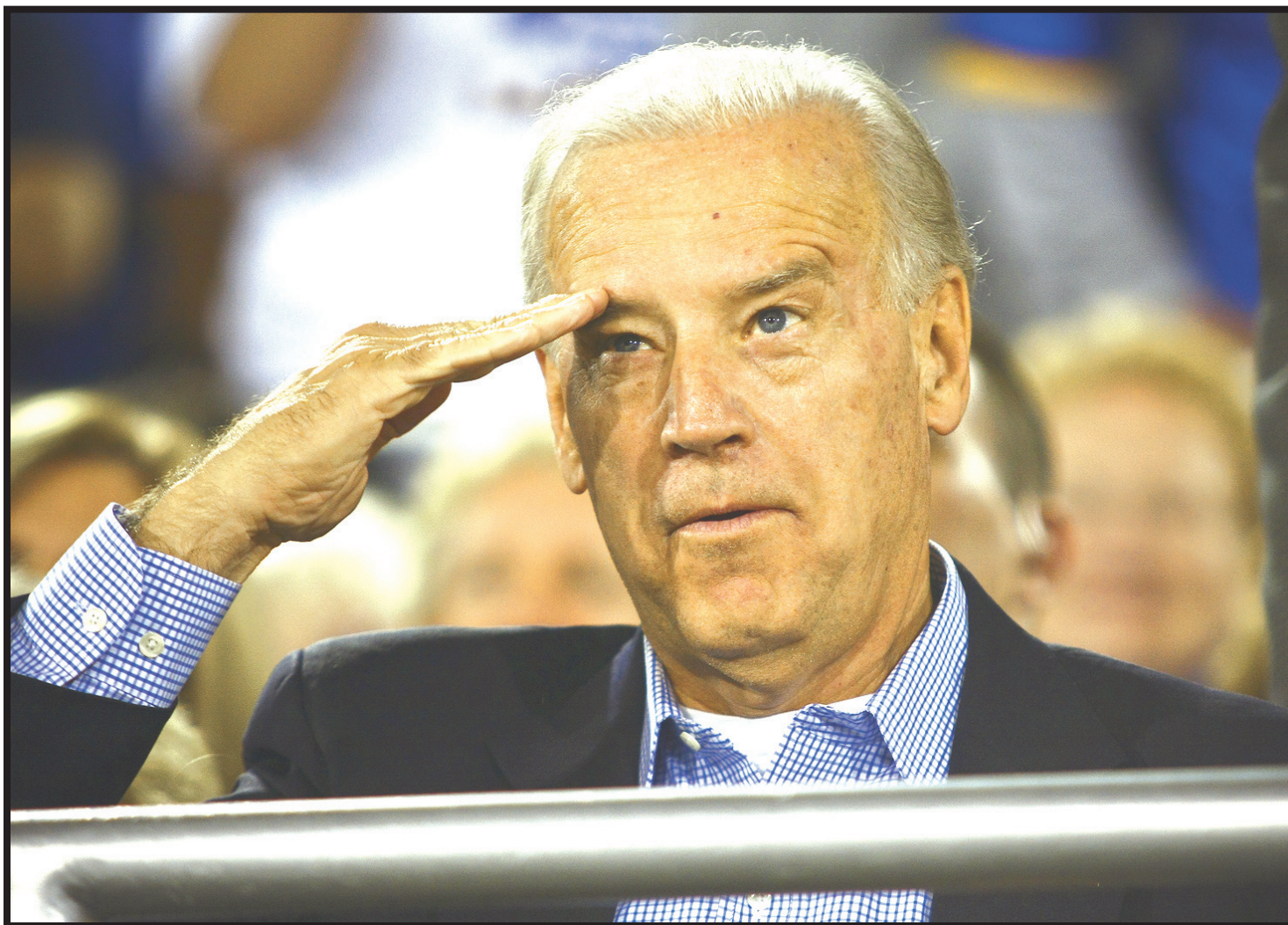




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Biden takes lead in North Carolina; 70 percent say country on 'wrong track'



didate Kamala Harris to be his running mate on August 11. It's not yet clear if Harris's far left voting record will impact Biden's chances for winning North Carolina. Gov. Roy Cooper immediately gushed over the Harris pick on his Twitter account saying, "Great pick by Joe Biden of Kamala Harris as VP. I worked with her when we were AGs of our state and I know her strengths. The road to the White House runs through NC and we'll get it done up and down the ticket."

Problematic for Republicans too might be Democrat Cal Cunningham's improving numbers in the U.S. Senate race against Thom Tillis. While still within the margin of error, Cunningham now leads Tillis by three points (41 to 38 percent). Tillis had a four-point lead in April and a two-point lead in May. North Carolina is considered one of the most competitive Senate races in the nation as Republicans attempt to hold on to their majority in the upper chamber. Republicans are defending 23 seats in 2020,

BY RAY NOTHSTINE

Former vice president Joe Biden leads President Donald Trump in North Carolina for the first time ever in a Civitas Poll. While the lead is a single point and within the margin of error, Biden has pushed ahead of a president who has been accused by his detractors of failing to take control of the Covid-19 pandemic. Trump's approval rating has dropped four points since May in North Carolina and Biden now leads 45 to 44 percent.

