was created by Papola and economist Russ Roberts of the George Mason University Mercatus Center. The

video has over six million views on YouTube. N.C. House Speaker Tim Moore is also slated to speak at CLC as well as John Fund, a long-time journalist and national affairs columnist for National Review.

In existence since 2008, the Conservative Leadership Conference will feature speakers from around the country from diverse organizations within the conservative movement. Breakout sessions led by nationally-recognized experts will inform attendees about key issues in politics, social issues, education, elections, and free-market economics.

Civitas Director of Development and CLC organizer Alexander Guin called the event a "crash course in conservative ideas." He noted that Civitas is always striving to make CLC "bigger and better" every year.

Some of the past speakers include Charles Krauthammer, Nigel Farage, Rep. Mark Meadows and President of Judicial Watch Tom Fitton. Full information on the annual conference can be found at [civitasclc.org](http://civitasclc.org).

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NC Capitol Connection  
805 Spring Forest Rd Ste 100  
Raleigh, NC 27609  
Vol. 10, No. 2



## FROM THE EDITOR

# Cultivating, Sustaining a Free Society

The cover story this month is an overview of the upcoming Conservative Leadership Conference in April. Cultivating and sustaining a free society requires civic engagement and we hope you can make plans to join us next month.

I'm excited to hear Christopher Scalia speak at CLC, particularly about his new book and the legacy of his father, the late Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia. One of my favorite books I've read over the last several years has been "Scalia

Dissents: Writings of the Supreme Court's Wittiest, Most Outspoken Justice." It has helped me learn a lot about "originalism" as a legal philosophy and the importance of fidelity to the founding texts for the rule of law.

Included in this issue is a review of Robert Luddy's "Entrepreneurial Life: The Path from Startup to Market Leader." Luddy is also one of the speakers at CLC this year and can offer valuable insight for not only business success but well-rounded skills for life.

Civitas polling has helped to reinforce, at least, currently, that all the talk of a "Blue Wave" election overtaking North Carolina is premature. Our new president Donald Bryson offers up some important thoughts below on the "Blue Wave" prediction. We've included updates and graphics from some of the other latest polling results in this issue as well.

Brian Balfour offers a piece on the importance of expanding rural medical care in North Carolina. This is an issue that is gain-

ing steam in the General Assembly, particularly because it's a legitimate crisis with some much-needed common sense solutions and deregulation.

Susan Myrick gives us an update on efforts to implement online voter registration in North Carolina and Bob Luebke pushes back against the narrative that charter schools are hurting traditional public schools.

Also included in this issue is an overview of the ethics complaint Civitas President Donald Bryson has filed against Gov. Roy

Cooper for his mitigation fund for the Atlantic Coast Pipeline. Civitas will continually hold public officials of both political parties accountable to uphold the public trust and confidence.

There is more content in this issue and we look forward to continually improving and building upon various aspects of this publication. As always, we appreciate your support and involvement in our work to remove barriers to freedom in North Carolina.

## Blue Wave in North Carolina? Recent Polls Disagree.

BY DONALD BRYSON

National and state Democratic Party officials, and media pundits have been predicting a "Blue Wave" election in 2018 for months now.

A wave election is difficult to define, but Mark Barabak, with the Los Angeles Times, provided a good definition in 2014:

*There is no authoritative definition of a wave election. (Which is not to be confused with a realigning election, like those in 1932 and 1968, in which a party forges a new and enduring presidential coalition.)*

*A wave election is commonly considered one in which a political party wins a large and lopsided number of House and Senate seats while sustaining minimal losses.*

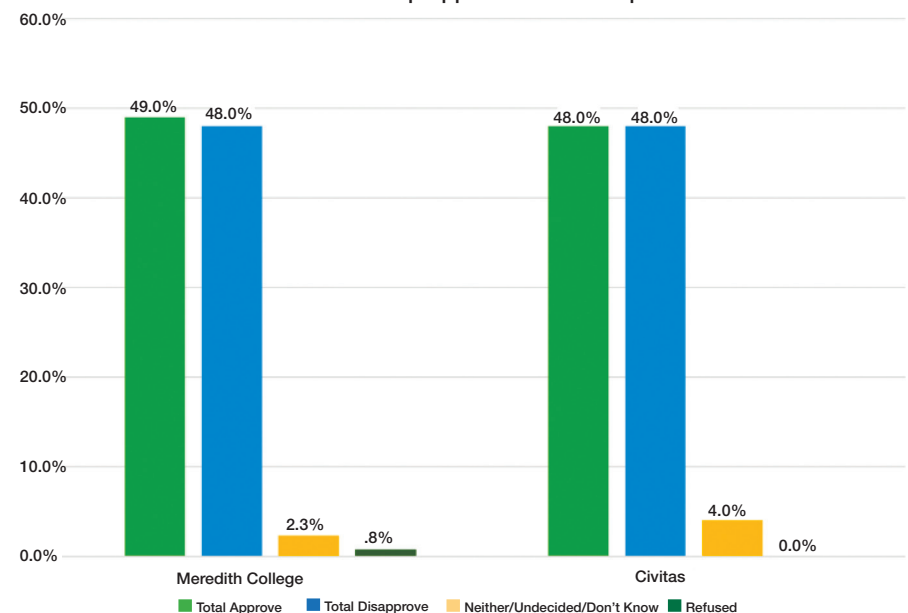
The conventional wisdom on the upcoming 2018 election cycle goes this way: The public has turned against President Donald Trump, his agenda, and the Republican lawmakers. Thus, the 2018 elections will lead to major Democratic gains in the United States House, and potentially break the super-majorities enjoyed by Republicans in the North Carolina General Assembly.

However, if a Blue Wave is coming to the Tar Heel State, what data backs up the theory?

Two recent North Carolina polls, from Meredith College and the Civitas Institute, call these Blue Wave claims into question, at least in North Carolina.

The first step of the Blue Wave prophecy is a widespread job disapproval of President Trump. However, both the Meredith and Civitas polls show that President Trump's North Carolina approval/disapproval ratings are essentially even. No fair reading of either poll shows an overwhelming disapproval of President Trump, which seems to show an initial crack of the Blue Wave rhetoric.

President Trump Approval – Poll Comparison



Plainly speaking, North Carolinians are not overwhelmingly outraged about the President's job performance, which is critical in turnout for the Blue Wave.

As a test of voter motivation, polls will often use "generic ballot" questions.

These questions test political parties against each other in generic elections, such as for Congress or the General Assembly. A typical generic ballot question would be, "If the 2018 election for Congress were held today, would you be

*Continued on page 12*

# Implementing George Soros' Agenda

BY SUSAN MYRICK

- *State Board of Elections director recently announced intentions to introduce online voter registration*
- *SBE bureaucrats, however, do not have authority to make such significant changes to NC election laws*
- *Legislators need to push back against the George Soros backed agenda*

State election officials are once again pushing for online voter registration, are Republicans helping them?

During a Joint Legislative Elections Oversight Committee meeting on December 15, 2017, Kim Strach, executive director of the State Board of Elections (SBE) informed committee members that SBE administrative staff was in the process of working with the North Carolina Department of Motor Vehicles (NC DMV)

to develop and implement online voter registration for the state of North Carolina.

A distinction must be made between the administrative staff of the State Board of Elections and the board because, at this time, there is no “Board of Elections.” Governor Roy Cooper has refused to appoint board members because of changes made to the board’s makeup in legislation passed in 2017. Session Law 2017-6 would have merged the State Board of Elections and the N.C. State Ethics Commission into one agency, overseen by an eight-member Bipartisan State Board of Elections & Ethics and Enforcement agency. Cooper opposes an eight-member board made up of four Democrats and four Republicans and won his case in the Supreme Court in January. The case has been remanded to the Court of Appeals.

Strach’s announcement about her intentions to introduce online voter registration in North Carolina didn’t seem to surprise committee members. No one asked a question as to the appropriateness of the administrative staff deciding and moving ahead

with a change that would require the legislature to make changes to existing election statutes.

The next question should have been obvious; where does the SBE’s administrative staff – all state employees – get the power to develop and implement changes that would introduce new policies and procedures that fundamentally change the ways in which North Carolinians can register to vote and that is contrary to existing election law? All without an appointed board to provide oversight and supervision. While this is an interesting question, we’ve seen this SBE staff attempt to implement online voter registration before without board or legislative approval.

Shortly before the presidential election in 2012, apparently without the knowledge of the SBE members, SBE staff at the time under the supervision of former director, Gary Bartlett, appeared to successfully subvert state law to facilitate online voter registration. Civitas determined that they lied when they claimed the NC Attorney General’s Office conferring with SBE staff on the issue, and avoided oversight by their own

board and the legislature. The result was to illegally add thousands of people to the North Carolina voter rolls.

