



PAGE 12

Getting the Shot

After missing the mark on vaccinating residents for COVID-19, officials are honing in on target



PAGE 13

Vaccine Timeline

Here's a look at the state's progress in vaccinating its residents against COVID-19, from 1796 to the present.

FOR DAILY UPDATES VISIT CAROLINAJOURNAL.COM

CAROLINA JOURNAL

AN AWARD-WINNING JOURNAL OF NEWS, ANALYSIS, AND OPINION FROM THE JOHN LOCKE FOUNDATION CAROLINAJOURNAL.COM VOL. 30 • NO. 2 • FEBRUARY 2021 • STATEWIDE EDITION

New and familiar faces as N.C. General Assembly returns to work  
Senate welcomes 11 new members; House welcomes 20



Interview:  
Darren Jackson  
Carolina Journal's Dallas Woodhouse interviews the North Carolina Court of Appeals judge.  
PAGE 14

CAROLINA JOURNAL  
4800 SIX FORKS ROAD, #220  
RALEIGH, NC 27609  
CJ ONLINE  
jlf.carolina.journal  
@carolinajournal  
www.carolinajournal.com  
editor@carolinajournal.com

NONPROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
DURHAM, NC  
PERMIT NO. 302

# CAROLINA JOURNAL



**PUBLISHER**  
Amy O. Cooke  
[@therightaoc](#)

**INTERIM EDITOR-IN-CHIEF**  
John Trump  
[@stillinbarrel](#)

**OPINION EDITOR**  
Ray Northstine  
[rnorthstine@lockehq.org](#)

**STAFF WRITERS**  
Julie Havlak  
[@juliehavlak](#)

Dallas Woodhouse  
[dwoodhouse@lockehq.org](#)

**CONTRIBUTORS**  
David Bass  
Andrew Dunn  
Johnny Kampis

**DESIGNER**  
Greg de Deugd  
[gdedeugd@johnlocke.org](#)



The John Locke Foundation  
4800 Six Forks Road, #220  
Raleigh, N.C. 27609  
(919) 828-3876 • Fax: 821-5117  
[www.JohnLocke.org](#)

John Hood  
*Chairman*

Jim Anthony, Julie Scott  
Emmons, Bill Graham, John M.  
Hood, Ted Hicks, Christine Mele,  
Rodney C. Pitts, Paul Slobodian,  
Paul "Skip" Stam, David Stover,  
Edwin Thomas  
*Board of Directors*

ISSN 2578-8167 Carolina Journal is  
a monthly journal of news, analysis,  
and commentary on state and local  
government and public policy issues  
in North Carolina.

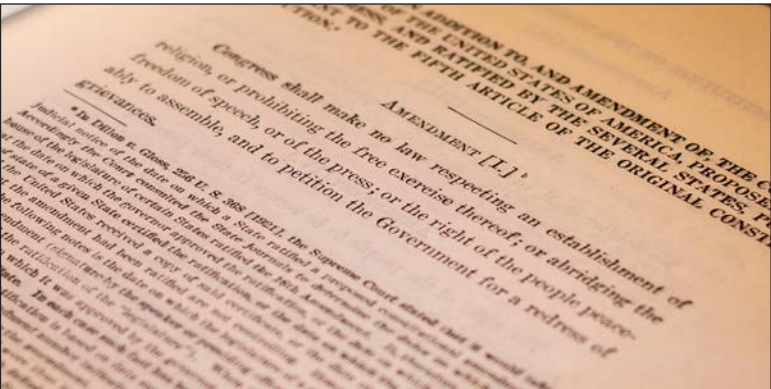
©2020 by The John Locke Founda-  
tion Inc. All opinions expressed in by-  
lined articles are those of the authors  
and do not necessarily reflect the  
views of the editors of CJ or the staff  
and board of the John Locke Founda-  
tion. Material published herein may  
be reprinted as long as appropriate  
credit is given. Submissions and let-  
ters are welcome and should be di-  
rected to the editor.

To subscribe, call 919-828-3876.  
Readers also can request Carolina  
Journal Weekly Report, delivered  
each weekend by e-mail, or visit  
[CarolinaJournal.com](#) for news, links,  
and exclusive content updated each  
weekday. Those interested in educa-  
tion, economics, higher education,  
health care or local government also  
can ask to receive weekly e-letters  
covering these issues.



FROM THE PUBLISHER

## The courageous First Amendment



**“T**imid men prefer the calm of despotism to the tempestuous sea of liberty,”  
*Thomas Jefferson*

I love the First Amendment with a burning hot passion of a thousand suns. It’s what drew me to journalism. Fear of losing it drew me to public policy. More information is freedom. Less information is tyranny.

Freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom of assembly, freedom of the press, and freedom to petition government aren’t just quaint phrases. They are the five freedoms enshrined in the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution and the cornerstone of our republic. Side note: The U.S. isn’t a democracy. We are a constitutional republic with democratic institutions. The difference is crucial.

The First Amendment is to the powerful as sunlight is to vam-

pires. Without the First Amendment, there is no 14th Amendment and no 19th Amendment. Speaking truth to power and challenging the power structure have been crucial to every single civil rights advancement in our country. Take threats to it seriously. Right now, those threats are real.

Following the Jan. 6 violence that erupted in Washington, D.C., Democrats are consolidating their power with help and encouragement from their allies in Silicon Valley, the media, Hollywood, high-profile athletes, and academia. They are herding conservative free thinkers who challenge them into an internet ghetto under the guise of public safety.

If you’re a student of history, this sounds familiar. Think Reich-

continued PAGE 20

## COMMENTARY BY JOHN HOOD



## Lower taxes attract key leaders

**WHEN DEMOCRATS** attack pro-growth tax reform as “trickle-down economics,” I can understand their rhetorical intent. But the charge is silly on multiple levels — including the fact that every Democrat who ever serves in state or local office spends great time and effort to try to recruit business executives, entrepreneurs, investors, and high-value professionals to their communities.

All producers and consumers make choices that define and drive an economy. But in every economic system that has ever existed, spanning the spectrum from primitive villages to centrally planned states to modern market-based societies, there

are always some human beings whose decisions have a larger effect than others.

To observe that economies thrive or sputter partly in response to the decisions of a relatively small group of leaders is not to say that only elites matter or that the rest of us have no recourse if we dislike what they do. Private-sector leaders who make poor decisions run the risk of losing their incomes, jobs, and influence. Government officials do, too — although incumbent politicians are typically harder to displace than incumbent CEOs.

Still, there is no question that the fate of North Carolina’s econ-

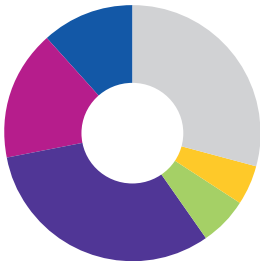
continued PAGE 21



## PUBLIC OPINION POLL

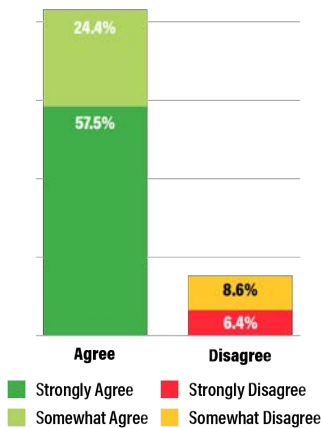
### North Carolina School Choice

If location and cost were not factors, what type of school would you select for your child?

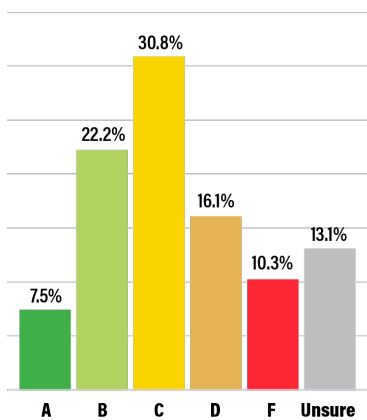


- TRADITIONAL PUBLIC 29.3%
- CHARTER SCHOOL 11.4%
- PRIVATE RELIGIOUS 31.7%
- PRIVATE NON-RELIGIOUS 16.4%
- HOMESCHOOL 4.9%
- UNSURE 6.3%

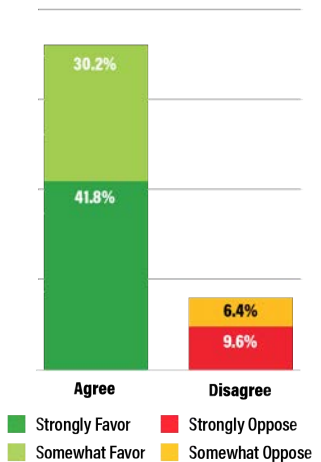
Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: Parents should have the ability to choose where their child attends school?



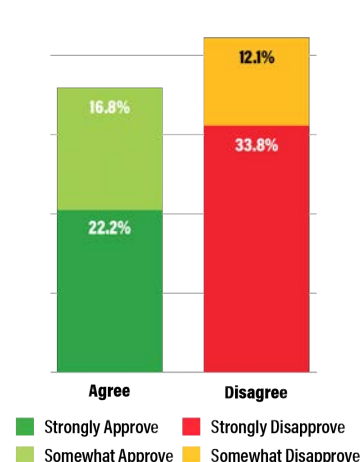
Students are often given the grades A, B, C, and D, and Fail to denote the quality of their work. What grade would you give local public schools in North Carolina?



An ESA creates a savings account using government funds for parents with restricted uses for educational purposes.



Would you say that you approve or disapprove of Gov. Roy Cooper's handling of school re-opening, in light of COVID-19?



Harper Polling, on behalf of John Locke Foundation, surveyed 950 likely general election voters from January 20 – 24, 2021 with a margin of error of ±3.18%.

# NORTH CAROLINA

## Cooper creates new position for left-wing foundation's exec

BY DAVID N. BASS

Gov. Roy Cooper's office is creating a new position and filling it with a longtime staffer from the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation, one of the top philanthropic funders of left-wing causes in North Carolina.

The position, called a philanthropy liaison, will be filled by Joy Vermillion Heinsohn. Heinsohn currently serves as assistant director of the Reynolds Foundation and has been with that organization in some capacity since 1998. Heinsohn officially leaves the Reynolds Foundation Feb. 5, and her first day in the governor's office will be March 1.

According to a news release Jan. 27, the new role is "grant-funded," although it is not obvious who the funder is. Questions from *Carolina Journal* on specific duties for the position, plus information on its source of funding, were not returned by press time. *CJ* has filed an open-records request with the governor's office to obtain any grant agreements surrounding the position.

Z. Smith Reynolds actually broke the news Jan. 25, with a



**JOY VERMILLION HEINSOHN.** Heinsohn currently serves as assistant director of the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation.

two-paragraph note on its website from Executive Director Maurice "Mo" Green.

In a statement to *CJ*, Senate Majority Leader Kathy Harrington, R-Gaston, noted that having an outside entity fund a state employee

"presents numerous conflict of interest" challenges. "Who will she be accountable to: the taxpayers or the liberal organizations funding her position?" Harrington said.

In a letter to Reynolds Foundation supporters, Heinsohn outlined

portions of what her new role will entail.

"The philanthropic sector in N.C. is rapidly growing and changing, with several new foundations on the scene with financial assets that our state has not previously seen," she wrote. "Simultaneously, our state and nation continue to reckon with issues of racial injustice, democracy, climate justice, education, and economic inequality in ways that now are overlayed with a pandemic and its repercussions. ... Moving forward, building partnerships will be central to my new role in state government, which will focus on connecting state government and philanthropy to strengthen our collective ability to improve the quality of life of the people of North Carolina."

In the past, Heinsohn has been candid about her political views. In an interview from October that identified her as "a Democratic voter from the small city of Winston-Salem," Heinsohn called for "bringing decency back to the White House" and hoped that North Carolina would vote against then-President Trump.

The Reynolds Foundation is a stalwart funder of left-wing non-

profits and activism in the Tar Heel State, including partisan causes such as Blueprint NC. Blueprint NC was responsible for a 2013 memo calling on progressive groups to "cripple" and "eviscerate" Republican legislative leaders. The Reynolds Foundation gave \$2.1 million to Blueprint NC between 2009 and 2013.

Heinsohn's hiring comes six months after the Reynolds Foundation pledged to give \$50,000 to a task force created by Cooper to study racial equity in the criminal justice system.

The hiring also appears to be another step in recent moves by the Cooper administration to tap talent from left-wing philanthropies for official government posts.

In August 2019, Cooper appointed Damon Circosta to the state Board of Elections. Circosta, who was subsequently made SBE chair, is executive director of the A.J. Fletcher Foundation, another top supporter of left-wing activism in North Carolina. Longtime Capitol Broadcasting Company CEO Jim Goodman chairs Fletcher's board of directors. Goodman's wife, Barbara, serves as the foundation's president.

## GOT AN OPINION?

The Carolina Journal is accepting letters to the editor and guest opinions (op-eds)\* on issues related to North Carolina. We cover the state from a limited government and free market perspective but will consider varying viewpoints, depending on relevance and quality. A good guideline for letters is 200-500 words and 550-800 words for op-eds. A letter to the editor is comment or disagreement with a published CJ piece; an op-ed is a guest opinion argument.

**Please email any submissions to opinion editor Ray Nothstine (rnothstine@lockehq.org)**

\*We retain the right to edit or to not publish any submitted letters or op-eds.



**CAROLINA JOURNAL**

## GENERAL ASSEMBLY

# New and familiar faces as N.C. General Assembly returns to work

## Senate welcomes 11 new members; House welcomes 20

BY JULIE HAVLAK  
AND JOHN TRUMP

For February, *Carolina Journal* takes a brief look at each new member of the General Assembly — 11 in the Senate and 20 in the House. We look at where they've been, what they're doing now, and what we might expect them to do as lawmakers.

The 2021-22 session began in late January. Expect COVID-19 and the ongoing fallout from the pandemic to be top priorities for lawmakers, who are crafting a new budget for the biennium. They'll also draw new legislative and congressional maps for the next decade based on fresh census data. Each legislator, too, has individual priorities.

### SENATE



#### District 3

**Ernestine (Byrd) Bazemore, D-Bertie**

**YESTERDAY:** Ernestine (Byrd) Bazemore, a Democrat from rural eastern North Carolina, worked for 28 years in the Bertie County School System, her campaign website says. She was elected to the county's Board of Commissioners in 2014 and became board chair four years later. She got 52% of the vote against Thomas Hester Jr., a Vance County commissioner.

**TODAY:** Bazemore in August did an interview with WIZS in Henderson. She made her priorities clear and offered insights into how she'll serve: "Broadband is a major concern across all the counties; not all areas are currently being served," she told the station. "Also, the services offered by rural hospitals as well as Medicaid expansion are big concerns."

**TOMORROW:** Bazemore doesn't appear especially active on social media, which isn't necessarily a bad thing. She raised about \$20,000 for her campaign, according to Ballotpedia, but spent about \$500. A good chunk of the money, \$5,400, came

from the National Democratic Redistricting PAC, which during the 2019-20 election cycle, its website says, "targeted ...17 state legislative chambers." She'll serve on the Senate's Pensions and State, Appropriations on General Government, and Local Government committees.



#### District 6

**Michael A. Lazzara, R-Onslow**

**YESTERDAY:** Republican Michael Lazzara, who was born in Palermo, Sicily, is a Marine Corps vet who served at Camp Lejeune. A restaurant owner, he was elected to the Jacksonville City Council in 2005 and served as the mayor pro tem. Lazzara donated more than \$24,000 to his own campaign, which raised close to \$75,000. He beat Democrat Ike Johnson in a landslide Nov. 3. Lazzara represents Onslow County, home to Camp Lejeune and Marine Corps Air Station New River. The military is a priority for him.

**TODAY:** Lazzara, who replaces longtime Republican Sen. Harry Brown, bills himself on his website as a "conservative Republican." He boasts support of agriculture, the military, and schools, among other priorities, such as economic development. N.C. Senate leader Phil Berger, R-Rockingham, has appointed him to the following legislative committees: Appropriations on General Government, State and Local Government, Education, and Judiciary.

**TOMORROW:** It's clear Lazzara is staunchly conservative and is likely to side with Republicans on key issues and votes. In response to a question — What is your favorite book? Why? — in a Ballotpedia candidate survey, Lazzara, who chose *The Nails* by Max Lucado, said this: "It reminds me that Jesus had a choice not to be crucified but chose the nails and suffering to show his love for us. He had the power to override all suffering but in order to fulfill the prophecy, he had to suffer and he did. I translate that to our trials and tribulations in our daily lives and in suffering there will be glory that comes to us. This book



**MICHAEL LEE.** Expect Lee to vote mostly along conservative lines, although he supports state money for film tax grants.

always helps me stay grounded and a good book for all to read."



