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Civitas Polls Continue to Dash Hope for “Blue Wave”

BY RAY NOTHSTINE

The Civitas Institute hosted a poll lunch on May 15 in Raleigh where Donald Bryson and Jonathan Kappler offered commentary for the latest poll results. Kappler is the executive director for the NC Free Enterprise Foundation. One of the top revelations from the Civitas poll was that President Donald Trump would easily best Democrat presidential nominee Hillary Clinton in North Carolina if a do-over election was held. Kappler joked that Clinton has not done herself any favors with her popularity given her recent spate of excuses for losing the general election to Trump. Clinton would lose a hypothetical rematch to Trump 45 to 37 percent in



Photo by Greg Skidmore

North Carolina. In 2016, Trump beat Clinton 50.5 percent to 46.7 percent, despite many national polls showing Clinton with a slight lead in the state before the election.

Former U.S. House Speaker Tip O’Neill often quipped that “all politics is local,” and a strong economy is helping to actual-

ize that in North Carolina. Trump’s approval rating surpassed the 50 percent threshold in North Carolina for the first time, scoring a 51 percent approval rating in the Civitas poll. “These results are noteworthy

because they appear to be contrary to the narrative of an oncoming anti-Trump blue wave,” said Civitas President Donald Bryson. “Either the blue wave momentum is not congealing, or North Carolinians are simply acting contrary to the larger national narrative, even when you consider the generic congressional ballot.”

A generic congressional ballot question was included in the poll that found equal support for Democrats and Republicans at 41 percent across North Carolina. “Surprisingly, 18-40-year-olds – a reliable

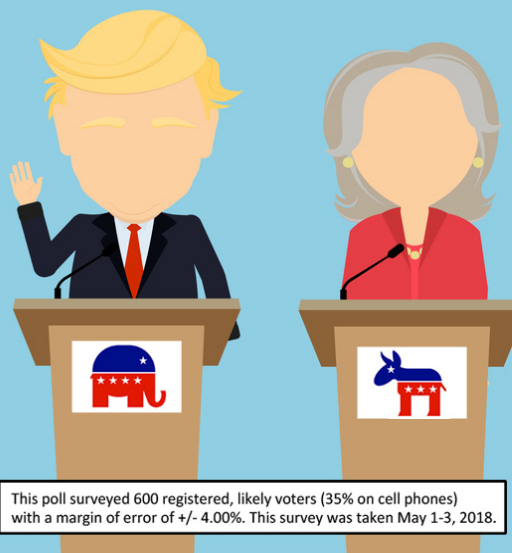
group for Democrats in previous years – appear to be breaking for Republicans in the generic ballot test, as well as job approval for the President,” declared Bryson.

State polling for legislative races showed a similar split, with 40 percent of voters preferring a generic Republican candidate and 40 percent of voters preferring the Democrat.

A national poll publicized a couple of weeks after the Civitas poll by Reuters also put a damper on the “blue wave” narrative. Republicans led the

(Continued on page 11)

If the 2016 Presidential Election were held again in 2018, for whom would you vote:



This poll surveyed 600 registered, likely voters (35% on cell phones) with a margin of error of +/- 4.00%. This survey was taken May 1-3, 2018.

FROM THE EDITOR

A new state budget from the General Assembly was unveiled at the end of last month. Brian Balfour offers up an overview of what North Carolinians can expect to see with this \$23.9 billion state budget. Donald Bryson explains the consequences from the lack of transparency by GOP leadership during the legislative process over this budget. He notes that “Republican leaders at the General Assembly have forgotten two crucial political maxims: sound policy

makes good politics, and sound policy comes from good debate.”

Of course, there are positives. The major one is that the General Assembly maintains fairly reasonable spending discipline going forward. Big government activists perpetually maintain that more spending is a boon for the economy and citizenry. A common refrain now, ripped from the pages of the Religious Left, is that budgets are “moral documents.” Yet, there is nothing

morally about runaway spending, taxes, and a crippling debt that forces many citizens to flee their homes for better opportunities or just some peace of mind. Economists Art Laffer and Stephen Moore predicted in an April op-ed in the Wall Street Journal that as many as 800,000 residents could flee New York and California over the next three years. The reason? High taxes. Other states with similar profligate spending aren’t faring much better. North

Carolina is well positioned to attract even better paying jobs, lifting the standard of living in our state.

The cover story is on our recent polling at Civitas, some of it which has made national news. While it’s still early in the short and fickle life of politics, Civitas polls continues to show a lack of momentum for the so called “blue wave” electorate for this fall’s elections.

The staff too has been busy writing about the May 16 teacher walkout

in Raleigh. You will see some of that in this issue. Many of us even went downtown to engage and talk with many of the participating teachers. Please check in with our website www.nccivitas.org for all of our content. There is much more in this issue as well, including an important update on the Civitas Partisan Index from Susan Myrick. Thank you for your continued support and engagement in helping us to remove barriers to freedom.

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Legislative Budget Maintains Tax Cuts, Spends \$500 Million Less Than Cooper's Plan

BY BRIAN BALFOUR

On June 12, the FY 2018-19 state budget was approved when the state legislature overrode Gov. Cooper's veto.

The spending total of \$23.9 billion marks an increase of less than four percent over current year expenditures, and about half a billion less spending compared to Gov. Cooper's spending plan.

The legislative budget would allow previously-scheduled tax cuts to go into place in 2019. Specifically, the state's personal income tax rate will fall from 5.499 percent to 5.25 percent, while the corporate income tax rate would drop from 3 percent to 2.5 percent. The tax relief will result

in 99 percent of North Carolinians either paying less or paying no state personal income taxes.

The budget also includes the fifth straight pay raise for teachers, along with raises for other state employees. Budget writers also add \$161 million to the state's rainy day fund,

rate of any state imposing this tax. Cooper's plan would have frozen the rate at 3 percent.

o Allowing these two rates to drop is estimated to save taxpayers \$110 million in the first half of calendar year 2019 alone.

• An increase in the standard deduction for the per-

"The tax relief will result in 99 percent of North Carolinians either paying less or paying no state personal income tax."

boosting the balance to \$2 billion to better prepare the state for the next natural disaster or recession.

Disappointingly, the budget includes corporate welfare expansion – with the intention of luring an Apple operations facility to the state – along with several appropriations earmarked for local pet projects.