In February 2013, Civitas Institute documented this, in an article titled “Elections Bureaucrats Ran Amok:”

*how SBE bureaucrats conspired with a private company, working for the Obama campaign, to facilitate a form of online voter registration for the 2012 General Election – in violation of state law. It’s a classic example of how bureaucrats ignore the democratic process and hijack an agency for partisan purposes.*

Then in 2016 just before the presidential election, SBE staff appeared to violate state law once again when they sent instructions to all 100 counties to disregard the law that requires signatures on certain voter registration forms. SBE staff, without the knowledge of board members, instructed the



county Boards of Election directors to move DMV registration forms from the “incomplete queue” to the “review queue.” Then staff made it clear that the local boards would “not need to wait for a signature because the voter is registered (active or inactive).”

State law requires the signature of the voter when the individual changes their voter registration. For some reason, just before early voting commenced, a state employee decided to subvert law and policy. The action was unprecedented and alarmed county board of elections’ directors around the state.

*Continued on page 14*

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## NC Capitol Connection

PUBLISHER  
Civitas Institute

MANAGING EDITOR  
Ray Nothstine

EDITORIAL & ADVERTISING  
805 Spring Forest Rd. Ste 100  
Raleigh, NC 27609

phone: 919.834.2099  
fax: 919.834.2350

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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# February Civitas Poll Results

BY CIVITAS STAFF

Civitas Institute recently conducted an extensive poll of North Carolinians across the state and spanning the political spectrum. With questions ranging from public opinion on national issues to state-specific topics, this poll has provided keener insight concerning North Carolina voters, their political sentiments, and voting priorities.

North Carolinians declared that their top national issue is immigration / illegal immigration and the economy, while calling education the top statewide issue.

State legislative and congressional races are essentially even between the two major political parties. Thirty-nine percent of North Carolinians

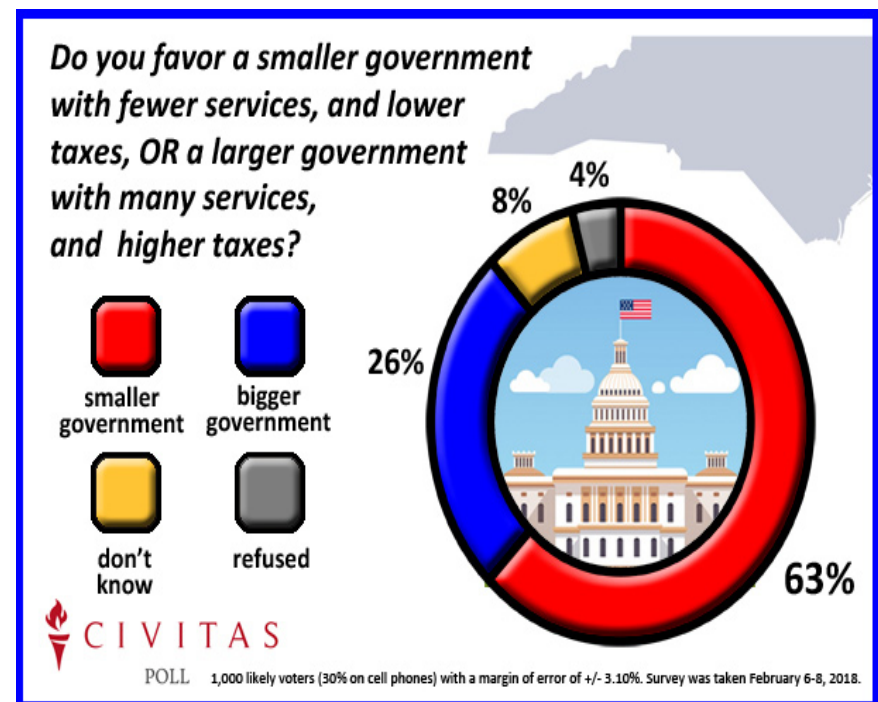
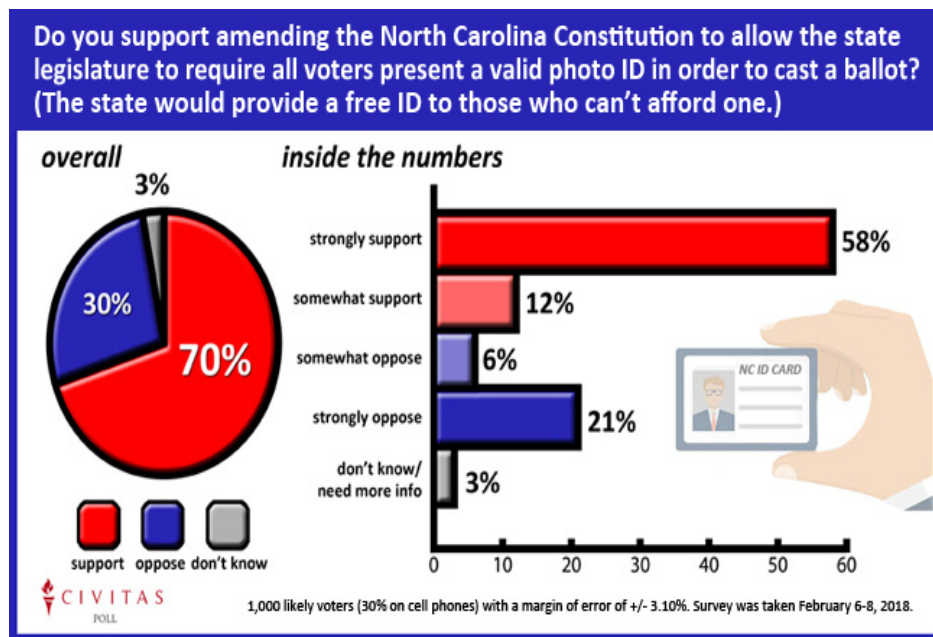
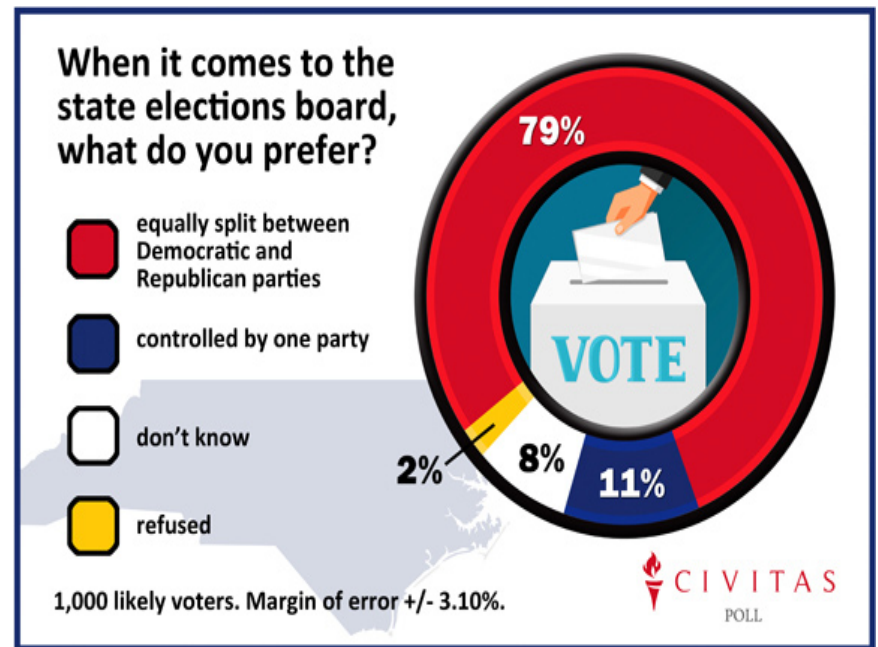
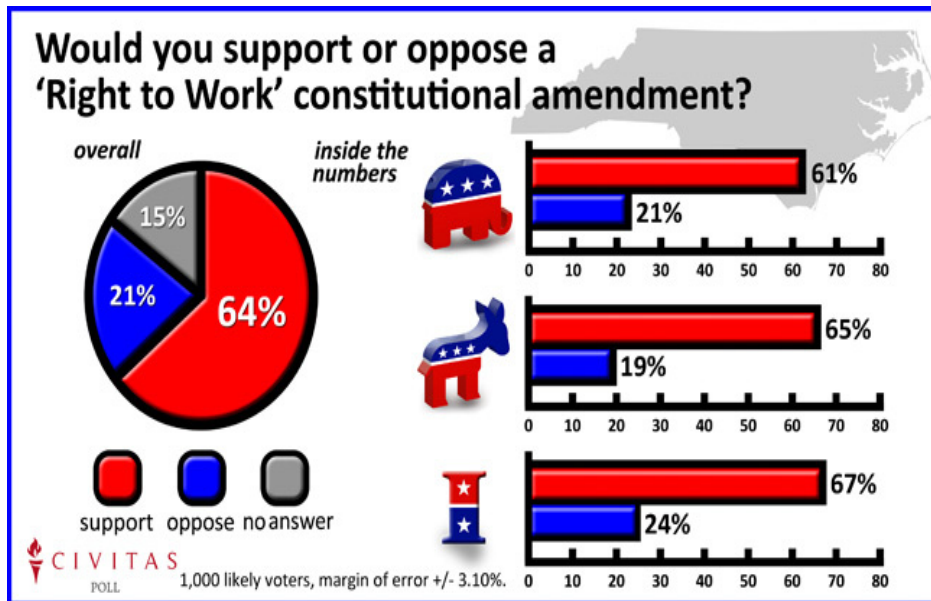
say they would vote for a Republican candidate for the North Carolina General Assembly while 40% for a Democrat. Forty-one percent of respondents have declared their intention to vote for a Republican for Congress, while 41% say they will vote for a Democrat. Republicans lead in the race for the State Supreme Court 41%

to 38%, and that number jumps substantially for Republicans when actual names are included in the poll.

