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Rep. Larry D. Hall NC House 29th District

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The Raleigh Report

From the Office of Representative Larry D. Hall

August 7, 2009

Budget writers continue working diligently with Gov. Perdue this week to come to an agreement on a budget for the next two years. While there is still work to be done, I am confident that we have moved significantly closer to a consensus.

The House also took up a number of key bills this week. We have worked hard to pass legislation that will prevent racial profiling and reform North Carolina's probation laws. We have also improved the State Fair Housing Act and our predatory lending laws. The following information highlights just some of the important work we have done here in Raleigh this week.

I hope you will contact me if you have questions, or if I can be of service. Thank you as always for your support and your interest in our state.

***** SALES TAX HOLIDAY WEEKEND REMINDER *****

Remember to take advantage of the state's sales tax holiday, which starts at 12:01 am on Friday, August 7 and ends at 11:59 pm on Sunday, August 9. In an effort to better help consumers afford back-to-school items for their children, shoppers this weekend will not have to pay the sales tax on clothing, school supplies and computers. I hope you will take advantage of this opportunity. During the sales tax holiday, consumers will not pay sales tax on clothing, footwear, and school supplies of \$100 or less per item; school instructional materials of \$300 or less per item; sports/recreation equipment of \$50 or less per item, computers of \$3,500 or less per item; and computer supplies of \$250 or less per item.

For more information on the sales tax holiday, go to:
www.dor.state.nc.us/taxes/sales/salestax_holiday.html

Public Safety

_State lawmakers have approved legislation that will reform probation in North Carolina by giving probation officers more tools to keep offenders from getting into further trouble ([SB 920](#)). If enacted, probation officers would be added to the list of persons who are allowed to access the juvenile records of certain offenders. The legislation would also make warrantless searches and drug screening regular conditions of supervised parole and would add additional controlling measures for offenders subject to intermediate punishment. The bill will now be presented to Gov. Perdue to be signed into law.

_State lawmakers have passed a bill intended to help prevent racial profiling by law officers by changing how they collect traffic statistics ([SB 464](#)). The legislation also provides that when a law enforcement officer arrests an adult who is supervising minor children, the minors must be placed with a responsible adult approved by the parent or guardian. If it is not possible to place the minor children with a responsible adult within a reasonable period of time, the officer shall contact the county department of social services. The bill now returns to the Senate for a concurrence motion.

_The General Assembly has ratified legislation that clarifies that people who use defibrillators in emergencies aren't liable for damages unless they displayed gross negligence ([HB 1433](#)). The bill will now be presented to Gov. Perdue to be signed into law.

_The General Assembly has ratified legislation that would strengthen domestic violence laws by providing protection for the pets of abused persons. ([SB 1062](#)). Opponents of the bill say that the legislation is evidence of political correctness going too far. However, proponents of the legislation contend that the bill is meant to protect human beings more than animals. In domestic violence cases, there have been some instances in which abusers threaten violence toward a family pet as a means of manipulating their victims. In extreme cases, abusers have tortured or killed pets. The bill will now be presented to Gov. Perdue to be signed into law.

Protecting Homeowners

_The Statutory Homestead Exemption would be significantly increased under a bill that has been ratified by the General Assembly and sent to Gov. Perdue to be signed into law ([HB 1058](#)). The legislation increases the exemption from \$18,500 to \$35,000.

Improving Government

_The General Assembly has ratified legislation that will require all cities, counties and other local units of government to adopt a code of ethics for their governing boards ([HB 1452](#)). The legislation would also require members of those boards to receive education on ethics laws applicable to local government officials. The bill will now be presented to Gov. Perdue to be signed into law.

_The House has passed legislation that would expand the definition of economically distressed counties to include the 80 poorest counties in the state as determined by a number of factors ([HB 1514](#)). If enacted, the legislation would also increase the maximum expenditure of funds from the Industrial Development Fund from \$5,000 to \$10,000 per new job created or per job retained up to a maximum of \$500,000 per project. The bill is now in the Senate Committee on Finance.

_A bill that would improve North Carolina's absentee voting laws, especially the ability of military and overseas voters to cast timely ballots, has been approved by the House ([SB 253](#)). If enacted, the bill would open up absentee voting 10 days earlier in even-numbered years to 60 days and not later than 50 days before the primary or any other election. In the case of municipal elections, voting would open no later than 30 days before an election. The bill will now return to the Senate for a concurrence motion.

Miscellaneous

_Legislation that would establish requirements for certification of persons performing lead-based paint renovation work in certain residential housing and child-occupied facilities has passed the House and is now pending in the Senate ([HB 1151](#)). If enacted, the legislation would also require accreditation of renovation trainers and renovation training courses.

_The General Assembly has ratified legislation that would establish the Drug, Supplies, and Medical Device Repository Program in the North Carolina Board of Pharmacy ([HB 1296](#)). The program would allow donations of unused drugs, supplies, and medical devices to uninsured and underinsured patients in this state. The donations would go to a free clinic or pharmacy and be redistributed. The bill will now be presented to Gov. Perdue to be signed into law.

_State lawmakers have passed a bill that will provide the same protections to search and rescue animals as those provided to law enforcement agency animals and animals that assist the disabled ([HB 1098](#)). Under the legislation, any person who knows or has reason to know that an animal is a search and rescue animal and who willfully kills that animal will be guilty of a Class H felony. The bill will now be presented to Gov. Perdue to be signed into law.

_North Carolina residents over age 18 would be allowed to get a motorcycle learner's permit without taking a rider safety course under a bill that has been approved by both bodies of the Legislature ([SB 64](#)). Under the bill, the learner's permit would be valid for 12 months and could be renewed for one additional six-month period. The bill will now return to the Senate for a concurrence motion.

Notes

_The Offshore Energy Exploration Study Committee, which was created by the General Assembly earlier this year, held a public hearing in Wilmington this week to hear public opinion on exploring for energy resources of the coast of North Carolina. The committee was established to consider the financial and environmental implications of oil and natural gas exploration off our state's coast. The committee's final recommendations are due in May.

Larry D. Hall

Please remember that you can listen to each day's session, committee meetings and press conferences on the General Assembly's website at www.ncleg.net. Once on the site, select "Audio," and then make your selection – House Chamber, Senate Chamber, Appropriations Committee Room or Press

Conference Room.