



State Lottery Stacks Odds
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Cooper says no to teacher raises; claims not enough

BY RAY NOTHSTINE

While allowing for pay raises for other state employees that were recently passed in mini-budgets, Gov. Roy Cooper vetoed 3.9 percent teacher pay raises for North Carolina educators, calling it “inadequate.” The raise, spaced out over two calendar years, was passed by the Republican majority in the legislature. With his November 8 veto, Cooper decided a raise of zero was better than 3.9 percent, setting up the issue to potentially be a major focus of his reelection campaign. Non instructional staff would have been given 2 percent raises, but that too was shelved by Cooper’s veto pen.

The NCAE, one of Cooper’s biggest allies,



remains firmly behind the governor. “North Carolina educators rejected the Republican budget as anemic and insulting in June, and we reject essentially the same today,” declared NCAE President Mark Jewell in a tweet. Around 5 percent of North Carolina teachers

are members of the NCAE so it remains to be seen how many will be loyal to the governor in a political fight where a zero percent raise is seen as better than an almost 4 percent raise.

Soon after the veto, while lashing out at Republicans and not Cooper, Rep. Deb Butler (D-Wilmington) suggested that teachers are

going hungry in the state. Butler tweeted her furor: “I am heartsick and furious! A NC teacher wrote me the most poignant and painful email. She struggles to raise her daughter on her teacher pay. After all is paid, she has virtually nothing for food and gas.

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CIVITAS INSTITUTE
NC Capitol Connection
805 Spring Forest Rd Ste. 100
Raleigh, NC 27609
Vol. 11, No. 10

From the editor

School choice week is next month. The benefits of school choice will be celebrated at the end of January to the first day of February, in which freedom-minded state and national organizations hold events and highlight the overall need for education reform.

Obviously, education policy and spending drive much of the work we do at Civitas. It will once again be a monumental issue in North Carolina in 2020, particularly since Gov. Roy Cooper vetoed teacher pay raises yet again (he claims a 3.9 percent raise is not enough) to secure that another controversial issue is at the

forefront. From a purely political perspective, it's hard to blame him given that it riles his base up and easily foments outrage on the Left. It will be another issue his supporters and base can point to and screech about, not to mention is guaranteed to energize rallies for an NCAE organization that is bleeding membership and losing its grip on power.

North Carolina continues to spend more money on education and teacher pay than ever before, and it's sad that many politicians continually use the issue as a wedge to shore up their support while dividing the electorate.

Taxpayers, of course, are victims of the political games, but the biggest victims are the 1.5 million public school students. One can easily surmise that if money was the most important issue when it comes to improving education, improvements would be easy to measure given all the spending. However, conservatives know that family health and stability, educational options, and less centralized control are just as important, if not more so. After all, what good is more money if long established truths and effective learning styles are ignored? If more money is directed towards social engineer-

ing who does it really help?

Our goal is to empower parents and students to take greater ownership over the options they do have and limit the power of government to dictate every education style and standard.

Civitas is excited about 2020 and the opportunities North Carolinians have to expand freedom and we hope even more will join us in that mission. This issue also contains our annual Civitas Action Freedom ranking of legislators. Holding our elected officials accountable is one of the first steps to securing a good and competent government.



CYAN MAGENTA YELLOW BLACK

School choice may play major role in party realignment

BY BOB LUEBKE

Underneath the carefully choreographed unified exterior, signs are emerging that the coalition that helped to elect Democratic politicians for decades may be fracturing.

Black and Hispanic parents, longtime supporters of Democratic Party politicians, are now the biggest supporters of charter schools and voucher programs, policies directly at odds with teachers' unions, a traditional and powerful

Democratic constituency. The Washington Times is reporting that prior to last month's Democratic presidential primary debate, dozens of black and Hispanic protestors urged party leaders to end their allegiance to teachers' unions and support charter schools.

The divisions in the movement are real. Recent poll numbers from Education Next found that Democrats who identify as African American approve of targeted vouchers, universal vouchers and charter schools by a margin of 70, 64 and 55 percent, respectively. Among Hispanic Democrats, support for the three policies registers at 67, 60 and 47 percent. Meanwhile just 40 percent of Non-Hispanic white Democrats support targeted vouchers, 46 percent approve of universal vouchers and only 33 percent endorse charter schools.

In October the Benenson Strategy Group released a poll that showed 81 percent of Democratic primary voters and 89 percent of Democratic primary voters support a proposal to expand choices within the public schools system including "magnet schools, career academies, and public charter schools."

Political winds are already shifting. In Florida

in 2018, 100,000 African-American moms chose the Republican Ron DeSantis over the African-American, Democratic candidate Andrew Gillum for one reason: school choice. Those 100,000 votes determined the election's outcome.

Could traditional voting shifts come to North Carolina? Gov. Roy Cooper has a long history of opposition to school choice programs and has recommended freezing and phasing out the state's Opportunity Scholarship Program (OSP), which provides vouchers of up to \$4,200 to eligible children to attend a school of their choice.

Cooper's stance could hurt him with a key voting bloc. In January 2019, the Civitas Poll found statewide black support for charter schools eclipsed white support by 82 to 74 percent, while white opposition to charters was also higher (18 percent vs 10 percent).

There are signs that at least some lawmakers have become increasingly aware of these trends. In 2017, eight black legislators held a press conference where they expressed support for vouchers and charter schools. The event was newsworthy because it was the first time a group of state Democratic lawmakers publicly expressed

support for school choice, a policy that previously had only been advocated by Republicans.

Despite the recent trends, it still appears there is far more progress needed to crack the Democratic opposition to school choice. If anything, many Democrats only appear to be doubling down. At a recent forum of Democratic candidates for state superintendent, candidates were unanimous in their opposition to charter and voucher programs. Such positions should not be surprising given the sizeable financial influence the North Carolina Association of Educators and the National Education Association still hold in North Carolina state politics.

Minority parents are dissatisfied with the current education system and want additional education options. A January 2019 Civitas Poll found that if a parent could send a child to any school, 32 percent of whites would send the child to a traditional public school. Only 20 percent of blacks chose traditional public schools. If money was not a factor, 74 percent of black respondents would choose charter, private or home schools, compared to 63 percent of whites.

So, will minorities vote their sentiments? When

asked in the Civitas Poll if you would be more or less likely to vote for a candidate for state legislature who supports giving parents more educational options, 38 percent of whites said much more likely along with 53 percent of blacks.

Democrats have long portrayed their party as an advocate for minorities and for equal opportunity. The embrace of radical teachers' unions and the heavy-handed opposition to choice not only raises legitimate questions about the party's commitment to equality and expanding educational opportunity, but also reveals that most Democrats continue to ignore the voices of the poor and minorities, desperate for choices to escape the educational crisis they confront.