#### District 9

**Michael Lee, R-New Hanover**

**YESTERDAY:** Republican Michael Lee, a lawyer, returns to the General Assembly after losing his re-election bid in 2018. Lee was first elected in 2014, but lost by just 231 votes to Democrat Harper Peterson in 2018. Buoyed by a campaign chest of close to \$1 million, and strong backing from the N.C. Senate Majority Fund — some \$450,000 — Lee returned the favor to Peterson, beating him by about 1,200 votes.

He represents coastal New Hanover County, which includes the city of Wilmington and the University of North Carolina Wilmington.

**TODAY:** Lee will co-chair the Senate's Education/Higher Education Committee and also serve on the base budget committee, as well as Finance, Health Care, and Judiciary. He is a proponent of tax relief and balanced budgets and in 2018 co-sponsored the Hurricane Florence Act after Hurricane Matthew, which began as a Category 5 storm, struck the Carolinas in October 2016. Matthew caused nearly \$5 billion in damage and decimated communities throughout North Carolina.

**TOMORROW:** Expect Lee to vote mostly along conservative lines, although he will support state money for film tax grants. During his previous tenure in the General Assem-

bly Lee was a champion for school choice, recodification of the state's criminal code, restrained spending, and limited taxation.



#### District 11

**Lisa Stone Barnes, R-Nash**

**YESTERDAY:** Republican Lisa Stone Barnes was first elected to the General Assembly in 2018, when she won a seat in N.C. House District 7, which encompasses an area about 50 miles northeast of Raleigh. Barnes, who has served on numerous boards in and around Nash County, soundly beat Democrat Allen Wellons in the right-leaning district. The seat in the rural eastern N.C. district came open when Republican Rick Horner decided against seeking re-election. Wellons previously served in the Senate beginning in the late 1990s. Barnes is big on issues related to agriculture and is married to a long-time sweet potato farmer. She served on the Agriculture Committee in the House.

**TODAY:** Barnes will vote along conservative lines and lists education, health care, the economy, and dealing with the pandemic as key issues. She'll also serve on the Agriculture Committee in the Senate, in addition to Education/Higher Education, Appropriations on Agriculture, Environment, and Natural Resources, and Health Care. Barnes is strong on issues such as separation of powers, including holding the governor in check, and active on social media, applauding a decision in December confirming the legislature as North Carolina's constitutional authority on policy issues and distribution of money. "It's great to see some honest work done by our state lawmakers and judicial branches," she posted.

**TOMORROW:** Barnes is endorsed by the NRA, and says on her website she has a concealed-carry permit and encourages responsible gun ownership. She'll remain a strong advocate of the Second Amendment, as well as agriculture, which

continued NEXT PAGE

# GENERAL ASSEMBLY

continued from PREVIOUS PAGE

is North Carolina's No. 1 industry, contributing \$92.7 billion to the state's economy. North Carolina, the state Agriculture Department says, is the largest producer of sweet potatoes in the country, accounting for about 54% of those grown in the United States. She gained the endorsement of N.C. Agriculture Commissioner Steve Troxler.



## District 17 Sydney Batch, D-Wake

**YESTERDAY:** Sydney Batch, a Wake County Democrat, in January was chosen by Wake Democrats and confirmed by the governor to fill a seat in the N.C. Senate. The seat came open when Sam Searcy resigned. Batch, elected to the N.C. House in 2018, in November lost her seat to Republican Erin Paré, who got 50% of the vote to Batch's 47%. Searcy had won a second term to the Senate in District 17, defeating Republican Mark Cavaliero. In the House, Batch was a primary sponsor of a bill to expand Medicaid, a move Republicans have consistently resisted but Gov. Roy Cooper will continue to push.

**TODAY:** Batch, in her latest run for office, got endorsements from several unions and other left-leaning groups, such as Democracy for America and the Sierra Club. She'll likely side with Democrats on most issues, including those supporting more money for public schools and environmental regulations. In May, Batch was a primary sponsor of a bill limiting toxins in drinking water. "Our government has a unique and nondelegable role to play in ensuring that our environment and natural resources are safe and protected," she says on her website.

**TOMORROW:** Batch is a proponent of the Second Amendment and, she says on her website, "is working hard to preserve North Carolina's natural resources so we continue to have woods and streams to support hunting and fishing."

A lawyer, Batch says she will support small businesses, particularly as that relates to loans and other money distributed through COVID-19 relief.

However, Batch as a member of the state House, voted four times against safely reopening gyms, while also sending a campaign piece touting her support of small businesses.

On the mailer, she's seen apparently standing in a gym. This didn't get past gym owners, who blasted Batch on social media.



**SYDNEY BATCH.** Batch (left), a Wake County Democrat, in January was chosen by Wake County Democrats and confirmed by the governor to fill a seat in the N.C. Senate. The seat came open when Sam Searcy resigned.



## District 18 Sarah Crawford, D-Wake

**YESTERDAY:** Democrat Sarah Crawford earned a seat in the General Assembly in 2020 after first trying in 2014, when she lost to Republican incumbent Sen. Chad Barefoot by about 6% of the vote. In November, she handily beat Republican Larry Norman for a seat in the district, which spans Franklin and Wake counties. Crawford has worked with several nonprofits, and she was recently named CEO of Tammy Lynn Center, which offers community-based programs that help children and families. Education will be a key issue for Crawford, whose mother, she says, was a teacher.

**TODAY:** Expect Crawford, who leans left on many issues, to often side with Democrats, including on things such as raising teacher pay, expanding Medicaid, and "clean energy" initiatives. In an interview with *Indy Week* in October, Crawford spoke in favor of "increasing access to affordable housing and healthy food as well as benefits like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program." She told the newspaper she supports raising the minimum wage and raising the Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard percentage to 70% renewable energy by 2030. She serves on the board of directors at Safe Space in Louisburg, working to reduce relationship vio-

lence and sexual assault in Franklin County, her campaign website says.

**TOMORROW:** Crawford, who will serve on the Health Care committee, may break with Democrats on some issues, however, including gun laws. Crawford told *Indy Week* she supports the creation of a nonpartisan commission to determine state and congressional lines, an idea that came before lawmakers last year but failed to gain traction. "An independent process would restore fairness in the political system and create more competitive districts to better serve the democratic process." She said she's a gun owner and competitive shooter and "will fight for common-sense reforms that keep guns out of the hands of domestic abusers and criminals and work to ensure communities where we can live, work, and play without fear of gun violence."



## District 24 Amy S. Galey, R-Alamance

**YESTERDAY:** Republican Amy Galey represents Alamance County, situated between Greensboro and the Triangle. She won with about 52% of the vote against Democrat J.D. Wooten in an election tainted with controversy and an ethics complaint over where Wooten actually lived. Wooten filed a defamation lawsuit against Galey over campaign ads. Galey, a strong supporter of the Sec-

**I will fight for common-sense reforms that keep guns out of the hands of domestic abusers and criminals and work to ensure communities where we can live, work and play without fear, of gun violence.**

- Sarah Crawford, Wake, D

ond Amendment and NRA member, her website says, had served on the Alamance County Board of Commissioners, becoming chair in 2017. Of the \$1.3 million in campaign funds raised, according to Ballotpedia, more than \$1 million came from the N.C. Senate Majority Fund.

**TODAY:** Galey will serve on several Senate committees, including Education/Higher Education, Judiciary, State and Local Government, and Appropriations on Justice and Public Safety. Galey, a lawyer, will support Republicans on most key issues, some of which she lists on her website, including the Second Amendment, jobs and recovery, agriculture, and education. In education, she pushed to increase funding for Alamance schools and supported a school bond referendum in 2018. She supports increasing teacher pay. She supports reforms to clarify the governor's authority under the Emergency Management Act

and has filed a bill to tighten up the law around collusive lawsuits.

**TOMORROW:** Galey replaces long-Alamance senator Rick Gunn, a staunch proponent of state alcohol reform and author of several bills that aimed to loosen rules on liquor maintained for decades by a state-run monopoly. It's not clear how Galey will vote should similar legislation come up, though as a commissioner in 2017 she voted in favor of the so-called "brunch bill," which would allow bars and restaurants to begin serving cocktails at 10 a.m. on Sundays. The move in Alamance failed at the time. She told the *Times-News*, "I think of conservatism as people can do what they want as long as they are not hurting anyone else. You don't have to if you don't want to."



## District 29 Steve Jarvis, R-Davidson

**YESTERDAY:** Republican Steve Jarvis, with some 74% of the vote, breezed to victory Nov. 3 against Democrat Duskin Lassiter. Jarvis raised about \$133,000 for his campaign, including \$80,000 of his own money. Jarvis served a term in the N.C. House before running for Senate and served on the Davidson County Board of Commissioners. He was one of six state lawmakers who visited the White House in July to discuss deregulation with the president.

**TODAY:** Jarvis on his website lists regulatory reform as a key issue. Expect this to be a point of emphasis for Jarvis as he starts his Senate term. Critics of overregulation in North Carolina say they overburden business and stunt economic growth. "The state has the ability to adjust regulatory burden (such as compliance and reporting requirements) as they apply to small businesses," he says on his campaign website. "The answer to regulatory reform would be (to) have all necessary rules ... reviewed and go through the adoption process as if they were just submitted."

**TOMORROW:** Jarvis, who owns a construction company, was appointed to the Senate's committees on Agriculture, Energy, and Environment, Health Care, State and Local Government, and Appropriations on Health and Human Services. Expect votes along conservative lines, including on issues — in addition to regulatory reform — regarding lower taxes, job growth, and education. Jarvis told WXII in an interview in March that he supports gun owners and, in the House, sponsored a bill to help school children with epilepsy.

continued NEXT PAGE

# GENERAL ASSEMBLY

continued from PREVIOUS PAGE



## District 39 DeAndrea Salvador, D-Mecklenburg

**YESTERDAY:** Democrat DeAndrea Salvador, along with Sen. Sarah Crawford, turned their large districts blue. Both operate nonprofit organizations. Dan Bishop, a Republican, had held the District 39 seat before being elected to Congress. Salvador, her website says, founded RETI — Renewable Energy Transition Initiative — a nonprofit focused on helping families sustainably reduce energy costs using smart technology, solar energy, efficiency, and education. She also serves on the boards of Clean Air Carolina and Youth Empowered Solutions, the site says. She served, too, on the Mecklenburg County Air Quality Commission.

**TODAY:** She'll serve on the Senate's Agriculture, Energy, and Environment; and Appropriations on Agriculture, Environment, and Natural Resources committees. She becomes the youngest black woman to serve in the N.C. Senate and the youngest senator in the upcoming biennium, *The Charlotte Weekly* reported. "I will work towards robust economic recovery, stronger support for our schools, as well as strive to connect our community to well-paying jobs, improved access to clean energy, and to keep environmental and racial justice at the forefront," she told the newspaper.

**TOMORROW:** Salvador says on her website she'll work to rebuild the economy, including a push to raise the minimum wage, an idea Republicans oppose and Democrats embrace. She also lists advancing "sustainable" infrastructure projects and transportation initiatives; investing in education, to include vocational training and college prep; and increasing access to health care. That includes support for expanding Med-



**KEVIN CORBIN.** Corbin (at right), a native of Macon County in the N.C. mountains, will continue to be a strong advocate for the western part of the state, including Western Carolina University.

KEVIN CORBIN

icaid, which is high on the governor's agenda, so much so that he vetoed the latest budget because it wasn't included. She'll likely vote for Democratic priorities, and her endorsements included Planned Parenthood and the N.C. Association of Educators.



## District 49 Julie Mayfield, D-Buncombe

**YESTERDAY:** Democrat Julie Mayfield, an Atlanta native and "proven progressive," says her campaign website, soundly defeat-

ed Republican Bob Penland, 63% to 37%, in November. It's not surprising, considering her decidedly liberal district that includes Asheville, where she served on the city council. The website mountaintrue lists her as its co-director, and she started with the nonprofit in 2018. The group, its site says, "envision[s] thriving communities in our mountain region that are connected to and help sustain both each other and our natural environment." Gov. Beverly Perdue, the site says, in 2011 appointed Mayfield to the Mountain Resources Commission, which dissolved in 2013.

**TODAY:** Mayfield on her Facebook page wrote this about the mask mandate, saying the Republican leadership isn't adhering to a rule from the governor that masks

be worn in legislative buildings. "I find it unconscionable and irresponsible that the legislative leadership of our state is unwilling to adhere to the law, model good behavior for our residents, and keep safe the people who work every day at the legislature." Mayfield will serve on the committees for State and Local Government; Transportation; and Appropriations on Agriculture, Environment, and Natural Resources.

**TOMORROW:** Mayfield supports the Green New Deal and, on her website, says she "will take on climate change and restore protections for air and water to keep our communities healthy and safe." She wants to expand Medicaid, and expect Mayfield to side with Democrats on most "progressive"

priorities. She received endorsements, for example, from the Sierra Club, Equality N.C., and several labor unions, including the N.C. Association of Educators.



## District 50 Kevin Corbin, R-Macon

**YESTERDAY:** Republican Kevin Corbin got almost 67% of the vote in beating Democrat Victoria Fox in November. He's a familiar face, having served two terms in the N.C. House, beginning with the 2016 election. He served four years on the Appalachian State University Board of Trustees and is a past chairman of the Macon County school board, his campaign website says. He served six years on the Macon County Board of Commissioners, elected chairman his final four years on the board. He sponsored a slew of bills in this past legislative session, including a move to expedite occupational licenses for military spouses.

**TODAY:** Corbin lists individual liberty as a core issue, saying on his website: "I believe that individuals possess God-given inherent rights, and it is the job of the government to protect them and support equality under the law." He's fiscally conservative, running along N.C. Republican Party lines. He'll serve on the Senate's committees for Commerce and Insurance, Education/Higher Education, and Appropriations on Education. Corbin owns two insurance agencies, the Corbin Agency in Franklin and the Blue Ridge Insurance Group in Seneca, South Carolina, his campaign website says. He's also a founding member of the gospel group Blue Ridge.

**TOMORROW:** Corbin, a native of Macon County in the western mountains, will continue to be a strong advocate for the western

continued NEXT PAGE



# THIS IS WHAT OPPORTUNITY LOOKS LIKE.

LEARN MORE ONLINE AT: [WWW.CAROLINAJOURNAL.COM](http://WWW.CAROLINAJOURNAL.COM)

# GENERAL ASSEMBLY

continued from PREVIOUS PAGE

part of the state, including Western Carolina University. He says, according to his website, that he'll work to help residents there on issues such as broadband expansion and school safety. A primary focus, for Corbin and all lawmakers, is helping the state recover from the pandemic. Local newspaper *The Franklin Press* wrote of Corbin: "[His] track record of teaming with other [lawmakers] representing rural regions across the state positions him well to continue championing rural needs. There is strength in numbers, and the state's rural residents stand to benefit from a unified voice."

## HOUSE



### District 3

Steve Tyson, R-Craven

**YESTERDAY:** Republican Steve Tyson has lived in eastern North Carolina his entire life, only leaving to serve in the Army. He comes from a military family, and his son followed in his footsteps. Tyson ran on his background as a small business owner for 35 years. But he has also served in government as Craven County commissioner for 12 years and as a board member of the Craven100 Economic Development Alliance.

**TODAY:** Tyson wants to be remembered for protecting the Second Amendment, for responsible



**MATTHEW WINSLOW.** Winslow's first paid job was cleaning hog houses in northeastern North Carolina. He founded Winslow Homes.

government spending, for term limits, and for protecting public waterways. He wants to make schools safer by adding more trained school resource officers. He touts his history in economic development on his campaign website, where he targets the urban-rural divide. "But let us face

the facts," he says. "Eastern N.C. is being neglected in Raleigh. Virtually all new business is going to Charlotte, Raleigh, and Durham."

**TOMORROW:** Tyson also promises to treat transportation like economic development, he says on his campaign website. He is a former member of the Highway 70 com-



**Let us face the facts. Eastern N.C. is being neglected in Raleigh. Virtually all new business is going to Charlotte, Raleigh, and Durham.**

- Steve Tyson, Craven, R

mission, and a former chairman of the Metropolitan Planning and Transportation Organization.