President Donald Trump's job approval rating is split at 48% approval and 48% disapproval. Gov. Roy Cooper has strong approval ratings with 58% approval and 29% disapproval.

This poll surveyed 1,000 likely voters (30% on cell phones) with a margin of error +/- 3.10%. This survey was taken February 6-8, 2018. For a full picture of the poll results including crosstabs visit [www.nccivitas.org](http://www.nccivitas.org).

Below are additional results in the February poll.



# The Truth About North Carolina's State Budget

- As focus turns to the state budget this spring, liberals will predictably claim that the state budget has been “slashed” or “cut to the bone”
- Reality, however, shows that the state budget has grown at a rate three times as fast as population - even after adjusting for inflation - over the last three and a half decades

BY BRIAN BALFOUR

North Carolina's 2018 “short” legislative session will get into full swing later this spring.

The main point of business will be adjusting the second year of the two-year state budget plan approved in 2017. Last year, Gov. Roy Cooper vetoed the budget proposal, calling it “short sighted and small minded.” Cooper's main objections were that the budget didn't spend enough and it included tax cuts.

We should expect similar disagreements this year as well. Big-government liberals will trot out their well-worn, predictable slogans like “government has been cut to the bone” and the state budget has been “slashed.”

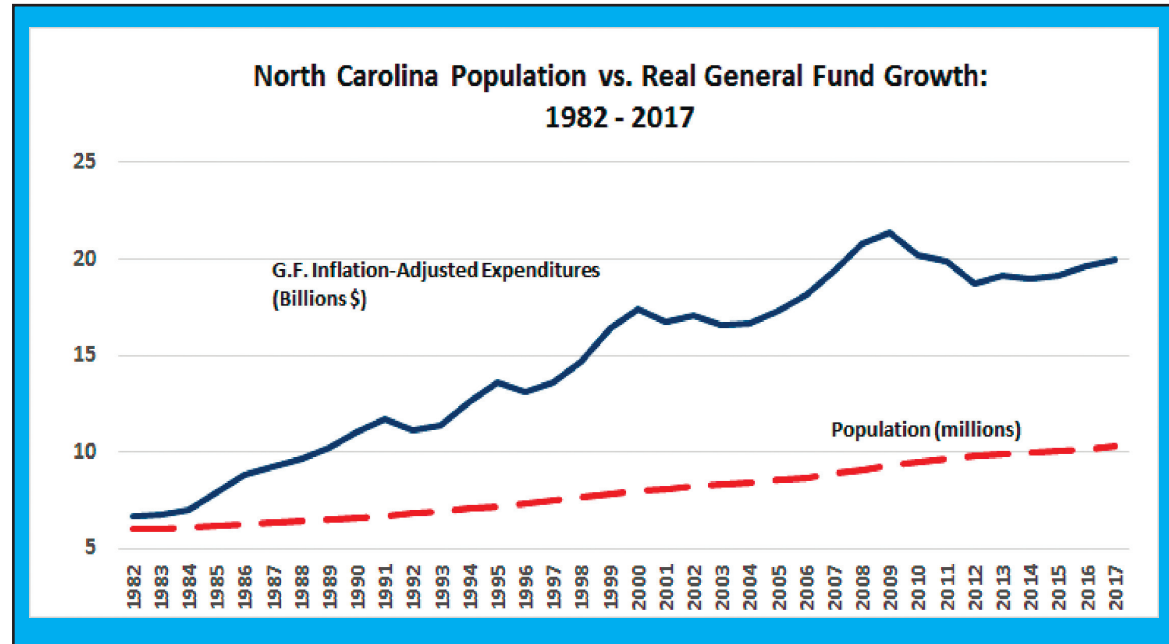
When placed into context, however, such claims

simply don't square with the reality of North Carolina's long-term budgetary trends.

The chart shows the trend lines for the state's inflation-adjusted General Fund budget, compared to population growth, for the past 35 years.

As you can see, even after adjusting for inflation, North Carolina's state budget is now three times as large as it was in the early 1980s. But isn't that just a reflection of a rapidly growing state? No. Compare that growth rate to the state's population growth rate during that time of 73 percent.

In short, inflation-adjusted spending has exploded



at a rate nearly *three times as fast* as population since 1982.

As a result, North Carolina's spending per person — even after adjusting for inflation — *has ballooned by more than 70 percent*. Put differently, North Carolina's state bud-

get now spends \$821 more for every man, woman and child than it did in in 1982 — not due to inflation but in real, inflation-adjusted terms. That comes to an increase of more than \$3,200 for every family of four.

Sure, state spending lev-

eled off a bit after the great recession, but there is no denying the massive increment of state government spending over the last three and a half decades.

## Innovation and Sweat Equity: Keys to Success

REVIEW BY RAY NOTHSTINE

Robert Luddy only had \$1,300 to launch his business and knew that what he didn't have in capital to start out with would have to be made up with sweat. In business, of course, that is commonly referred to as “sweat equity.” The lesson of hard work and persistence is one of the main overarching themes of Luddy's book “Entrepreneurial Life.”

CaptiveAire Systems, headquartered in Raleigh, is the fruit of those efforts. Luddy founded the company in 1976 and continues to serve as President. CaptiveAire is now the largest manufacturer of commercial kitchen ventilation systems in the United States. One of the chief attributes of an entrepreneur is the ability to look into the future; to figure

out and predict the market even before the consumer makes demands. Creating demand through innovation is essential according to Luddy. A big part of Luddy's success too has been honing that skill over a lifetime. “Conventional thinkers are abundant; excellent leaders who reject the status quo are scarce,” writes Luddy.

Like many in business

though, success is far from guaranteed. It took nearly eight years before Luddy's business could be considered stable. That character-building process of cutting costs, constant innovation, and aggressively seeking sales was ultimately critical to the long-term success of CaptiveAire Systems. Luddy credits his early contract with the restaurant franchise Golden

Corral for helping sustain the business through its humbler beginnings. Early in the life of his company, extraordinary measures were needed just to make payroll. Luddy offers up stories like that one as well as entrepreneurial advice from decades of overseeing phenomenal growth as founder and president.

*Continued on page 12*

# Expanding Access to Medical Care in Rural North Carolina

BY BRIAN BALFOUR

Most observers would readily agree that two major issues confronting health care in North Carolina are the rising cost of coverage and care and the limited access to care facing most of our rural populations.

But what if there was a simple way to address both of those problems, basic legislation that has already proved to be effective in more than a dozen states?

## The Problem

Rural North Carolina counties face a significant doctor shortage. Access to care for our state’s rural population has become so acute that a new legislative study committee was formed to develop policies to address the issue. The Committee on Access to Healthcare in Rural North Carolina held its first meeting in January. Legislators heard testimony from health and economic experts about the problems facing healthcare in rural parts of the state.

As reported in North Carolina Health News, the experts informed legislators that “Rural areas have a shortage of almost every type of provider. In

- *Far too many rural North Carolinians lack adequate access to medical care*
- *Physician shortages in rural counties is a primary cause*
- *Eliminating restrictions on Advanced Practice Registered Nurses would go a long way toward alleviating the problem*

North Carolina, 20 counties do not have a pediatrician; 26 counties do not have an OB-GYN; and 32 are without a psychiatrist, according to the interactive North Carolina Health Professions Data System.”

Some of the alarming statistics discussed at the committee meeting included:

- Nationally, only 11 percent of physicians choose to practice in rural areas
- 70 of 80 rural counties in NC are currently designated “medical deserts” for their lack of primary care availability
- 79 North Carolina counties are designated as “primary care health professional shortage areas”
- A decade later, only 3 percent of North Carolina medical school grads from the class of 2008 are currently providing primary care in rural areas

## Expanding Nursing Scope of Practice

Like many professional restrictions and licensing practices, limiting the scope of practice for nurses harms consumers, drives up prices and is designed to benefit specific incumbent professionals. Current North Carolina law restricts the scope of care that registered nurse practitioners, advanced practice registered nurses, and physician assistants can provide, while also requiring a certain level of supervision by a licensed physician.

With so few licensed physicians choosing to practice in rural areas, laws restricting the ability of highly-trained medical care providers to provide much-needed care are dev-

astating to rural populations.

“Our nurses are our best source of practitioners in our rural areas,” Senator Ralph Hise (R-Mitchell)

goes on to higher degrees that is most likely to serve in a rural area.”

