



Larry D. Hall
House of Representatives
29th District



From the Office of Representative Larry D. Hall
May 29, 2009

This week, House lawmakers continued the difficult task of writing North Carolina's budget for the coming fiscal year. In an attempt to shore up our state's expected \$4 billion shortfall, House members are considering a number of money-saving measures. It is challenging to decide where and how to save money, but we must make these hard decisions to meet our Constitutional duty to balance the budget in the face of a 20 percent drop in revenues.

These budget measures may be painful in the short term, but they are necessary if we are to protect programs and services that enable us to provide a quality education at all levels, meet the health needs of our most vulnerable citizens, maintain and cultivate jobs, and keep us safe in our homes, neighborhoods and schools. As the economy gets better we must not forget who sacrificed.

This week, to spur the economy, we approved several bills that could help the state attract new investment and new building. I have included some information about those bills below.

Also, since we just celebrated Memorial Day, it is fitting to acknowledge some measures we have taken this legislative session to improve the lives of veterans and members of the Armed Forces in North Carolina. These measures include everything from making it easier for them to renew their drivers' licenses and cast timely ballots to protecting our severely injured veterans from being denied unemployment insurance benefits if they lose a job as a result of injuries sustained in war.

Economy - The House approved a bill this week that may help North Carolina bring in a new company that would be required to invest \$1 billion. The bill ([SB 575](#)) changes the way corporate income tax liability is calculated for multi-state taxpayers by considering only the company's sales in the state when determining their tax bills. The existing formula also accounts for companies' property holdings and payroll. The change applies only to companies that invest \$1 billion or more over a nine-year period. No company in the state currently qualifies for the incentive. The proposal also requires companies to locate in one of the state's poorest counties, provide health insurance, meet a wage standard, and forego other state grants or tax breaks before they can qualify for the incentive.

_Counties and municipalities in North Carolina would be authorized to provide development

incentives in exchange for reductions in energy consumption under a bill that passed the House this week ([SB 52](#)). More specifically, counties and municipalities would be able to grant incentives to a developer or builder if they agree to construct a new development or reconstruct an existing development in a way that significantly reduces energy consumption.

_The State Treasurer's office would be given more flexibility to increase investment income and better manage risk under a bill that passed the House this week ([SB 703](#)). The bill would allow the treasurer to invest up to 5 percent of the state's portfolio in commodities such as timber, real estate and treasury inflation protected securities, or TIPS. The bill does not allow investments in derivatives or other risky assets.

VETERANS LEGISLATION

Honor Fallen Soldiers - members of the House honored the life and memory of the fallen soldiers who served our great nation in Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom in Iraq and Afghanistan with a House Joint Resolution ([HJR 1652](#)). In the resolution, the General Assembly expressed profound gratitude to the North Carolinians who were killed in the line of duty during these military operations. Each North Carolinian who was killed in the line of duty while carrying out these operations is named in the resolution.

Transportation - The Division of Motor Vehicles would be allowed to waive the commercial motor vehicles skills test for qualified military personnel who have operated similar vehicles for at least two years prior to applying for a commercial driver's license under a bill that has passed the Senate ([SB 423 = HB 271](#)). The legislation would also waive the requirement if the applicant has completed a similar skills test while in the military if finally approved.

_Two bills would make it easier for members of the military reserves to renew their drivers' licenses after they receive deployment orders. A bill that has passed the Senate ([SB 809](#)) would allow members of the Armed Forces to renew their drivers' licenses upon receipt of deployment orders and give them a 60-day grace period for an expired license after they are released from military duty outside of the United States.

_Legislation meant to ensure that certain special license plates that are available to military veterans are issued to the right people has passed the House ([HB 1094](#)). The bill is intended to prevent impostors from purchasing military awards license plates.

Employment.

_House lawmakers have passed legislation regarding unemployment insurance compensation for certain severely disabled veterans who have been discharged due to a service-connected disability ([HB 1124](#)). If enacted, severely injured veterans could receive unemployment benefits if they lose their job because of a disability incurred or aggravated during active military service or because of the veteran's absence from work to obtain care and treatment for that disability.

Miscellaneous

_ North Carolina's absentee voting laws would be improved under a measure that has passed the House ([HB 614](#)). The bill is specifically intended to improve the ability of military and overseas voters to cast timely ballots. The bill is now in the Senate Committee on Judiciary I.

Notes

_Members of the General Assembly honored former Insurance Commissioner Jim Long this week for his nearly 30 years of service to the state. Long was Insurance Commissioner from 1985 until his retirement last year. His 24 years on the Council of State was the third-longest tenure of any official. Long was a native of Alamance County who also served two terms in the House of Representatives. He died in February as the result of a stroke. He was 68.

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