### District 7

Matthew Winslow, R-Franklin

**YESTERDAY:** Republican Matthew Winslow ran on the slogan "send a builder." His first paid job was cleaning hog houses in northeastern North Carolina. He is the son of a teen mother who worked to support her family, and he says he knows what it is like to have to depend on the government. He founded the homebuilding company Winslow Homes.

**TODAY:** Winslow describes himself as a "pro-faith, pro-family, and pro-freedom conservative." His Facebook campaign page focuses on his faith. Like other Republican campaigns, his posts lean heavily on law-and-order messages. Just above a photo of an N.C. officer killed in the line of duty, Winslow's campaign writes that "I'm running to build a safer community for families and law enforcement."

I will always stand alongside our brave law enforcement officers who keep our families and communities safe."

**TOMORROW:** He promises to support small businesses, according to his campaign website. "I understand the importance of lowering taxes, reducing regulations," he writes. "As a businessman, I will take this work experience to the legislature. The legislature needs to be made up of people with real-life business experience, not career politicians."



### District 9

Brian Farkas, D-Pitt

**YESTERDAY:** Democrat Brian Farkas ousted the Republican incumbent, physician Perrin Jones. He represents Pitt County, home of East Carolina University and the Brody School of Medicine. Farkas now works in his family's architecture business, but he also worked for emergency management for the National Institutes of Health and the U.S. Attorney's office. He bagged an endorsement from former President Obama. He became caught up in controversy over defunding the police, after House Speaker Time Moore, R-Cleveland, accused him of wanting to strip money from police departments. Farkas disputed the allegation.

**TODAY:** He shares Gov. Roy Cooper's focus on education and Medicaid expansion. His campaign website promises he "will fight to lock

continued NEXT PAGE

# FIRST IN FREEDOM

*Transforming Ideas into Consequences for North Carolina*

In First in Freedom the John Locke Foundation's president and research staff apply the timeless ideas of 20th-century conservative thinkers to such 21st-century challenges as economic stagnation, tax and regulatory burdens, and educational mediocrity.

Available at:  
**JohnLockeStore.com**



# GENERAL ASSEMBLY



**ERIN PARE.** Pare, pictured with former Wake County Sheriff Donnie Harrison, supports getting children back in the classroom. She is the PTA president of an elementary school, and she says one of her key goals is school choice.

continued from PREVIOUS PAGE

up the Education Lottery funding, raise teacher pay, improve distance learning, and freeze college tuition.”

**TOMORROW:** His website says Farkas will fight for paid family leave, a raised minimum wage, and a state independent oversight committee for police accountability and racial inequality.

“We have to commit to real reforms to repair centuries of systemic racism and inequality,” Farkas says on the site. “Our state must be a national leader in accountability by conducting thorough investigations that provide a just and efficient means to reduce incidents of police misconduct.”



## District 19

### Charles Miller, R-Brunswick

**YESTERDAY:** Republican Charles Miller was chief deputy of the Brunswick County Sheriff's Office for more than a decade. He has also worked in the private sector and in security at a nuclear plant.

He was the biggest donor to his campaign, putting \$75,000 into the election. He served 15 years on the local school board, where he says he tried to reopen schools during the pandemic. He represents a coastal district just south of Wilmington.

**TODAY:** Miller says schools



**A costly bail bond system, lengthy trial times, and overcrowded prisons all currently contribute to a process that disadvantages those without money and resources in North Carolina.**

- Abe Jones, Wake, D

should be required to provide the choice of in-person learning during the pandemic. “I have visited with a lot of small businesses that have really suffered during this pandemic,” Miller told WECT.

“The virus is real, I understand that, but it's time to safely open [North Carolina] back up and let people decide. ... I don't think the governor has done a very good job taking care of North Carolinians.”

**TOMORROW:** Miller opposes expanding Medicaid, but he said that he wants to review the current level of unemployment benefits.

Miller criticized the deficit Republicans inherited from the Democrats when they took over the legislature in 2010.

“It's not time to squander that money away. It's time to buckle down,” Miller told WECT.



## District 37

### Erin Pare, R-Wake

**YESTERDAY:** Republican Erin Pare defeated a Democratic incumbent by running an aggressive campaign in suburban Wake County. She earned U.S. Rep. Steve Scalise's endorsement after her Democratic opponent mocked the representative's shooting on social media, says Pare's campaign website. She won against her opponent, Sidney Batch, 50% to 47%, in November. Batch was appointed later to a state Senate seat. Pare describes herself as a small business owner. She previously worked in nonprofits and as the director of the Regulatory Improvement Council.

**TODAY:** Pare focused on education and the economy when she ran for office. She describes herself as an advocate for the taxpayer. Her website portrays her as a traditional, fiscally conservative Republican, with a focus on public safety, Second Amendment rights, and low taxes.

**TOMORROW:** Pare supports getting children back in the classroom. She is the PTA president of an elementary school, and she says one of her key goals is school choice. Pare is a military spouse and the sister of a disabled adult, and this has taught her the need for market-based solutions in health care, she says on Ballotpedia.



## District 38

### Abe Jones, D-Wake

**YESTERDAY:** Democrat Abe Jones served Wake County as a Superior Court judge. Gov. Jim Hunt, a Democrat, appointed him onto the court in 1995, and he was elected to two more eight-year terms. Jones turned his attention to the legislature after losing judicial elections in 2012 and 2014. His district covers northeast Raleigh in Wake County.

**TODAY:** His campaign focused on affordable housing, vocational education, and criminal justice reform. He argued for a more fair legal process, saying that “a costly bail bond system, lengthy trial times, and overcrowded prisons all currently contribute to a process that disadvantages those without money and resources in North Carolina.”

**TOMORROW:** Expect him to be an advocate for community colleges and funding for vocational training. His website praises Wake Tech and calls for expanding vocational training across the state. Community colleges are bracing for a lean budget year, and their enrollment has failed to rise with the unemployment rate during the pandemic.



## District 43

### Diane Wheatley, R-Cumberland

**YESTERDAY:** Republican Diane Wheatley is a registered nurse who operates a school bus company with her husband. She served on the Cumberland County Board of Education for 10 years. The NRA ran videos for her describing her as the “law-and-order candidate.” She focused on making her county catch up with the rest of the state, on unemployment and wages before the pandemic. She won in a recently redrawn district, after losing in the 2012 primaries.

**TODAY:** She says health care is her top policy priority, followed by education and job creation. She says she most admires her father and President Reagan for his “unapologetic patriotism, positive attitude, humor, and overwhelming belief in the American people.”

**TOMORROW:** She believes the biggest challenge facing the state is revenue and the economy. On Ballotpedia, she writes, “Everything state government does, whether it is health care, education, public safety, or infrastructure, depends

on funding, and funding depends on a healthy state economy. We are currently looking at having to recover from an unprecedented reversal of economic fortune both nationally and in North Carolina.”



## District 63

### Ricky Hurtado, D-Alamance

**YESTERDAY:** Democrat Ricky Hurtado is the son of immigrants who fled civil war in El Salvador. The 32-year-old UNC Chapel Hill instructor says that education changed his life. His campaign focused largely on education, especially for first-generation college students and immigrants. He scored endorsements from key national figures, including former president Barack Obama and Sen. Elizabeth Warren. He has worked with the governor on task forces, including the DRIVE Task Force on education equity and teacher diversity and MyFutureNC on work force development. His district sits between Durham and Greensboro.

**TODAY:** Expect him to oppose Republicans' education priorities. Hurtado regularly criticizes Republicans, accusing them of putting tax cuts above education funding. He is skeptical of school choice and charter schools. He told WXII that the voucher program was “not working” and that he supports a temporary moratorium. But he didn't call for a cap on charter schools.

**TOMORROW:** Hurtado promised to “reverse an harmful era of Republican deregulation” with environmental policies. He will push Democratic priorities, including Medicaid expansion, diversity in education, and higher teacher pay.



## District 66

### Ben T. Moss Jr., R-Richmond

**YESTERDAY:** Republican Ben Moss, a locomotive engineer, flipped a seat that had been held by Democrats for decades. He was also the first Republican elected to the Richmond County Board of Commissioners in more than 120 years, according to the *Richmond Observer*. His district borders South Carolina.

**TODAY:** He is the House freshman whip. He describes himself as a Christian and a strong advocate for the Second Amendment. He ran on safety and security, filling his Face-

continued PAGE 10



# locke

*For* **TRUTH** *For* **FREEDOM**  
*For The* **FUTURE** *Of North Carolina*

With ideas backed by powerful research and outreach, the John Locke Foundation shapes public policy and reforms that further liberty in North Carolina for generations to come.

SIGN UP FOR OUR NEWSLETTER AT

**[www.johnlocke.org](http://www.johnlocke.org)**

 @johnlockefoundation

 @JohnLockeNC

# GENERAL ASSEMBLY

continued from PREVIOUS PAGE

book campaign page with posts about gun rights and law enforcement officers. As whip, he will be responsible for mobilizing votes from his fellow Republican freshmen representatives.

**TOMORROW:** He says on Facebook he is pro-God, pro-gun, and pro-law enforcement. A political ad pilloried him as “Bad News Ben,” a title he embraced as far as Democrats were concerned. He assures supporters that he is “bad news” for anyone who is “pro-abortion, anti-God, anti-law enforcement.”



## District 68

David Willis, R-Union

**YESTERDAY:** Republican David Willis owns and runs a local preschool. He served on the N.C. State Board of Community Colleges, as well as on advisory boards for early education. He campaigned on educational issues and supporting public schools. He will represent the south-Charlotte area.

**TODAY:** He was elected the freshman leader in the House. He ran on boosting education, infrastructure, and economic growth. He also promises to identify and eliminate wasteful spending in government.

**TOMORROW:** Expect him to make education a major priority with teacher pay and school choice. “Parents should have the opportunity to decide which educational environment is best for their children,” Willis writes on his campaign website. “Students deserve an education that will help each one of them reach their fullest potential and prepare them for a successful career.”



## District 72

Amber M. Baker, D-Forsyth

**YESTERDAY:** Democrat Amber Baker was a principal of an elementary school for 12 years before becoming a life skills teacher at Mount Tabor High School. She was elected as vice chair of the Forsyth County Democratic Party’s African American Caucus. She says she has been homeless and dependent on government assistance for her daughter.

**TODAY:** Her district leans heavily Democratic, with about 58% of its 54,000 voters registered as Democrats and only 15% as Republicans. She replaces Derwin Montgomery, who ran for Congress but lost in the



**RICKY HURTADO.** Hurtado is the son of immigrants who fled civil war in El Salvador. Expect him to oppose Republicans’ education priorities. He regularly criticizes Republicans, accusing them of putting tax cuts above education funding. He is skeptical of school choice and charter schools.

primaries.

**TOMORROW:** Baker wants to double the money for low-income housing. She also pushed to add an African American history requirement for high school students. Expect her to fight for increased funding for social services.



## District 74

Jeff Zenger, R-Forsyth

**YESTERDAY:** Republican Jeff Zenger comes from the construction industry. He ran on reopening the economy during the pandemic and school choice against a Democratic opponent who focused on health care. Zenger did not give an answer on Medicaid expansion, but he has voiced support for market-driven solutions to health care needs like the association health plans that would allow small businesses to band together for leverage against insurers.

**TODAY:** Zenger’s win helped Republicans hold onto their majorities in the legislature. Democrats invested heavily in his district, and Dem-



**I’ve found a government of any size rarely that had a revenue problem. It is far more common to see a government filled with overspending, inefficiency and corruption.**

- Jeff Zenger, Forsyth, R

ocrat Dan Besse had outraised Zenger by 12 times, as of June, reported the *Triad City Beat*. Zenger won the seat with 51.2% of the votes.

**TOMORROW:** Expect Zenger to join Republicans’ crusade to reopen the economy this session. He takes a traditional conservative’s approach to government spending. He is suspicious of government inefficiency, and he advocates for school choice. “I’ve found a government of any size rarely that had a revenue problem. It is far more common to see a government filled with overspending, inefficiency, and corruption,” he told the *Triad City Beat*.



## District 80

Sam Watford, R-Davidson

**YESTERDAY:** Republican Sam Watford is back in office. After serving two terms in the House, he lost a 2018 election after voting against a law that would eliminate the need for a concealed-carry permit, as well as to allow 18-year-olds to buy guns. He once served on multiple state legislative committees, including Appropriations, Elections, Energy, Education, Regulatory Reform, Foster Care, and State and Local Government. His district lies southwest of Greensboro.

**TODAY:** The waterline contractor has regained one committee assignment on local government so far. He ran on gun rights, low taxes, less regulation, and an economic comeback. His vote on concealed-carry permits returned to haunt his campaign, but he fired back on social media.

**TOMORROW:** Watford argued that he approaches state issues from the local perspective in a previous election. As the chair of the

House Local Government Committee, he will help lead the legislature’s response to local governments’ economic woes from the pandemic and the shutdowns.



## District 85

Dudley Greene, R-McDowell

**YESTERDAY:** Republican Dudley Greene replaces Josh Dobson, who moved on to become the N.C. labor commissioner. Greene served three decades in law enforcement, including as the sheriff of McDowell County. Not surprisingly, he made law and order a major issue in his campaign for office.

**TODAY:** His campaign touted his support for law enforcement and career technical training. He described himself as a common-sense conservative who will support business, public safety, and education.

**TOMORROW:** Greene opposes any cuts to police funding. He called for more resources for law enforcement, telling the *Avery Journal*: “As a matter of fact, I think that where we can, we need to give law enforcement more resources. If there’s not public safety, there’s not an environment for business, education, or anything else in the state. ... If there’s ways we can expand through additional training and funding, that’s what we need to do.”



## District 93

Ray Pickett, R-Watauga

**YESTERDAY:** Republican Ray Pickett, in what was dubbed “the battle of the Rays,” defeated Democratic incumbent Ray Russell. Pickett lambasted his opponent for opposing teacher pay raises in the budget and the pro-life “Born Alive” bill. Pickett accused Russell of looking out for the “liberal inside-the-beltway agenda.” Pickett served on the Blowing Rock Town Council and owned the Blowing Rock Inn for almost 20 years. He will represent Boone and Appalachian State University.

**TODAY:** His campaign promoted veterans’ issues, broadband, and law and order. His Facebook campaign page pushed back against the mask mandate. Pickett also criticized the N.C. Department of Transportation for overspending.

**TOMORROW:** Pickett wants to audit the department and prevent future cases of overspending. “Our

continued NEXT PAGE

# GENERAL ASSEMBLY



**GREY MILLS.** Republican Grey Mills (left) recaptured the seat he held from 2009 through 2012. He took a break after running for lieutenant governor and losing in the primaries.

continued from PREVIOUS PAGE

Dept. of Transportation has gone millions over their budget and still failed to get the job done," says his website. "Every day I drive on roads and infrastructure that need repair. Let's audit the DOT and stop wasting taxpayer money on projects that never happen."



**District 95**  
Grey Mills, R-Iredell

**YESTERDAY:** Republican Grey Mills recaptured the seat he held from 2009 through 2012. He took a break after running for lieutenant governor and losing in the primaries. Mills once served on several influential state legislative committees, including Transportation, Appropriations, Elections, and Education. He co-owns a law firm that specializes in personal injury. He interned for U.S. Sen. Jesse Helms while completing law school. His district sits just north of Charlotte.



**The biggest thing is the budget. With reduced revenue being likely, we've got a lot of tough choices ahead. It's a tough thing, but we'll have to deal with it.**

- Grey Mills, Iredell, R

**TODAY:** Mills won almost two-thirds of the vote in this election. Like other Republicans, he focused heavily on gun rights and transportation. He attacked Cooper for "mismanaging" unemployment benefits.

**TOMORROW:** Mills will serve as chairman of the House Election Law and Campaign Finance Reform Committee. "COVID-19 has changed things. We'll have a lot to deal with next session," Mills told the *Mooresville Tribune*. "The biggest thing is the budget. With reduced revenue being likely, we've got a lot of tough choices ahead. It's a tough thing, but we'll have to deal with it."



**District 98**  
John R. Bradford III,  
R-Mecklenburg

**YESTERDAY:** Republican John Bradford is back in the House, after serving two terms and losing during the 2018 election cycle. He is a former environmental engineer. He says he supports renewable energy. Bradford has a daughter who has a serious, chronic health condition. He describes helping people with developmental disabilities as a major priority. He has hired employees with Down syndrome. He followed his grandfather into the state legislature. He will represent the northern part of Mecklenburg County.