Why maintain a decades-old restriction on nursing scope of care, when freeing them to perform many of the basic evaluation and treatment functions — currently limited to physicians — would drastically improve rural populations’ access to health care?



said in a 2016 Joint Health and Human Services Oversight Committee meeting examining a bill to loosen regulations on registered nurses.

“You want the most likelihood of someone practicing in a rural area? It’s someone who attends a community college in a nursing program and even

Those favoring the status quo may invariably bring up safety concerns, but those are misguided at best. Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs) are highly-trained professionals that require masters-level education.

*Continued on page 15*

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# Teacher Quality: the Overlooked Variable

BY REBECCA FAGGE

My elementary years were spent at a rural school in Tuxedo, NC. Built in the 1920s, it was the same school that my father and his siblings attended. I remember using textbooks with my aunts' and uncles' names in them. We had no fancy equipment...just pencils, paper, and chalkboards. The only technology we had was the reel-to-reel movie projector and the hand-cranked duplication machine (I loved the smell of purple worksheets).

I tell you about my childhood school because, despite its significant financial limitations, it produced a major general in the Marine Corps, an Oprah Book Club writer, an international storyteller, and the usual assortment of doctors, lawyers, teachers, and generally hard-working Americans. A rural mountain school did this without tons of money.

It is possible to see the same results in the lives of graduates of today's inner-city schools, and, similar to that rural mountain school, it doesn't require a ton of money. What is the secret for successful educational outcomes? Quite simply, it is the influence of quality teachers.

The golden thread that

runs through all educational research is the assertion that positive student outcomes are directly tied to accomplished teaching. Everyone knows this, but we continue to throw money at a myriad of other educational initiatives. I have long been concerned about a growing lack of quality in the teaching profession. Like every other profession, there are both good and bad practitioners. This fact should not be interpreted as a criticism of all teachers, of course. However, we can never improve the teaching profession until we recognize this reality.

What do I mean? Teacher quality in North Carolina is becoming questionable within the ranks of newly-graduated teachers, lateral entry educators, and the long-enduring (and often long endured) veteran teaching force. Many new hires have graduated both high school and college with what might be characterized today as a minimal education; poor spelling and grammar, limited historical knowledge and context, and a disturbing lack of basic content knowledge. Some new teachers have techno-



logical knowledge and yet have no idea how to teach real concepts if the power happens to go out.

Lateral entry educators are hired from other professions to fill difficult to staff positions in areas such as math or science. They are certified to teach when they take a minimal number of course hours. The most concerning group in this category however includes the colleagues that all current teachers recognize. They are the ones who do the minimum amount of work and complain constantly. Administrators seem loathe to address their various shortcomings and colleagues end up car-

rying their weight.

How can we solve this problem? Admission standards need to be raised for teacher candidates and the quality of teacher preparation courses in the UNC system must be upgraded. Applicants to colleges of education should be able to demonstrate an academic commitment to their undergraduate core courses, but all universities do not currently expect them to demonstrate a 3.0 GPA. Most college level work for teacher candidates is heavy on disjointed theory and very light on theoretical applications in real classrooms. I've heard from some teacher can-

didates that say many of their courses are online. Reducing our teacher preparation to a correspondence course is troubling. Since tax dollars go to support the UNC system, it is reasonable that citizens should be able to expect quality and a minimal amount of standardization in the prescribed coursework. There is enough research available to help guide the adoption of a standard of basics.

For those new hires who may be entering as lateral entry or even as an experienced teacher from another state, NC's certification requirements need to be

- *Quality teaching is a critical component to student progress.*
- *There are concerns about teacher quality in NC.*
- *NC can take action to contribute to a higher quality teaching force.*

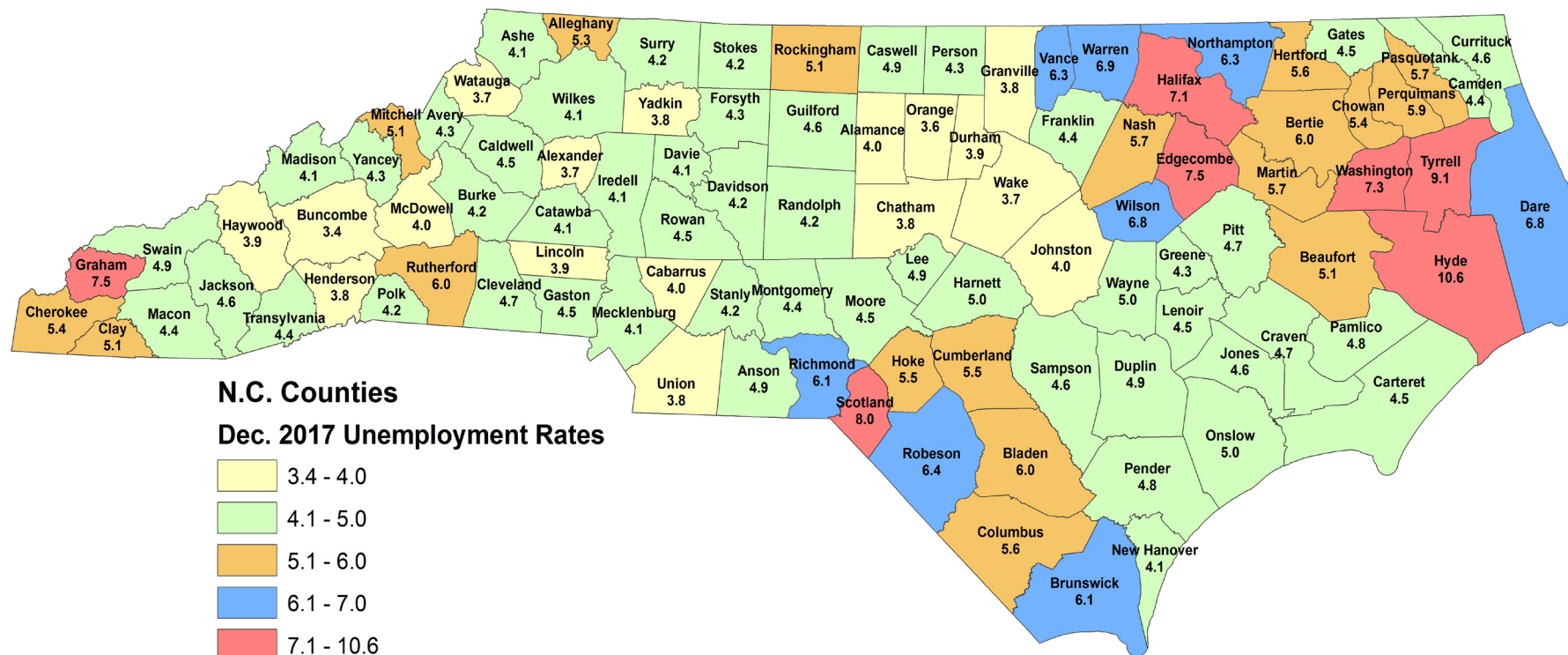
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Changes represent the difference in voter registration between January 6, 2018 to February 24, 2018