Some of the highlights include:

Tax Cuts Continue as Scheduled

• The personal income tax rate would fall to 5.25 percent in 2019 from the current 5.499 percent as provided for in a previous budget. Cooper's plan would have preserved the higher rate for filers earning \$200,000 or more.

• The corporate income tax would fall from 3 percent to 2.5 percent beginning in 2019, giving North Carolina the lowest such

personal income tax included in last year's budget and scheduled to take effect in 2019 are also not stopped in the budget.

o Deduction for married filers will increase from \$17,500 to \$20,000, and \$8,750 to \$10,000 for single filers.

Pay Raises for Teachers, Other State Employees

• Teachers would receive an average 6.5 percent pay increase, bringing the average increase to teachers' base pay to nearly 20 percent since the 2013-14 school year.

o Includes nearly \$12 million to provide a permanent salary increase for veteran teachers with 25 years of experience.

o Appropriates \$22 million toward performance-based pay initiatives for 4th and 5th grade reading teachers and 4th through 8th grade math teachers.

• Provides performance bonuses for principals whose students achieve the most academic growth. Eligible principals could earn up to \$20,000 in bonus money.

• Most other state employees would receive a 2 percent salary increase, with the minimum salary for all permanent, full-time workers brought up to \$31,200.

Education Funding

• Provides an overall increase in public education funding of \$700 million, compared to current year.

• Allocates \$35 million for public school safety initiatives, including safety training, safety equipment and youth mental health personnel.

• Increases funding by \$11.9 million for textbooks and digital resources, raising total textbook funding to \$73.9 million.

• Includes a \$3 million funding increase for the Children with Disabilities Scholarship Grant program to reduce the waitlist.

• Includes a provision enabling cities to use their tax revenue to fund public schools, including charter schools. Currently, cities are not allowed to provide funding for schools.

• Adds \$18 million in funding to the Pre-K program (formerly More at Four) to add more than 3,500 additional slots. Includes a plan to elimi-

nate the waitlist for this program by 2021. (Note: Pre-K funding technically is in the HHS department)

Corporate Welfare and Local Earmarks

• Makes it easier to qualify for status as a "transformative project" in the JDIG program (Job Development Investment Grant). Investment threshold is lowered from \$4 billion to \$1 billion, and promised jobs lowered from 5,000 to 3,000. "Transformative" projects are eligible for larger incentives than normal projects. This move is presumably geared at luring a major Apple investment to the Triangle area.

• Establishes the Growing Rural Economies with Access to Technology (GREAT) program. GREAT would grant state taxpayer dollars to broadband providers to set up broadband service infrastructure in unserved areas.

• Millions of dollars are earmarked for dozens of strictly local projects, such as walking trails, local libraries, parks and playgrounds.

\$500,000 is earmarked for Cleveland County youth baseball fields, in anticipation of the American Legion World Series this year in Shelby – which happens to be in House Speaker Tim Moore's district.

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Overpaid Public Workers are Bilking Taxpayers of Millions

BY ROSS MARCHAND AND DONALD BRYSON

Largely thanks to tax reform and a federal deregulatory drive, economic growth is alive and well across North Carolina. Unemployment remains at decade lows and wages are growing at decade highs. But even with higher earnings, workers are right to ask what their hard-earned tax dollars are being spent on at the state and local level. Unfortunately, more and more dollars go toward padding the pockets of overcompensated public servants, further increasing the gap between private and public pay. By leveling the playing field between bureaucrats and private-

sector workers, lawmakers in Raleigh can send a clear message to taxpayers that the system is not stacked against them.

Bureau of Labor Statistics economists Maury Gittleman and Brooks Pierce found in 2012 that, “controlling for skill differences and incorporating employer costs for benefits packages, ... public sector workers in state government have compensation costs 3–10 percent greater than those for workers in the private sector, while in local government the

gap is 10–19 percent.”

A look at compensation data provided by the N.C. government confirms that pay is unreasonably high for public workers. Around 90 percent of research assistants employed by the state, for instance, make more than \$40,000 a year.

the public dole to clear \$50,000 with a couple of years of experience. In contrast, the average salary for research assistants statewide is \$40,000. This (crude) comparison, of course, leaves out generous insurance and pension benefits for state employ-

by more than \$50,000 in her first year on the job, including a \$17,500 raise in January 2018 and she now makes \$192,500 a year.”

We’re not saying there isn’t a useful role for the public sector. North Carolina has created a superb higher education system with taxpayer dollars, and boasts some of the best roads. But elected officials have created a system where public servants are systematically compensated at higher rates than their private-sector counterparts, taking into account job role, experience and education.

In addition to bilking taxpayers for millions of dollars in unnecessary expenses, this system attracts talent away from the private sector. And, in a public sector environment where bad performance is rarely punished, this talent all but goes to waste.

By limiting pension benefits for new hires and conducting a systematic review of pay practices, lawmakers in Raleigh can rebalance the system in a way that works for taxpayers.

This article originally appeared in the Charlotte Observer on May 26.

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“By leveling the playing field between bureaucrats and private-sector workers, lawmakers in Raleigh can send a clear message to taxpayers that the system is not stacked against them.”

Clearly, the state’s pay schedule makes it possible for research assistants on

ees. Workers employed by the state government enjoy a defined benefit

pension plan, along with a generous Preferred Provider Organization health-care plans. Proposed reforms to replace guaranteed pensions with 401(k) contribution plans failed last year in the legislature. Contrast this to the private sector, where guaranteed pensions have largely gone the way of the dodo.

Then of course there are the high-ranking bureaucrats. According to Brian Darling in a Townhall op-ed, “Dr. Mandy Cohen, secretary of the [North Carolina] Department of Health and Human Services, saw her salary rise

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CYAN MAGENTA YELLOW BLACK

Civitas Engages with Teachers at NCAE Walkout

BY RAY NOTHSTINE

On May 16, some members of the Civitas staff showed up in downtown Raleigh to talk with teachers about why they decided to participate in the NCAE walkout to protest “lack of respect,” teacher pay, and K-12 funding in the state.

Some estimates put the crowd at 19,000, and if it was less than that, it probably wasn’t by much. In all, 42 North Carolina school districts out of 115 shut down for the day for the walkout.

“I don’t mind answering the call [to teach], but stop calling collect,” declared Nina Sumpter, a teacher in Guilford County. Sumpter estimates she spends \$700 of her own money on school supplies annually. She said participating in the rally was not just about money or raises, but “respect.”