Minority voters can play a key role in upcoming elections. If black and Hispanic voters vote their sentiments, it will expand educational opportunity for those who need it most. It will also likely fracture and force a reshaping of the Democratic coalition, making the upcoming election season even more eventful.

This article was originally published in the Fayetteville Observer

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NC Capitol Connection

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NC Capitol Connection is a publication of the Civitas Institute

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

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Time for some good news on guns and self-government

BY RAY NOTHSTINE

The media constantly inundates Americans with images of selective gun violence and shootings. Perhaps, in part, to strengthen calls for more gun control and firearm regulations. In fairness to the networks, it's also an issue that symbolizes many of our national divisions: conservative vs. liberal or rural vs. urban. Overall, the continued narrative leads us to surmise that the crisis of gun violence is getting worse. In fact, most surveys or polling conveys the belief that gun violence is on the rise.

Yet, there is a lot of good news to report when it comes to firearms and our capacity for self-government. According to the FBI, the murder rate dropped by 6.2 percent in 2018. Furthermore, all gun murders dropped by 6.7 percent last year. The homicide rate in more recent years has dropped in half since the early 1990s. Perhaps the biggest news from the data is that murder committed with all types of rifles are down 23.9 percent. I've pointed out before that 80 percent of all gun crimes occur with a handgun and by



someone who is not the legal owner of the firearm.

What we know and have known for some time is that the vast majority of legal gun owners follow and comply with the law. That is why it's virtually impossible to convince them that even more gun control will somehow have a positive impact on gun crimes or violent shootings. Tens of millions of American firearm owners exercise their

Second Amendment rights daily with no problems or incidents of any kind.

Furthermore, concealed carry permits are skyrocketing at a time that gun crimes are actually declining. A recent report by the Crime Prevention Research Center notes that "North Carolina had black permits increase twice as fast as whites." A good sign that those choosing to exercise their rights in the

state represent a broad and growing demographic.

Nationally, permits for concealed carry are up 8 percent from last year. At the same time, even more states have implemented constitutional or "permitless" carry in the last decade. A bill that North Carolina has been unable to pass, even with supermajorities in the General Assembly and simultaneously having a Republican

governor (Pat McCrory) in office.

Unsurprisingly, all of this good news related to a decrease in gun violence is not widely reported in the media. But the numbers are a reminder that the government should do their most important work first, which is to secure the inherent rights of the people.

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Politifact should stick to the facts

BY LEAH BYERS

Politifact NC has outdone itself this time. In an incredible act of acrobatics, the so-called “fact checkers” bent over backwards last month in order to simultaneously protect Democratic Gov. Roy Cooper from facing the political ramifications of his actions and take shots at the Republican leadership of the state legislature.

Gov. Cooper vetoed a stand-alone teacher pay raise bill on November 8. That same day, state House Representative and chairman of the Rules

Committee, Rep. David Lewis (Harnett) stated on social media that Cooper had vetoed every teacher pay raise that the legislature had passed during his time as governor.

Lewis’s statement is true and an inarguable fact. Yet Politifact NC, in a report published on November 19, rated the claim as “Half True,” the middle ranking on the Politifact scale.

In addition to the stand-alone bill, Cooper has vetoed all three of the state budgets passed during his first term, which

all contained pay increases for teachers. There is no other teacher pay raise bill that has been presented to Cooper. Thus, he vetoed all of the teacher pay raises he has seen. Seems straightforward enough, right?

The explanation of their rating speaks for itself:

*Lewis said Cooper has vetoed ‘every single teacher pay raise we’ve ever passed.’ While this is **technically accurate**, it suggests that Cooper opposes teacher pay raises — which isn’t true [emphasis added].*

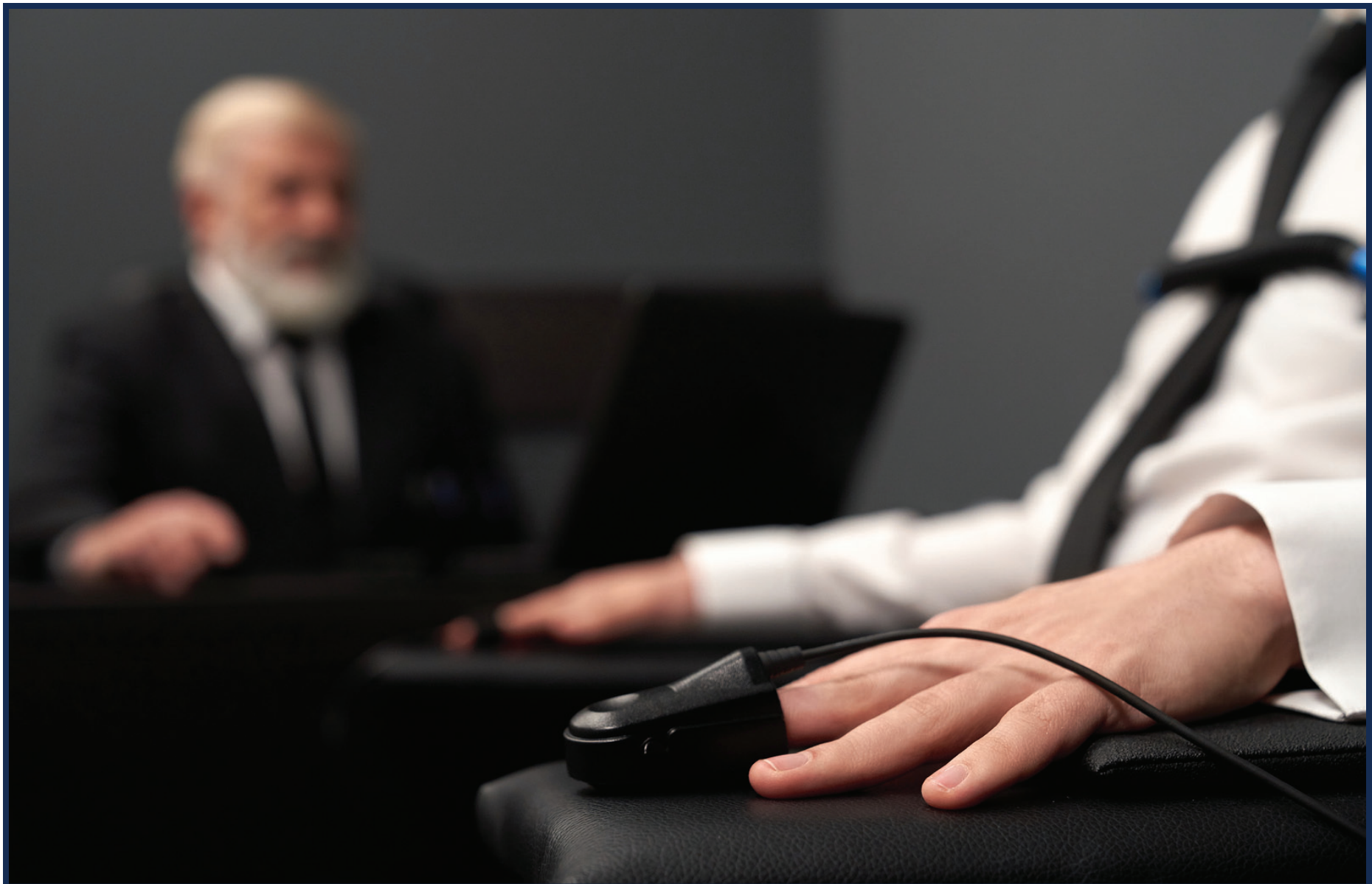
In fact, Cooper vetoed the proposed raises in hopes of securing more money for educators. And his approval of step raises shows he’s not blocking teachers from the money they’re owed.