The August 10 poll was taken before Biden picked U.S. Senator and former presidential can-

(Continued on page 10)

From the editor

As I'm sure readers know, Gov. Roy Cooper again extended Phase Two, this time until at least September 11. Who would have thought such aggressive governmental controls would have lasted well into the fall? Along with the terrible loss of life from Covid-19, it's hard to fathom all the economic heartbreak and destruction as well.

Whether one agrees with the measures by our governor or not – and much of the loudest dissent stems from a lack of transparency in the data and decision making – it's a reminder that state and local elections matter significantly. State governors have had unprecedented power pretty much throughout the entire pandemic. They issue orders about what businesses can open and then regulate the capacity number on those establishments. Control of public-school openings are another piece where governors

have taken over the reins. State legislators are shut out of the process entirely, particularly in North Carolina.

Gov. Cooper is using the crisis to try and expand state and federal power – particularly by using Covid-19 to call for another effort to expand Medicaid. There is tremendous political pressure too, wherein much of the media seems ready to pounce on any narrative or story that might result in a less aggressive shutdown. There is a push by the Left and progressive activists to demand widespread vote-by-mail initiatives – potentially threatening the safety and security of our elections.

While the Civitas Institute may not have all the answers as it pertains to the coronavirus, we understand the threat of an aggressive and growing government. Jefferson once summed it up this way: “I own I am not a friend to

a very energetic government. It is always oppressive.”

That type of government means less money for you and more for the state and national government in their effort to control more and more aspects of your life. Like you, we know this crisis won't be with us forever – and we know that the unprecedented power grabs must be checked. “Never let a good crisis go to waste” is the horrible mantra that only serves to punish the law-abiding taxpayers who play by the rules of society.

We want to thank you for your support and diligent commitment to a freer North Carolina. It makes it easier to jump in the trenches and battle the never-ending onslaught against the principles that made our state and nation so great.

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Exposing the radical agenda the Left wants to impose on North Carolina

BY BRIAN BALFOUR

A new coalition of left-wing groups in North Carolina has garnered more than 200 members. Its radical agenda should terrify anyone who values freedom, the rule of law, common sense, and economic security.

This new coalition calls itself NC United

for Survival & Beyond (NCUSB) and includes some deep-pocketed, influential organizations that back some of the group's fringe ideas; which include:

- a “push for *everyone* to be released” from prisons and jails
- refuse to honor ICE detainees
- expand Medicaid to illegal immigrants
- a waiver for *all* tenants from rent and utilities
- providing a permanent universal basic income of \$1,200/mo. to all residents (regardless of age) – including illegal immigrants
- elimination of right to work laws, which would take away many workers' choice to join or not join a union
- massive tax increases, and
- online voter registration with mail-in voting with no witness requirement

The North Carolina Association of Educators (NCAE), Durham Democratic Party, William Barber's Poor People's Campaign, North Carolina AFL-CIO, and Democracy NC, among many oth-



ers, have all signed on to NCUSB's agenda. Should these demands become reality, the impact would be absolutely stunning.

In April the group garnered some media attention from WRAL after its protests of Senate leader Phil Berger. The article glossed over the group's radical agenda with the vague and inoffensive description of “addressing inequality.”

Crime

Imagine releasing more than 33,000 prison inmates into your communities, many of which are convicted murderers and rapists. Recall, NCUSB's agenda includes a call to

release “all” prisoners. Without prison as a deterrent, what's to keep them from repeat offenses? The havoc that these violent criminals would wreak could be incalculable. New York and other large cities have done similar actions to try to deal with the Covid pandemic and look at how their crime rates have spiked.

Medicaid Expansion

With an estimated 325,000 illegal immigrants in the state, and Medicaid expenditures of roughly \$360 per enrollee per month (\$4,320 per year), extending Medicaid expansion to illegals could

cost taxpayers up to \$1.4 billion annually, which is more than total annual state appropriations for the UNC System.

Universal Basic Income

The most radical proposal is their universal basic income program, which completely defies reality. The cost of a \$1,200/mo. universal basic income for all 10.5 million North Carolinians would be roughly \$151 billion, every year. Adding in payments to illegal immigrants would add millions more to the total.

The total cost of UBI — \$151 billion — is more

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Exposing the radical agenda the Left wants to impose on North Carolina

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than six times the state's current annual General Fund budget.

For a family of four, for instance, UBI would amount to \$57,600 per year, for doing nothing. In this case the UBI figure is nearly \$4,000 more than the state's median household income of \$53,855. In other words, many households would receive more income from this program than they would by working.

Of course, such a program would bankrupt the state and cripple our economy and would surely grow rapidly as more and more people would be drawn to the state by the robust handout.

As stunned as I was that any group would publicly advocate for such an insane policy, I reached out to a representative of the coalition for comment or clarification on this policy, but received none.