Julie LaRoche, a school teacher at Snow Creek Elementary in Catawba County was asked why she attended the walkout: “To come to support the students in my classroom and funding for public education, because I think our children are the future, and I think that’s so important for me and my own children.”

When asked about how she would respond to those who say spending continues to go up with little or no achievement results, LaRoche offered this explanation:

“I guess my question

In the 2019 budget, teachers on average will receive a 6.5 percent raise and 6.9 percent increase for school principals. According to GOP legislative leaders, the raises amount to 20 percent on

County, brought up an important point. “Things have changed a lot since I began teaching. I used to teach when there were 34 and 35 in the classroom, but you didn’t have all these different labels

who did not walkout. She said Surry County “wanted to focus on the kids” and remained open. Lawrence said “Surry County does more with less [funding].” She noted that teachers “work morning, noon, and night, and that it puts a lot of stress on family life.”

Lawrence said that there were some legislative leaders in the General Assembly who are on record of saying “they want to dismantle public education” but she would not offer up any specific names. “People no longer want to be teachers because they are no longer respected,”

said Lawrence. “We fought for a lot of these benefits we received in the past. The General Assembly has erased almost all of our past benefits.”

When asked to give a fair average dollar amount for an annual teacher salary in North Carolina, teachers at the rally either balked or changed the subject.

would be how we are spending more money on education because we are not seeing that? It’s possibly being spent in different areas. If you look at the money towards education, part of that is for the vouchers. And when \$10 million is going into vouchers that is not going into public education.” LaRoche claimed the standards in private education are not the same or as high as for public education.

average for teachers since the 2013-2014 budget year. Many proponents of the new budget say that in recent years when Democrats controlled the General Assembly, spending decreases froze teacher pay and led to layoffs of state workers, including educators. The upcoming budget offers a \$700 million funding increase for education over last year.

Gloria Lawrence, a retired teacher in Surry

that we put on children and we didn’t have a lot of the conditions that we have now,” said Lawrence. “I had never seen in my first 25 years of teaching, maybe 20 years of teaching, a fetal alcohol syndrome child. I had never seen one with AIDS. I had never seen a cocaine baby. I have seen those now, and I’ve seen what it does to their ability to learn.”

Lawrence showed up to support her fellow teachers



Changes represent the difference in voter registration between April 28, 2018 and June 2, 2018

County	Total Voters	Total Change	Democrats	Democrat Change	Republicans	Republican Change	Libertarians	Libertarian Change	Unaffiliated Voters	Unaffiliated Change
Totals	6,940,696	25,102	2,657,380	2,803	2,082,906	5,080	35,459	155	2,164,734	16,912
ALAMANCE	100,807	346	38,094	25	33,041	91	496	-3	29,174	231
ALEXANDER	24,325	37	6,166	-9	10,788	16	83	1	7,288	29
ALLEGHANY	7,427	22	2,644	-7	2,604	16	34	0	2,145	13
ANSON	17,341	39	11,631	1	2,466	-3	19	-1	3,223	40
ASHE	18,886	-1	5,299	-6	8,054	3	72	0	5,461	2
AVERY	11,746	14	1,396	-10	6,914	9	48	0	3,388	15
BEAUFORT	33,090	118	13,220	7	10,774	55	89	0	9,007	56
BERTIE	14,049	47	10,041	25	1,541	-4	24	0	2,443	26
BLADEN	22,904	19	12,622	-45	3,911	24	38	0	6,333	40
BRUNSWICK	99,512	388	27,146	51	37,237	182	369	-3	34,759	158
BUNCOMBE	194,280	754	74,850	138	46,016	42	1,411	11	71,987	550
BURKE	58,054	85	18,220	-63	20,679	30	266	2	18,887	114
CABARRUS	135,402	500	41,319	86	49,272	132	773	6	44,033	272
CALDWELL	54,717	40	14,129	-37	24,592	10	356	0	15,639	67
CAMDEN	7,812	47	2,226	-31	2,458	22	47	2	3,081	54
CARTERET	52,288	95	11,990	-53	22,268	74	239	1	17,791	73
CASWELL	15,664	67	7,905	14	3,295	6	34	0	4,430	47
CATAWBA	104,188	387	25,302	-278	44,644	167	405	-8	33,835	505
CHATHAM	52,742	171	20,738	48	12,894	-27	234	2	18,876	148
CHEROKEE	23,160	83	5,622	-40	9,948	57	129	-2	7,460	67
CHOWAN	10,246	25	4,843	6	2,628	9	21	-1	2,754	11
CLAY	8,635	27	1,881	-14	3,595	21	44	0	3,115	20
CLEVELAND	64,467	176	25,920	-27	21,001	87	236	-2	17,308	117
COLUMBUS	37,173	99	20,698	10	7,139	20	58	0	9,277	68
CRAVEN	68,679	258	22,966	-29	24,023	104	354	5	21,336	178
CUMBERLAND	214,490	793	97,955	160	49,231	127	1,138	12	66,162	490
CURRITUCK	19,601	105	3,964	-6	7,218	53	154	3	8,264	54
DARE	29,623	94	8,752	-28	9,152	46	212	1	11,506	74
DAVIDSON	107,656	384	25,849	-226	50,459	274	444	-6	30,903	342
DAVIE	29,682	148	5,439	-2	15,092	74	112	1	9,039	75
DUPLIN	30,136	125	14,005	39	8,110	24	124	2	7,897	60
DURHAM	222,685	802	122,976	335	27,737	-3	1,092	8	70,868	452
EDGECOMBE	38,174	-29	26,700	-37	6,212	-4	83	1	5,177	9
FORSYTH	256,127	69	104,445	-15	75,674	-159	1,243	8	74,760	233
FRANKLIN	43,873	181	18,079	33	13,317	38	198	3	12,278	106
GASTON	143,242	532	44,604	79	54,350	135	693	5	43,594	312
GATES	8,636	28	4,575	7	1,762	4	29	1	2,270	16
GRAHAM	6,401	39	1,896	-2	2,822	19	26	6	1,657	16
GRANVILLE	38,380	-116	18,655	-73	9,376	-32	144	0	10,204	-11
GREENE	11,427	30	6,523	1	2,085	8	21	-1	2,797	21
GUILFORD	368,639	1,242	167,803	243	94,990	173	1,748	5	104,086	816
HALIFAX	38,332	97	25,263	35	4,610	-30	83	1	8,375	90
HARNETT	74,386	375	26,248	3	25,926	123	492	-6	21,720	255
HAYWOOD	44,219	163	16,479	-28	13,428	81	249	3	14,059	105
HENDERSON	84,165	386	17,941	8	31,634	116	435	0	34,150	260
HERTFORD	15,365	-9	11,180	-1	1,475	-9	36	0	2,674	1
HOKE	32,165	172	15,209	48	6,767	21	194	1	9,994	101
HYDE	3,423	4	1,973	-3	531	1	13	0	906	6