*The statement is partially accurate but leaves out important details that might give the public a different impression of the situation. We rate this claim **Half True.**”*

Apparently, facts aren’t enough for PolitiFACT to rate something as true. Their personal interpreta-

tions and agenda clearly account for at least half of their ratings, given that Lewis’s completely true statement was only able to get him to a 50 percent score.

In today’s click-bait and fake news culture, fact-checking is a weighty responsibility. It would be a true public service, if done with integrity and without bias. It’s a shame that the fact checkers consistently have to be fact checked.



What can we learn from Gov. Cooper's leadership style

BY BROOKE MEDINA

You can tell a lot about a person by how they treat others, including those whom they hold political or professional power over. And when considering character, namely a politician's, it should be noted that their willingness—or unwillingness—to be transparent with the public is also an indicator of where they fall on the integrity spectrum.

Gov. Roy Cooper's leadership since he took office over three years ago has provided us with several lessons, most of which center around how to avoid taking public stances on issues one doesn't find politically advantageous. The following should serve as a real-life cautionary tale to other would-be elected officials on how *not* to behave toward colleagues, journalists, and citizens:

Derision of colleagues

There come times when even an evading politician must look someone they don't like in the eye and dignify them with a response. That opportunity came for Gov. Cooper just this past month when State Treasurer Dale Folwell called to task governor-appointed Department of Transportation head James Trogdon for recklessly overspending tens of millions in taxpayer dollars.

Instead of acknowledging the legitimate concerns

laid out by the treasurer, Cooper's office issued a childish ad hominem:

"A financial lecture from the nation's least effective State Treasurer, who boasts among the worst fiduciary return on investment and raised the cost of healthcare for state employees during his tenure, is not credible," Cooper complained.

Not only was this sophomoric response beneath the governor's office, but it was also a disservice to taxpayers who have entrusted our state's chief executive with the responsibility of stewarding our tax dollars well.

Dismissiveness toward investigators

This brings us to our next lesson in poor leadership: being dismissive of accountability. Many that have achieved notoriety have a difficult time submitting to oversight. It's easy to fall into this trap when one is surrounded by people that regularly agree with them. And let's not kid ourselves, no politician relishes being investigated (just ask President Donald Trump). Yet, public officials are required to conduct their public service in a way that is...well, subject to public scrutiny.

So, when the governor was called upon to give an account of his questionable behavior surrounding what appeared to be a quid pro



quo agreement between his office and Atlantic Coast Pipeline, LLC, he would have been wise to exhibit a willingness to work with investigators to immediately dispel any doubt that his behavior was above reproach. Instead, his office was dismissive of these investigators, who happen to be retired federal agents.

Previously, the governor also instructed employees to stonewall investigators as they looked into his actions surrounding the pipeline agreement.

Disregard for the truth

Sadly, the governor and his administration have used their trusted position to spin narratives and tell tall tales. Whether it be issuing misleading statements on Medicaid expansion from

the North Carolina Division of Military Veteran's Affairs to blatant hypocrisy when it comes to unfair corporate tax cuts, Cooper's record in truthful leadership has been less than exemplary.

But perhaps the most salient and stomach-turning example of Cooper's disregard for the truth was evidenced in his veto of the BornAliveInfantSurvivor's Protection Act earlier this year. Good leaders protect the vulnerable. Leadership rooted in integrity does not sacrifice the existence of the innocent for the sake of political power. The governor's claim that existing laws were sufficient to protect survivors of "botched" abortions is inconsistent with a proper reading of both North Carolina Lily's

Law and the federal Born-Alive Infant Protection Act of 2002.

Gov. Cooper is nearing his fourth year as chief executive of this great state. He has provided the public with numerous examples of his leadership style, including ones not listed above, such as poor oversight of hurricane relief funding, evasiveness toward journalists surrounding his travel, potentially for fundraising purposes and the persistent chaos surrounding his overly partisan board of elections appointees.

Although he is largely silent on topics that might draw too much attention to politically unpopular positions, his actions will continue to speak louder than his words.

State lottery stacks odds against the poor

BY MARK STECKBECK

As the candidates vying for the Democratic nomination for president debate the merits of taxing the wealthiest Americans, maybe we should instead focus on getting rid of a program that effectively taxes the poorest among us. Imagine if one of the Democratic candidates proposed a regressive tax on income, beginning with a 5 percent tax levied on incomes less than, say, \$30,000 per year, with that rate decreasing as incomes rise. At some point the rate falls to zero, maybe for those with annual household incomes greater than \$200,000. For good measure, to make the tax have some appearance of noblesse oblige, let that candidate also proclaim that much of the revenue generated from this tax will help fund education. We'll tax the poor to build better schools in places like Apex, Holly Springs, and Wake Forest. How could anyone object?

The NC Education Lottery does essentially that;



it is a regressive tax that disproportionately adversely affects families. Studies show that lower-income households spend a greater percentage of their income on lottery tickets — roughly 5 percent — relative to families with higher household incomes. And since money is fungible, proceeds from

the sale of lottery tickets that allegedly go to fund pre-K, elementary, and secondary education in North Carolina, which is currently less than 25 percent, simply replace resources that are redirected toward other government expenditures.

The NC Education Lottery touts as a virtue the

fact that 50 to 60 percent of the revenue raised from the sale of lottery tickets goes back to lottery players in the form of cash prizes. That is, for every dollar spent on the lottery in North Carolina, buyers of these tickets get, say, \$0.55 back in the form of cash payouts. This is apparently a way to

appease critics who argue that the lottery is an unfair tax on the poor; it might not be as bad as it appears. This is a spurious argument.

First, if casinos in Nevada offered the same low return to players, they'd be shut down for theft and fraud. Competition among casinos causes them to return about

State lottery stacks odds against the poor

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\$0.95 for every dollar gambled. Even slot machines, the *least* fair of casino games, return between \$0.88 and \$0.98 per dollar played. At the two casinos in North Carolina, the minimum is \$0.83 per dollar gambled in slot machines. Remember, slot machines are the least fair of all casino games, which is why they're referred to as "one-armed bandits."

