



**Congrats to our team**  
**Carolina Journal wins four N.C. Press Association awards**

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# CAROLINA JOURNAL

AN AWARD-WINNING JOURNAL OF NEWS, ANALYSIS, AND OPINION FROM THE JOHN LOCKE FOUNDATION CAROLINAJOURNAL.COM VOL. 28 • NO. 6 • JUNE 2019 • STATEWIDE EDITION

## IN THE LAB

### UNC laboratory schools are changing the formula for education in North Carolina

**KARI TRAVIS**  
 ASSOCIATE EDITOR

**LINDSAY MARCHELLO**  
 ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Poet Adrian Rice, in a thick Irish brogue, paints a scene in the imaginations of the third-graders who sit before him in Walkertown.

“A blackbird lands in lush, green blades / Flirting its tail up and out / Like a satin fan waved / In the high summer heat / With the cock of the head / From side to side / Its bill cuts a silent, yellow arc,” Rice quotes from an original poem.

A small group of 8- and 9-year-olds are spellbound, their notebooks open, pages scrawled across their desks. Several children shove their hands into the air to ask questions before clutching pencils to scratch

out new poems — verses that say a great deal about their lives, their struggles, and their school.

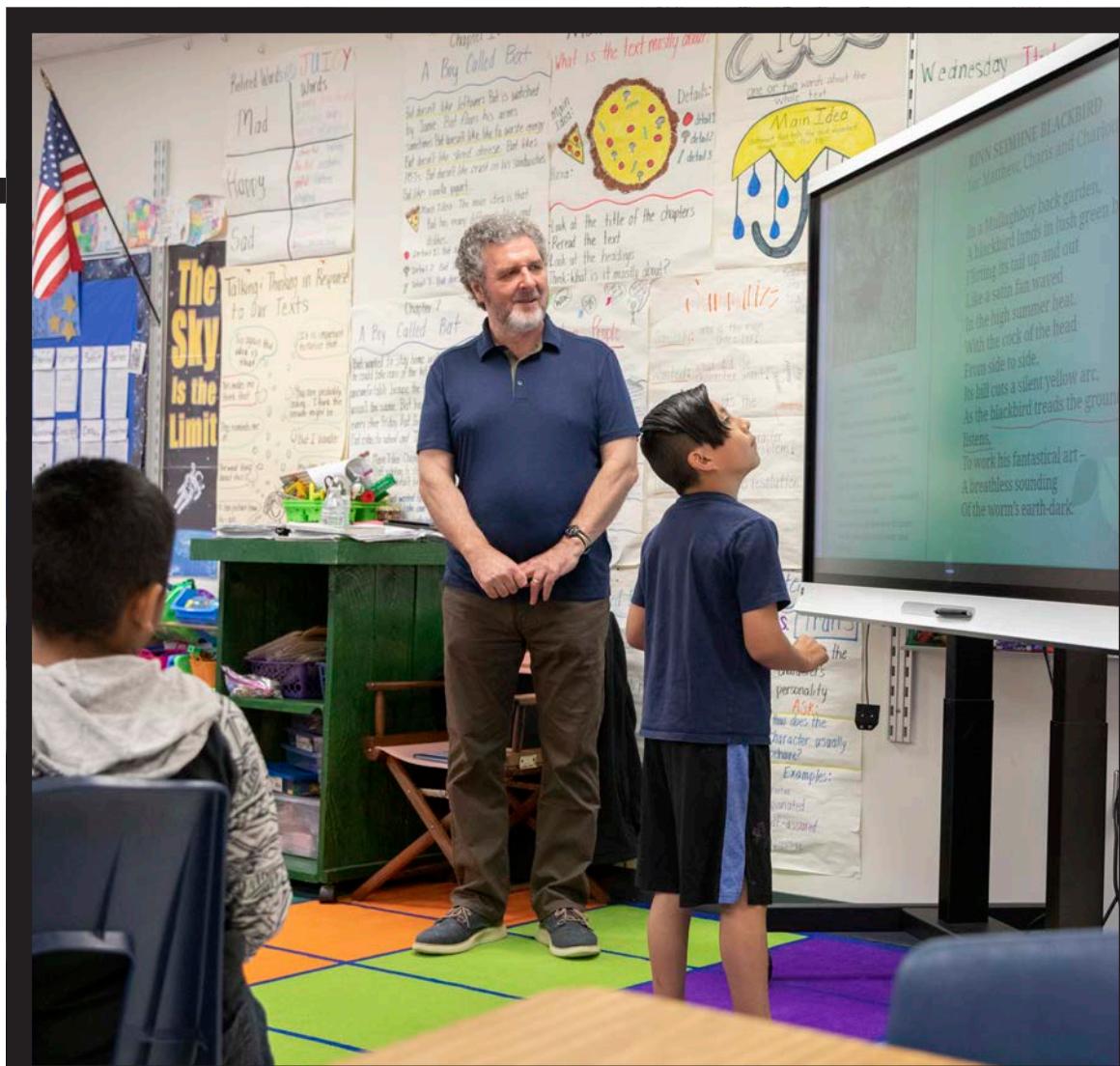
“Can you write nine lines today?” Appalachian State University professor Beth Frye asks.