IREDELL	119,004	491	30,154	24	49,217	176	568	4	39,061	283
JACKSON	28,369	174	10,156	25	7,516	59	173	0	10,521	88
JOHNSTON	125,403	814	38,564	86	48,110	317	693	9	38,032	399
JONES	7,301	35	3,545	8	1,834	3	21	0	1,901	24
LEE	36,319	99	14,663	7	10,319	28	172	2	11,163	61
LENOIR	38,493	89	20,827	-18	9,538	28	114	1	8,014	78
LINCOLN	57,049	157	13,709	-91	25,061	132	256	-3	18,023	119
MACON	25,801	97	6,510	-5	10,445	44	128	-1	8,716	58
MADISON	16,929	44	6,547	-1	4,391	7	107	4	5,884	34
MARTIN	17,011	81	10,097	20	3,292	-10	34	0	3,588	71
MCDOWELL	29,312	54	8,300	-20	11,108	28	151	1	9,753	45
MECKLENBURG	723,936	3,742	317,624	1,336	170,578	369	4,367	34	231,346	1,987
MITCHELL	11,025	33	1,146	11	6,648	9	28	-1	3,203	14
MONTGOMERY	16,449	54	7,106	22	5,040	15	57	-3	4,244	20
MOORE	66,982	321	16,410	-10	27,203	102	340	0	23,028	228
NASH	66,241	161	33,207	20	18,738	49	205	2	14,090	90
NEW HANOVER	168,090	971	52,739	159	53,041	197	1,175	11	61,128	602
NORTHAMPTON	14,592	53	10,486	19	1,434	-4	21	1	2,650	36
ONSLOW	106,377	783	27,521	26	38,547	234	921	14	39,384	506
ORANGE	113,224	176	52,385	82	16,389	-61	718	-5	43,722	154
PAMLICO	9,683	26	3,803	1	3,146	11	38	1	2,696	13
PASQUOTANK	28,724	30	13,095	-11	6,108	23	168	0	9,350	17
PENDER	40,850	230	12,560	-25	15,355	94	237	1	12,698	160
PERQUIMANS	10,007	26	4,040	-25	2,707	24	32	0	3,227	27
PERSON	26,649	27	12,002	-15	6,624	15	97	-1	7,926	28
PITT	122,561	512	55,576	141	31,817	60	712	0	34,449	305
POLK	15,957	40	4,380	-10	5,561	2	80	0	5,934	46
RANDOLPH	91,429	250	18,722	-31	45,863	131	484	-2	26,357	149
RICHMOND	30,329	48	16,485	-51	5,933	41	74	1	7,837	57
ROBESON	76,024	698	48,635	308	9,455	-46	189	-1	17,744	437
ROCKINGHAM	59,888	135	22,456	-139	20,722	57	218	3	16,490	212
ROWAN	94,386	60	27,822	-60	38,245	46	388	-3	27,931	77
RUTHERFORD	44,899	85	14,367	-131	16,885	83	217	0	13,430	133
SAMPSON	37,902	-191	16,256	-86	13,863	-53	108	0	7,675	-52
SCOTLAND	22,581	132	12,795	25	3,722	22	50	0	6,014	85
STANLY	41,475	137	11,024	-46	18,269	56	140	0	12,041	127
STOKES	31,025	41	7,664	-27	15,005	20	152	1	8,202	46
SURRY	45,695	136	13,555	-53	19,275	90	116	1	12,748	98
SWAIN	10,351	42	3,968	6	2,687	19	30	0	3,666	17
TRANSYLVANIA	25,705	78	6,684	7	8,258	15	116	0	10,647	56
TYRRELL	2,418	5	1,378	-5	353	-1	8	-2	679	13
UNION	153,819	700	39,512	34	63,704	241	677	-5	49,923	427
VANCE	30,066	75	19,748	13	4,359	-4	69	1	5,889	64
WAKE	723,124	3,396	268,371	964	188,313	53	4,683	34	261,721	2,315
WARREN	13,508	65	9,245	6	1,816	19	34	1	2,413	39
WASHINGTON	8,732	13	5,832	6	1,140	4	26	-1	1,734	4
WATAUGA	45,757	90	12,118	-7	14,051	14	502	-5	19,084	87
WAYNE	74,623	148	32,228	21	23,849	34	301	1	18,245	92
WILKES	42,691	48	9,782	-31	21,988	27	138	0	10,782	51
WILSON	55,515	54	29,032	-8	13,456	-3	157	-1	12,869	66
YADKIN	24,004	57	4,048	-4	13,271	33	78	3	6,607	25
YANCEY	13,991	22	5,120	4	4,917	8	49	0	3,905	10

What's Missing from the Teacher Pay Discussion

BY BOB LUEBKE

- *Focusing just on salary figures paints an incomplete picture*
- *Pay boosts for academic credentials and certifications are significant and important*
- *The value of benefits can exceed \$20K, depending on experience and school district*

Teacher pay is a never-ending discussion in North Carolina.

Just over 40 school districts in North Carolina decided to close school on May 16 to allow teachers to come to Raleigh to lobby legislators for more funding for education and better teacher pay.

How much money does the average North Carolina teacher earn? According to the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, in 2017-18, the average teacher earned \$51,214. Under the 2018-19 state budget, that number would increase to approximately \$53,600.

The average figure, however, doesn't tell the entire story.

The NC DPI figure includes the average base salary and the average value of local supplement, along with other smaller supplements. Absent from most discussions is the value of health and life insurance, retirement benefits, social security, pay differentials for additional education (e.g. master's degree — about a 10 percent salary increase) or certification (e.g. teachers with NBPTS certification receive a 12 percent salary increase). Since both differentials and benefits have a dollar value (benefits must be purchased), they are legitimate components of what teacher's "earn"

for their work. Thus, a better term for describing the dollar value of what teachers receive in return for their labor is not teacher pay, but teacher compensation.