Second, the average payout is less relevant than the median payout. Suppose you had 99 people in a room, all of whom earned no income last year. The average salary in the room is \$0. Now, suppose a successful actress enters the room and the actress's annual salary is, say, \$10 million. The average salary in the room just increased to \$100,000. But for the 99 whose incomes were already zero, they still have no income. Because the multi-state jackpots can get very large, a payout to one winning player skews the average payout to all lottery ticket buyers. The median payout to lottery ticket purchasers is a much better metric and that is near zero.

Some argue that people who buy lottery tickets do so voluntarily and since, unlike taxes, there is no coercion, there's really no harm done to low income people from playing the lottery. The NC Education Lottery sells a dream and

for seemingly little money anyone can buy that dream.

Although it's true that people who play the lottery do so voluntarily, nearly all do so unwittingly. People voluntarily enter into exchanges every day, including some that are intentionally deceptive. We don't say there is no harm done to consumers who freely, but unwittingly, engage in

intentionally fraudulent or deceptive exchanges. It's not so much as a dream the NC Education Lottery is peddling, but instead false hope.

Studies show that the human mind has a difficult time comprehending very large and very small probabilities. We therefore have a tendency to overstate the infinitesimally small chance of some low probability event happening, and understate the likelihood of some large probability event happening. For example, I know people who are afraid to fly (very safe relative to the alternatives), but also smoke cigarettes (very unsafe relative to the alternative). People therefore have a very difficult time understanding the near-zero probability of them ever

winning a lottery jackpot. This causes people to overspend on lottery tickets.

To better understand how deceptively low the probability is of winning either of the two multi-state lotteries, PowerBall and Mega Millions, here are two comparisons that illustrate the odds of winning, which makes playing either a "sucker's bet."

First, you have a better chance of flipping a quarter and having the coin come up heads twenty-eight times in a row than you do of winning one of the two multi-state lottery jackpots. Should someone test the likelihood of their succeeding at this, they would not live long enough to see heads come up twenty-eight times in a row.

Second, there are 292,201,338 possible combinations of PowerBall numbers (302,575,350 for Mega Millions). If you were to lay 292,201,338 quarters edge-to-edge along Interstate 40, your line of quarters would begin at the entrance in Wilmington, continue westbound all the way to where I-40 ends in Barstow, California, and then return in the eastbound

lanes two-thirds of the way back until you get to the airport in Nashville, Tennessee (Knoxville, Tenn. for Mega Millions). Under one of these quarters is etched a "W" to represent the winning quarter. For every PowerBall or Mega Millions ticket purchased, the buyer of that ticket is essentially purchasing the right to travel the 4,404 miles (4,560 miles

to spend their time and their money. My concern is with the lack of fairness inherent in state-run lotteries. The problem lies in state governments granting monopoly rights to sell participation in games of chance. The lack of competition allows the NC Education Lottery to prey on unwitting people by offering games with such infinitesimally low

“My concern is with the lack of fairness inherent in state-run lotteries.”

for Mega Millions) across the country, and two-thirds of the way back again, stopping somewhere along the way to randomly pick up one of these quarters. If they are lucky, they'll pick the one with the "W."

These probabilities are so infinitesimally small that most people fail to comprehend how futile it is to play these games. The chance of a ticket winning is literally near-zero, and yet few people, especially those with lower levels of education, even understand how unlikely their chance is of winning this near-zero probability event.

My criticism of lotteries is not based on any moral or religious principle against gambling. I do not gamble myself, but don't care to ban others from choosing how

probabilities of winning. The games attract primarily those least able to comprehend the odds, and also those least able to afford to engage in such deceptive gambles. It therefore acts little different than a regressive tax that takes from the poorest in our state a greater share of their incomes. That is a problem of fairness about which we should all be concerned.

Mark Steckbeck is an associate professor of economics and the Lundy Chair in Business Philosophy at Campbell University. The views expressed in this article do not necessarily represent the views of Campbell University.

Felons should not have their voting rights restored until their debt to society is paid in full

BY ANDY JACKSON

Should a convicted felon who has not completed his or her full sentence be allowed to vote? The North Carolina National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) thinks so. The organization joined several other groups in a lawsuit aimed at forcing the state of North Carolina to allow convicted felons serving their time on parole to vote.

Have parolees fully “reentered society?”

The plaintiffs laid out a basic goal of restoring the voting rights of an estimated 70,000 convicted felons currently on probation or parole.

They claim that these felons have “reentered society.” What they cannot claim is that those individuals have fully paid their debt to society. Those who are on parole or probation are still serving their sentences.

(Technically, most North Carolina prisoners are released to post-release supervision rather than parole. The statuses are functionally similar, and I will continue to use the more common term in this article.)

A felon on parole has not “fully returned to society” as Dennis Gaddy, the head of one of the orga-

nizations that started the lawsuit, claimed. Parole is part of a felon’s sentence. It is a period when the felon is still under government supervision. During and after parole, there are a host of rights and privileges most citizens enjoy that parolees do not. Parolees remain under the supervision of government officials, their freedom of movement is limited, and they may be required to “submit to random drug/urine screenings, secure a job, pay restitution ordered by the court at the time of sentencing and refrain from contact with victims/survivors and their families.” So, felons on parole have not fully returned to society and much of their lives are supervised and limited.

Until they have fully reentered society by fully paying their debt to society, restricting their right to vote is justified.

Of all the limits imposed on parolees, why only focus on voting?

It is curious that the plaintiffs only focus on allowing those still serving their sentences to vote. There are a host of other rights and privileges that felons lose, such as serving on a jury, owning a firearm, or holding elected office. As I previously



noted, those on parole also have a host of restrictions that have a greater impact on their daily lives than not being able to vote. So why the focus on voting?