Funding this unprecedented ratcheting up of state spending would require the imposition of economy-crushing, job-killing taxes. On this score, NC United for Survival and Beyond is painfully naïve about the devastating levels of tax hikes that would be required.

Corporate Income Tax

Among their recommendations is to increase the corporate income tax rate to 5%, which by their estimates would raise an additional \$250 million, not even a rounding error www.nccivitas.org

relative to the new spending they propose.

Sales Tax Modernization

NCUSB also advocates for "sales tax modernization," by broadening the sales tax to more purchases like online transactions and eliminating targeted sales tax exemptions while lowering the tax rates. Presumably, these changes would be largely revenue neutral and raise little to no additional revenue.

Graduated Income Tax and Wealth Tax

Another NCUSB proposal is a graduated income tax and a wealth tax. According to the NC Justice Center, repealing the 2013 tax reforms and re-introducing a graduated income tax code would generate \$3.6 billion annually. For sake of argument, we'll set aside the flaws of this estimate such as the lack of recognizing the negative economic consequences of the tax hike and use this figure.

Regarding taxing wealth, the group explains "Options for taxing wealth include estate and inheritance taxes, capital gains taxes, and mansion taxes."

What a "mansion tax" implies goes unexplained, but nevertheless; how much could the state hope to collect from these taxes?

- According to the Justice Center, an inheritance tax would generate up to \$170 million
- Real estate conveyance tax collected in the current fiscal year produces



about \$85 million, even if a 'mansion tax' miraculously doubled this amount, it would only add another \$85 million

- Capital gains are taxed as income, at a flat rate of 5.25%, and the

Justice Center estimated in 2015 that the tax generates roughly \$500 million per year in revenue. The state with the highest capital gains tax rate is California at 13.3%, about 2.5 times

North Carolina's rate. Using static calculations, if NC increased its capital gains rate by 2.5 times it would generate about \$1.25 billion in revenue, an increase of (Continued on page 12)

Electoral College protects North Carolina's voice

BY ANDY JACKSON AND TRENT ENGLAND

Every four years, along with the presidential election come criticisms of the Electoral College. Some people are just unhappy their candidate lost, but others are truly uncertain.

Today, a lobbying group from California called National Popular Vote is trying to take advantage of that uncertainty to convince state legislators to manipulate the Electoral College. Their plan, which goes into effect if passed by enough states to control the election outcome, is for states to ignore their own voters and instead choose presidential electors based on the nationwide vote. That effort threatens to make the will of North Carolina voters subservient to those of other states, taking away our voice in presidential elections.

So, what is the truth about the Electoral College?

At the 1787 Constitutional Convention, the American Founders argued about how to elect the presi-

dent. The first proposal was that Congress do it. It works that way today in Australia, Canada, Great Britain, and many other countries. The Founders rejected this because they wanted presidents to be independent of Congress. They considered holding one big national election — a national popular vote. But then a handful of big

states, or the biggest cities, might control who becomes president.

It was at the very end of the Constitutional Convention that a committee of eleven members, including James Madison, came up with the Electoral College. The people have power to choose the president, but it is channeled through our states and based on our representation in Congress.

In the Electoral College, each state gets as many presidential electors as we have members in the House and the Senate. States with more people have more members of the House, but each state has two senators. That means the smallest states get three electors, and bigger states get more; North Carolina has 15. In that

way, the Electoral College balances the interests of citizens in large and small states.

The 2016 election showed how this works. Hillary Clinton believed she would win no matter what, so she slacked off her efforts to win votes in the middle of the country. The result was that she lost states like Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin where

Democrats had won for a generation. She did, however, rack up huge margins in big cities, especially in California. That gave her a popular vote majority, but not the White House.

The Electoral College forces candidates and parties to reach out to more Americans, and not to ignore the heartland of our country. In every election,

it pushes candidates to build broader coalitions.

The Electoral College also adds an element of federalism to our presidential elections, making states relevant, and it contains election disputes to within individual states. There has never been a nationwide recount thanks to the Electoral College.

If North Carolina was to join the National Popular Vote interstate compact,

our electoral votes could be determined, not by the voters of North Carolina, but by the vote totals in California and other larger states. For example, if North Carolina had been a member of the compact in 2016, all our electoral votes would have been given to Hilary Clinton even though a majority of North Carolina voters cast ballots for Donald Trump. The General Assembly should not make our vote for president irrelevant.

North Carolinians who care about the Constitution and our state's voice in presidential elections need to continue to remind our state legislators to stand up for the Electoral College.

Andy Jackson is the Election Policy Analyst at the Civitas Institute. Trent England is the author of "Why We Must Defend the Electoral College" and the executive director of Save Our States, which is based in Oklahoma City.

This article originally appeared in the Fayetteville Observer.