The high percentage of teachers from Durham, Chapel Hill-Carrboro, Charlotte Mecklenburg and Wake County Public Schools requesting personal leave to attend the May 16th rally made those districts some of the first to close district schools to allow teachers to lobby for more funding for education and better teacher pay.

That said, it's fair to assume teachers from Durham, Chapel Hill-Carrboro, Charlotte-Mecklenburg and Wake County probably hold some of the strongest views about the need to raise teacher pay. So, let's look at teacher pay and total teacher compensation in those districts.

The Fiscal Research Division of the NC General Assembly developed figures for beginning, mid-career and experienced teachers (Access the full analysis from the online article, "What's Missing from the Teacher Pay Discussion," on the Civitas website). According to FRD figures, beginning teachers in Durham Public Schools have a starting salary — including local supplement (\$4,375)

— of \$39,375. However, when the value of benefits (\$15,626) are added total compensation for beginning teachers in Durham increases to \$55,001. If teachers have a master's degree, total compensation increases to \$59,914. Compensation for mid-career teachers, those with fifteen years of experience, with a bachelor's degree starts at \$71,090. If you have a master's degree, total compensation increases to \$77,612, or certification from the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) will boost your compensation to \$78,916. If you hold both masters and NBPTS certification, your salary will be boosted to \$85,438. Finally, compensation for experienced teachers (30+ years) is even higher. Base salary (\$51,300) plus the local supplement (\$9,491) provides a base salary of \$60,791. Adding benefits (\$20,933), means a teacher with a bachelor's degree and 30+ years of experience has a total compensation package valued at \$81,723. A master's degree boosts compensation to \$89,309, or NBPTS certification increases compensation to \$90,826. Add both masters and NBPTS certification total compensation rises to \$98,411.

You get the picture. Benefits and pay differentials for academic creden-

tials or certification adds significantly to teacher compensation. Indeed, experienced teachers in Wake County and Chapel Hill-Carrboro with both a master's degree and NBPTS certification can have total pay and compensation packages in excess of \$100,000.

Since the amount of local supplement, benefits and pay differentials increases with years of experience the impact on salary and total compensation is significant. Beginning teachers in Wake County receive a base salary of \$35,000. Adding the local supplement of \$6,038 brings the starting salary to \$41,038. However, teachers receive \$16,038 in benefits. Hence, compensation for a beginning teacher in Wake County is \$57,076. Longevity and pay differentials for academic credentials and certifications will raise total compensation even further.

Are teachers paid and compensated fairly?

NCAE and many teachers say no and walked out on schools to demonstrate for higher salaries and more education funding. Of course, teachers have every right to demonstrate for more pay and funding. But let's also remember, the issue of teacher pay must be expanded to include teacher compensation. Moreover, teachers

have received pay raises five of the last six years and every year since 2014-15.

Yes, teachers have the right to demonstrate, but ask yourself:

Is closing school for a teacher pay rally good for students who missed class and another day of instruction?

Is closing school for a teacher pay rally good for students especially when they're repeatedly told by teachers not to miss days leading up to the end-of-grade exams?

Is closing school for a teacher pay rally good for bus drivers or cafeteria workers who will lose a day's pay?

Is closing school for a teacher pay rally good for parents, many of whom will now have to miss work, take a vacation day or make other childcare arrangements?

The North Carolina Association of Educators is the largest professional educators association representing teachers in North Carolina. NCAE also planned the May 16 teacher rally. The organization constantly tells us how they are working for teachers and students. If so, why couldn't teachers plan a rally later in the day or when school ended in June? Legislators

(Continued on page 11)

Civitas Partisan Index - 2016

BY SUSAN MYRICK

The updated Civitas Partisan Index (CPI) shows the political balance of power in North Carolina for the 2016 elections.

The CPI (Modeled after the Cook Partisan Voting Index developed for congressional districts) compares votes cast in each N.C. legislative district to votes cast in the state. The result is a letter (D or R) followed by a number, indicating the extent to which each district leans Democrat or Republican. For example, a district whose voters allotted five more percentage points to the Democratic candidates compared to the state average receives an index score of D+5.

Why? You ask, did we delay the rollout of the CPI after the 2016 General Election? The answer is simple – redistricting, of course! Just days after the 2016 election, on November 29, the U.S. District Court for the Middle District of North Carolina, in the case of *Covington v. North Carolina*, entered an order directing the defendants (N.C. legislature) to redraw legislative districts by March 1, 2017.

Knowing that the legislative maps would change, we decided to wait until the dust settled to put together the 2016 CPI. It was a good thing, too, since the fight over North Carolina's maps would rage on through 2017 and until the current maps were decided on by none other than the U.S. Supreme Court in

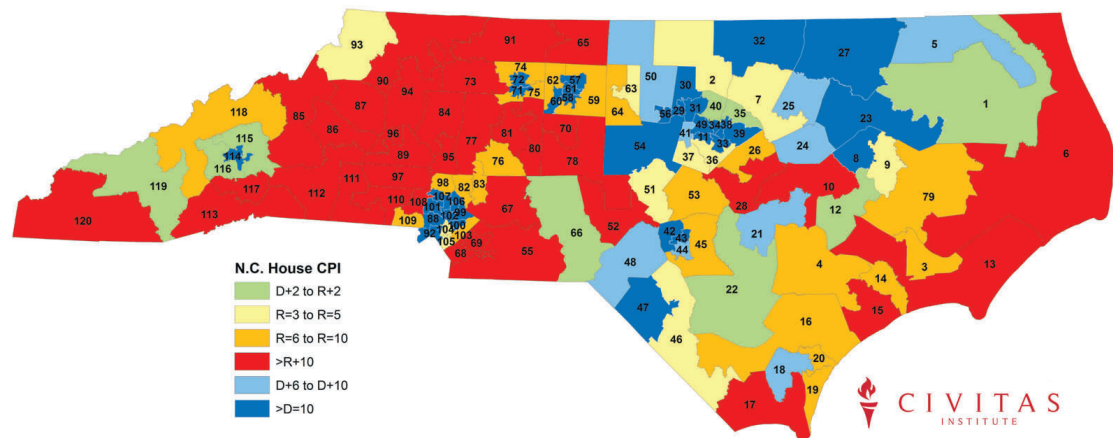
February 2018.