The narrow focus on voting rights for felons still serving their sentence suggests that the groups backing the lawsuit believe that those felons could be a potent political force to help their preferred candidates win elections. Aside from the moral issue of

trying to use felons for the groups’ own political ends, their quest is likely a fool’s errand; research suggests that the voting rate of convicted felons may be as low as 5 percent. If current law impacts 70,000 felons, that means that as few as 3,500 felons still serving their sentences would vote in any given year statewide. Even if they all voted the same way, they would almost never make a difference in statewide

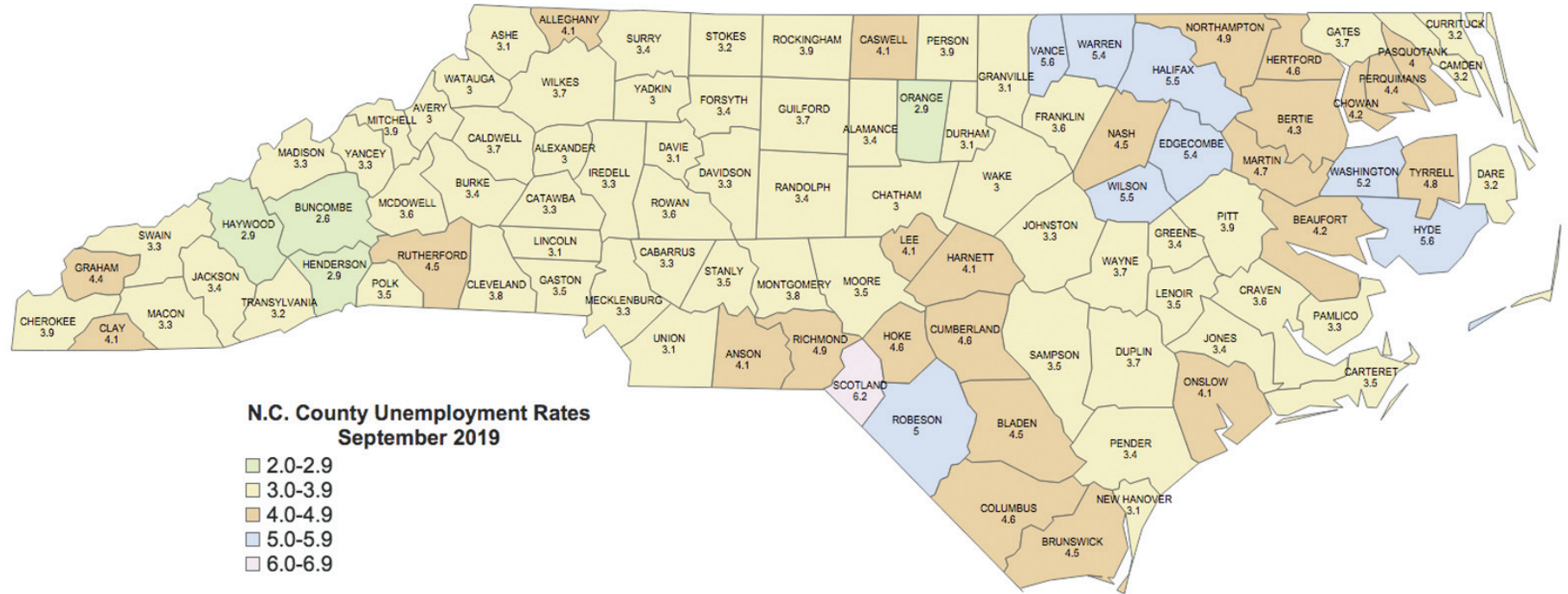
elections.

In addition to being morally and legally wrong, the plaintiffs are evidently wrong on the impact of felon voting restrictions on elections.

Restricting the right of felons to vote is both constitutionally and practically correct

While the plaintiffs claim in their complaint that felon disenfranchise-

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The above map shows the September 2019, (not seasonally adjusted) unemployment rates for all 100 North Carolina counties (data from N.C. Department of Commerce). The September statewide unemployment rate was 3.5 percent, which resulted in a decrease for all 100 N.C. counties. The national unemployment rate for September was also 3.5 percent. Nationally the unemployment rate has been at or below 4 percent for 19 consecutive months.

Scotland County had the highest unemployment rate at 6.2 percent, while Buncombe County had the lowest at 2.6 percent.

All 15 of the state’s metro areas experienced rate decreases. Among the metro areas, Rocky Mount at 4.8 percent had the highest rate and Asheville had the lowest rate at 2.7 percent.

The number of workers employed statewide (not seasonally adjusted) increased in September by 56,211 to 4,942,117, while those unemployed decreased by 42,527 to 178,221. Since September 2018, the number of workers employed statewide increased 148,574, while those unemployed increased 6,190.

Cooper says no to teacher raises; claims not enough

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Teachers going hungry in NC?”

According to the National Association of Educators, North Carolina teachers presently have the third fastest rate of teacher pay raises since 2014. Overall, teachers have received raises in the last five budgets. Meanwhile, Gov. Cooper has vetoed four pay raises during his

tenure as governor. Two of those raises have been approved by overriding Cooper’s budget veto. “Over the past five years, teacher pay has increased from \$47,792 (2014-15) to \$53,975 (2018-19), or by 13 percent,” wrote Civitas Policy Director Bob Luebke in an October article. An increase in the total benefits package for teachers

has also improved the total compensation package.

While the proposed 3.9 percent raise was less than some of the previous state budgets, some Republican leaders wanted to focus on higher raises for other state employees that were neglected in recent past budgets, giving raises for positions such as state troopers and correctional

officers.

President Pro Tem Sen. Phil Berger, in a press release, stated, “Teachers are told to be good, loyal Democrats and their union and their governor will take care of them. But they need to ask themselves: ‘What has Roy Cooper ever done for me?’ He’s vetoed every single teacher pay raise that’s come across his

desk, and he chose today to give teachers nothing for the next two years.

“Governor Cooper uses teachers as pawns, blocking their pay increases then trying to convince them it’s all the Republicans’ fault. At some point, they’ll see his cynical ploy for what it really is.”

Felons should not have their voting rights restored until their debt to society is paid in full

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ment is just a legacy of Jim Crow in the South, the practice is the norm throughout the United States. Section 2 of the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution specifically allows states to deny the right to vote to anyone for “participation in rebellion, or other crime.” The practice is also enshrined in Article VI, of North Carolina’s 1971 Constitution:

No person adjudged guilty of a felony against this State or the United States, or adjudged guilty

of a felony in another state that also would be a felony if it had been committed in this State, shall be permitted to vote unless that person shall be first restored to the rights of citizenship in the manner prescribed by law.

So, under both the United States and North Carolina constitutions, the state is well within its authority to require felons to fully complete their sentences before their voting rights are restored.

North Carolina is hardly

alone in denying the right to vote to those serving a felony sentence. Over three-fifths of the states in the union have felon voting restrictions as strong or stronger than North Carolina’s. Our state is among the plurality of states that automatically restore the right to vote upon the full completion of a felon’s sentence, including probation and/or parole. According to the nonpartisan National Conference of State Legislators, North Carolina is one of 21 states

that prohibit felons from voting until they have completed all their sentences. Another 11 states have further restrictions on felons voting. For example, Nebraska requires a two-year waiting period after completing parole before voting rights are restored and, in Arizona, a person with two or more felony convictions must apply to the courts to have voting rights restored.

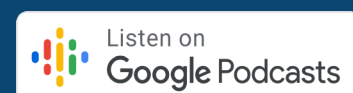
Both constitutionally and in practice, North Carolina strikes the right balance on

felon voting.