County	Total Voters	Total Change	Democrats	Democrat Change	Republicans	Republican Change	Libertarians	Libertarian Change	Unaffiliated Voters	Unaffiliated Change
Totals	6,865,275	24,019	2,649,950	2,033	2,069,690	4,183	34,754	358	2,110,881	17,445
ALAMANCE	99,584	326	38,014	21	32,719	77	487	7	28,364	221
ALEXANDER	24,098	20	6,177	-5	10,696	4	78	1	7,147	20
ALLEGHANY	7,343	13	2,656	-12	2,563	13	35	-1	2,089	13
ANSON	17,221	17	11,612	-9	2,452	4	23	0	3,134	22
ASHE	18,781	39	5,352	-28	8,008	22	70	2	5,351	43
AVERY	11,648	79	1,408	7	6,853	42	48	0	3,339	30
BEAUFORT	32,708	-9	13,201	-38	10,654	13	95	-3	8,758	19
BERTIE	13,959	46	10,006	11	1,550	12	24	0	2,379	23
BLADEN	22,630	32	12,945	-96	3,614	69	39	0	6,032	59
BRUNSWICK	98,351	990	26,988	175	36,791	336	367	9	34,205	470
BUNCOMBE	191,848	372	74,390	-42	45,839	-9	1,369	21	70,250	402
BURKE	57,647	103	18,313	-37	20,544	33	259	2	18,531	105
CABARRUS	133,157	307	40,977	21	48,688	-41	735	-1	42,757	328
CALDWELL	54,370	47	14,174	-45	24,459	-1	355	4	15,382	89
CAMDEN	7,641	17	2,343	-18	2,389	10	46	2	2,863	23
CARTERET	51,756	120	12,086	-32	21,977	37	245	1	17,448	114
CASWELL	15,438	30	7,865	-29	3,542	-102	35	0	3,996	161
CATAWBA	102,783	178	25,910	-27	44,067	18	410	-2	32,396	189
CHATHAM	51,780	171	20,444	-8	13,180	69	231	4	17,925	106
CHEROKEE	22,989	113	5,879	-23	9,798	60	128	0	7,184	76
CHOWAN	10,183	36	4,869	2	2,602	6	23	-1	2,689	29
CLAY	8,529	57	1,958	-10	3,529	26	46	6	2,996	35
CLEVELAND	64,324	254	26,173	12	20,898	92	236	6	17,017	144
COLUMBUS	36,854	175	20,957	14	7,019	68	59	3	8,819	90
CRAVEN	67,652	140	22,991	-28	23,693	30	344	1	20,624	137
CUMBERLAND	212,855	1,484	97,742	325	48,952	286	1,121	23	65,040	850
CURRITUCK	19,179	176	3,979	7	7,038	83	146	0	8,016	86
DARE	29,193	123	8,745	-12	9,011	39	203	-1	11,234	97
DAVIDSON	106,690	673	26,821	18	49,854	273	449	4	29,566	378
DAVIE	29,389	226	5,443	13	14,961	57	112	5	8,873	151
DUPLIN	29,875	4	13,996	-19	8,181	-15	119	1	7,579	37
DURHAM	219,593	224	121,664	40	27,941	-38	1,067	0	68,921	222
EDGECOMBE	38,073	7	26,741	-51	6,187	4	79	1	5,066	53
FORSYTH	254,244	1,041	104,098	260	75,751	98	1,224	5	73,171	678
FRANKLIN	43,337	156	18,045	-8	13,174	21	188	1	11,930	142
GASTON	141,661	447	44,404	35	53,963	111	673	6	42,621	295
GATES	8,533	28	4,576	-1	1,760	12	26	0	2,171	17
GRAHAM	6,300	-9	1,896	-11	2,783	-1	20	0	1,601	3
GRANVILLE	38,213	5	18,666	-19	9,392	-14	140	-3	10,015	41
GREENE	11,322	-19	6,519	-18	2,067	-6	22	0	2,714	5
GUILFORD	364,953	262	166,928	-41	94,492	-171	1,720	0	101,813	474
HALIFAX	37,984	28	25,185	-30	4,680	19	81	-1	8,038	40
HARNETT	73,520	323	26,266	11	25,621	87	498	0	21,135	225
HAYWOOD	43,738	106	16,520	-33	13,247	40	241	6	13,730	93
HENDERSON	82,932	136	18,039	0	31,308	-1	436	6	33,149	131
HERTFORD	15,240	1	11,121	-16	1,491	16	35	0	2,593	1
HOKE	31,686	78	15,067	8	6,709	3	191	3	9,719	64
HYDE	3,405	16	1,979	1	531	0	11	0	884	15



IREDELL	117,958	1,181	30,067	157	48,884	343	555	8	38,452	673
JACKSON	27,897	15	10,078	-17	7,406	2	165	0	10,248	30
JOHNSTON	123,750	1,338	38,337	183	47,577	494	672	5	37,164	656
JONES	7,194	-3	3,517	-21	1,807	1	22	0	1,848	17
LEE	35,916	88	14,672	-19	10,232	32	165	4	10,847	71
LENOIR	38,292	-6	20,857	-34	9,452	-15	111	3	7,872	40
LINCOLN	56,606	604	14,027	51	24,766	246	253	11	17,560	296
MACON	25,503	98	6,510	-12	10,351	46	124	1	8,518	63
MADISON	16,725	32	6,529	-7	4,357	5	98	0	5,741	34
MARTIN	16,833	4	10,073	-10	3,338	-8	40	1	3,382	21
MCDOWELL	29,054	104	8,344	-20	10,987	27	150	3	9,573	94
MECKLENBURG	713,034	1,606	313,595	686	169,838	-221	4,265	41	225,336	1,100
MITCHELL	10,944	12	1,132	-1	6,622	-4	29	-1	3,161	18
MONTGOMERY	16,252	38	7,083	-21	4,976	26	58	3	4,135	30
MOORE	66,111	83	16,385	-37	26,924	-9	337	5	22,465	124
NASH	65,687	75	33,066	-9	18,613	1	199	5	13,809	78
NEW HANOVER	165,873	393	52,304	55	52,627	-23	1,142	1	59,800	360
NORTHAMPTON	14,440	14	10,419	-2	1,445	-5	20	0	2,556	21
ONslow	104,358	611	27,440	30	37,838	146	893	23	38,187	412
ORANGE	112,317	-87	52,021	-92	16,503	-77	720	3	43,073	79
PAMLICO	9,611	65	3,810	-4	3,112	35	36	0	2,653	34
PASQUOTANK	28,292	91	13,067	-21	6,065	40	165	2	8,995	70
PENDER	40,118	153	12,626	-39	15,044	67	228	1	12,220	124
PERQUIMANS	9,929	-20	4,069	-12	2,661	-5	31	0	3,168	-3
PERSON	26,478	4	12,011	-31	6,622	17	99	0	7,746	18
PITT	121,659	486	55,499	100	31,826	81	707	6	33,627	299
POLK	15,750	12	4,374	-12	5,501	-9	79	1	5,796	32
RANDOLPH	90,433	27	18,760	-63	45,525	7	413	4	25,735	79
RICHMOND	30,077	38	16,555	-48	5,840	39	70	-2	7,612	49
ROBESON	74,413	156	48,510	-42	9,882	26	197	3	15,824	169
ROCKINGHAM	59,564	79	22,712	-57	20,589	34	213	4	16,050	98
ROWAN	93,767	183	27,835	25	38,026	37	382	9	27,524	112
RUTHERFORD	44,367	173	14,770	-58	16,559	83	214	5	12,824	143
SAMPSON	37,933	70	16,406	4	13,860	-3	104	0	7,563	69
SCOTLAND	22,285	-61	12,722	-61	3,699	-11	47	0	5,817	11
STANLY	40,890	30	11,154	-42	17,986	2	135	-1	11,615	71
STOKES	30,857	32	7,719	-16	14,928	15	149	-1	8,061	34
SURRY	45,170	-7	13,748	-106	19,007	5	113	-1	12,302	95
SWAIN	10,217	38	3,946	-4	2,631	18	32	0	3,608	24
TRANSYLVANIA	25,356	125	6,675	-8	8,180	12	121	0	10,380	121
TYRRELL	2,402	-7	1,387	-7	354	3	8	0	653	-3
UNION	151,090	380	39,156	51	62,844	53	662	9	48,428	267
VANCE	29,739	-3	19,630	-42	4,381	5	67	0	5,661	34
WAKE	717,650	6,297	266,784	1,530	188,504	772	4,610	77	257,752	3,918
WARREN	13,435	17	9,249	-4	1,801	8	32	0	2,353	13
WASHINGTON	8,639	-49	5,799	-47	1,131	2	27	0	1,682	-4
WATAUGA	45,484	-47	12,098	-59	14,000	15	500	-3	18,886	0
WAYNE	74,053	14	32,124	-65	23,706	-2	292	1	17,931	80
WILKES	42,598	46	9,874	-14	21,921	2	138	4	10,665	54
WILSON	55,328	270	29,091	108	13,665	30	156	4	12,416	128
YADKIN	23,827	11	4,069	-11	13,186	-2	73	1	6,499	23
YANCEY	13,931	27	5137	-7	4,893	9	47	2	3,854	23



The above map shows the December 2017, not-seasonally adjusted, unemployment rates for North Carolina counties. (data from N.C. Department of Commerce)

According to the North Carolina Department of Commerce, the December “not seasonally adjusted” statewide unemployment rate was 4.4 percent,

down 0.1 percent from the previous month.

Unemployment rates decreased in 56 of North Carolina’s counties in December, increased in 20, and remained unchanged in 24. There were 17 counties with rates at or below 4 percent and another 50 counties with rates at or below 5 percent unemployment.

## Civitas Files Ethics Complaint Against Gov. Cooper

BY CIVITAS STAFF

Civitas President Donald Bryson filed a complaint on February 14 with the North Carolina Ethics Commission. This complaint requests the Ethics Board issue an opinion regarding Gov. Roy Cooper’s recent decision to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with Atlantic Coast Pipeline, LLC. Civitas requests that special attention be given to the details surrounding the \$57.8 million “slush

fund.”

Civitas’s complaint questions the ethics of this action by Gov. Cooper—while acting in his official capacity—to issue state permits for construction of the Atlantic Coast Pipeline in what appears to be an exchange for private funds to be used at the governor’s discretion.

There are questions surrounding whether or not these funds could be considered an illegal gift under

the State Government Ethics Act’s gift ban. Of particular concern is the potential that these funds might trickle into projects or accounts that benefit Gov. Cooper and/or his political campaigns.

If declared ethical, this action sets a terrible precedent for what our elected officials can do outside of the constitutional process.

“This is a serious matter of public trust and transparency,” Bryson said.

“The Cooper administration has provided so few details about this unprecedented new slush fund. It’s critical the people of North Carolina know exactly what happened and whether any of Cooper’s actions violate ethics laws. We hope the Ethics Commission will provide details and issue a clear opinion on the governor’s actions.”

