

## NC Legislative Update: February 1, 2019

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02.01.2019

Lawmakers returned to Raleigh to start official business on Wednesday, January 30th. While the session technically started on the 9th, the General Assembly traditionally breaks for a few weeks to get organized, move offices, and appoint committees. The session is expected to get off to a slow start with members getting adjusted to their new roles. Legislative leaders have indicated that not much action will take place next week, with only a few committees meeting.

The House has announced a scheduling change for 2019. They will be holding a Rules Committee meeting on Monday afternoons, which will be followed by a no-vote session in the evening. Tuesdays will be reserved for committee meetings, and Wednesdays and Thursdays will be busy days on the floor. The House also announced that it has scheduled the week of April 22-26 and the week of July 1-6 as vacation weeks and will not hold session.

The decision to expand Medicaid is shaping up to be a major issue of the legislative session. Legislative Democrats have long pushed for the expansion, but Republicans in both chambers have not been willing to expand the program, citing worries of runaway costs. Republican members of the House are now starting to warm up to the idea, and are planning to file their Carolina Cares bill that would expand Medicaid coverage and include some form of work requirement. Representative Donny Lambeth calls it a hybrid Medicaid bill. Senate Republicans remain opposed, which may make for a lengthy session since Governor Cooper's office has stated "the session ends when we get Medicaid expansion."

School construction funding is another issue that legislators will tackle this session, with the House and Senate unveiling 2 competing plans. The House has proposed a \$1.9 billion bond that would go before the voters for approval on the 2020 primary election ballot. Senators Brown, Harrington, and Krawiec filed their Building North Carolina's Future bill this week, which uses the Pay-As-You-Go state capital funding mechanism established in 2017 to put additional dollars towards school construction. The bill increases the percentage of tax collections that go into the fund by .5% and adds \$100 million dollars of lottery revenue to the fund on a recurring basis. The bill also requires that funds received by schools be used to comply

with the K-3 class size requirements before they can be used for other priorities.

Representatives D. Hall, Lewis, Goodman, and McGrady filed House Bill 3 this week, which seeks to limit the purposes for which eminent domain can be used. The bill puts a constitutional amendment on the March 2020 primary ballot. It limits eminent domain purposes from public use or benefit to just public use. The House has passed this bill several sessions in a row, but the Senate has not taken it up.

Earlier this month, Senator Lewis Pate of District 7, which covers Wayne and Lenoir Counties, resigned from the Senate due to health related issues. Pate was elected to 5 terms in the Senate and served 4 terms in the House. The Wayne and Lenoir County Republican Executive Committee has chosen Jim Perry of Kinston to fill Pate's seat.

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