**TODAY:** As a small business owner, Bradford prioritizes cutting regulations, taxes, and the size of government. He will serve as senior chairman of the House Finance Committee with three other Republicans.

**TOMORROW:** Expect him to make

people with special needs a legislative priority. "I want to be remembered for ensuring that everyone deserves an opportunity. I believe individuals with special needs have special abilities that we need to embrace and try to provide opportunities to help them live productive and meaningful lives," he wrote on Ballotpedia.



**District 118**  
Mark Pless, R-Haywood

**YESTERDAY:** Republican Mark Pless spent 15 years as a paramedic, where he faced the opioid epidemic and drug overdose calls.

The insurance salesman served as Haywood County commissioner, where he became embroiled in controversy over his comments about addiction.

His district lies in the mountains in western North Carolina, near Asheville.

**TODAY:** Pless might have whipped up controversy in his district while serving as county commissioner, but he still carried off 64% of the vote. Pless credited the controversy to his focus on protecting taxpayer dollars.

**TOMORROW:** The agent with N.C. Farm Bureau Insurance focused his campaign on bringing jobs to the region. Expect him to support gun rights.

"It's very different for people to be able to stand strong and to believe in government, and it seems like their rights are being threatened or violated, especially the Second Amendment and freedom of speech and right to vote," he told *The Mountaineer*.



**District 119**  
Mike Clappitt, R-Swain

**YESTERDAY:** Republican Mike Clappitt won this round against his Democratic opponent, who has run against him in the past four elections.

Clappitt helped win Republicans their veto-proof supermajority in 2016, when he rode President Trump's coattails to victory.

He is a retired fire captain for the Charlotte Fire Department. He

represents a rural district in the far western mountains.

**TODAY:** He ran on supporting law enforcement, jousting with his opponent on support for police officers. Clappitt was once assistant sergeant at arms for the General Assembly.

He will serve as chairman of the Federal Relations and American Indian Affairs House Committee.

**TOMORROW:** Clappitt says he wants to work with a DWI task force and to bolster drug rehabilitation.

He says he wants to funnel money from the court system into more schools.

"One thing I'm looking at for sure is the fines and forfeitures that go to the current school systems, but aren't being shared with charter schools," Clappitt told ABC News.



**District 120**  
Karl E. Gillespie, R-Macon

**YESTERDAY:** Republican Karl Gillespie trounced his Democratic opponent, carrying 74% of the vote.

Gillespie is a fifth-generation resident of Macon County, but he left to spend almost two decades in the communications industry.

He returned to found National Communications, a turnkey low-voltage contractor that handles fire alarms and fiber optics.

He serves on the Board of Trustees for Southwestern Community College.

His county is home to the Nantahala National Forest in the western mountains.

**TODAY:** Expect his background in fiber optics and community colleges to influence his policy decisions.

Gillespie says affordable broadband is his top issue, and he plans to push for "substantial financial commitment" from the state and federal government.

He also wants more money for public education and community colleges.

**TOMORROW:** Gillespie told the *Smoky Mountain News* that he supports Medicaid expansion, the issue that sunk the last budget amid partisan gridlock.

He promises to promote local agriculture, broadband access, and fiscal responsibility.



COVID-19

# Getting the shot

After missing the mark on vaccinating residents for COVID-19, officials are honing in on target

BY JULIE HAVLAK

After a slow start, North Carolina is ramping up its COVID-19 vaccinations. Almost 7% of residents got the first shot of COVID-19 vaccines by Jan. 29, when 728,551 people received a first dose, according to the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services. Earlier that week, an



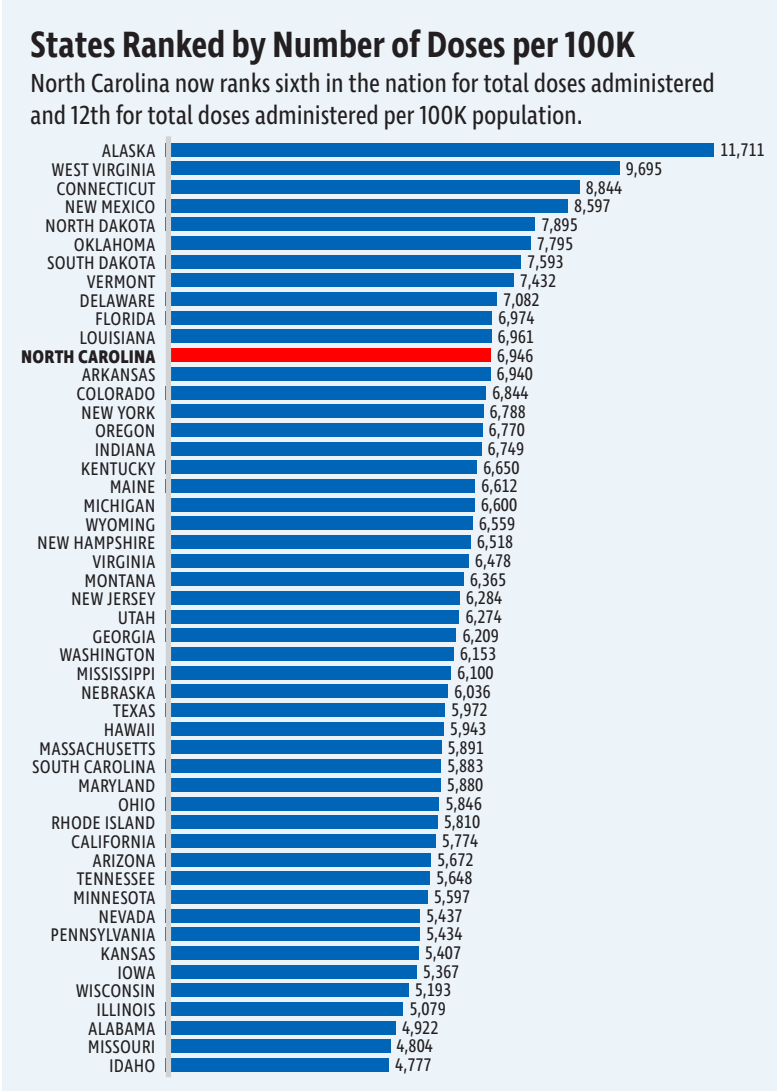
**GETTING THERE.** North Carolina has injected 99% of first doses sent by the federal government by Jan. 27, but only 53% of first doses have reached elderly patients' in long-term care homes.

average 11.1% of COVID-19 tests came back positive. North Carolina now ranks sixth in the nation for total doses administered, according to the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention. The state shot up the rankings

in late January, but its rollout got off to a rocky start. Elderly residents crossed the state border to get vaccines, hospitals canceled thousands of appointments, and the slow rollout left many confused and frustrated. North Carolina spent weeks lagging behind the nation. Early January saw massive backlogs — even

as the federal government tied vaccine supply to the success of states' vaccine rollouts. State lawmakers and health care advocates criticized North Carolina's progress and questioned the governor's vaccination plan. By the first week of January, North Carolina was sitting on almost three-fourths of its available doses. The state had given only 25.5% of its available doses, according to the CDC. Only five other states in the country had worse vaccination rates, and West Virginia's rate was almost triple that of North Carolina. North Carolina had climbed to the lower middle of the pack by Jan. 26. It ranked 32nd out of the 50 states for administering 699,722 of 1,250,900 available vaccines, according to the CDC. North Carolina's own data show a better performance. The state has administered 69% of the doses. The state used mass vaccination sites to ramp up its numbers, but that tactic earned backlash from local providers. They argued it left elderly and rural residents without access to vaccine sites. Hospitals had to cancel thousands of appointments as the state diverted vaccines toward Charlotte

and Durham. But the state gained ground. North Carolina had injected 99% of the first doses sent by the federal government by Jan. 27. The state rocketed from 40th in first doses administered per 100,000 residents to 12th in a week. North Carolinians in nursing homes and long-term care homes aren't so lucky. Only 53% of the first doses had reached patients' arms in long-term care homes as of Jan. 29. The federal government manages that rollout. State Health and Human Services Secretary Dr. Mandy Cohen says a limited supply of vaccines is coming into the state, and health officials have little advanced notice when it does arrive. North Carolina will now get 120,000 new first doses from the federal government each week, Cohen said. She says the state has mostly burned through its backlog. "North Carolina is ready to take on more vaccines, and we need those vaccines now," Cohen said during a press conference in late January. "We know that this is hard on North Carolinians. Demand for vaccines is vastly greater than supply."



**MANDY COHEN:** "North Carolina is ready to take on more vaccines, and we need those vaccines now. We know that this is hard on North Carolinians. Demand for vaccines is vastly greater than supply."

SOURCE: CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

# COVID VACCINE TIMELINE



**1796:** Edward Jenner discovers vaccines, using cowpox pus to immunize people from smallpox.

**1976:** Researchers lay the groundwork for today's COVID-19 vaccines. They make critical discoveries about mRNA — the genetic material behind the two leading COVID-19 vaccines. Scientists hope to use snippets of mRNA to hijack the body's own cells and make copies of viral proteins. This would teach the immune system to fight viruses. But mRNA is fragile, and scientists struggle to get it to last inside the body. One researcher finally makes a breakthrough.

**2003:** The severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) coronavirus is identified in China.

**2012:** The Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS) coronavirus is discovered on the Arabian Peninsula. Its discovery spurs another advance in coronavirus vaccines. Researchers learn how to present the immune system with the now-infamous spike proteins that cover COVID-19.

**2017:** The U.S. National Institutes of Health partners with Moderna to see how quickly they could develop a mRNA vaccine in the event of a pandemic.

**2018:** Scientists win a victory for the messenger RNA technology behind today's vaccines. The FDA approves the first lipid nanoparticle carrier for mRNA — the technology that helps mRNA survive long enough to provide protection against viruses inside the body.

**DECEMBER 2019:** Chinese authorities publicly identify human cases of COVID-19.

**JAN. 10, 2020:** Chinese researchers publish the sequence of the SARS-COVID-2 genome.

**JAN. 11, 2020:** Researchers in the U.S. begin working to develop a mRNA vaccine.

**MARCH 16, 2020:** Moderna begins Phase 1 clinical trials for a COVID-19 vaccine.

**MARCH 17, 2020:** BioNTech and Pfizer join forces to create a COVID-19 vaccine.

**APRIL 16, 2020:** The U.S. bankrolls Moderna's vaccine candidate.

**MAY 21, 2020:** The U.S. federal government dumps \$1.2 billion into AstraZeneca's candidate vaccine, securing at least 300 million doses for the U.S.

**JUNE 2020:** China's military approves the use of a vaccine being developed by Chinese vaccine maker CanSino and the Academy of Military Science.

**JULY 14, 2020:** Moderna publishes initial clinical trial data. Pfizer follows suit Aug. 12.

**JULY 22, 2020:** The Trump administration invests almost \$2 billion in Pfizer for 100 million doses of its vaccine.

**JULY 27, 2020:** Moderna and Pfizer launch Phase 2-3 trials with 30,000 volunteers across multiple countries. This will determine whether the vaccines are safe and effective.

**JULY 2020:** China approves a coronavirus vaccine for emergency use that is developed by state-owned drugmaker Sinopharm.

**AUG. 8, 2020:** U.S. spending passes \$9 billion for developing and



manufacturing candidate vaccines across seven companies.

**AUG. 11, 2020:** Russian President Vladimir Putin announces the "world's first" approved vaccine, Sputnik V, but researchers have only completed Phase 2 trials on 76 people. Global scientists question the ethics of his decision.

**SEPT. 8, 2020:** Major vaccine companies, including Pfizer and Moderna, pledge to "stand with science" and to "adhere to high scientific and ethical standards" for individuals' safety and wellbeing.

**SEPT. 12, 2020:** Pfizer and BioNTech say they will expand their U.S. trial to 44,000 participants.

**OCT. 6, 2020:** The FDA updates its guidelines on vaccines, requiring drugmakers to collect two months of safety data after the second injection before applying for an emergency authorization. The new guidance effectively eliminates the likelihood of approving a vaccine before the election, and the Trump administration criticizes the guidance.

**NOV. 8, 2020:** Pfizer and BioNTech release the preliminary analysis of their first 94 cases.

**NOVEMBER 2020:** Chinese state-owned vaccine developer Sinopharm has vaccinated almost 1 million people in China under its emergency-use program.

**DEC. 2, 2020:** The United Kingdom becomes the first Western country to approve a vaccine for emergency use.

**DEC. 8, 2020:** The FDA determines that Pfizer's vaccine has an efficacy rate of 95%.



**DEC. 9, 2020:** North Carolina's vaccine tracker is set to go live. North Carolina chose to build its own vaccine tracker, the Coronavirus Vaccine Management System, for a \$1.2 million price tag. State officials will later complain the software is slowing down the vaccine rollout.

**DEC. 11, 2020:** The FDA approves the first vaccine for emergency use in the U.S., the Pfizer-BioNTech candidate. The federal government funnels more money into Moderna for a total of \$4.1 billion in federal funding.

**DEC. 13, 2020:** Workers in Michigan load vaccines onto trucks for the first deliveries across the U.S.

**DEC. 14, 2020:** The U.S. gives its first vaccinations to health-care workers.

**DEC. 15, 2020:** North Carolina vaccines its first volunteer.

**DEC. 21, 2020:** The European Union approves the Pfizer vaccine.

**DEC. 23, 2020:** Brazil reports data showing that China's CoronaVac vaccine protects just over 50% of people, less than previously advertised.

**JAN. 4, 2021:** North Carolina has some of the lowest vaccination rates in the nation. The state has vaccinated only 966 people per 100,000 people. Only five other states rank lower.

**JAN. 5, 2021:** Gov. Roy Cooper enlists the N.C. National Guard to help the state's vaccinate effort.

**JAN. 8, 2021:** Eight governors demand the release of all available vaccine doses, including the ones held in reserve for the second shot required for immunity. Cooper is not among them.



**JAN. 8, 2021:** President-elect Biden announces plans to ship out all available doses of the vaccine. He says he will stop the Trump administration's policy of keeping doses in reserve for the second shot.

**JAN. 12, 2021:** The Trump administration makes big changes in its plan for vaccine rollout. Officials begin recommending vaccinating anyone 65 or older, and anyone with underlying conditions. They also change how states get vaccine doses. The federal government will begin prioritizing states by their speed of vaccine rollout, as well as by population size. They will also stop holding doses in reserve.

**JAN. 12, 2021:** Lawmakers in the N.C. General Assembly question department officials about the slow rollout of vaccines. Lawmakers criticize the speed of distribution. Secretary of N.C. Department of Health and Human Services Mandy Cohen says, "I think there are a lot of issues. I think, overall, for North Carolina, our decision to prioritize every county ... means there are some that are going to be great and some that are going to struggle."

**JAN. 14, 2021:** Cooper opens COVID-19 vaccines to people 65 older. The state abandons its original rollout plan, which separated residents into tiers of priority.

**JAN. 18, 2021:** The U. S. has delivered more than 31 million doses of coronavirus vaccines. But only 39% of those doses have been administered.

**JAN. 19, 2021:** Biden announces plans to activate the National Guard to help Americans get the vaccines. North Carolina has already beat him to it.

**JAN. 19, 2021:** 450,000 people have been vaccinated in North Carolina, Cohen says.



**JAN. 20, 2021:** North Carolina begins vaccinating prisoners and staff.

**JAN. 21, 2021:** Cohen acknowledges that vaccine doses are being wasted. She says the number is in the "tens."

**JAN. 21, 2021:** Cohen disputes the CDC's data on North Carolina's vaccine rollout. She says she's working with officials to fix discrepancies on the federal website.

**JAN. 24, 2021:** North Carolina reports its first case of COVID-19 variant from the United Kingdom. The variant B.1.1.7 is identified in an adult in Mecklenburg County.

**JAN. 25, 2021:** The N.C. Healthcare Association and the N.C. Association of Local Health Directors both send letters criticizing the governor and Cohen's plans for vaccine rollout. Cone Hospital in Greensboro says it had to cancel 10,400 appointments after the state unexpectedly diverted first-dose vaccines. Lincoln and Gaston counties complain that they will receive no vaccines for the week as the state hosts vaccination megasites in Charlotte. Cohen apologizes and guarantees to give some providers a baseline of minimum vaccines. North Carolina ranks 43 out of 50 states for distribution.