Through their own actions, felons have demonstrated that they do not respect our laws or the rights of others. While felons on parole are no longer in prison, they are still serving their sentences and rightfully have many of the rights and privileges of citizenship, including voting, taken from them until their sentences are completed. The lawsuit seeking to change these restrictions is baseless.

CIVIL TALK

BRINGING CLARITY TO
NORTH CAROLINA POLITICS



Civitas Action Freedom Rankings 2019

This year's Civitas Action Freedom Rankings score a total of 124 House Representatives and 51 Senators due to mid-session resignations and appointments. In the House, three Representatives tie for first place with a perfect score. It is worth noting, however, that only one of those - Rep. Michael Speciale (R-Craven) - has a true perfect score with no missed votes. Reps. Keith Kidwell (R-Beaufort) and Kelly Hastings (R-Gaston) also scored 100s, with two and three missed votes, respectively. In the Senate, the highest score went to Sen. John Alexander (R-Franklin) at 90.9.

Civitas Action's Freedom Rankings score legislative votes on issues related to expanding or defending freedom for North Carolinians. This year, the scores broke directly along party lines, with Republicans at the top of the scoring and no crossover with Democrats. The highest scoring Democrats were Sen. Don Davis (Greene) and Rep. Charles Graham (Robeson) (with the exception of Rep. Ken Goodman, who resigned his House seat in April). For more information on our scorecard and specific votes ranked please visit www.civitasaction.org.

House

Rank	District	Legislator	Party	Score
1	110	Kelly Hastings	R	100
1	79	Keith Kidwell	R	100
1	3	Michael Speciale	R	100
4	55	Mark Brody	R	94.1
5	91	Kyle Hall	R	93.8
6	112	David Rogers	R	92.9
7	51	John Sauls	R	92.3
8	86	Hugh Blackwell	R	91.7
8	9	Gregory Murphy*	R	91.7
10	87	Destin Hall	R	88.2
10	46	Brenden Jones	R	88.2
10	83	Larry Pittman	R	88.2
13	96	Jay Adams	R	87.5
13	14	George Cleveland	R	87.5
13	28	Larry Strickland	R	87.5
16	68	Craig Horn	R	83.3
17	109	Dana Bumgardner	R	82.4
17	1	Edward Goodwin	R	82.4
17	59	Jon Hardister	R	82.4
17	70	Pat Hurley	R	82.4
17	13	Pat McElraft	R	82.4
17	78	Allen McNeill	R	82.4
17	118	Michele Presnell	R	82.4
17	64	Dennis Riddell	R	82.4
17	63	Stephen Ross	R	82.4
26	113	Cody Henson*	R	81.8

Rank	District	Legislator	Party	Score
27	20	Holly Grange	R	81.3
27	75	Donny Lambeth	R	81.3
27	81	Larry Potts	R	81.3
27	97	Jason Saine	R	81.3
27	90	Sarah Stevens	R	81.3
32	74	Debra Conrad	R	80
32	95	John Fraley	R	80
32	113	Jake Johnson**	R	80
32	84	Jeffrey McNeely**	R	80
32	15	Phil Shepard	R	80
37	69	Dean Arp	R	78.6
38	82	Linda Johnson	R	77.8
39	120	Kevin Corbin	R	76.9
40	7	Lisa Barnes	R	76.5
40	10	John Bell	R	76.5
40	52	Jamie Boles	R	76.5
40	22	William Brisson	R	76.5
40	4	Jimmy Dixon	R	76.5
40	62	John Faircloth	R	76.5
40	6	Bobby Hanig	R	76.5
40	77	Julia Howard	R	76.5
40	12	Chris Humphrey	R	76.5
40	17	Frank Iler	R	76.5
40	80	Steve Jarvis	R	76.5
40	53	David Lewis	R	76.5
40	67	Wayne Sasser	R	76.5

House

Rank	District	Legislator	Party	Score
62	2	Larry Yarborough	R	73.3
64	117	Chuck McGrady	R	70.6
64	111	Tim Moore	R	70.6
64	89	Mitchell Setzer	R	70.6
67	9	Perrin Jones**	R	66.7
68	19	Ted Davis	R	64.7
69	66	Ken Goodman*	D	60
70	47	Charles Graham	D	53.3
71	98	Christy Clark	D	50
71	48	Garland Pierce	D	50
73	43	Elmer Floyd	D	43.8
73	116	Brian Turner	D	43.8
75	44	William Richardson	D	42.9
76	27	Michael Wray	D	40
77	57	Ashton Clemmons	D	35.3
77	35	Terence Everitt	D	35.3
77	24	Jean Farmer-Butterfield	D	35.3
77	105	Wesley Harris	D	35.3
77	61	Pricey Harrison	D	35.3
77	5	Howard Hunter	D	35.3
77	40	Joe John	D	35.3
77	99	Nasif Majeed	D	35.3
77	50	Graig Meyer	D	35.3
77	72	Derwin Montgomery	D	35.3
77	119	Joe Sam Queen	D	35.3
77	93	Ray Russell	D	35.3
77	21	Raymond Smith	D	35.3
90	25	James Gailliard	D	33.3
90	103	Rachel Hunt	D	33.3
90	58	Amos Quick	D	33.3
93	104	Brandon Lofton	D	31.3
94	60	Cecil Brockman	D	30.8

Rank	District	Legislator	Party	Score
95	41	Gale Adcock	D	29.4
95	115	John Ager	D	29.4
95	49	Cynthia Ball	D	29.4
95	92	Chaz Beasley	D	29.4
95	88	Mary Belk	D	29.4
95	32	Terry Garrison	D	29.4
95	31	Zack Hawkins	D	29.4
95	39	Darren Jackson	D	29.4
95	101	Carolyn Logan	D	29.4
95	30	Marcia Morey	D	29.4
95	71	Evelyn Terry	D	29.4
95	36	Julie von Haefen	D	29.4
107	37	Sydney Batch	D	28.6
107	29	MaryAnn Black	D	28.6
107	54	Robert Reives	D	28.6
110	66	Scott Brewer**	D	27.3
110	8	Kandie Smith	D	27.3
112	18	Deb Butler	D	25
112	23	Shelley Willingham	D	25
114	100	John Autry	D	23.5
114	102	Becky Carney	D	23.5
114	11	Allison Dahle	D	23.5
114	114	Susan Fisher	D	23.5
114	38	Yvonne Holley	D	23.5
114	56	Verla Insko	D	23.5
114	42	Marvin Lucas	D	23.5
114	34	Grier Martin	D	23.5
122	106	Carla Cunningham	D	23.1
122	33	Rosa Gill	D	23.1
124	107	Kelly Alexander	D	18.8
*Resigned during legislative session				
**Appointed during the legislative session				