State legislators are also seeking answers to ques-

tions about the purpose of the fund, and Senate Leader Phil Berger has said Cooper’s claims so far “don’t pass the smell test.” Legislators drafted 15 questions for the fund that have yet to be answered. Cooper’s Administration has vowed not to answer, saying they “appear to be political in nature, as well as moot.”

# Are Charter Schools Hurting DPS? Look Again.

- *A recent study cited by the N&O claims that charter school growth is “hurting” public schools*
- *But charter schools only grow when families choose to send their children there*
- *Rather than a district in distress, a review of spending and staffing data suggest a district unable to control spending*

A recent study by Helen Ladd (Duke University) and John Singleton (University of Rochester) found that in selected North Carolina school districts, charter schools drained funds from conventional public schools. Specifically, the authors show in Durham county – where approximately 15 percent of the school age population attends charter schools – charter schools cost Durham Public Schools (DPS) between \$500 and \$700 per student.

The study has spawned a lot of rhetoric. Citing the same study, last week editors at the News and Observer opined that the “excessive expansion of charters hurts NC’s traditional public schools.” Even worse, editors suggested that the expansion of charters “represent the

misguided dismantling of a public education system that helped change North Carolina for the better over the last 100 years.”

Demonizing some generic category of “charter schools” intentionally glosses over the fact that it is North Carolina families choosing to enroll their children in charter schools that has fueled the expansion of such schools. Perhaps Ladd, Singleton and the N&O could devote some curiosity as to why so many families are flocking away from the traditional public schools in search of better options.

If charter school growth is hurting the public schools, if the public schools are really being dismantled as the left asserts, there should be evidence of such in the broad outlines of budget and spending fig-

ures and staffing levels.

Ladd and Singleton say charter school growth has had a significant negative fiscal impact on Durham Public Schools. So, let’s look at some relevant trends over the past several years.

Table I provides data for budgets, spending and staffing for DPS for the years 2010-11 to 2016-17. These years are chosen because the Legislature lifted the charter school cap in 2011 and the time period encompasses the period of charter school expansion in Durham.

Between 2010-11 and 2016-17, enrollment in DPS charter schools increased more than 111 percent, increasing from 3,037 (2010-11) to 6,409 (2016-17). Over the same time period, enrollment in DPS only increased 3 percent

(961 students). Likewise, the DPS operating budget increased 18 percent and per student spending grew 15.2 percent over the same period.

It is important to remember DPS and charter schools located in Durham County are both public schools. They both receive state money but for budgeting purposes are treated as separate institutions, meaning the figures presented here for DPS and charters are mutually exclusive.

The gains noted in this table don’t reflect a district being dismantled or in financial stress. It’s also hard to think the same when you look at DPS staffing levels over the same period. As previously mentioned, between 2011-2017, DPS gained 961 students. During the same period however, DPS

also hired 486 more staff, including 256 more teachers. That’s one new staff person for approximately every two students, and one new teacher for nearly every four students. Too many figures? Just remember that over the same period DPS enrollment increased 3 percent while DPS staffing increased 12 percent.

Employee salaries and benefits comprise the single largest component of most school district budgets. As such, DPS budget increases look like they could be explained by staff increases. The other issue not discussed however, is the growth of employee benefits. Over the period 2010-11 to 2016-17, per student spending for DPS employee benefits increased 37

*Continued on page 13*

Table I: Selected Data for Durham Public Schools and Durham County Charter Schools 2010-11–2016-17

	2010-11	2016-17	% Change
DPS System Enrollment (ADM)	31,946	32,907	3%
Durham Charter School Enrollment (ADM)	3,037	6,409	111%
DPS System Budget (millions)	\$294.8	\$350.1	18.7%
Per Student Spending	\$9,230	\$10,641	15.2%
Per Employee Benefits	\$1,649	\$2,268	37.5%
Teachers	2,108	2,364	12.1%
Administrators	152	261	71.7%
School Professionals	304	417	37.1%
Other Staff	1,349	1,357	.5%
All Staffing	3,913	4,399	12.4%

# Blue Wave in North Carolina? Recent Polls Disagree.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

voting for the Democratic candidate or the Republican candidate?”

Both polls asked generic ballot questions for North Carolina Congressional and state legislative elections. And still, both polls had surprising results in a year when Democrats are supposed to dominate in November.

Neither Congressional

ballot question found an overwhelming lead for Democrats. Surprisingly, both polls show an essential tie for generic Congressional races.

The biggest surprises come from generic ballot questions for the North Carolina General Assembly. Progressive leftist groups – with names such as Flip NC

and Flippable – have been organizing all over North Carolina and the state Democratic Party has been hosting candidate announcement events called “Blue Monday.”

And yet, neither the Meredith College or Civitas poll show any large advantage for either party.

The Meredith College poll shows Republicans

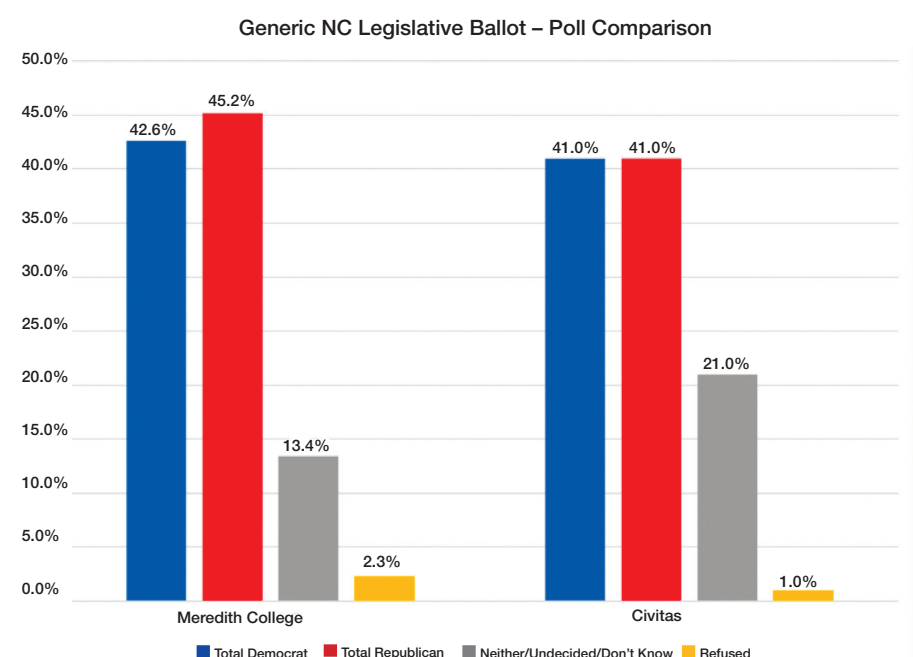
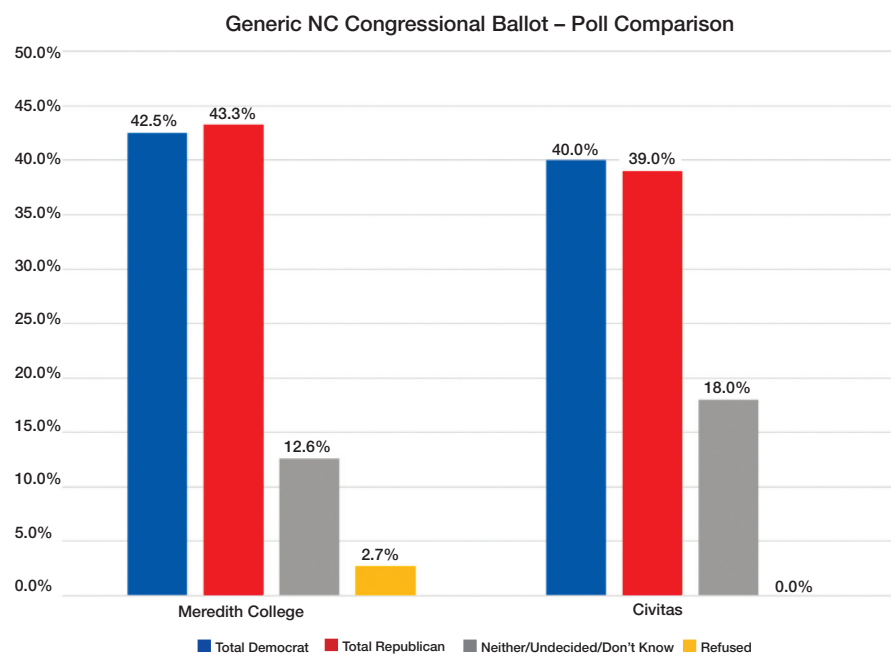
with a slight lead in generic races for the General Assembly, while the Civitas poll shows the two parties in a tie.

Yet again, the data for an oncoming Blue Wave does not exist.

The calendar tends to be rather long in election years, and the public’s memory is proportionally short. Many things can

happen in North Carolina politics over the next 259 days, so stay tuned in to the next statewide Civitas poll and other analysis.

However, current data from North Carolina does not show a coming Blue Wave; it may just be a ripple or trickle.