**JAN. 26, 2021:** Cohen says 95% of all COVID vaccine first doses have been administered. The state has given more than 110,000 doses. Some 260,000 first doses were given in the past week alone. "We're ready to take on those vaccines now," says Cohen.

**JAN. 27, 2021:** North Carolina is scheduled to receive another shipment of 120,000 vaccines from the federal government.

**JAN. 29:** Cohen announces North Carolina spot in the top 10 states for total doses administered.



## INTERVIEW

## Jackson plans to compete for statewide seat in 2022

## INTERVIEW



**Darren Jackson**  
North Carolina Court of  
Appeals Judge

State Rep. **Darren Jackson** ran unopposed for his Wake County state House seat in the 2020 election. As House minority leader he oversaw political and policy strategy for his party's members. Republicans added a net four seats to their House majority, leaving the chamber with 69 Republicans and 51 Democrats.

When voters elevated Phil Berger Jr. from the state Court of Appeals to the state Supreme Court, Gov. Roy Cooper picked Jackson to fill Berger's vacant Court of Appeals seat.

Jackson is a lifelong resident of eastern Wake County. He and his wife, Tina, have three children and one grandchild. He received a bachelor's degree in political science from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1993 and a degree from Duke University School of Law in 1996.

After graduating law school, he practiced with the firm of Gay, Stroud, & Jackson (later renamed Gay, Jackson, & McNally) in Zebulon. His practice focused on real estate and civil litigation. He litigated criminal and civil cases in all levels of the state courts, from Small Claims Court to the N.C. Supreme Court, as well as at the U.S. District and Bankruptcy Courts. He also worked on appellate cases to the 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

Jackson served 12 years in the state House. His Court of Appeals seat will be open for a full eight-year term in 2022.

Dallas Woodhouse interviewed Jackson by email.

*CJ goes in-depth with former Democrat State House Leader Darren Jackson as he transitions to State Court of Appeals*

**Dallas Woodhouse:** How were you first approached about joining the Court of Appeals? What were your first thoughts about making such a move?

**Darren Jackson:** Over the course of my career, I have considered what would be next in my legal career. Through the years, I have indicated to many folks my interest in the bench once my legislative service was over. I have been in the same job since I graduated from law school. Leaving a firm and my partners after 25 years is difficult, and certainly there are reservations, and maybe even a few second thoughts.

**DW:** How do you define yourself politically? How will that affect your judicial approach?

**DJ:** I am a registered Democrat and will run for re-election as such. I was always a big supporter of nonpartisan judicial elections and believe that politics should not impact your judicial approach.

**DW:** What are the three most important qualities a judge must have to be an effective jurist? Which judges, current or retired, past or present, do you most admire? Why?

**DJ:** Socrates aptly described the essential qualities of a good judge. "Four things belong to a judge: to hear courteously, to answer wisely, to consider soberly, and to decide impartially."

I've enjoyed reading books about U.S. Supreme Court Chief Justice Earl Warren, Justice Thurgood Marshall, and Justice William Brennan. Of course, now Warren is of particular



**SWORN IN.** Judge Darren Jackson says of his judicial philosophy, "The Court of Appeals is an error-correcting court. I intend to approach each case in a fair and impartial manner without any preconceived bias or desired outcome."

interest since he successfully made the transition from politician to jurist.

Locally, I have always admired Justice Michael Morgan and Superior Court Judge Craig Croom. I have watched them on the bench from my time as a young lawyer and have seen them serve as role models for other young lawyers and young people in their communities. Always courteous to all those that appear in front of them, I have seen these judges making a difference in drug court and juvenile courts in ways that have made real differences in the lives of many.

**DW:** In a sentence or two, how would you define your judicial philosophy?

**DJ:** I am not approaching this new position with any preconceived philosophy. The Court of Appeals is an error-correcting court. I intend to approach each case in a fair and impartial manner without any preconceived bias or desired outcome.

**DW:** What will you miss most about the General Assembly?

**DJ:** The very good friends I have made and the nonpolitical work. The last nine months were particularly

satisfying in that my office was able to help a lot of people with unemployment, loss of health insurance, rental assistance, food assistance, etc.

**DW:** Do you agree with the following statement: The federal government has three equal branches of government with checks and balances. But while North Carolina also has three branches of government with checks and balances, the branches are not equal, because the state Constitution and the traditions of North Carolina have given more power to the legislative branch, subject to revision as the people see fit?

**DJ:** Separation of powers is an issue that has become before the courts many times the last 10 years and could easily come up again during my time on the court. According to our Code of Judicial Conduct, "A judge should abstain from public comment about the merits of a pending proceeding in any state or federal court dealing with a case or controversy arising in North Carolina or addressing North Carolina law." Therefore, it would not be proper to comment further.

**DW:** Your fellow Democrats in the N.C. House elected you as leader. And Gov. Cooper trusted you to look after his interests in the General Assembly, and of course appointed you to this position. How will you separate your previous role from your new role as an impartial judge? Is it possible?

**DJ:** I have often remarked that I thought lawyers made good legislators because of their legal training. You represent a client to the best of your abilities, without getting emotionally involved.

At the legislature, I represented my district. As leader, I had to stand up and make certain arguments in representing my caucus and party.

Now, I am in a totally different job, one where it is not my job to represent a party, a political party, a point of view, or a bias. I am to serve as a judge without bias. I believe my training allows me to make this transition very easily.

**DW:** Have you given any thoughts for running statewide for this seat in 2022?

**DJ:** Yes, I certainly took this new job with the plan

to run for re-election to the seat in 2022 for a full term.

**DW:** What was your first day on the bench like? What has surprised you so far?

**DJ:** I have not had my first oral argument yet, so technically I have not sat on the bench, although I have considered and voted on several motions.

So far, I have been very impressed by the congeniality of all the members of the court. Almost every judge has reached out to offer advice, support, and help. I have also found the staff to be very friendly and helpful as well, although that's not a surprise. My years in public service have taught me that we have wonderful people across this state going to work every day trying to do a great job for all the citizens of North Carolina.

**DW:** Tell us something about yourself that our readers may be surprised to learn.

**DJ:** That the Bojangles cup they normally see in my hand is actually full of Pepsi and not sweet tea.

**DW:** Tell us your funniest experience in politics.

**DJ:** Nothing funny that I can remember right now (or that would be appropriate to share.) After 12 years at the [General Assembly], I can tell you that I still often went down stairwells that didn't go anywhere. I think the fact that we honored the architecture of that building a few years ago to be some sort of an inside joke.

**DW:** Any parting words?

**DJ:** Writing this on Martin Luther King Jr. Day, it seems appropriate to leave you with a quote from Dr. King:

"Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly."

You can follow Jackson on Twitter at @JacksonforNC

## COMMENTARY

## G.A. should not shy away from expanding gun rights



**RAY NOTHSTINE**  
OPINION EDITOR

If one isn't paying attention to Second Amendment issues, they might not know North Carolina has lost a lot of ground compared to other states over the past few decades. Our state doesn't make any of the worst lists, but many rankings no longer put us near the top 10. *Gun & Ammo* magazine ranked N.C. No. 26 out of 50 for best states for gun owners in 2019.

North Carolina has a pretty strong concealed carry law, yet, amazingly, the state still requires the Jim Crow-era pistol permit to buy a handgun. The only way to bypass that is by having a state-issued concealed-carry permit. Other Southern and many Midwestern states have already scrapped these laws, which are well-known for their racist legacy of trying to keep firearms away from black Americans. *Reason* magazine called it "the Klan's favorite law" in 2005.



**NORTH CAROLINA SLIPPING IN GUN RIGHTS.** A state Superior Court judge had to intervene when Wake County Sheriff Gerald Baker tried to use the coronavirus pandemic to suspend pistol permits temporarily.

Another problem with the permit process: The Wake County sheriff tried to use the coronavirus pandemic in 2020 to suspend pistol permits temporarily, essentially implementing a de-facto handgun purchase ban. A Superior Court judge had to intervene to restore the rule of law and equal protection under the U.S. Constitution. Furthermore, while the permit cost of \$5 is not an undue hindrance, what other inherent rights are you charged for by the government?

In recent years, Republicans haven't done much to expand gun rights in North Carolina, preferring

a more defensive strategy. This was true even during legislative supermajorities. Yet it may be time finally to rethink this tactic given that states less red than North Carolina have passed constitutional carry legislation over the past decade. Missouri and West Virginia even achieved bipartisan votes to override constitutional carry vetoes from Democrat governors.

Constitutional carry, sometimes called "permitless carry," would simply allow for concealed carry without a state-issued permit. States that have enacted this legislation have not seen an increase

in violent crime, proving there's no danger in expanding an inherent right enshrined in the Bill of Rights and state constitution.

Vermont has had constitutional carry since it has been a state. Two other New England states, Maine and New Hampshire, passed this legislation in 2015 and 2017. North Carolinians need to ask their lawmakers why they are less deserving of these rights than many Northeasterners? Are we less capable of self-government or less knowledgeable of firearm safety?

Another reason the General Assembly should go on the offensive is that it's unclear how aggressive the Biden White House will be in attacking the Second Amendment. Taken directly from his campaign website, Biden says he wants to restrict gun purchases to one per month and add a ban on the manufacture and sale of so-called assault weapons, a nebulous term often used for certain semi-automatic rifles.

Fortunately, since the *Heller* Supreme Court decision, federal judges have been more favorable to protecting the plain meaning of the text of the Second Amendment. However, states can place regulations on firearms, and federal overreach during a Biden-Harris administration is bound to rear its

ugly head again.

It's important that state legislators continue to expand something James Madison declared to be an "advantage" to Americans that "the Constitution preserves." In *The Federalist Papers*, in what is an essential point, Madison goes on to explain that European countries don't trust their citizens with arms because they are afraid of their subjects. Yet, over here, citizens should remember they are masters and not servants of the government.

An essential part of federalism is the state legislatures exerting their power against federal encroachment, especially if the issue has the backing of the Bill of Rights. North Carolinians should ask their legislators why the state is falling behind on this issue, especially compared to many neighboring states?

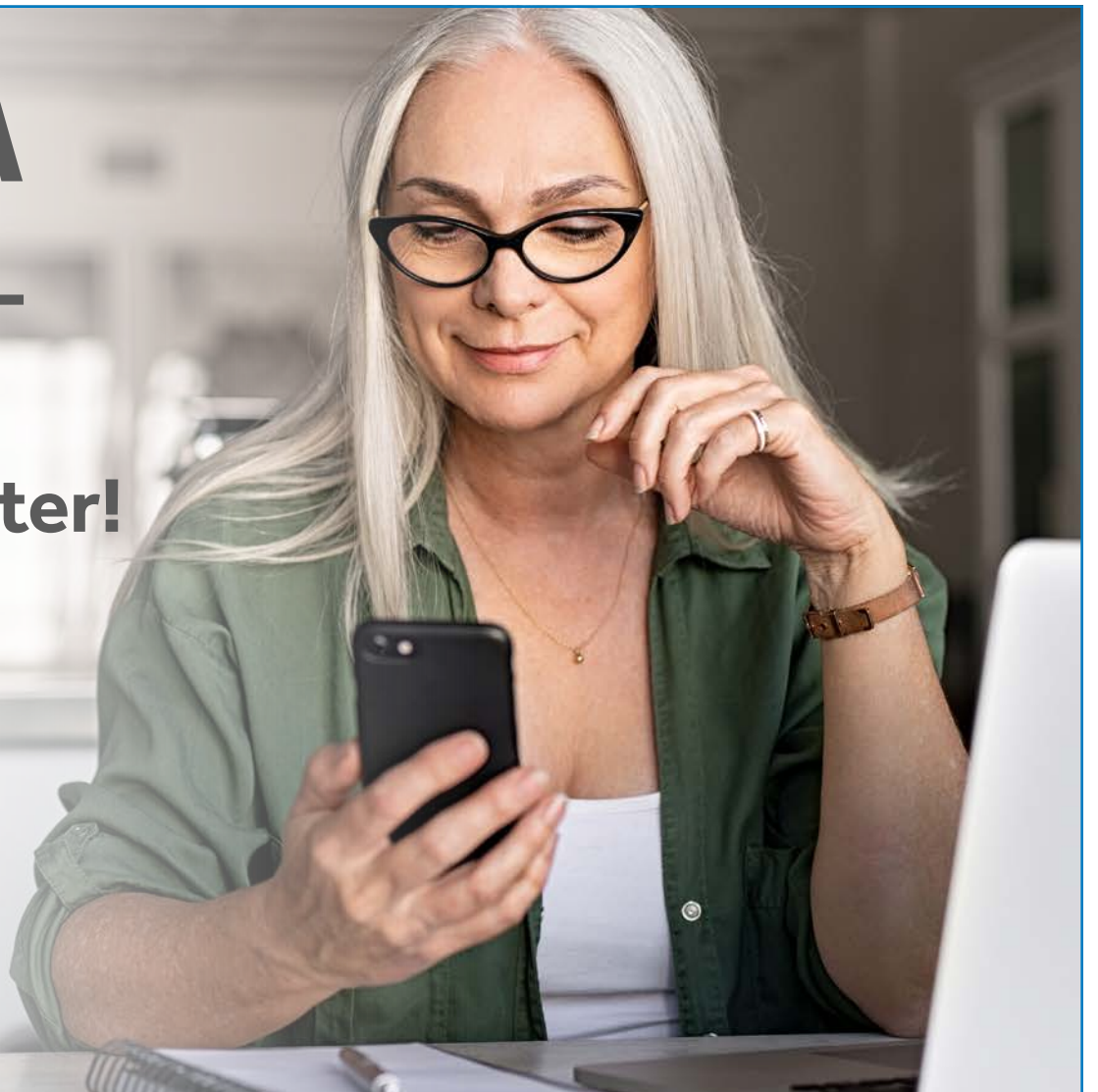
North Carolinians should know they are only one election from going the way of Virginia last year, where the legislature passed seven gun-control bills. Finally, most North Carolinians know the long-established truth on this issue: More firearm regulations are ineffectual for preventing crime or improving public safety. It's the criminals, not the law-abiding citizens, who eschew gun laws.



Sign up for the **FREE**  
CJ Daily online newsletter!

[www.carolinajournal.com](http://www.carolinajournal.com)

*Breaking news, top stories,  
and analysis delivered each  
morning to your inbox.*



# EDUCATION

## Radical changes coming to N.C. social studies standards



**DR. TERRY STOOPS**

CENTER FOR EFFECTIVE EDUCATION  
JOHN LOCKE FOUNDATION

In February, the N.C. State Board of Education is expected to approve new academic standards for all public school social studies courses. The new standards represent an extreme departure from those approved in the past, and parents may begin to notice changes in their children's social studies lessons as early as the next school year.

The current review of academic standards for the state's K-12 social studies courses began in April 2019. Many expected the process of drafting, vetting, and revising the standards to be completed in one year. In fact, the State Board of Education was poised to approve new standards in June 2020. But the process was derailed when State Board of Education principal adviser Matthew Bristow-Smith, teacher adviser Mariah Morris, and board member James Ford opposed approval due to concerns about "inconsistencies on race and equality perspectives."

Despite a proposal to add an



**DIVIDING US?** Protesters surround a monument in Raleigh in May 2020. Tribal antagonisms have led to violent confrontations in cities and towns across the nation, and there is no indication such conflicts will subside.

introductory statement affirming the state's commitment to diversity and equity, Bristow-Smith, Morris, and Ford called for sweeping changes. Ford echoed Bristow-Smith's complaint that the standards did not contain "specific words and concepts," particularly those related to the "rich and diverse history of marginalized groups and the representation of them." Ford contended that "specificity and inclusiveness will help produce more socially conscious and empathetic future citizens to have a more perfect union." A majority of the board relented, and its leadership instructed the N.C. Department of Public Instruction to incorporate suggestions from the three objectors.

DPI staff released revised standards the following December. In addition to being littered with spelling and grammatical mistakes, staff appeared simply to substitute references to "people" and "groups" with lists of those deemed marginalized or oppressed. Agency staff also recommended the inclusion of numerous new standards designed to focus on America's sins. It is hard to imagine a more cynical and divisive collection of social studies standards.

Proponents of the change offered no empirical or anecdotal evidence that students lack an appreciation of marginalized groups or that teachers sought to suppress minority perspectives. But there is plenty of evidence that students

lack a basic understanding of civics and U.S. history. There is a crisis in social studies in education in America, and these standards would do nothing to address it.