The newest CPI took the 2016 Council of State vote totals (by precinct) and applied the numbers to the newly drawn legislative districts. Because many districts have changed in both the state senate and the state house, we can't contrast all the individual districts in this CPI with the last one. However, we can compare average voting patterns from 2016 to those in 2012 and earlier. In the 2016 general election, 51.3 percent of the vote went to Republican Council of State candidates while 48.3 percent went to Democrats. In 2008, the numbers were nearly reversed, Democrats received 53.4 percent of the total votes for Council of State candidates compared to 46.6 percent for Republicans.

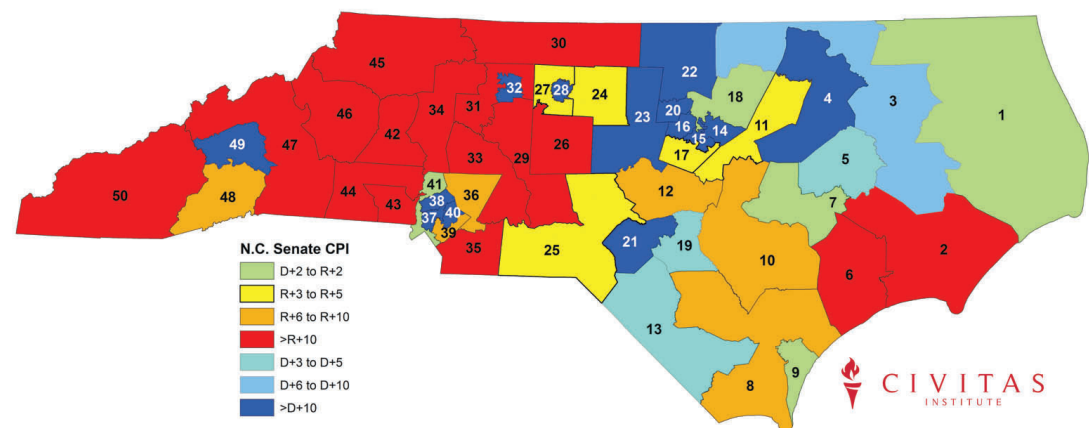
The CPI utilizes voter data from presidential election year results for governor and the other Council of State offices (i.e., lieutenant governor, commissioner of agriculture, commissioner of insurance, commissioner of labor, attorney general, secretary of state, superintendent of public instruction, state treasurer and state auditor). Although President and U.S. Senate election results are also available, state-level races give a more accurate picture of how voters will vote in a state legislative race than do national races.

While it does not pre-

2016 CPI for House Districts



2016 CPI for Senate Districts



dict elections, the CPI reveals which districts lean Republican or Democratic, and may illuminate significant trends. In using the CPI, it's important to remember that elections featuring incumbents, the candidates' traits and experience, the campaigns, fundraising and current political issues can play powerful roles.

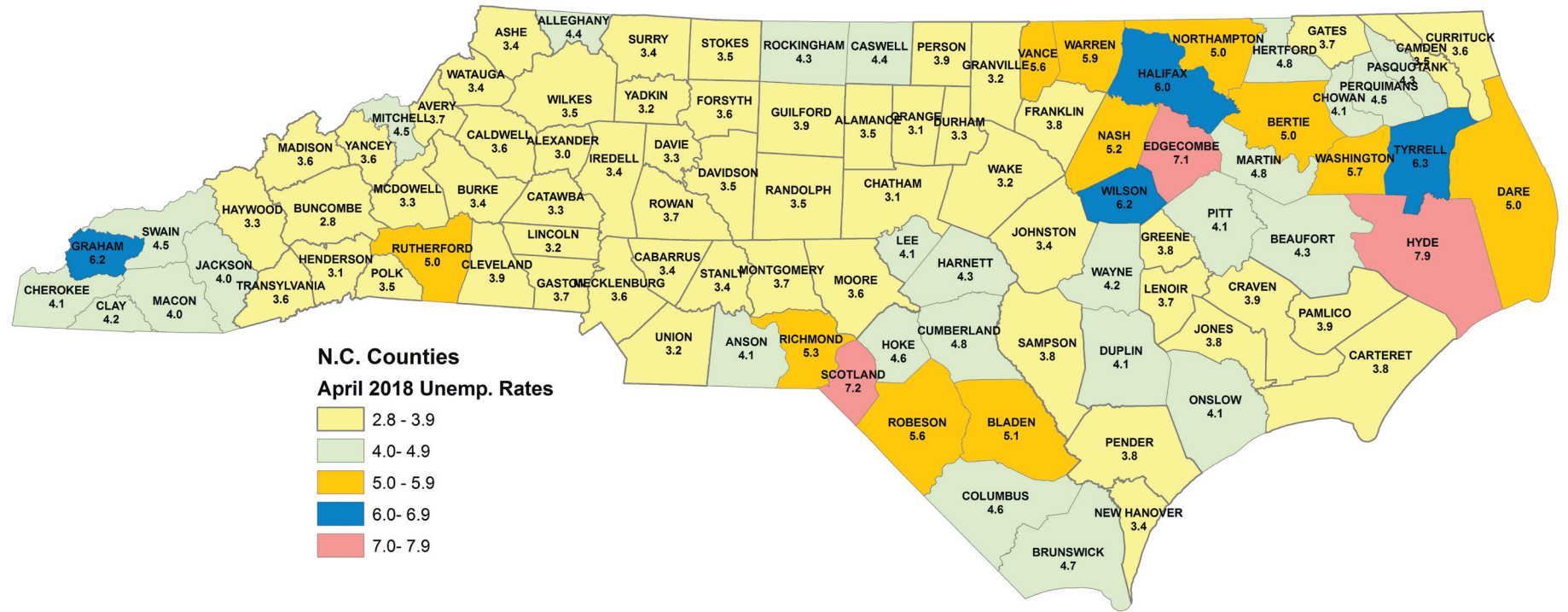
History

In early 2008, the Civitas Institute premiered the North Carolina Partisan Index, now the Civitas Partisan Index, using data from the 2004 General Election.

In the 2008 CPI, of the 60 contested legislative seats, all but ten seats went to the dominant party as indicated by the CPI. (Three seats had a neutral

CPI). Among the ten districts that were not in line with the CPI score, eight were in the range of R+3 to D+3, and most involved races with multi-term incumbents, well-known challengers, or significant spending differences between the candidates. The CPI model correctly predicted the outcome of all but one state House race, when the value of

(Continued on page 10)



The above map shows the April 2018, (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 April statewide unemployment rate was 3.7 percent, down 0.6 percent from March’s revised date. The state’s April 2018 unemployment rate decreased 0.2 of a percentage point from a year ago. All counties saw a decrease from March.