# Innovation and Sweat Equity: Keys to Success

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

When he noticed the company was losing money in the early 1980s, he stepped back in to take over the sales team, dramatically raising cash flow and putting the company back on track. “Today, CaptiveAire has one hundred sales offices and over 220 sales personnel covering most of North America,” writes Luddy. “Our twenty-five-year sales growth has averaged at thirteen percent each year in spite of some setbacks and recessions.” He credits this success not only

to constant innovation but dynamic relationships with customers to help realize and stay ahead of market trends and the competition. Today CaptiveAire has over 1,200 employees spread throughout the United States. Luddy opened plants closer to customers and constantly improved the assembly line process to stay ahead of the competition.

Luddy gives homage to figures like American founder Benjamin Franklin and his parents for instilling in him a passion for

innovation and learning. He held a myriad of jobs from a young age and dabbled in the stock market, learning valuable lessons about savings and investing. “The early acquired education, work ethic, and understanding of the value of money helped form me into an entrepreneur.”

There is little doubt his innovative nature and his call to distinguish the entrepreneur from the bureaucrat, or his propensity to shed stagnant thinking has shaped Bob Luddy’s lifelong commit-

ment to education as well. Luddy, a former chairman of the board of the Civitas Institute, has launched Franklin Charter Academy, Thales Academy, St. Thomas More Academy and has more schools on the drawing boards. “Over time, these entrepreneurial schools have helped change the education debate in North Carolina,” says Luddy. Currently, over 4,000 students in the Raleigh area are enrolled in Luddy schools and he credits that success to the lessons learned through

constant innovation at CaptiveAire.

“Entrepreneurial Life” is not only a valuable resource for the aspiring entrepreneur, but it’s a reminder that there is no replacement for the timeless value of hard work and perseverance. Luddy reminds the reader too that intangibles such as integrity, humility, and lifelong learning are just as essential for lasting success — not only in the marketplace — but in life too.

## Are Charter Schools Hurting DPS? Look Again.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

percent (\$1,649 to \$2,268). Looked at another way, the percentage of the budget devoted to cost of employee benefits increased from 17.8 percent to 21.3 percent of the budget, the single largest increase of any category over that time.

Ladd and Singleton will likely say the growth masks the impacts at DPS. That may be partially true to an extent. Still, since Durham County had such a high percentage of charters and according to the authors charter schools have “significant negative fiscal impacts” on DPS, shouldn’t the impacts be visible in the budget and staffing numbers for DPS?

Of course, that raises another question: Do these figures reveal the impact of charter schools on DPS or do they merely reveal the inability of DPS to control spending? Staffing seems to have increased at a rate disproportional

to the number of students. Spending has expanded faster than enrollment. As Marguerite Roza, Director of the Edunomics Lab at Georgetown University has pointed out, the real problem with the impact of charters on public schools is that drops in enrollment don’t reduce spending in teaching staff or central administration to match revenues because oftentimes spending is tied to departments and programs – not enrollments. And all the while the healthcare and retirement costs continue to increase.

The real problem is not charter schools, but DPS’s inability to control spending. The quick expansion of charter schools has exposed public schools as less than nimble in responding to a changing environment and the need to control costs. Blaming charters only allows public schools to ignore the real

problem.

However, there are other problems. Reporters were quick to pick up on the findings of the Ladd & Singleton study. They weren’t so quick however to point out its limitations – which the authors clearly mentioned. Ladd and Singleton pointed out that the study does not account for the fact that charters may actually force traditional public schools to be more prudent in spending, encourage schools to cut wasteful spending and push schools toward better uses of resources.

The analysis also does not account for the possibility of cost reductions that might arise because districts have less of a need to build facilities, a consideration that might be particularly relevant in fast growing districts.

Finally, and most importantly, the analysis only focuses on the fiscal bur-

den of charter schools and the costs to students of those who remain in public schools. A more developed analysis would balance those costs with the social value and benefits of charter schools. One of these benefits is that the average per pupil cost in a charter school is 70 percent of the per pupil cost of the traditional public school, resulting in significant savings for taxpayers. It should also be noted that the average charter school also receives no assistance for facility costs or local revenue. These subjects are not easy to quantify. However, as currently constructed the analysis reflects only one side of an equation.

N&O editors and other public school advocates have done a good job of pitting traditional public schools against charter schools. They forget however that charters ARE public schools, merely a

variation. Saying charters in Durham County cost the school district \$500-\$700 per student is based on an assumption that public schools lay claim to funds for students who don’t sit in their classrooms.

Charter schools are merely another iteration of the American promise to educate our children. One of the purposes of charter schools is to provide parents with additional educational options. Charters are approved and funded when they convince policymakers of their value and viability. That most progressives fail to see the benefits of this evolution and view charters as predators on a public-school system, makes you wonder if their commitment is to provide a quality education or to prop up a failing system.



### TEARING DOWN THE BARRIERS TO FREEDOM: **CLC 2018** APRIL 13, 2018

Confirmed speakers for CLC 2018

- Dennis Prager • Lt. Gov. Dan Forest • John Papola • State Treasurer Dale Folwell
  - Christopher Scalia • Bart Danielson • John Fund • Jim Demint • Robert Luddy
  - Speaker Tim Moore • Adam Michele • Katherine Restrepo • NC Sen. David Curtis
  - Darvn Iwicki • Rep. Mark Walker • George Landrith • Travis Korson • Ryan Bomberger
- and more to be announced soon!

*Thirty years ago, Ronald Reagan made the powerful call: “Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall”. He was calling for an end to the barriers that kept citizens trapped in communist tyranny. And it worked. Soon the Berlin wall fell and the world rejoiced. Today, the barriers we fight are ones envisioned by the Left and erected by government that squelch innovation, limit opportunity, and prevent true flourishing. The mission of the Civitas Institute is to fight to eliminate barriers to freedom so North Carolinians can live a better life. We believe North Carolina can and should lead the nation to a future of unfettered opportunity without political favoritism. The 2018 CLC will identify the biggest obstacles to freedom for North Carolinians and equip attendees with the knowledge and training to do their part to eliminate them.*

## Implementing George Soros' Agenda

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

In the December 2017 SBE meeting, just minutes before her comments regarding online voter registration, Kim Strach, informed the Committee that the SBE “had been dealing with a lot of investigations with voter registration fraud.” Strach said that they had received voter registration forms (mostly changes to existing voter’s information) that included the voter’s correct date of birth, driver license number, etc., but the signatures did not match the one’s in the Board of Elections’ files. Strach’s suggestion that North Carolina utilize another form of voter registration, even more vulnerable and open to fraud and hacking, further threatens the integrity of the voting process.

So back to that question: Where exactly does the SBE’s administrative staff, all state employees, get the authority to devel-

op and implement new policies and procedures that would change the way North Carolinians register to vote?

There can only be one answer: the State Legislature is the only entity that could allow and assist the SBE to implement online voter registration. For seven years, the Republican-led legislature has failed in its attempts to introduce security measures into North Carolina election processes. Proposals to require voter ID, eliminate same day registration, shorten early voting periods and eliminate out-of-precinct voting all met slow, expensive deaths in the courts. These failures lead us to another question, one that we can’t answer: Why would the Republicans now agree to one of the Left’s favorite pet projects?

Evidently, no one on the committee knew that

George Soros, the billionaire financier of the American left, considers online voter registration, along with automatic voter registration, to be a “game changer” for progressives in the elections leading up to and including the presidential election of 2020. Soros is a founding member of the Democracy Alliance, the secretive donor coordination organization that has been credited with directing more than \$500 million to political non-profit groups and campaign committees in order to elect Democrats and push radical progressive policy.

According to the Democracy Alliance:

Automatic voter registration (AVR), in particular, is one of the largest “game-changer” reforms, ensuring:

- That millions of voters are added to the rolls automatically when they

interact with government agencies;

- That once citizens are signed up, they remain registered when they move within a state;

- That citizens can register to vote online; and

- That people can update their registration information at the polls.

It is no mere coincidence that Democrats have introduced at least three bills that would implement automatic/universal voter registration. Senate Bills 704 and 646 and House Bill 881 are waiting for the Republicans to pass legislation that would allow for electronic signatures and make way for online voter registration.

Here’s another question worth asking; Why would Republicans — most of whom campaigned on securing our elections — agree to help the SBE administrative staff implement legislation that would

make our elections system even more vulnerable and at the same time make it more difficult to determine who is registering to vote? The implementation of online voter registration will only further erode the integrity of our system of elections.

Online registration would make our elections far less reliable. The SBE needs to clean up their existing problems, they certainly don’t need to introduce new forms of registration that promise to be problematic. Moreover, requiring voters to provide “real” signatures when registering to vote of making changes to their registration is a sensible safeguard to reduce opportunities for fraud.

Legislators need to first and foremost protect the integrity of our elections — not implement George Soros’ agenda.

## Teacher quality: the overlooked variable

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

updated. There are quality educators who moved to NC and give up trying to get work teaching because of the arduous and lengthy certification process.