In April 2020, we were reminded of the appalling state of social studies education in the United States. That's when we learned that only 15% of eighth-grade students were proficient on the 2018 National Assessment of Educational Progress U.S. history test, a 3-percentage-point drop from four years ago. And only around one in four students scored at or above proficient on the NAEP civics and geography tests administered in 2018. While state-level results are not available, there's little reason to believe that N.C. students would outperform national averages.

We should recognize the potential for divisiveness and ignorance to undermine our nation's social and political foundations. In his 1991 book, *The Disuniting of America: Reflections on a Multicultural Society*, historian Arthur Schlesinger Jr. worried the classification of all Americans according to ethnic and racial categories would lead to the kind of corrosive social fragmentation and separatism that make preservation of nationhood impossible.

"Unless a common purpose binds them together, tribal antagonisms will drive them apart," Schlesinger wrote. "In this century darkly ahead, civilization faces a

critical question: What is it that holds a nation together?"

America's political, religious, and intellectual leaders formulated the "melting pot" ideal as a "brilliant solution for the inherent fragility, the inherent combustibility, of a multiethnic society," Schlesinger observed. But it's an ideal under assault in our public schools, the one place that taught generations of Americans about the things and ideas that bind them together and offer a perpetuating justification for the American experiment. Today, tribal antagonisms have led to violent confrontations in cities and towns across the nation, and there is no indication such conflicts will subside.

In the end, North Carolina's revised social studies standards focus on what divides us, not what unites us. It typifies the kind of identity politics that many North Carolinians and Americans reject. Perhaps it's time to adopt an aspirational vision for social studies education in our state. A 1952 bulletin published by DPI is a good place to start. "Social studies," the authors wrote, "is the area of our school program that children re-discover the past and seek to understand and appreciate their heritage; unravel the present and seek to understand their world of people; and finally, live and work with others in an effort to make this a better world."

“Higher education is in a crisis. Its two key missions— the search for truth and service to the public— are under attack from many directions.

Read our latest report:  
**Bolstering the Board:  
Trustees are Academia's Best Hope  
for Reform**

Download at  
**go.jamesgmartin.center/research**  
or call 919-828-1400 to request a hard copy.



THE JAMES G. MARTIN CENTER  
FOR ACADEMIC RENEWAL

COMMENTARY

DID YOU KNOW?

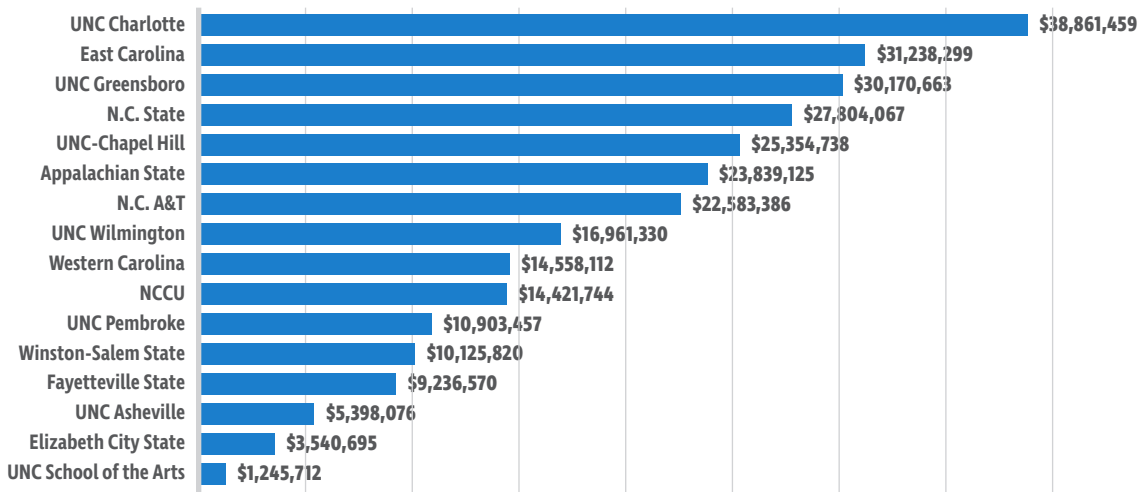
UNC schools will get millions in COVID-19 funding



JENNA A. ROBINSON  
COLUMNIST

Congress recently approved the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021, a \$2.4 trillion spending package that includes \$23 billion in aid for public and nonprofit colleges and universities. The relief package will provide about \$286 million in new Higher Education Emergency Relief Funding to University of North Carolina System schools. Of that amount, almost \$90 million is allocated directly for emergency student aid and about \$196 million will go to the institutions themselves. (These figures are estimates created by the Association of Public & Land-Grant Universities.) In an email to the UNC Board of Governors and campus administra-

Higher Education Emergency Relief Funding to UNC System schools



SOURCE: United States Department of Education


tors, UNC System President Peter Hans explained that the aid to universities can be used for various purposes, including: Defray[ing] expenses associated with coronavirus (including lost revenue, reimbursement for expenses already incurred, technology costs associated with a transition to distance education, faculty and staff trainings, and payroll); Carry[ing] out student support activities authorized by the Higher Education Act that address needs related to coronavirus; or Provid[ing] financial aid grants to students (including students

exclusively enrolled in distance education), which may be used for any component of the student's cost of attendance or for emergency costs that arise due to coronavirus, such as tuition, food, housing, health care (including mental health care), or child care. In making financial aid grants to

students, an institution of higher education shall prioritize grants to students with exceptional need, such as students who receive Pell Grants. New HEERF funding will be allocated to favor institutions that enroll a large number of low-income students. This is a change from the CARES Act, which allocated funding based on total enrollments. The Department of Education is expected to release more details on HEERF funding in the coming weeks. Universities have suffered significant losses over the past two semesters due to COVID-19. This aid, in addition to the \$179 million in CARES Act that UNC schools received in the spring, will help universities recover. It will also mean that there is less pressure on the N.C. legislature to increase its own appropriations to UNC in the coming year.

Jenna Robinson is president of the James G. Martin Center for Academic Renewal.

Money for nothing: The worst of student loan debt hits college dropouts



MEGAN ARNOLD  
COLUMNIST

I CAN'T REMEMBER a single alternative to college proposed to me, for me, my entire school-age life. That I would go to college after high school was presented by adults and taken by me as a given. How I would pay for it was always a thing to be figured out later. My mom had a modest state-based Tuition Assistance Program account for me. It was assumed I would be awarded some merit-based scholarships, and whatever remained could be paid for with student loans. I started college in 2008. My freshman year required all the TAP funds, a chunk of my mom's 401k, a Pell Grant, federal loans, and a private loan. Oh, and I guess I did get \$750 from the school for academic achievement. My story is an all-too-common one. The public policy of American higher education has left over 100,000 25-39 year-olds with some college, no degree, and, most likely, significant debt. Yet, in policy discussions, we rarely



hear from this group. The problem goes deeper than student loan forgiveness. I commuted to a school near home in Pennsylvania that year, so it took all that money just for in-state tuition and fees. The next year, that money my mom had taken from her retirement savings would put us over the income threshold for a Pell Grant, and I transferred to an even more expensive private university in Washington, D.C. A year at the private school, and then I transferred again, staying in the D.C. area but moving to a slightly more affordable public university. I wasted credits every time I transferred — usually general education requirements for one school that didn't fit the criteria of the next. Already annoyed with being required to take (and pay for) classes outside of my chosen areas of study, I opted to take classes only in my majors — anthropology and economics — in my first semester at the new school. This was the only semester I made the Dean's List. Eventually, I changed my economics major to a minor so I could finish a degree and get out of there as quickly as possible with something to show for it. That was 2012. It's 2020 now, and I've been sitting with 119/120 credits toward my degree and three classes remaining since 2016. I've been working in the retail/service industry for four years and

defaulting on my student loans as I struggle to get on my feet in Pennsylvania, living at home with my family. Sometimes I think back to my freshman year of high school when the vocational/technical school gave a presentation to encourage students to sign up for vo-tech. I felt inspired by it and talked to my parents about their culinary program that night. The response I received wasn't exactly "you're too good to learn a skilled trade; you're going to go to college," but that's what I took away from it. I have no interest in avoiding accountability for the decisions I made that got me to where I am: in debt, living at home, and without an undergraduate degree to show for it. But I must give myself some space to reflect (or deflect) that the amount of foresight and self-knowledge required here is a bit of an unreasonable ask of 18-year-olds. They have been told they're bright for their entire lives and they must go to college so they can succeed — which, it turns out, was also a lie. I don't blame them, but it didn't help that my parents didn't go to college and couldn't offer much advice for choosing colleges and financing options. Individuals carry responsibility for unwise decisions, but there's

a larger institutional problem in education that comes from telling young people the only path to success is through college. The political discussion around student debt forgiveness spends too much time questioning the morality and intelligence of student debtors, rather than questioning the federal student loan system. Higher education depends on young people borrowing tens of thousands of dollars for college. Yet tens of thousands of them have little hope of completing a degree or repaying their debt. Things need to change in the provision of higher education, to be sure, but that may need to begin with changes in our cultural attitudes toward having a college degree and, perhaps especially, toward not having one. I don't want student loan forgiveness, at least not without the federal government exiting the student loan industry altogether, forever and ever, amen. But more than anything in terms of policy, I'd like to see more alternatives to college available to people leaving high school, and I'd like to see companies and organizations spend more time getting to know job candidates beyond the presence or absence of a degree on a resume. Megan Arnold is a writer based in Pennsylvania.

# COMMENTARY

## General Assembly faces new challenges as 2021 session gets underway



### BECKI GRAY

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT  
JOHN LOCKE FOUNDATION

With a ceremonial swearing in and social distanced pomp and circumstance on Jan. 13, the 2021-22 biennial session of the N.C. General Assembly officially began. After a brief organizational break, they are back and ready to get to work as of Jan. 27.

The new House consists of 69 Republicans and 51 Democrats. The 2021 Senate consists of 28 Republicans and 22 Democrats.

Tim Moore was elected unanimously by his colleagues to serve as speaker of the House for a fourth term. The N.C. Senate was also unanimous in electing the longest-serving member of the Senate, Phil Berger, as president pro tempore for a sixth term. Mark Robinson, a Republican and the state's first African American lieutenant governor, serves as president of the Senate for the next four years.

Democrat Roy Cooper remains governor with veto power over all bills except constitutional amendments, redistricting plans, and local bills. In his previous four-year term, he vetoed 53 bills, more



**NEW GENERAL ASSEMBLY.** Mark Robinson, being sworn in here as the state's first African American lieutenant governor, will serve as the president of the North Carolina Senate for the next four years.

than all other governors combined. (The governor didn't receive veto power in North Carolina until 1996.) House Republicans need three Democrats to join with them to override any of Cooper's vetoes this session; Senate Republicans need two Democrats to support any veto overrides.

Barring any new emergencies, look for this session to consist of three phases:

1. Immediate COVID-19 response and recovery;
2. The state budget in later spring with a budget passed and sent to the governor before the end of the fiscal year; and
3. The decennial redistricting of

congressional and legislative districts.

The almost yearlong pandemic has affected everyone and everything from health care to education to the economy. Cooper's executive orders have devastated businesses. Record numbers of people are unemployed through no fault of their own. Children are suffering from the closings of in-person learning. Domestic violence, child abuse, substance abuse, and mental health issues are affecting families and individuals every day.

COVID-19 response and recovery will drive the new General Assembly for the next few months. In 2020, North Carolina

received over \$3.5 billion of the \$2 trillion federal funds to address the pandemic effects. These funds, under restrictions designated from Congress, were appropriated by the General Assembly to address small business loans, support for online education, broadband access, vaccination rollout, and school support.

Congress approved an additional appropriation for unemployment benefits and for food, rental, and child care assistance to the states. North Carolina will receive over \$1 billion. The General Assembly must ensure any emergency funds address pandemic needs and don't merely expand or create government programs.

The governor's wide-sweeping powers under N.C.'s Emergency Management Act need to be realigned with the reality of an emergency lasting nine months or longer. Enacted in 1977, the intent of the act was to authorize one person (the governor) to respond to an emergency for "prevention of, preparation for, response to, and recovery from natural or man-made emergencies or hostile military or paramilitary action." The goal was to keep residents safe and commerce intact and to ensure a quick recovery. It was never intended for one person to have power to close businesses, shut down schools, and bring an economy to a screeching halt for months on end. The law should be amended to require time frames for the governor to secure con-

currence with the elected Council of State and approval from the legislature. It's a question of good government, no matter who the governor happens to be.

During the pandemic, through numerous executive orders, some regulations have been waived that should be made permanent. In Cooper's Executive Order 130, removing certificate-of-need requirements to free up hospital beds, dialysis stations, and ambulatory surgical centers and MRIs as needed was right then and a good idea post-pandemic. Health care transparency and deregulation are important to going forward, just as there is no reason to restrict ever-greater school choice options post pandemic.

Because of lawmakers' fiscally responsible decisions to lower taxes and restrain spending over the past decade, North Carolina's revenue picture looks better than many other states. But when federal subsidies go away and the real impact of the pandemic hits, fiscal restraint will be more critical than ever before.

The COVID-19 pandemic that defined 2020 isn't over. Look for the 2021 General Assembly to address North Carolina's needs aggressively as they start their work. The state budget and redistricting of legislative and congressional districts will follow later once the pandemic is under control and the state's economy is back on track. Smart decisions now will pay off later.



# BIG GOVERNMENT BIG PRICE TAG



## THE THREAT IS REAL

- ⚠️ **\$7 billion sucked out of our economy over 4 years**
- ⚠️ **5,500 fewer jobs available each year**
- ⚠️ **Families will keep less of what they earn**
- ⚠️ **Harder to attract new businesses**
- ⚠️ **Sound budgeting threatened**



Learn more at: [johnlocke.org/research](https://johnlocke.org/research)

# COMMENTARY

## History argues against frequent 4-3 state Supreme Court splits



**MITCH KOKAI**  
SENIOR POLITICAL ANALYST  
JOHN LOCKE FOUNDATION

You might expect that the 2020 N.C. Supreme Court elections will guarantee plenty of 4-3 rulings in the year ahead. The high court's four Democrats could line up against its three Republicans, including the two newest members.

But a look back at recent court history suggests that it's wise to look beyond party labels. Party-line splits proved rare the last time Democrats held a 4-3 advantage.

Before delving into the past, let's set the stage for the newly reconfigured court that began hearing cases in January.

Entering the 2020 election, Democrats outnumbered Republicans, 6-1, on the state Supreme Court. Three seats were up for grabs in November, including the chief justice's post. For the first time in almost two decades, Democratic and Republican candidates competed in one-on-one matchups with party labels linked to their names.

Republicans swept all three seats, though Justice Paul Newby needed a month after Election Day to confirm his victory over outgoing Chief Justice Cheri Beasley. With new Republican Justices Tamara Barringer and Phil Berger Jr. joining the court, Democrats' majority drops to 4-3.

The new partisan split mirrors the arrangement justices faced as recently as 2018. Democratic



**SPLIT DECISIONS?** When Paul Newby was the only Republican on the court, Justices Samuel Ervin IV (left) and Michael Morgan (right) joined in many of his dissents. Either one could prove willing to join him in a future split decision.

Justice Michael Morgan had joined the court in 2017 after unseating Republican incumbent Robert Edmunds in the 2016 election. Morgan's win flipped control of the court from Republicans to Democrats.

Some observers expected that the change in partisan advantage in 2017 might lead to significant shifts in court rulings. Democrats would outvote their Republican colleagues regularly, 4-3. But that prediction never panned out.

Over the course of two years of a 4-3 Democratic majority, the state Supreme Court issued opinions in 155 cases. In 125 cases (81%), justices ruled unanimously. Of the remaining 30 cases, eight produced a solo dissent. In nine cases, two justices broke ranks.

That leaves 13 cases that produced 4-3 splits. That's just 8% of total cases. Even more significant for those looking for signs of partisanship: Only three of those 13 splits pitted the court's four Democrats against its three Republicans.

One of those partisan splits deserves special attention. On Jan. 26, 2018, the high court handed down its ruling in *Cooper v. Berger*. That case featured a political clash between the state's Democratic governor and its Republican legislative leaders. The specific issue focused on lawmakers' planned restructuring of the state elections board.

Democrats on the bench sided with the Democratic governor. They threw out a new bipartisan elections board. The board had

promised equal membership for both major parties, rather than giving the governor a 3-2 Democratic advantage. Critics viewed the ruling as a clear sign of partisan judicial activism.

But that case proved to be a rare exception.

