

# NC Legislative Update: September 6, 2019

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The legislature took the week off to spend Labor Day in their districts, so no legislation moved on Jones Street this week.

Governor Cooper signed a series of bills into law allocating funds for state employee raises, which were included in the budget passed by the legislature but vetoed by Cooper. The bills give State Highway Patrol (SHP) officers, State Bureau of Investigation (SBI) officers, Alcohol Law Enforcement (ALE) officers, correctional employees, and rank-and-file state employees a 5% raise over two years. Legislators are still working on a bill for teacher raises.

The pay raise bills are part of an effort by legislative leaders to piecemeal the budget by breaking it up into smaller “mini budget” bills. Governor Cooper vetoed a controversial mini budget bill, House Bill 555, which allocated funds for Medicaid Transformation, the State’s movement to capitated Medicaid contracts. The bill passed without any Democrats voting for it, as they claimed healthcare funding should include discussions around Medicaid expansion and they expressed concerns about healthcare management organizations (HMOs) denying coverage in an effort to cut costs.

Governor Cooper also signed bills to do the following: reduce the number of tests public school students are required to take, allow parents or guardians of a handicapped person to be issued a handicapped license plate, allow children of wartime veterans to use scholarship funds for short-term workforce training, modify cartway path laws and septic tank regulations, implement the Victims’ Rights constitutional amendment, and create the North Carolina Gaming Commission, which will be required to study the feasibility of sports betting.

## Gerrymandering Ruling

In a unanimous ruling, a three judge panel order the General Assembly to redraw legislative districts, ruling that the current maps are unconstitutional. The court found that the current maps were created with partisan intent and discriminated against Democrats by forcing them into districts where they are not allowed to elect the candidate of their choice. The Superior

Court Judges have given the General Assembly until September 18 to redraw the maps, and specified that the old districts cannot be used as a starting point. They are also requiring the redistricting process to be done in a public environment and with public input. Senate Leader Phil Berger claimed that the ruling contradicts the State Constitution and legal precedent, calling it an effort by Democrats to use the court system to win elections. Legislative leaders have indicated that they do not plan to appeal the decision.

*Ruling:* <https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/6380175-18-CVS-14001-Final-Judgment.html#document/p7/a522617>

*WRAL:* <https://www.wral.com/judges-order-another-redraw-of-nc-voting-maps-say-legislative-districts-too-partisan/18609222/>

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#### **More about Nexsen Pruet's North Carolina Public Policy Team**

*In addition to providing Government Affairs Services, the Nexsen Pruet Public Policy team provides attorneys and clients with a newsletter summarizing the week's activities and conveying the inner workings of the legislative process and state government in Raleigh during the legislative session. Please feel free to pass this along to your clients or other interested parties. If you would like to receive the update in your inbox, please email [shernandez@nexsenpruet.com](mailto:shernandez@nexsenpruet.com) to be added to the list. If you are interested in learning more about how Nexsen Pruet can help you achieve your public policy goals and acquiring legislative representation in North Carolina or South Carolina, please reach out to Sandy Sands at [ssands@nexsenpruet.com](mailto:ssands@nexsenpruet.com) or Ross Barnhardt at [rbarnhardt@nexsenpruet.com](mailto:rbarnhardt@nexsenpruet.com).*