We also need to apply stricter standards to the performance of current teachers, especially early in their work years. Despite concerns about the overall quality of the potential teacher talent pool, there are always excellent candi-

dates. We need to make sure that the quality candidates in each area have a fair and fast track to practicing their craft for the benefit of all our students.

Numerous studies demonstrate a link between quality teachers — defined here as effective teachers — and future income potential. Seeing such outcomes can go a long



way toward building the case why North Carolina needs a superior teaching force.

The Oprah Book Club writer who attended the same country school that I did has credited some of his early teachers with the inspiration and basic skills necessary to begin his lifetime pursuits. I believe North Carolina has an opportunity to provide this for every student, when

we use the research and resources at our disposal to promote consistent, high-quality teaching.

*Becky Fagge is a Civitas contributor and a former teacher with the Winston-Salem Forsyth County Schools. She is now retired and lives with her husband, Larry, in High Point, North Carolina.*

# Expanding Access to Medical Care in Rural North Carolina

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

As North Carolina Nurses Association President Mary Graff argued, “Nursing is the most trusted profession in the country, but opponents to this bill imply that nurses can’t be trusted to practice to the full scope of their training and education. That simply doesn’t add up.”

Not only would increasing the scope of care for APRNs increase access to care for rural patients, it would generate significant healthcare savings and create thousands of jobs in the healthcare industry.

Dr. Chris Conover, a health economist at Duke University, explained in that 2016 committee meeting that APRNs are being underutilized due to restrictive regulations. Conover discussed the findings from his research which showed that expanding scope of practice for APRNs could not only improve quality and access to care but also save more than \$433 million per year in North Carolina.

Further, Conover’s research estimated that at

least 3,800 jobs would be added to the economy statewide.

The increased competition for patients – mostly in rural areas – would help to drive down costs, while breaking the shackles of restriction would enable and attract more APRNs to practice across the state.

Who would oppose a measure to expand rural access to medical care while driving down healthcare costs? The primary opposition would come from the licensed physicians, who want to see continued restrictions to competition, which work to drive up the prices they can charge.

## *A Recipe for Success*

A growing number of states are recognizing the advantages to expanding the scope of care for APRNs. Since 2010, twenty-two states have removed their physician supervision requirements, while 14 have moved to “full prac-



tice authority” for APRNs, nurse practitioners and nurse anesthetists.

When Arizona removed the physician supervision of nurse practitioners, the number of nurse practitioners serving rural areas jumped by 73 percent within five years. North Carolina can do the same for nearly 15,000 advanced practice nurses and physician assistants.

Indeed, a 2010 Institute of Health study declared “Now is the time to eliminate the outdated regulations and organizational and cultural barriers that limit the ability of nurses to practice to the full extent of their education,

training, and competence.”

The study also found alleged safety concerns to be baseless, concluding “States with broader nursing scopes of practice have experienced no deterioration of patient care.”

In a 2015 presentation to Pennsylvania legislators on this topic, Duke University researchers in concert with the Bay Area Council Economic Institute, pointed out that “The National Governors Association has reported that nurse practitioners have been shown to provide comparable quality care to physicians and recommended that states consider easing scope-of-practice restrictions and modifying reimbursement policies to encourage greater NP (nurse practitioner) involvement in primary care.”

The presentation also called legislators’ attention to the fact that the Federal Trade Commission has emphasized concerns that “scope-of-practice laws may deprive consumers of quality and cost benefits by placing unnecessary or overbroad competition restrictions on the primary care market.”

The presentation highlighted research analyzing what impacts on access, quality and cost of health care Pennsylvania could expect from expanding scope of practice in their state. Their findings suggested that “Full Practice Authority could benefit

Pennsylvanians by increasing access to comparable or higher quality health care and it could lower costs in the process. Reform would save Pennsylvanians at least \$6.4 billion over a decade, increase the statewide nurse practitioner workforce by 13%, and improve the overall quality of primary care.”

Similar benefits no doubt would materialize in North Carolina if state lawmakers were to take the prudent step of expanding the scope of practice for APRNs.

## *Conclusion*

Lack of access to medical care in North Carolina’s rural areas is an urgent problem, causing unneeded suffering and arguably higher death rates for our rural populations. While not a cure-all, eliminating the restrictions on scope of practice for Advance Practice Registered Nurses would go a long way toward reducing this problem.

State legislators should recognize the significant benefits in terms of access to care, job growth, and cost savings such a measure would bring to rural North Carolinians. The highly-trained, and highly-trusted APRNs are fully capable of alleviating the urgent problem of doctor shortages in rural areas. It’s past time to break down the barriers preventing them from doing so.

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# What “Kryzewskiville” Can Teach Us About Economics

BY BRIAN BALFOUR

- *First come, first served’ allocation of scarce resources incentivizes waiting in line*
- *How a society allocates scarce resources determines how people compete for those resources*
- *Private property and voluntary exchange encourages productive behavior to compete for resources*

For college basketball fans, the excitement of “March Madness” is just around the corner. March marks the beginning of the mesmerizing three-week tournament to crown a college hoops champion, an event packed with buzzer-beaters, upsets, and office bracket pools across the nation.

Duke University’s basketball program, one of the traditional favorites to win the tournament, is also home to a unique tradition that can teach us a valuable economic lesson.

Kryzewskiville, or more easily called K-ville, is a tradition reportedly dating back to 1986, in which students live in tents outside the basketball arena in order to obtain prime student seating for major Duke home basketball games. It is named after long-time head basketball coach Mike Kryzewski. Why would these students forsake the comfort of their dorm rooms or apartments, often for weeks?

Student seats at the games are allocated for free on a “first come, first served” basis, so those first to set up camp outside the arena get first choice of seats in the student section. Front row seating comes with ample tv exposure, not to mention prime real estate

for heckling opposing players.

Like any economic good, seats at Cameron Indoor Stadium are scarce. Each seat can be used by only one student, even though many more fans would desire a seat at the game. This is where economics comes into play.

*The method by which scarce goods are allocated will determine how people compete to obtain those goods.* In the case of K-ville, the first come, first served method of allocation incentivizes students to be first in line to obtain the most desirable seats.

Imagine, instead, if those seats were allocated, say, according to feats of strength. Instead of filling up tents in K-ville, students would fill up the campus weight room to out-lift each other to earn a spot at the front of the line. Or, what if coach K himself personally distributed the student tickets? Students wouldn’t waste time in tents, instead they would go to great lengths to curry favor with Coach K – perhaps by showering

him with gifts – in hopes of being rewarded with prime seats.

Just like those front-row Duke basketball tickets, all economic goods face the same potential dilemma of multiple people desiring



to lay claim to the same resource.

One of the key question society must answer, then, is: What system of allocating scarce resources most encourages greater production of needed goods and services, resulting in a higher standard of living?

Several methods are conceivable. They include:

*First come, first served:* whoever is first to claim or physically obtain the good gets to keep it. We see this method playing out in the tents of K-ville. Those willing to forego other uses of their time in order to wait longest in line will be rewarded. It may also involve a little luck as well, with those who happen to be closest to some valuable good having the greatest ease of getting to it first. Obviously, rewarding the first in line does not incentivize productive activity.

*Winner take all:* there is a contest in which the

winner is awarded control of their desired goods. Depending on the contest – be it strength, intelligence, height – the winner may be selected by chance or through acquiring a skill arbitrarily chosen by an authority figure. Such a process is unlikely to encourage greater production, but rather incentivize people to train themselves to win the contest.

*Lottery:* there is a drawing to see who wins ownership of the goods in question. This rewards people by pure luck.

*Someone decides:* an authority figure decides who gets what. Concentrating so much power over scarce goods into the hands of a single person or committee invites corruption. As such, people are incentivized to bribe or threaten the decision-makers to obtain what they desire (i.e. sending coach K gifts in exchange for tickets). Lobbying becomes more rewarding than investments in productivity.

*Need:* an authority figure determines who is in most desperate “need” of the good, and awards it to him. Attempting to distribute by “need,” however, subjects distribution to the arbitrary definition of “need” by the authority figure. Productive activity could be discouraged by the risk of losing access to goods because one is not considered “needy” in the eyes of the decider.

None of those options

seem like a particularly productive (or fair) means by which to allocate scarce resources. Which brings us to:

*Exchange of private property:* Private property implies that goods have an owner, and that owner is the one with just and legal authority to determine how that good is used. The owner can consume it, use it for productive purposes, stockpile it or trade it. One acquires rights over property thru voluntary exchange, whether those exchanges involve goods for goods, goods for money, or money for labor.

Under such a system, in order to compete for desired goods, one must offer something of value in exchange. This incentivizes greater productivity – the key to improving the standard of living for a society.

The method society chooses for how scarce resources are allocated will generate very different types of behavior, and results.

Only a system based on private property rights and free exchange will provide the framework for a more prosperous society, as this system is the only one to truly incentivize productive activity.

When applied correctly, the economic way of thinking can equip us to observe economic laws in action all around us – even in the behavior of hoops-crazy college kids in tents. To ignore these lessons would be true madness.