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Changes represent the difference in voter registration between June 6 and August 8, 2020

County	Total Voters	Total Change	Democrats	Democrat Change	Republicans	Republican Change	Libertarians	Libertarian Change	Unaffiliated Voters	Unaffiliated Change
Totals	7,044,905	57,310	2,538,174	8,965	2,109,596	18,783	41,353	1,409	2,355,782	28,153
Alamance	104,409	802	37,016	167	33,981	264	570	23	32,842	348
Alexander	23,901	69	5,125	-51	11,062	92	97	5	7,617	23
Alleghany	7,250	40	2,136	-27	2,767	34	30	-1	2,317	34
Anson	16,176	77	10,021	-17	2,605	57	30	1	3,520	36
Ashe	18,700	147	4,500	-26	8,301	98	78	1	5,821	74
Avery	11,816	311	1,372	32	6,871	157	54	1	3,519	121
Beaufort	33,000	224	11,792	-38	11,410	152	102	4	9,696	106
Bertie	12,873	11	8,582	-23	1,484	14	30	2	2,777	18
Bladen	22,223	110	10,731	-49	4,565	97	58	3	6,869	59
Brunswick	108,918	1,364	26,425	210	42,449	637	500	29	39,544	488
Buncombe	199,313	3,980	75,184	1,224	45,217	745	1,513	1	77,399	2,010
Burke	55,598	441	15,238	-35	20,987	250	298	7	19,075	219
Cabarrus	142,357	1,275	42,336	307	49,859	343	964	27	49,198	598
Caldwell	51,654	261	11,258	-62	24,362	196	355	6	15,679	121
Camden	7,814	67	1,768	-14	2,675	43	57	2	3,314	36
Carteret	49,557	369	9,808	23	22,234	206	236	11	17,279	129
Caswell	14,911	86	6,856	-30	3,547	57	40	2	4,468	57
Catawba	104,090	773	22,593	30	44,863	311	483	23	36,151	409
Chatham	55,445	595	20,656	165	13,421	161	270	7	21,098	262
Cherokee	21,652	313	4,204	-37	10,222	253	123	-3	7,103	100
Chowan	9,947	37	4,145	-27	2,718	34	32	1	3,052	29
Clay	8,775	151	1,618	4	3,930	86	56	1	3,171	60
Cleveland	64,032	384	22,670	-157	22,585	343	298	14	18,479	184
Columbus	35,455	221	16,808	-52	8,505	185	88	6	10,054	82
Craven	69,985	411	21,255	6	25,231	165	435	28	23,064	212
Cumberland	213,749	1,612	93,252	334	48,910	458	1,406	74	70,181	746
Currituck	20,860	159	3,548	-11	8,317	112	178	7	8,817	51
Dare	28,696	243	7,621	34	9,493	118	191	3	11,391	88
Davidson	108,464	836	23,448	8	51,535	552	495	15	32,986	261
Davie	30,203	233	5,020	36	15,514	121	139	6	9,530	70
Duplin	29,538	159	12,316	-36	8,475	113	101	0	8,646	82
Durham	231,432	1,524	125,929	833	25,855	53	1,172	36	78,476	602
Edgecombe	34,586	30	22,926	-91	6,044	83	85	5	5,531	33
Forsyth	260,450	1,125	102,723	350	73,696	64	1,432	49	82,599	662
Franklin	44,877	462	16,732	30	14,011	162	268	17	13,866	253
Gaston	143,362	1,495	41,319	152	55,412	694	887	47	45,744	602
Gates	8,039	62	3,827	-1	1,833	34	32	3	2,347	26
Graham	5,870	84	1,439	-51	2,762	84	24	-2	1,645	53
Granville	38,074	134	17,224	-54	9,657	75	155	6	11,038	107
Greene	11,045	30	5,551	-50	2,294	39	23	0	3,177	41
Guilford	368,909	2,372	161,760	751	91,085	310	2,100	53	113,964	1,258
Halifax	36,583	110	22,815	-66	4,615	35	97	2	9,056	139
Harnett	77,080	607	24,746	45	27,512	256	578	39	24,244	267
Haywood	44,300	1,066	14,245	-124	14,631	609	287	12	15,137	569
Henderson	84,250	2,191	17,341	428	31,184	698	509	27	35,216	1,038
Hertford	14,608	19	10,109	-25	1,439	5	35	2	3,025	37
Hoke	31,249	331	13,942	60	6,763	125	244	9	10,300	137
Hyde	3,081	10	1,541	-11	545	8	17	0	978	13