Senate

Rank	District	Legislator	Party	Score
1	18	John Alexander	R	90.9
2	45	Deanna Ballard	R	85.7
2	47	Ralph Hise	R	85.7
2	8	Bill Rabon	R	85.7
2	42	Andy Wells	R	85.7
6	50	Jim Davis	R	84.6
6	24	Rick Gunn	R	84.6
8	26	Jerry Tillman	R	83.3
9	43	Kathy Harrington	R	81.8
10	44	Ted Alexander	R	80
10	33	Carl Ford	R	80
10	29	Eddie Gallimore	R	80
10	10	Brent Jackson	R	80
10	35	Todd Johnson	R	80
10	31	Joyce Krawiec	R	80
10	25	Tom McInnis	R	80
10	36	Paul Newton	R	80
10	7	Jim Perry	R	80
10	2	Norman Sanderson	R	80
20	13	Danny Earl Britt	R	78.6
20	12	Jim Burgin	R	78.6
20	46	Warren Daniel	R	78.6
20	11	Rick Horner	R	78.6
20	1	Bob Steinburg	R	78.6
25	39	Dan Bishop*	R	77.8
26	30	Phil Berger	R	76.9
26	6	Harry Brown	R	76.9

Rank	District	Legislator	Party	Score
26	48	Chuck Edwards	R	76.9
26	34	Vickie Sawyer	R	76.9
30	39	Rob Bryan**	R	66.7
31	5	Don Davis	D	53.3
32	32	Paul Lowe	D	42.9
33	21	Ben Clark	D	40
34	9	Harper Peterson	D	38.5
35	17	Sam Searcy	D	33.3
36	4	Toby Fitch	D	28.6
37	23	Valerie Foushee	D	27.3
38	27	Michael Garrett	D	26.7
38	20	Floyd McKissick	D	26.7
38	16	Wiley Nickel	D	26.7
38	40	Joyce Waddell	D	26.7
42	14	Dan Blue	D	23.1
43	28	Gladys Robinson	D	21.4
43	22	Mike Woodard	D	21.4
45	15	Jay Chaudhuri	D	20
45	41	Natasha Marcus	D	20
45	38	Mujtaba Mohammed	D	20
48	3	Erica Smith	D	18.2
49	19	Kirk deViere	D	15.4
50	49	Terry Van Duyn	D	14.3
51	37	Jeff Jackson	D	0
*Resigned during legislative session				
**Appointed during the legislative session				

Changes represent the difference in voter registration between October 5, 2019 and November 16										
County	Total Voters	Total Change	Democrats	Democrat Change	Republicans	Republican Change	Libertarians	Libertarian Change	Unaffiliated Voters	Unaffiliated Change
Totals	6,782,151	26,914	2,492,807	5,266	2,034,101	5,755	38,931	290	2,216,312	15,603
Alamance	100,160	156	36,204	47	32,724	32	544	7	30,688	70
Alexander	23,410	87	5,342	-24	10,671	44	89	2	7,308	65
Alleghany	7,048	74	2,249	2	2,623	22	32	2	2,144	48
Anson	15,778	74	10,093	-5	2,397	33	28	2	3,260	44
Ashe	17,929	-17	4,589	-10	7,849	-10	74	1	5,417	2
Avery	11,345	10	1,327	-7	6,623	11	51	0	3,344	6
Beaufort	32,057	-42	11,947	-41	10,842	0	98	0	9,170	-1
Bertie	12,709	43	8,689	5	1,408	3	26	0	2,586	35
Bladen	21,610	25	11,028	-14	4,160	18	48	-1	6,374	22
Brunswick	102,975	14	25,666	-23	39,681	-1	442	-1	37,186	39
Buncombe	191,631	173	72,610	-1	44,117	-14	1,499	3	73,405	185
Burke	53,490	8	15,527	-39	19,846	9	275	2	17,842	36
Cabarrus	135,311	-33	40,546	-12	48,103	-54	884	-6	45,778	39
Caldwell	50,359	15	11,599	-27	23,534	21	348	0	14,878	21
Camden	7,493	116	1,844	-8	2,496	55	57	1	3,096	68
Carteret	50,886	-52	10,650	-43	22,350	5	231	0	17,655	-14
Caswell	14,451	16	6,883	-20	3,281	26	34	-1	4,253	11
Catawba	99,753	96	22,447	-18	43,077	31	448	2	33,781	81
Chatham	52,745	-82	19,966	-65	12,825	-12	265	1	19,689	-6
Cherokee	21,026	6	4,311	-26	9,699	22	126	-3	6,890	13
Chowan	9,695	-29	4,206	-31	2,612	-1	27	0	2,850	3
Clay	8,463	28	1,634	-7	3,726	32	54	0	3,049	3
Cleveland	61,721	20	23,144	-44	21,049	63	275	-2	17,253	3
Columbus	34,327	-10	17,208	-53	7,631	37	68	0	9,420	6
Craven	67,363	42	21,218	-31	24,138	43	391	1	21,616	29
Cumberland	204,462	990	90,976	311	46,553	211	1,276	6	65,657	462
Currituck	19,689	164	3,566	14	7,705	100	167	-3	8,251	53
Dare	29,025	282	7,963	29	9,330	109	221	2	11,511	142
Davidson	104,371	132	23,326	-13	49,457	20	470	4	31,118	121
Davie	28,986	150	4,930	1	14,871	77	130	4	9,055	68
Duplin	28,405	-31	12,379	-24	7,967	-17	104	-1	7,955	11
Durham	222,743	2,875	121,420	1,400	25,782	198	1,129	8	74,412	1,269
Edgecombe	33,802	57	23,033	15	5,657	29	78	2	5,034	11
Forsyth	251,588	1,101	100,334	282	72,468	131	1,365	17	77,421	671
Franklin	42,406	-66	16,427	-36	13,136	-9	226	0	12,617	-21
Gaston	136,593	249	40,459	-18	52,631	110	791	3	42,712	154
Gates	7,787	66	3,847	14	1,703	23	28	0	2,209	29
Graham	5,685	-11	1,499	-7	2,630	-4	26	0	1,530	0
Granville	36,904	-50	17,171	-53	9,190	-9	151	2	10,392	10
Greene	10,879	4	5,760	-9	2,133	5	19	0	2,967	8
Guilford	354,876	1,310	157,282	211	89,398	67	1,973	3	106,223	1,029
Halifax	35,752	112	22,799	6	4,390	41	90	3	8,473	62
Harnett	73,922	518	24,602	103	26,074	205	549	10	22,697	200
Haywood	42,731	255	14,564	-45	13,658	129	271	-1	14,238	172
Henderson	80,492	254	16,687	45	30,067	8	484	2	33,254	199
Hertford	14,221	-1	10,109	-4	1,359	-3	32	0	2,721	6
Hoke	29,913	160	13,726	25	6,298	41	219	8	9,670	86
Hyde	3,020	31	1,587	-2	516	11	14	-1	903	23
Iredell	118,864	1,519	28,212	205	49,346	553	641	11	40,665	750
Jackson	27,148	118	9,260	24	7,416	52	189	3	10,283	39
Johnston	128,560	953	37,483	185	49,403	343	812	19	40,862	406
Jones	6,988	11	3,136	-19	1,888	12	24	0	1,940	18
Lee	35,388	15	13,404	-19	10,254	22	198	-1	11,532	13
Lenoir	36,565	262	18,613	44	9,480	82	107	-1	8,365	137
Lincoln	56,529	417	12,143	38	25,758	191	288	5	18,340	183
Macon	25,213	129	5,895	-7	10,568	84	141	5	8,609	47
Madison	16,067	-48	5,820	-11	4,271	-16	107	-3	5,869	-18
Martin	15,797	6	8,944	-6	3,165	0	39	0	3,649	12
Mcdowell	27,380	163	7,011	4	10,947	90	148	-1	9,274	70
Mecklenburg	725,997	869	314,473	365	162,235	-211	4,900	10	244,389	705
Mitchell	10,181	24	1,044	0	6,060	8	34	1	3,043	15
Montgomery	15,585	-47	6,279	-34	4,991	-4	65	-4	4,250	-5
Moore	67,628	-17	15,719	-26	27,808	1	399	2	23,702	6
Nash	64,746	205	31,389	8	18,391	82	226	1	14,740	114
New Hanover	164,098	158	49,775	14	51,569	19	1,212	6	61,542	119
Northampton	13,278	14	9,184	-4	1,432	4	25	1	2,637	13
Onslow	103,268	1,764	24,496	254	38,318	611	1015	30	39,439	869
Orange	108,105	508	50,165	247	14,764	6	695	0	42,481	255
Pamlico	9,147	76	3,257	-13	3,237	50	44	1	2,609	38
Pasquotank	26,628	341	11,317	60	6,057	92	157	3	9,097	186
Pender	40,041	-5	11,339	-22	15,422	-2	256	2	13,024	17
Perquimans	9,357	96	3,491	37	2,680	8	38	3	3,148	48
Person	25,600	102	11,002	4	6,607	44	103	5	7,888	49
Pitt	117,972	145	51,386	-137	30,277	-14	727	-1	35,582	297
Polk	15,205	-10	3,895	-7	5,462	0	77	0	5,771	-3
Randolph	87,075	366	16,699	56	44,537	153	498	0	25,341	157
Richmond	27,738	19	14,115	-11	5,826	14	82	-1	7,715	17
Robeson	71,912	-151	42,968	-155	9,431	0	192	1	19,321	3
Rockingham	57,388	30	19,940	-50	20,754	39	250	1	16,444	40
Rowan	89,805	356	24,576	113	37,170	64	425	-1	27,634	180
Rutherford	42,696	-14	12,371	-26	16,852	13	204	-1	13,269	0
Sampson	35,239	120	14,216	26	13,351	38	118	-2	7,554	58
Scotland	20,713	121	11,200	12	3,557	37	64	0	5,892	72
Stanly	40,403	315	9,742	3	18,378	154	148	4	12,135	154
Stokes	29,382	89	6,501	-18	14,673	51	156	-2	8,052	58
Surry	43,535	191	11,642	-29	18,938	73	128	2	12,827	145
Swain	9,270	14	3,376	2	2,575	2	39	0	3,280	10
Transylvania	24,803	27	6,156	-12	8,018	8	115	-2	10,514	33
Tyrrell	2,214	-5	1,173	-2	356	-1	9	0	676	-2
Union	153,555	102	37,668	-6	63,193	18	803	4	51,891	86
Vance	28,096	142	18,119	43	4,137	42	70	3	5,770	54
Wake	736,572	6,740	269,992	2,184	182,666	664	5,365	104	278,549	3,788
Warren	12,856	18	8,547	-9	1,835	13	40	1	2,434	13
Washington	8,075	19	5,251	-8	1,088	12	22	1	1,714	14
Watauga	45,251	530	11,899	163	13,370	56	501	7	19,481	304
Wayne	71,459	499	29,459	116	23,190	160	351	-1	18,459	224
Wilkes	40,486	106	8,401	-32	21,246	66	142	-5	10,697	77
Wilson	54,001	156	27,251	-7	12,990	45	169	-1	13,591	119
Yadkin	23,004	82	3,522	-1	12,946	32	95	2	6,441	49
Yancey	13,301	-15	4,518	-20	4,783	7	51	1	3,949	-3