Hyde County reported the highest unemployment rate at 7.9 percent, while Buncombe County had the lowest at 2.8 percent. When compared to the same month last year, not seasonally adjusted unemployment rates decreased in 95 counties, increased in three, and remained unchanged in two. All 15 metro areas experienced rate decreases over the year.

Civitas Partisan Index - 2016

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

incumbency is taken into account.

Compared to the 2004 CPI model, the 2008 CPI showed a higher concentration of Democratic-leaning voters in the urban population centers. While voters in most of the state were somewhat more likely to vote for Republican statewide candidates in 2008 compared to 2004, voters in Buncombe, Cumberland, Durham, Forsyth, Guilford, Mecklenburg, and Wake counties favored Democratic candidates more heavily. In fact, 19

of the 21 state House districts that voted significantly more Democratic in 2008 compared to 2004 – districts whose CPI moved more than 3 points Democratic – were in those seven most populous North Carolina counties.

In 2010 a small adjustment was made to the 2008 House CPI after the state legislature passed a bill (House Bill 1621) to realign districts in Pender and New Hanover counties to comply with an order of the North Carolina Supreme Court, in Bartlett

v. Strickland. The voter data remained the same – only the district lines changed. The changes were limited to House districts 16 and 18 and did little to impact the CPI data. House District 16 decreased from R+9 to R+8 while House District 18 remained D+12.

In 2010, Republicans became the majority in both the House and Senate in part by winning in 17 districts, held by Democrats, where the CPI indicated a majority of voters preferred Republicans. Also, Republicans won

three more districts that held a neutral value. The seven districts won by the Republican candidates in 2010 that were not in line with the CPI score ranged from D+1 to D+4.

The CPI is not a predictor of future legislative contest outcomes, but it does give a glimpse of the voting tendencies within a district. It is a way to identify districts that swing, lean, or firmly trend towards one political party or the other. Many Council of State seats have been unevenly contested in the

past, making it difficult to predict results “down ticket” looking at raw numbers alone. By looking only at deviations from the state average, the Civitas model can mitigate the effects of incumbency and uneven contests.

We invite you to check out your legislative districts on the CPI. You’ll get valuable insights on this year’s campaigns and elections.

Civitas Polls Continue to Dash Hope for "Blue Wave"

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

generic congressional ballot results 38.1 percent to 36.7 percent. Civitas polls were cited by The Hill publication this month for Republican primary polls in North Carolina's 3rd and 9th Congressional Districts. Rep. Robert Pittenger lost to Mark Harris and Rep. Walter Jones fended off two challengers in his district.

The May poll showed strong support for improvements to school security (56 percent) as an answer to school shootings instead of gun control (13 percent). Poll respondents were more likely to be in favor of tax cuts across the board (58 percent) over targeted tax cuts (19 percent). Targeted cuts and incentives are often much more popular amongst crony-minded politicians and legislators, who can leverage earmarks to reward political allies or their own constituency.

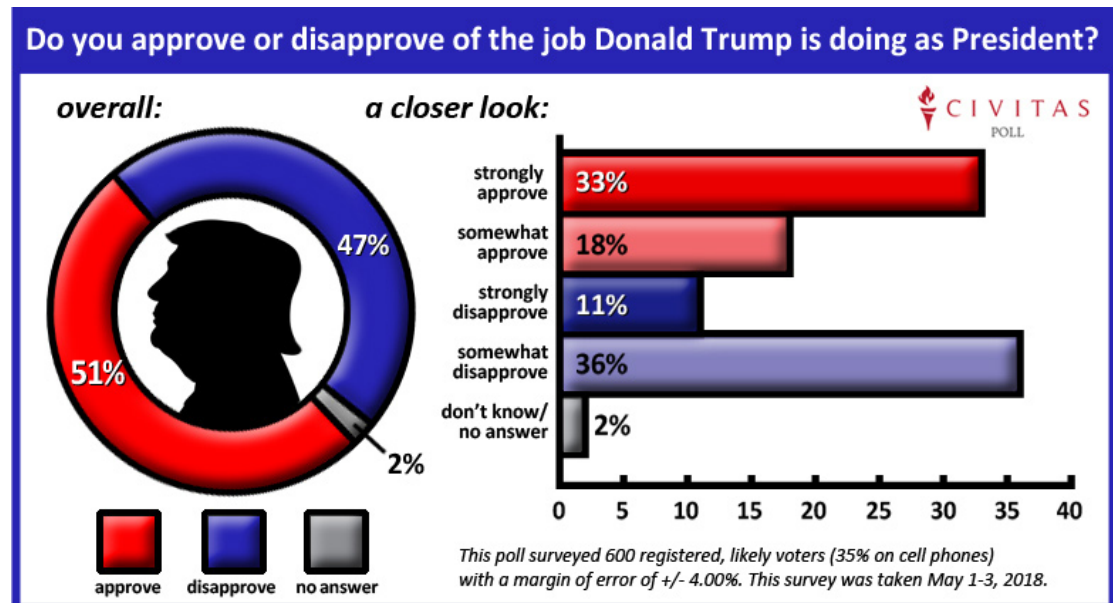
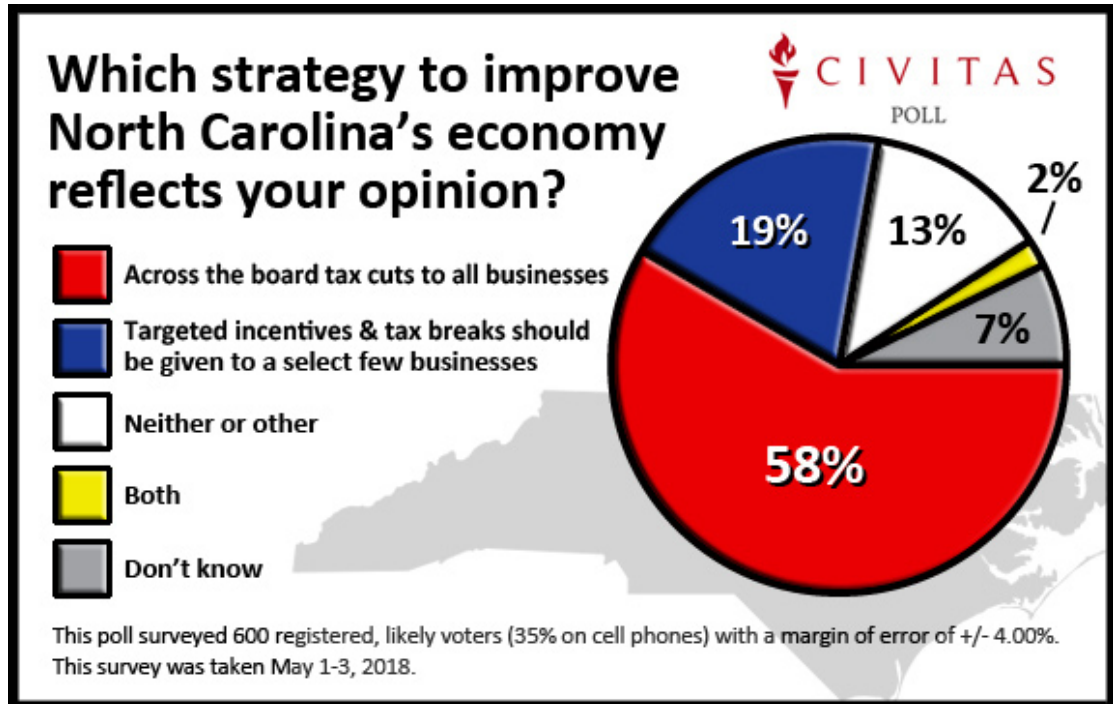
The poll surveyed 600 likely 2018 voters, 35 percent who are cell phone only users, and has a margin of error of 4 percent.