Iredell	124,162	1,240	28,303	97	51,632	563	663	22	43,564	558
Jackson	27,953	133	9,340	-86	7,719	103	185	-5	10,709	121
Johnston	135,589	1,689	38,606	305	51,985	617	893	35	44,105	732
Jones	7,182	0	3,084	-21	2,004	12	32	3	2,062	6
Lee	36,904	301	13,426	24	10,829	134	221	12	12,428	131
Lenoir	37,188	91	18,313	-53	9,751	63	116	3	9,008	78
Lincoln	58,987	686	12,175	46	27,166	371	308	10	19,338	259
Macon	26,112	560	5,803	-26	11,138	347	146	-2	9,025	241
Madison	16,541	289	5,831	12	4,435	138	109	-4	6,166	143
Martin	16,041	14	8,788	-57	3,330	36	38	1	3,885	34
Mcdowell	28,390	561	6,793	-104	11,625	385	154	1	9,818	279
Mecklenburg	760,467	6,650	327,843	2,830	164,860	151	5,232	137	262,532	3,532
Mitchell	10,550	183	1,056	13	6,295	116	35	1	3,164	53
Montgomery	16,217	90	6,183	-37	5,404	66	79	4	4,551	57
Moore	70,214	538	15,934	66	28,876	225	466	21	24,938	226
Nash	66,388	308	31,179	-31	19,003	163	255	20	15,951	156
New Hanover	170,260	998	51,238	230	52,834	192	1,294	63	64,894	513
Northampton	13,589	-3	9,042	-48	1,434	23	28	1	3,085	21
Onslow	110,072	1,488	25,215	193	40,962	588	1178	77	42,717	630
Orange	110,497	-102	51,557	-44	14,614	-94	637	-2	43,689	38
Pamlico	9,321	79	3,197	1	3,422	65	44	-1	2,658	14
Pasquotank	27,537	150	11,331	6	6,440	82	170	2	9,596	60
Pender	42,152	265	11,459	-36	16,348	169	293	14	14,052	118
Perquimans	8,990	31	3,165	-1	2,734	21	34	0	3,057	11
Person	26,323	173	10,943	-14	6,975	87	103	1	8,302	99
Pitt	121,163	378	51,906	72	30,970	101	742	8	37,545	197
Polk	15,793	329	3,939	30	5,736	137	89	8	6,029	154
Randolph	90,329	668	16,754	-7	46,422	422	532	22	26,621	231
Richmond	28,473	102	13,835	-78	6,290	90	84	-2	8,264	92
Robeson	74,069	-69	42,656	-367	10,305	167	203	1	20,905	130
Rockingham	59,167	528	19,835	49	21,811	312	277	15	17,244	152
Rowan	93,031	619	24,724	-48	38,841	408	454	27	29,012	232
Rutherford	44,161	529	12,097	-135	17,877	435	211	-2	13,976	231
Sampson	36,201	151	14,162	-33	13,847	93	140	6	8,052	85
Scotland	21,276	52	11,117	-73	3,783	49	67	1	6,309	75
Stanly	41,446	235	9,548	-42	19,054	163	160	8	12,684	106
Stokes	30,321	217	6,289	-51	15,371	171	158	5	8,503	92
Surry	44,945	275	11,289	-64	19,857	167	143	10	13,656	162
Swain	9,636	147	3,322	-47	2,754	85	43	4	3,517	105
Transylvania	25,517	351	6,205	39	8,219	119	118	-1	10,975	194
Tyrrell	2,250	-8	1,171	-5	371	-1	9	0	699	-2
Union	161,276	1,572	38,981	299	65,823	550	898	35	55,574	688
Vance	28,668	107	17,996	-46	4,407	69	78	5	6,187	79
Wake	766,691	6,544	280,870	2,535	184,307	182	5,597	226	295,917	3,601
Warren	13,062	34	8,485	-47	1,970	55	41	-2	2,566	28
Washington	8,098	3	5,134	-29	1,162	15	18	-1	1,784	18
Watauga	44,816	-360	11,815	-117	13,250	-88	461	-17	19,290	-138
Wayne	73,170	309	29,267	-64	24,014	168	364	9	19,525	196
Wilkes	41,691	258	8,194	-30	22,074	188	149	6	11,274	94
Wilson	55,550	167	27,377	-64	13,550	98	192	4	14,431	129
Yadkin	23,687	137	3,497	-11	13,313	87	107	7	6,770	54
Yancey	13,636	210	4,434	-30	4,970	130	53	2	4,179	108

Expanding Medicaid puts those most at-need at risk

BY LEAH BYERS

As of December 2018, over 2 million North Carolinians were enrolled in the state's Medicaid program. That's approximately 1 out of every 5 people in the state.

Some want the state to expand its Medicaid program to include able-bodied, working-age adults, most of whom have no dependent children. Doing so would increase enrollment by approximately half a million people, an increase of at least 25

percent.

Medicaid expansion is again starting to gain steam as an election and Covid-19 issue, but why is Medicaid expansion a bad idea for North Carolina? The most compelling reason: it will crowd out care for those who need it most.

Medicaid already serves the most at-risk populations. Expanding Medicaid would force traditional Medicaid populations to compete for limited access to care with hundreds of

thousands of mostly childless, able-bodied adults.

North Carolina context

The key issue of the 2019 legislative session was the battle over the expansion of the state's Medicaid program under the Affordable Care Act (ACA). Medicaid expansion was one of the key reasons Gov. Roy Cooper vetoed the state budget, and the governor's legislative representative even went as far as to say, "The session ends when we get

Medicaid expansion."

Despite holding the state budget captive, the governor was not able to accomplish his top policy objective of expanding Medicaid. The Medicaid expansion debate is often framed as an issue of healthcare versus state budget considerations. And the battle has gotten ugly: expansion supporters have even accused skeptics of being racist or hating the poor.