Mecklenburg vote emblematic of larger nationwide anti-tax voter sentiment

BY BRIAN BALFOUR

Last month Mecklenburg County voters rejected a local quarter cent sales tax hike sold as a way to raise funds for area art projects and parks. The tax was projected to cost taxpayers about \$55 million annually. It's the second time in five years that Mecklenburg voters have rejected a sales tax increase.

The proposal failed in spite of a \$1.1 million advertising campaign by supporters and is emblematic of some strong anti-tax sentiment around the country.

The Tax Foundation provides a good overview of several key tax-related

measures voted on in the recent November elections.

In Texas, an overwhelming 75 percent of voters approved a constitutional amendment requiring a vote of the people to approve of any state income tax being imposed. Texas' economy has been buoyed by its lack of an income tax, and voters voiced their support for strong protections against ever imposing one.

Voters in Colorado, home to perhaps the nation's most well-known taxpayer bill of rights (TABOR), shot down an effort to suspend the policy of sending refunds to taxpayers when-

ever state revenue rises at a rate faster than inflation plus population growth.

Seems that taxpayers like getting some of their hard-earned money back with the added bonus of restraining government growth. Disappointingly, a bill here in NC that would have given millions of North Carolina taxpayers a refund passed in the Senate but failed to get approval in the House.

In Washington, voters approved a couple modest tax increases, but rejected many more. As the Tax Foundation described:

Although voters gave their assent to the mod-

est new tax on e-cigarettes and a surtax on international investment management services, they gave a thumbs-down to just about everything else: a new payroll tax to fund long-term care services, for instance; Business & Occupation tax surcharges on financial institutions, service industries, tour operators, timber products, and paint; a new petroleum tax; a graduated-rate real estate excise tax; and even remote sales tax authority. Clearly, Washington voters felt overtaxed, and with good reason.

Finally, we can recognize that voters are typically

more receptive to so-called sin taxes on items like alcohol, cigarettes, marijuana and betting. In addition to Colorado's new e-cigarette tax, two California cities unsurprisingly voted to legalize and tax marijuana, as did Colorado with sports betting. The lesson here is that voters are more likely to approve of taxes that are easier to avoid.

Taxes are never a popular topic for voters, with the sole exception of taxes people believe they won't have to pay. Last month, many voters said enough is enough by rejecting tax hikes.