In seven of the 4-3 splits registered in 2017 and 2018, the three Republican justices joined a Democrat to create a majority. Justice Samuel Ervin IV gave Republican colleagues a fourth vote five times. Morgan, the court's newest member at the time, joined the Republican justices twice.

It's also worth noting that Newby wrote four of the majority opinions in 4-3 split rulings in 2017 and 2018. His reasoning convinced Ervin to cross party lines twice and

Morgan on two other occasions.

Conditions changed after 2018. Democrats flipped an additional seat in that year's election, then picked up a sixth seat in 2019 when a Republican resignation opened up a spot for a Roy Cooper appointee.

As the Supreme Court's only remaining Republican, Newby proved to be his colleagues' most frequent critic. He dissented 54 times over the next two years. (No one else cast more than 25 dissenting votes.) But Newby did not always speak as a lone wolf. Ervin voted alongside Newby in dissent 11 times. Morgan and Newby dissented in 13 of the same cases.

Some of those cases proved politically consequential. Morgan and Newby bucked the majority in a pair of high-profile cases involving questionable leniency for sexual predators. Ervin and Newby differed on the legal reasoning — but reached the same result — in objecting to a court decision that freed a convicted murderer from death row.

Both Ervin and Morgan remain on the Supreme Court today. Recent history suggests that either one could prove willing to join Republicans in a split decision, even if that means voting against fellow Democrats. Strong legal reasoning could prove persuasive in winning Ervin's or Morgan's support.

Now, with two more conservative jurists on the bench and two Democratic colleagues who have been open to supporting his legal arguments in the past, Newby should be able to shift gears. He will no longer need to play dissenter-in-chief.

It's even possible that he'll be part of more winning coalitions than the court's 4-3 Democratic majority suggests.

NORTH CAROLINA

# BUDGET IN PICTURES

ONLINE NOW AT [JOHNLOCKE.ORG](http://JOHNLOCKE.ORG)

A visual exploration of the current N.C. budget: How does state government get its money? How does it use that money? How has that changed over time? And how might that change in the future?

John Locke  
FOUNDATION

# COMMENTARY

## N.C. lawmakers should continue to reject Medicaid expansion



**DONALD BRYSON**  
PRESIDENT  
JOHN LOCKE FOUNDATION

The two U.S. Senate elections in Georgia are over, and now the overall national election results are known. Democrats have declared their newfound control of both chambers of Congress. But equally significant events took place at the state level, where bold, free-market-friendly leadership was vindicated and advanced once again in North Carolina.

North Carolina has been a leader in enacting free-market reforms at the state level that are improving people's lives. The past decade's tax reforms have reduced the burden of government and simplified the filing process for millions of Tar Heel families. The expansion of school choice has created opportunities for thousands of students in our state, which has become particularly important in the wake of COVID-19. And the rejection of Obamacare's Medicaid expansion



**FUNDING GAP.** Up to \$171.3 million in the first year of Medicaid expansion would have to be made up through new appropriations or taxation.

has helped protect North Carolina from a critical aspect of the federal government's health care takeover.

Unfortunately, special-interest groups will clamor to pressure the Republican leadership at the General Assembly to expand Medicaid under Obamacare.

Fortunately, the Supreme Court of the United States ruled the Biden-Pelosi-Schumer government in Washington cannot force states to expand Medicaid. The General Assembly has already exercised our state's rights, rejecting Medicaid expansion and the additional Obamacare empty promises that

would come with it, by passing Senate Bill 4 — No NC. Exchange/No Medicaid Expansion — in early 2013. This bill prevented Gov. Roy Cooper from unilaterally expanding Medicaid in his first week in office in 2017.

The General Assembly should continue to ignore calls for Medicaid expansion.

The Obama administration promised states that Washington would pick up 100% of the expansion costs for the first three years, and then 90% after that — but how reliable is this guarantee from a federal government that is \$27

trillion in debt, much of which is due to Medicaid? Moreover, unforeseen costs have been a constant problem for Medicaid.

For example, Medicaid expansion in Louisiana was expected to cost about \$1.4 billion per year. Instead, it has cost taxpayers an estimated \$3.1 billion per year — more than twice the Legislative Fiscal Office's original estimates, according to the Pelican Institute.

A 2020 study from the John Locke Foundation found that Medicaid expansion in North Carolina would create a significant gap in the state budget. This funding gap of \$119.3 million to \$171.3 million in the first year alone would have to be made up through new state appropriations, increased taxes on managed care plans, or higher taxes on providers.

Additionally, renewed calls for Medicaid expansion also come when the state's Medicaid program continues to transform into a new managed care model, which expansion would confuse and disrupt.

And what would we be paying for? Nothing that should comfort taxpayers.

Potentially crowding out funding for public safety and schools for the return on investment we would receive from Medicaid expansion

would be ludicrous.

Medicaid expansion would inexplicably hurt the most vulnerable North Carolinians. Medicaid is a program meant for the most disadvantaged residents. However, because of Medicaid's low doctor reimbursement rates, patients already have a tough time getting a doctor's appointment, contributing to the program's shockingly poor health outcomes. The expansion would add thousands and thousands of able-bodied, childless, working-age adults to Medicaid, which would further exacerbate the problem of access to quality care for the neediest North Carolinians.

As former Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker — who rejected Medicaid eligibility expansion — told the *Wall Street Journal*, "Caring for the poor isn't the same thing as taking money from the federal government to lock more people into Medicaid."

Obamacare expansion via Medicaid is a shell game that's a bad deal for taxpayers and a bad deal for North Carolina's economically disadvantaged families. When special-interest groups come knocking after the legislative session starts, the General Assembly should keep the door shut.

## Courageous First Amendment

continued from PAGE 2

stag Fire in 1933. Support for President Trump in any way is darn near an act of sedition. Support of the First Amendment is a crime against public welfare.

CNN wants to ban Fox News. ABC News Political Director Rick Klein suggests a national ideological "cleansing" of Trump supporters. MSNBC's Joy Reid is pushing "de-Ba'athication." (I had to look it up.) Democrat lawmakers demand resignations from some Republicans. Google, Apple, and Amazon collude to bring down Parler. Twitter censors the *New York Post* over stories critical of then-candidate Joe Biden. It permanently bans Trump along with tens of thousands of his supporters with encouragement from former first lady Michelle Obama, who wants the president banned from all platforms.

Verbal bomb thrower and Democrat Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez said Congress has "to figure out how to rein in the media environment so that you



**CNN wants to ban Fox News. ABC News Political Director Rick Klein suggests a national ideological 'cleansing' of Trump supporters. MSNBC's Joy Reid is pushing 'de-Ba'athication.'**

can't just spew disinformation and misinformation."

Closer to home, Gov. Roy Cooper got a little bellicose with his language at a recent news conference. "More people could be alive today but for dangerous falsehoods that have been spread about the critical importance of masks, social distancing." Translation: Anyone who disagrees with Cooper — who has ruled under a state of emergency for 10 months and kept residents locked down and in a perpetual state of fear — and dares to share those opposing opinions is guilty of killing people.

If you believe that to be true, it's not a huge leap to suggest people who perpetuate what Cooper calls "lies" and "misinformation" should be put in jail. *Carolina Journal* contacted the governor's office seeking clarification, but as of

this writing, we haven't received a response.

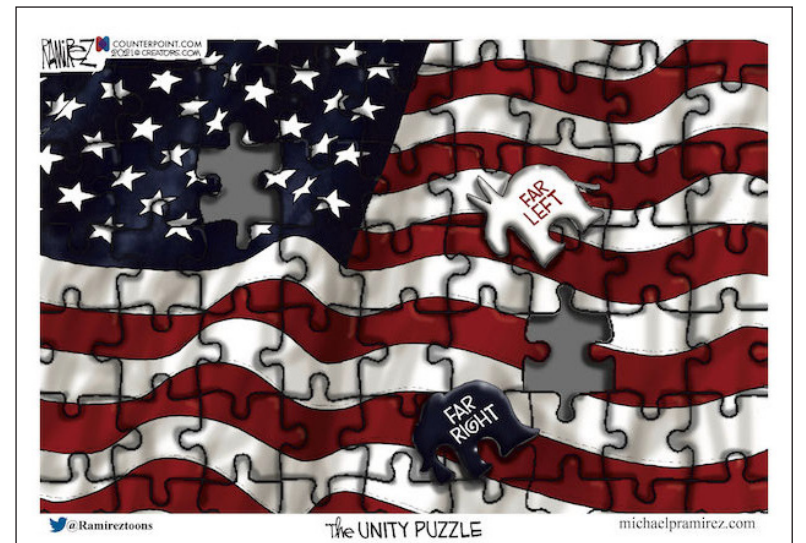
Former ACLU executive director Ira Glasser, who led the organization in 1977 when it defended a group of neo-Nazis' right to march in Skokie, Illinois, is concerned about the future of the First Amendment.

In a recent interview with Nick Gillespie of *Reason* magazine, Glasser recalls telling a group of college students that, based on his experience at the ACLU, if they care about social justice issues, then free speech is their ally. That was news to them. What astonished him is that "these were very educated, bright young people, and they didn't seem to know this history."

Based on my experience teaching college students, not knowing history is not a surprise to me.

Freedom is messy, but it takes courage. Glasser warns, "For people who today claim to be passionate about social justice, to establish free speech as an enemy is suicidal."

The speech we hate the most is the speech that should be most protected. If the First Amendment doesn't apply to everybody, then it doesn't apply to anybody. That's why the ACLU defended neo-Nazis' right to free speech. That's courage. That's freedom. That's the First Amendment. And that's why I love it.



## COMMENTARY BY JOHN HOOD



## Lower taxes attract key leaders

continued from PAGE 2

omy, or that of particular regional and local economies within our state, depends to a large extent on whether key economic leaders want to live, work, invest, or create businesses here or do so somewhere else.

Democrats and progressives fully accept this premise. Some even accept the premise that tax policy is a useful tool for attracting and keeping those economic leaders, which is why they award targeted tax incentives to politically favored firms (such as manufacturers) or industries (such as renewable energy).

What they reject is the premise that reducing taxes for all executives, entrepreneurs, investors, and high-value professionals will have broad economic benefits. They argue that lower taxes won't attract more of these individuals and that virtually none of the tax savings will "trickle down" as more jobs or higher incomes.

As an empirical matter, they are mistaken. Most peer-reviewed studies of state and local economies show that lower taxes, particularly on corporate and personal income, are associated with stronger economic growth.

Some of the best studies zero in on particular classes of economic leaders. A 2017 study by Enrico Moretti of the University of California at Berkeley and Daniel Wilson of the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco looked at location decisions by "star scientists" — those who rank in the top 5% nationally in the number of patented inventions.

They found that such scientists were disproportionately to be found in states with lower taxes on personal and corporate income. Other amenities also matter, of course, but "there are enough firms and workers on the margin that relative taxes matter," Moretti and Wilson concluded.

I'd venture to say that few Democrats or progressives would question the social value of attracting top-performing scientists. These individuals help create innovation economies with lots of localized spillover effects — new companies, more jobs, higher incomes that are spent on other goods and services. The effect is hardly a trickle. It's a river.

## Competing schools serve families well

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, our schools have gone in a variety of directions. Some public school districts that shut down last spring have never reopened for in-person learning to any significant degree. Others have welcomed at least their younger students back to school, as have most charter and private schools.

I think the latter group got it right. Online learning has its place. But as delivered over the past year to large masses of students, without sufficient preparation or support by teachers untrained in its best practices, virtual instruction has been largely a bust.

Moreover, the best available evidence suggests that the risk of COVID spread in schools is minimal, particularly when schools follow basic protection protocols. Children just don't seem to contract or transmit the virus to the same degree that adults do. As a recent study of N.C. schools by Duke and UNC Chapel Hill researchers concluded, "within-school infections were extremely rare."

However, rather than relitigate this issue, I'd like to focus on a different aspect of our education system's reaction to the pandem-



**PARENTAL CHOICE.** When schools must compete to attract and retain students, their offerings generally get better, as do their outcomes.

ic. Because North Carolina had a rich and expanding array of school choices going into the crisis, North Carolina families have been better served than those of many other states.

If parents of school-aged children deemed it unacceptable to take even the miniscule risk that their children might catch or carry home the virus, they were free to continue virtual learning. On the other hand, a fair number of parents with different risk calculations had other options to pursue. Many charter and private schools have been flooded with requests. Homeschooling vendors

and support groups have, too.

While North Carolinians were fortunate to have more school choice than the national average, far too many parents were left holding the bag. Even as we move into the spring semester, many are still holding it. And it's still empty.

The General Assembly and other state policymakers should see this challenging experience as a learning opportunity. The more options, the better.

Does advocating more parental choice mean I disdain district-run public schools? Hardly. I appreciate the many fine educators who

work in them, as my parents did for most of their respective careers. Millions of North Carolinians cherish their local schools. They want to see them improved, not destroyed.

Parental-choice initiatives advance that goal, too. When schools must compete to attract and retain students, their offerings generally get better, as do their outcomes. Empirical research isn't unanimous in support of this effect — that's not how academic research works — but well-constructed studies have linked higher school competition to higher student performance for decades.

In a recent paper published in the journal *Applied Economics*, three professors delved deeply into the case of Mississippi. They found that in communities with higher concentrations of private schools with religious affiliations, in particular, public schools tend to respond in ways that boost learning. The authors concluded that "policymakers should consider competition-based school reform policies to increase public-school outcomes."

I think the COVID experience will end up changing our education system for good, in both senses of the term.

### NORTH CAROLINA GOVERNMENT

## Process and prudence always matter

**IN THE SPIRIT** of the exception proving the rule, most lovers of liberty accept that government has a critical role to play in combating communicable disease.

In a free society, voluntary exchange based on private property and the rule of law is the default. But easily transmittable germs complicate the process of informed consent.

As they spread, they subject third parties to potential sickness and death.

As COVID-19 struck the world in early 2020, then, most conservatives and libertarians agreed that government possessed both the legitimate power and the responsibility to respond.

What we insisted on, however, were two constraints: process and prudence.

We argued, for example, that the General Assembly had never intended to give unlimited power to any governor to do whatever he thought best, for an unlimited amount of time.

While our critics claimed otherwise, we weren't simply dress-



**The costs of COVID restrictions aren't limited to lost wages, jobs, or social connections. They include medical costs.**

ing up ideological or partisan interests in procedural clothes. My friend Jeannette Doran of the N.C. Institute for Constitutional Law made this point when she criticized Roy Cooper's recent executive order allowing the sale of mixed drinks-to-go.

Doran thinks North Carolinians should be able to buy a mixed drink at a bar or store and consume it when they get home, as Cooper's order allows. So do I.

But under current state law, mixed drinks must be consumed

at the establishment where they are sold. "If the governor gets to ignore the ABC law, which law is up next?" Doran asked.

Just as process still matters during a pandemic, so does prudence. Even if a government mandate is legally imposed and has the potential to reduce COVID's spread somewhat, it may nevertheless be unwise.

It is entirely legitimate during a health crisis to weigh the costs and benefits of every regulation.

The costs of COVID restrictions aren't limited to lost wages, jobs, or social connections. They include medical costs. Two new papers just posted by the National Bureau of Economic Research explore those costs in some detail.

In the first, the University of Chicago's Casey Mulligan looked at the issue of "excess deaths." Because medical diagnoses are not always fully or accurately reported, one way to estimate the effect of something like a pandemic is to look at mortality rates from past years and then

compare them to deaths during the period in question.

When Mulligan did that for 2020 data through early October, he found more excess deaths than there were officially reported deaths from COVID.

About 17,000 of them, Mulligan estimated, were actually deaths from COVID complications that hadn't been reported. Another 30,000 deaths, though, represented events such as suicides and heart attacks that were probably made more numerous by COVID-era regulations and economic hardships.

Another NBER paper — by researchers from Duke, Harvard, and Johns Hopkins universities — forecasts the excess mortality the COVID-era spike in unemployment will cause in the future. They call their forecast "staggering": 890,000 additional deaths over the next 15 years.

Yes, our leaders should be taking the pandemic seriously. That includes serious consideration of long-term effects on life, liberty, and the rule of law.

# COMMENTARY

## Backlash ensures distillers' good deed goes unpunished



**JOHN TRUMP**  
MANAGING EDITOR

Assigning infallibility to government action is a fool's errand.

It's a common refrain in libertarian and conservative circles, and its truth is grounded in history, as well as the government's continuing and ubiquitous intrusion and overreach.