Fiscally conscious law-

makers are rightfully concerned about the costs of growing government through expanding the state's Medicaid program. Most states that have expanded experience cost overruns within the first years of the program. The ever-increasing federal deficit and debt problems make it a good bet the inflated 90 percent federal match for expansion enrollees is almost cer-

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 9)



Expanding Medicaid puts those most at-need at risk

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

tain to be on the chopping block in the coming years (Remember, the traditional Medicaid population has a 67 percent federal match).

But when it comes to Medicaid expansion, cost is actually the least of our worries. Larger concerns include increasing government distortion of the healthcare market while doing nothing to actually lower costs and crowding out access to care for those who need it most. The former is a topic we will now explore.

The bigger picture of Medicaid expansion

Civitas has written many times about the issue of Medicaid expansion crowding out care for the most vulnerable. But the point boils down to one simple statement: insurance coverage does not equal access to health care.

Medicaid is a joint federal and state program that was intended to provide health insurance coverage to society's vulnerable populations. In North Carolina, Medicaid enrollees must meet both income and categorical requirements to be eligible. Categories include: children, parents, the elderly, pregnant women, or individuals with disabilities. Each category has an income threshold, expressed as a percent of the federal poverty level.

The dual eligibility standard means that just being poor is not enough to make someone eligible

for Medicaid. Expansion would change that and provide Medicaid eligibility for anyone under 133 percent of the federal poverty level.

However, the current categorical eligibility means that the most high-need populations are already covered. As a result, those who would be newly eligible under expansion would be able-bodied, working-age adults, 78 percent of whom would have no dependent children.

North Carolina's Medicaid program is already positioned to achieve its goal of helping those who need it most. However, it still faces challenges of actually translating insurance coverage into healthcare access. Thus, expansion is not a neutral choice; it could actually harm current Medicaid enrollees by further limiting their access to care.

Access to care is already strained for those who need it most

Medicaid reimburses healthcare providers at a lower rate than private insurance. Therefore, doctors and other healthcare providers have an incentive to prioritize private insurance patients. In a 2018 study of physicians in the United States, 32 percent reported that they limit their number of Medicaid patients or do not see Medicaid patients at all. That's essentially a third of doctors across the country.



Remember, about 20 percent of North Carolina's population is already on Medicaid.

Perhaps the most impactful way to understand the issue of limited access to care is hearing about it from someone who has experienced it firsthand. Colleen Leonard is a mother of four who's oldest child, Mason, requires around the clock medical care. Colleen's family has experienced long wait times and losing access to physicians that stopped accepting Medicaid patients. Adding a half million (or more) people to compete for limited access to care would only make the situation worse for families like Colleen's.

What about the uninsured?

Medicaid expansion is a proposed solution to a legitimate problem – created by the ACA – known as the “coverage gap,” in which some uninsured, childless adults have incomes that

are too low to qualify for a subsidy on the federal exchange. It is worth noting that, if these individuals were working full time at minimum wage, they would qualify for a fully-subsidized insurance plan on the federal exchange.

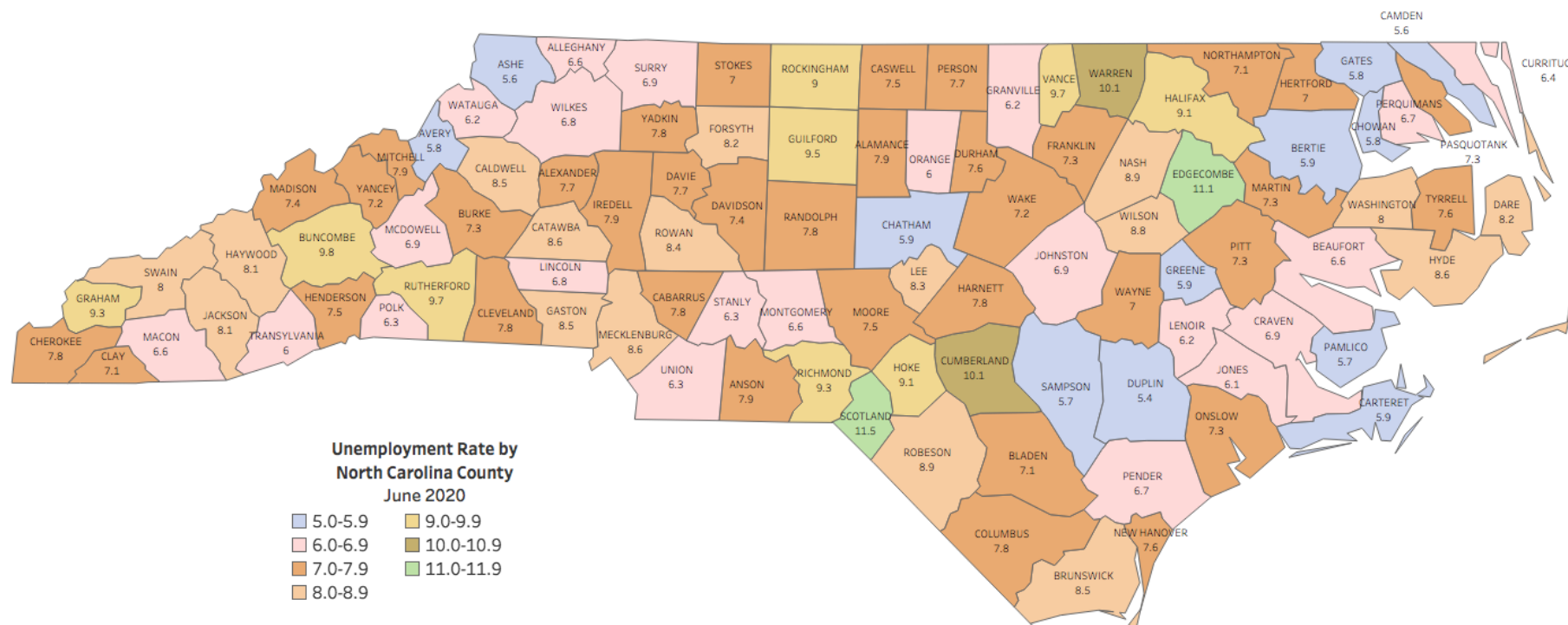
Consider also that an estimated 63 percent of individuals who would be covered by Medicaid expansion currently have private insurance. Moreover, an additional 11 percent of the expansion group are currently eligible for free plans on the federal exchange but remain uninsured. Many of these individuals would lose their private insurance and have Medicaid as their only option if the state expands. As mentioned, Medicaid recipients have a harder time finding medical providers and seeing them in a timely manner.