The Civitas Institute will host a poll luncheon in Wilmington on June 21 and will unveil new statewide poll date from June.

In a preview of the soon to be released June poll, it shows strong voter approval of five potential constitutional amendments for North Carolina.

In a poll that surveyed 541 registered voters, they supported a voter ID amendment (69 percent) and capping the state income tax at 5.5 percent (66 percent).

Support for an amendment limiting the annual growth of the budget to a percentage equal to the sum of annual inflation and the annual population is 49 percent to 17 percent in opposition. The right to work amendment has strong support at 76 percent, and 72 percent of registered voters support a constitutional amendment protecting the right of the people to hunt, fish, and harvest wildlife.



What's Missing from Teacher Pay Discussion?

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

would still be in session and it would mean school wouldn't have to be cancelled. What's also interesting is that to my knowledge none of the districts that plan on closing schools on May 16 are planning on making up the day. It's just another lost day of instruction.

But back to teacher pay and compensation. NCAE and other advocates for higher teacher salaries have ignored the value of benefits when discussing teacher pay. To evaluate claims of teacher pay being "fair" requires the complete picture. Base salaries are only one aspect

of teacher pay. In the case of the districts reviewed here, benefits and pay differentials add significantly to the pay for beginning teachers. Beginning teachers in Wake County have a benefit package of more than \$16,000. For experienced teachers in Charlotte Mecklenburg, benefits and

pay differentials are the difference between a salary of \$80,795 for an experienced teacher with only a bachelor's degree and a salary of \$98,482; the salary of an experienced teacher with a master's degree and NBPTS certification.

Teacher pay is an important topic. It's even more

important to know how we should talk about the term and what should be included in the discussion. An honest discussion of teacher pay, demands a focus not only on salary but also teacher compensation.

Sound Policy Comes From Good Debate: What's Missing From This Year's Budget Process

BY DONALD BRYSON

The recent announcement by leaders in the North Carolina General Assembly that changes to the current two-year budget will be settled in a conference report, and not through the regular appropriations committee process, has drawn a lot of ire. The announcement forced legislators into only a yes or no vote, confined debate, and shut down the amendment process.

The fact that this step away from the traditional process has made some people angry is justified. The state budget operates in two-year cycles – a biennium. In odd-numbered years, the General Assembly comes to Raleigh for the “long-session” that lasts – typically – from January to July with a budget passing before June 30. In even-numbered years, the General Assembly comes into session for the “short session,” which is chiefly focused on adjusting the budget passed the previous year and other bills related to spending or revenue. In both, short and long sessions, the state budget runs through various appropriations committees and is available for amendments, debates on those amendments, followed by deliberation on the whole budget.

There is nothing illegal or unethical about stepping away from the traditional process, but it does lack the transparency that citi-

zens, the press, and lobbyists have become accustomed to for the past 30 years.

However, let's not kid ourselves about why Republican leaders chose this process.

The coordination between the Democratic Party leadership and special interest groups for demonstrations at the General Assembly has often forced the legislative process to occur in a circus-like media spectacle. No one can or should want to try to legislate amidst vitriolic protests whose only aim is to coordinate

“ ... *sound policy makes good politics.* ”

with the minority party to score political points for November, and not help in meaningful policy debate.

Nonetheless, Republican leaders at the General Assembly have forgotten two crucial political maxims: sound policy makes good politics, and sound policy comes from good debate.

The traditional budget process was put in place to make sure that all legisla-



tors had a hand in crafting the most critical piece of legislation each year. Politicians don't care for stories about process, but process is essential to a representative government

because it provides citizens the transparency necessary to know if lawmakers are acting as good stewards of taxpayer money. Deliberation in appropriations subcommittees, committees and floor votes allows government watchdogs and lawmakers to find inappropriate spending and policy changes in the budget.

The traditional budget process is also critical to maintaining leadership, by

involving all legislators. North Carolina voters are only able to vote for legislators in their districts, not the leadership positions at the General Assembly. By allowing a few legislators to craft budget changes through a conference report, legislative leaders have made some legislative districts more valuable than others. Furthermore, there are likely several members of both parties who feel that their voices have not been heard.

A good many of the problems that currently exist in our nation's capital came about because Congress stopped passing the budget in “regular order.” The lack of transparency and ramming budgets through Congress has helped to exacerbate our federal debt crisis, now over \$21 tril-

lion. The North Carolina General Assembly has stepped away from the traditional process this one time, but doing something once can quickly turn into a habit.

North Carolina taxpayers deserve to hear from Republican leaders that this conference process is a one-off and is not the norm. Further, taxpayers also deserve a pledge from the Democrats who so ardently oppose this year's budget practice that they will never short-circuit the budget process if and when they come into power.

This article first appeared in the Raleigh News and Observer.