I won't take credit for the aforementioned paraphrased statement because Scott Maitland said it recently as we talked about a letter to America's distillers demanding \$14,000. Maitland owns Top of the Hill Restaurant and Brewery in Chapel Hill, which is temporarily closed because of the pandemic.

Chapel Hill these days, he says, is a ghost town.

Maitland is also a distiller.

And Maitland, like many distillers losing revenue streams because of closed tasting rooms, pivoted because of COVID-19. They were still cooking, mashing, and, well, distilling. To a point. Tasting rooms closed, as did distillers' shiny new cocktail bars, a result of Senate Bill 290, which the governor had signed into law the previous July.

Curbside sales only go so far, and direct online sales aren't allowed under N.C. ABC statutes. The focus switched to hand sanitizer, which, in addition to ethanol — high-proof alcohol — includes things such as glycerin and hydrogen peroxide. Distillers can use the denatured alcohol — which can't be consumed — for tax-free hand-sanitizing products, as long



**LOST REVENUE.** Many distillers are losing revenue streams because of closed tasting rooms due to COVID-19.

as it follows federal tax, and food and drug rules.

Hand sanitizer, as you'll remember, was in short supply. The distillers stepped in to fill a need, mostly donating their products or selling them around cost.

Simple enough? Nope

"Just as it seemed they'd made it through the worst of a terrible year," *Reason* magazine wrote Dec. 30, "the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) had one more surprise in store: The agency delivered notice to distilleries that had produced hand sanitizer in the early days of the pandemic that they now owe an unexpected fee to the government of more than \$14,000."

Under a provision of the CARES Act that reformed regulation of nonprescription drugs, reported *Reason*, "distilleries producing sanitizer have been classified as 'over-the-counter drug monograph

facilities.'

"The CARES Act also enacted user fees on these facilities to fund the FDA's regulatory activities. For small distillers, that means ending the year with a surprise bill for \$14,060 due on Feb 11."

"I was in literal disbelief when I read it yesterday," Aaron Bergh, president and distiller at Calwise Spirits in Paso Robles, California, told the libertarian-leaning magazine. "I had to confirm with my attorney this morning that it's true."

Distillers, including many in North Carolina, popped off on social media accounts.

"Absolutely ludicrous," said one N.C. distiller.

"Well This Sucks!!!" wrote another.

Maitland saw making the sanitizer as a sort of modern-day Victory Garden, a project that will help us all reach the other side of

the pandemic.

"I wasn't in the hand-sanitizing business," he told *Carolina Journal*. "I was in the, 'Let's save our collective ass's business.'"

Maitland said about half of the hand sanitizer produced at TOPO Distillery was given away.

"We're just trying to stop a pandemic," Maitland said.

Reporting from *Reason*, as well as loud backlash throughout the industry, led the Department of Health and Human Services to reverse its misguided policy.

"Small businesses who stepped up to fight COVID-19 should be applauded by their government, not taxed for doing so," Brian Harrison, HHS chief of staff, said in a news release.

"I'm pleased to announce we have directed FDA to cease enforcement of these arbitrary, surprise user fees. Happy New Year, distilleries, and cheers to you for

helping keep us safe!"

Yes, Happy New Year, and stay out of our business.

It's hard not to think politicians and American bureaucracies continue to have a problem with alcohol, some 100 years after Prohibition. Gov. Roy Cooper recently signed an executive order allowing restaurants, bars, clubs, and hotels to sell sealed to-go containers of mixed alcoholic drinks, months after lawmakers killed a similar provision in a COVID-19 relief bill.

Too little, too late.

Further, the option for to-go drinks is already there, says Maitland. What's to stop someone from buying a pint of whiskey from a state ABC store — which also sells bottled mixed drinks — and chugging it in their car? Or a six-pack from a grocery store, or wine, if that's their preference?

As if somehow government policy will change how people act, Maitland said.

"I don't understand it."

Welcome to the club, but there's a long line at the door. About 100 Triangle restaurants, bars, and similar service businesses have closed since spring, according to one list.

Add one more. Sadly, Zack Medford, a prominent and vocal Raleigh bar owner, has said he has closed Cogley's on Fayetteville Street, which, he wrote on Facebook, fell "victim to insufficient government aid, negligent leadership from elected officials, and inequitable state policies."

"Out of money, and out of hope, the bar was forced to lay off over 25 employees and turn the lights off one final time."

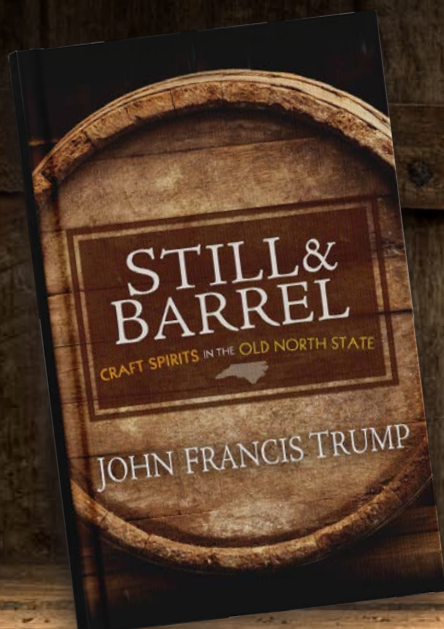
Bars in North Carolina, for all intents and purposes, closed in mid-March. Many for good.

Politically motivated and empty gestures won't save them.

Cheers to 2021.



**John Trump**  
Managing Editor,  
Carolina Journal



### Still & Barrel: Craft Spirits in the Old North State

"John Trump, a skilled journalist and storyteller, chronicles the North Carolina comeback of intoxicating spirit manufacture in a book that profiles pivotal characters, charts historical currents, and makes clear that the next step after farm-to-table dining is crop-to-fifth drinking."

- John T. Edge,  
Author of The Potlikker Papers

**ORDER TODAY!**

[www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)

[www.blairpub.com](http://www.blairpub.com)

## COMMENTARY

## Democrats setting themselves up as country's ruling party



**ANDY TAYLOR**  
COLUMNIST

The recent elections did more than just hand Democrats the trifecta of federal government — control of the presidency, Senate, and House. They revealed important political advantages the party now enjoys in money, human capital, and access to mass communication — the resources necessary to persuade Americans to support their policies and vote for their candidates.

The year 2020 marked a watershed for campaign finance. Donald Trump raised only about two-thirds the amount of his Democratic opponent, Joe Biden. Even accounting for the Republican National Committee's stellar performance, the GOP permitted an occupant of the White House, with all the natural advantages that come with incumbency, to be outraided.

The Senate party committees each generated just shy of \$300 million, but the Democratic House campaign committee brought in about \$60 million more than its Republican counterpart. Super PACs, those outside groups prohibited from donating directly to candidates but that can spend unlimited amounts on politics, were



College campuses buzz as a hive of Democratic Party activism.

overwhelmingly Republican in the years immediately following the Supreme Court's decision in *Citizens United* to unleash them. This has changed dramatically, and in 2020 entities that gave to support Republicans or oppose Democrats spent only about 20% more than adversaries. Left-of-center groups are catching up quickly.

With regards to activists and volunteers, government workers are as Democratic as they have ever been. There is no "deep state" conspiracy, but the 15% of the civilian labor force that works in all levels of government are a central element of the Democratic coalition, particularly in many cities where service and government employees' unions are strengthening. Nongovernmental recipients of the \$600 billion in federal procurement, notably those

in scientific research, are also deeply dependent on government favor. Many of these professionals and researchers have emerged as important Democratic leaders. Doctors, data analysts, engineers, lawyers, and academics provide much of the party's current organizational prowess and funding. Increased spending for cybersecurity, environmental programs, and public health initiatives at universities, research institutes, and government agencies will only enhance their political muscle.

College campuses buzz as a hive of Democratic Party activism and electioneering. Critics often exaggerate the extent to which professors indoctrinate students. But, given what we know about how voters are influenced, the university experience clearly generates a great deal of support

for Democrats and their policies. Colleges' 501(c)(3) status prevents explicit campaigning, but courses, curricula, student projects, and internships, particularly in the liberal arts, encourage political activism and voting with the implication it should be for left-of-center causes. The emergence of numerous new and ostensibly nonpartisan nonprofits designed to get young people to vote are a particular boon to the Democrats.

The construction of a media ecosystem has been a central element of GOP electoral successes over the past few decades. Talk radio formed the foundation in the 1990s. Fox News and the intelligent use of the internet and social media built on this so that there was a delineated and acceptable alternative to the liberal establishment media. The project is gravely threatened. The Trump presidency, initially helpful, proved problematic. Disrupters like One America News Network have emerged, producing content that strained credibility and turned off a sizable chunk of the audience. Fox News and others felt a need to compete, worsening the situation — the cable network has now lost its solid No. 1 rating, trails CNN, and is now only a nose ahead of MSNBC. In response, and often with the disingenuous but nonetheless persuasive claim that they only told the truth during the Trump years, "mainstream" outlets like CNN and the *New York Times* have gained ground and moved even closer to Democratic candi-

dates and policies. Social media giants Twitter and Facebook now frequently restrict speech and speakers core Democratic constituencies construe as offensive. The media landscape is as inhospitable to Republicans as it has been for years.

The resources businesses direct to the public arena have traditionally benefited the Republican cause. But not only are their direct contributions to campaigns more evenly divided between the parties, they increasingly see a broader mission beyond generating value for customers, shareholders, and employees. Big businesses are making investments in matters that are helpful to the Democrats by reinforcing a narrative that, for example, American public life is too unconcerned with the rights of its minority citizens and the deterioration of the environment. In an era when a small social media mob can organize a paralyzing national boycott, companies constantly receive reminders of their obligation to matters of "social justice."

In 2005, I wrote a book called *Elephant's Edge: The Republicans as a Ruling Party*. The areas of American life I describe above then contributed to a small but perceptible GOP advantage in electoral politics. A decade and a half on, it's the Democrats who seem to have acquired the whip hand.

*Andy Taylor is a professor of political science at the School of International and Public Affairs at N.C. State University.*

## The future for retailing: drones, AI, virtualization



**MICHAEL WALDEN**  
COLUMNIST

**ONE OF MY MOST** enduring memories as a small child was the weekly shopping trip with my mother. This was in the early 1950s, and my parents lived in a small home in a rural area of Ohio west of Cincinnati, just down the road from my grandparents' farm. The nearest town with any reasonable amount of shopping was five miles away. Today that's not very far, but my mom didn't have a car. My father used the only vehicle we had for his daily trips to work.

So, on Thursdays — which was shopping day — my mom would put me in a little red wagon and pull it the half mile to Carsh's

grocery store. Carsh's was a typical "mom and pop" store so prevalent in those days. Not only did Carsh's sell food products like meat, eggs, bread, and cereal, but if you needed some fabric, nails, or stationery, Carsh's had those, too. On the way back home, the groceries took my place in the wagon.

Buying groceries has undergone many changes during the past seven decades, and stores like Carsh's, which was family-owned and run, are harder to find. They've been replaced by supermarket chains or rolled into "big box" stores that sell everything.

Yet there's no doubt the most revolutionary recent change in retailing has been cyber-buying. Cyber-buying was almost nonexistent a decade ago, accounting for only 4.5% of retail sales. The latest data for 2020 show it now accounts for 16.5% of retail sales in 2020. That's an amazing almost fourfold increase within a decade.

If this pace continues, cyber-buying will account for 60% of sales by 2031.

As cyber-buying grows, it will also change. Shoppers will still be able to visit a website, compare products and services, then click and buy as they do today. But there will be three big enhancements to cyber-buying that will be applauded by some, however skeptically received by others.

The first is drone delivery. Cyber-buying often comes with delivery. Most such delivery today is done using vehicles on the roads. Drones are small, lightweight machines capable of flying short distances. They avoid congested roads and are perfect for delivering packages. At the end of 2020 the Federal Aviation Administration finalized new rules regulating the flights of drones. Experts think these rules will allow drone delivery to expand quickly and add a new dimension to the advantages

of cyber-buying.

The second enhancement will be use of AI, short for artificial intelligence, by cyber-buying companies. One of the aspects of the technology revolution is the ability of companies to collect all kinds of data from people buying their products and services. The companies know what we buy, when we buy, and how often we buy.

The development of AI, which is just a fancy term for programs predicting behavior, will increasingly allow cyber companies to anticipate our shopping needs. For example, a cyber supermarket will know the kinds of cereal the Waldens buy, the size of box, and how many times a month we purchase cereal. Expanded to all the Waldens' grocery purchases, a cyber supermarket could fill our weekly shopping cart and have the products delivered to our door. The Waldens wouldn't have to take the

time and thought to fill out weekly grocery lists, nor would we need to drive to the store to purchase them. In the future, the delivery may even be met by the Waldens' robot, which accepts the groceries and puts them away!

The third new development for cyber shopping will be virtualization. Virtualization allows a person to stay where they are, but have all the sensory — sight, hearing, taste, touch, smell — experiences of being somewhere else. Think about how this could be used with vehicle shopping. I stay in my home but "test drive" vehicles virtually. The one I pick is then delivered to my home.

I'm not sure I'm ready for the new retailing world, but do I have a choice?

*Michael Walden is a William Neal Reynolds Distinguished Professor at N.C. State University. He does not speak for the university.*

# COMMENTARY

## The John Locke Foundation, and why I choose to defend liberty



### JORDAN ROBERTS

GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS ASSOCIATE  
JOHN LOCKE FOUNDATION

Readers of *Carolina Journal* are probably familiar with my columns about health care policy published in these pages dating back over a year. For the past 2 1/2 years I have worked in the research division at the John Locke Foundation, where I focused on health care policy in North Carolina and nationally. Late last year, I took a new role on our government affairs team. While health care policy will always be a passion, this new role will expand my portfolio of issues in which I can advocate for free-market solutions. I couldn't be more excited for this new endeavor.

In my past role — as health care policy analyst — I would research, write, and speak about health policy issues. In my new role, I will work with stakeholders in the public and private sectors to identify and implement policy solutions consistent with the

founding principles of the John Locke Foundation. The rights of the people come before government. A constitutional republic needs to remain limited in size and scope, with free markets that allow individuals to chart their own path without fear of state intervention. It includes promoting a free society, where public and private institutions work toward solving complex problems. These are the principles the John Locke Foundation promotes, and these are the principles I want to expand in our state.

I will wake up every day proud to promote public policies such as limited government and increased economic freedom, which enhance liberty. Why? Because I believe these principles lay the foundation for a prosperous society. These principles create the conditions for a cooperative and civically engaged society. While our country is still trying to live up fully to the principles set forth in our Constitution, I believe our system of representative republican government is the best way to protect God-given rights and provide for equal treatment under the law in such a heterogeneous country.

Our country is in a precarious position. Partisan and tribal factions have taken over the public



**JORDAN ROBERTS:** 'Our country has persisted for more than two centuries because of Americans who have held in high esteem our system of governance.'

discourse. Our public and private institutions have been stress-tested. We're having serious debates about the future direction of our country. But those who believe in the same principles as myself and my colleagues at the John Locke Foundation must never forget the fragility inherent in our system of government. Its preservation requires constant attention and care. A system of governance of the people, by the people, for the

people must be cherished and protected at every level — from the federal government to the state governments to local governments. Ambition must be made to counteract ambition. Our country has persisted for more than two centuries because of Americans who have held in high esteem our system of governance. That's why our mission at the John Locke Foundation of furthering this adherence is so important.

Another reason I'm excited for this new role is because of the work that needs to be done to get our state and country back to where it was before the pandemic. COVID-19 has devastated our country and the world. Countless lives, businesses, jobs, and dreams were lost due to the rapidly spreading virus and the resulting government restrictions. It's more imperative than ever that we focus on principles of economic freedom and individual liberty so those who have been harmed by this pandemic can get back on their feet and the economy can recover. The work can't begin soon enough.

Our entire team at the John Locke Foundation is geared up and ready to get to work for the people of North Carolina. While the future of the pandemic and what lies ahead in a post-COVID world are still to be determined, the work to ensure a free and prosperous North Carolina must continue. As we move into the new legislative session in which lawmakers will have to make tough budgetary and policy decisions, you can be sure that the John Locke Foundation will be there every step of the way to guide the state's decision makers toward freedom and away from coercion. I'm thrilled to be a part of that team.



Sign up for the **FREE**  
CJ Daily online newsletter!

[www.carolinajournal.com](http://www.carolinajournal.com)

*Breaking news, top stories  
and analysis delivered each  
morning to your inbox.*