In addition to harming existing Medicaid patients, expansion takes away private insurance options for

many of its beneficiaries. Furthermore, transferring hundreds of thousands of patients from private insurance to Medicaid would have a significant negative impact on hospitals' and other care providers' bottom lines.

The bottom line: Coverage does not equal access to care

Health insurance should not be equated with access to healthcare. Adding hundreds of thousands of new recipients onto the Medicaid rolls would harm the traditional Medicaid population. Many of the new recipients under expansion will be forced to trade their more-generous private health insurance options in exchange for longer wait times and less available providers. With this context in mind, it quickly becomes clear that Medicaid expansion is a proposed solution that is not appropriate to the problem at hand.



The above map shows the June 2020, (not seasonally adjusted) unemployment rates for all 100 North Carolina counties (data from N.C. Department of Commerce).

The June not seasonally adjusted statewide rate was 7.9 percent.

Scotland County had the highest unemployment rate at 11.5 percent, while Duplin had the lowest at 5.4 percent. All 15 of the state’s metro areas experienced decreases from May. Among the metro areas, Fayetteville had the highest rate at 10.0 percent and New Bern had the lowest

at 6.7 percent.

No North Carolina counties had an unemployment rate of 5 percent or below for June. Four counties had a rate above 10 percent, a significant improvement over May, where after revisions, 80 counties reported an unemployment rate over 10 percent.

When compared to the same month last year, not seasonally adjusted unemployment rates increased in all 100 counties. All 15 of the state’s metro areas experienced rate increases.

The national unemployment rate for June was 11.1 percent and 10.2 percent for July.

Biden takes lead in North Carolina; 70 percent say country on ‘wrong track’

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

while Democrats have 12 to defend.

In the governor’s race, Cooper can still boast of a double-digit lead over Lt. Gov. Dan Forest (49-39 percent). That lead is down two points for Cooper from May. Democrats have taken over the lead from Republicans in the generic ballot for state legislative races (44-40 percent). In May, Republicans led the generic ballot by two points.

A bit of good news for Republicans is that they have a slight lead of two points in the generic ballot for state supreme court. Judicial activism has plagued the agenda of conservatives in North Carolina. The current makeup of the NC Supreme Court is six Democrats and one Republican. In the race to replace Mark Johnson as state superintendent of public instruction, Republican Catherine Truitt is tied with

Democrat Jen Mangrum. Before Johnson’s upset victory in 2016, Republicans hadn’t held the education post in 100 years. Of the voters polled who said they have kids in public schools, 34 percent said they’re looking to switch to private or homeschooling options. Undoubtedly, that number reflects the reaction over the uncertainty surrounding the opening of public schools.

Seventy-two percent of

voters say they still plan to vote in person and 58 percent have a favorable opinion of the phrase “Black Lives Matter,” while 70 percent have an unfavorable opinion of “defund the police.” Homicide rates are up from last year in Charlotte, Durham, Greensboro, and other urban areas in the state. Trump Press Secretary Kaleigh McEnany recently called efforts to defund the police “a travesty.”

McEnany added that “It’s why you have 67 percent of black Americans who worry that the criticism of police will cause police to pull back.” A Gallup poll released last month after the death of George Floyd revealed that 67 percent of Black Americans want more or the same amount of police presence in their neighborhoods, while 19 percent said they wanted less.

Trump's school choice message resonates with parents and voters

BY BOB LUEBKE AND DREW CATT

In his State of the Union speech in February, President Trump introduced the nation to Janiyah Davis, a fourth grader who's been on the wait list for a private school choice scholarship in her home state of Pennsylvania.

Unfortunately, the state's governor vetoed a school choice expansion last year, making it harder for thousands of families — including Janiyah's — to access educational options that would best suit their needs.

It's a story playing out across the United States, even in states that already have educational choice programs on the books.

In North Carolina, families who have been able to, choose the schooling type that works best for their children, including those using one of the three highly successful private school choice programs to access options that best meet their unique

needs. The largest of these — the North Carolina Opportunity Scholarship Program — serves more than 12,000 students.

Parents across the state love their choice programs and want even more options, according to a recent Civitas-EdChoice Poll.

The poll revealed interesting results for registered and minority voters.

While 64 percent of parents in our survey reported sending their children to traditional public schools, only 32 percent said they would opt for that type of school if they weren't limited by cost or location. In contrast, 43 percent said they would select a private school, but only 11 percent are currently accessing that type of school. That's a huge gap between what parents want and what they're able to access.

Our survey found tremendous support — nearly 70 percent — for North

Carolina's most popular private school choice program, which provides a voucher worth up to \$4,200 per year to low- and moderate-income families. Support was strong and across the board. Seventy-eight percent of minorities expressed support for the Opportunity Scholarship Program. Even more encouraging was the strength of support across party lines. The high numbers from Republicans (70 percent), Democrats (67 percent), and Unaffiliated (62 percent) show the program truly enjoys bipartisan support.

While the last decade has given parents a variety of educational options, the demand for more choice is growing. Fifty-seven percent of respondents believe North Carolina lawmakers need to do more to expand educational opportunity. What's even more remarkable? When asked about eligibility for school choice programs, nearly 50 percent of respondents said all students should qualify.

The Civitas-EdChoice survey also provided insight on the views of minorities and school choice. Like many other states, minority support for school choice eclipses that of white constituencies. For example, 57 percent

of registered white voters expressed support for charters. Among minorities, 63 percent support charters. On the Opportunity Scholarship Program, the gap is even wider. As noted previously, 78 percent of minorities support the program, contrasted with 67 percent of registered voters overall.

How important is school choice to minority voters? When asked if they would be more likely or less likely to vote for a candidate who supports school choice, once again, minority support for school choice was strong, besting support levels of registered voters by a margin of 78 percent to 63 percent.

Some of the most uplifting news from the survey bolsters our deep conviction that families know what's best for their children and are in the best position to find schooling options that meet their needs.

North Carolina parents trust other parents: 76 percent believe parents are best-suited to determine where a child should attend school, and 81 percent believe parents should be able to choose that school.

As policymakers, stakeholders, and community leaders explore ways to expand existing school

choice programs or create new ways for students to get in where they fit in, we hope they will bear this research in mind.

North Carolina and a number of other states have made great progress in recent years recognizing the importance of empowering parents.

How will policymakers respond to this news? We hope they will choose to respond as they have in the past — by expanding educational options. But nothing is certain. North Carolina's governor has reiterated his desire to end the Opportunity Scholarship Program. We hope not.

Today one in five students in North Carolina attends a school of choice — a charter, private or home school. But our work is far from done. We join those advancing education reform across the nation, committed to working tirelessly until all children, like Janiyah Davis, have a pathway to opportunity.

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This article originally appeared in the Fayetteville Observer.



Exposing the radical agenda the Left wants to impose on North Carolina

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

about \$750 million (of course, investors would change their behavior in response to the higher tax and as such the tax wouldn't generate this much revenue, but we can err on the high side for the sake of argument)

Recall that we estimated NCUSB's demands would add more than \$152 billion annually to the state budget. But their recommendations for how to pay for it generate – at best – about \$4.85 billion (using unrealistic assumptions to inflate this estimate).

A tax hike of nearly \$5 billion alone would mark a historic increase of more than 20 percent in the tax burden on North Carolinians. And it would still come up *more than \$145 billion short* of funding this radical left group's demands.

For context, total state personal income taxes collected in 2019 were just under \$13 billion. The tax rates required to fund NCUSB's new programs would be more than ten times that amount to pay for their proposed programs. Naturally, there

would be very few people left willing to work and pay such exorbitant state tax rates, when they could instead stay home and collect nearly \$58,000 per family of four.

Devastating Consequences

Of course, there are other problems. Unemployment would skyrocket. Businesses and job creators would flee the state.

Meanwhile, North Carolina would become a magnet for people wanting to take advantage of the state's generous 'universal basic income.' The result

would be a very dramatic shrinking of the labor force.

A very small number of working people would be responsible to fund a state budget suddenly more than six times the level of current spending.

No reasonable person believes the state could sustain this. Another \$170 billion in expenditures would bankrupt state government in no time and the economy would soon follow.

Joblessness and hopelessness among a significant share of the popula-

tion combined with tens of thousands of freed criminals would be a perfect recipe for high crime rates and civil unrest.

Conclusion

It could be easy to dismiss the demands of NC United for Survival & Beyond as the radical musings of a harmless, fringe group. But this coalition has the backing of several highly influential and well-financed organizations such as NCAE, AFL-CIO and Democracy NC.

NCUSB reveals what the Left really wants for North Carolina.