“Yes!” A soundwave of young voices breaks across the classroom.

The elementary school class is a departure for the kids, who come from low-income and minority backgrounds. The class on this Friday in May is a special poetry seminar taught by Frye, an expert in reading and special education, and Rice, a published poet and doctoral candidate at ASU.

This is how things work at Appalachian State University’s Academy at Middle Fork, an elementary “laboratory school” designed to help low-performing students achieve academic proficiency before sixth grade.

It’s an experiment, a K-5 project to discover new and better ways of teaching. Of learning.



**LABORATORY SCHOOLS.** Middle Fork’s “poet in residence,” Adrian Rice, teaches third-graders the art of parsing and writing poetry during a seminar class May 17.

PHOTO COURTESY OF TROY TUTTLE, APPALACHIAN STATE UNIVERSITY

#### Lab schools

Laboratory schools are a developing phenomenon across the UNC System. In 2016, the General Assembly passed a law establishing eight such schools. It’s aimed at UNC institutions with strong teacher train-

ing programs, and it targets public schools with the lowest performance scores. UNC will partner with local school districts to manage and run the K-8 schools, the statute says.

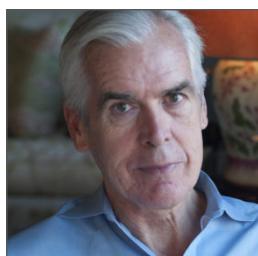
The Academy at Middle Fork is one of five now open across UNC’s 17-campus system. East Caroli-

na University, Western Carolina University, UNC-Wilmington, and UNC-Greensboro are operating lab schools, too.

At its core, a lab school is simply an “innovative approach to

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**Interview:**  
**Philip Howard**

Time for a fresh dose of common sense.

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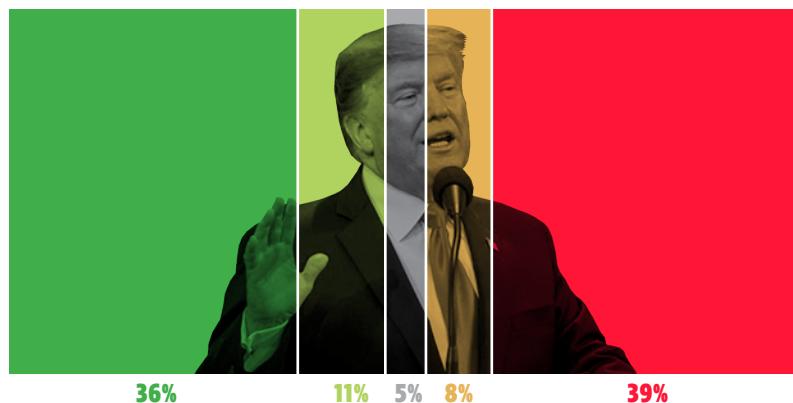
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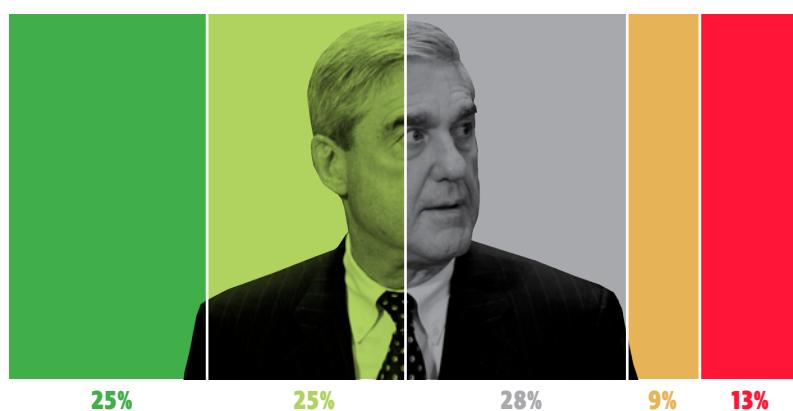
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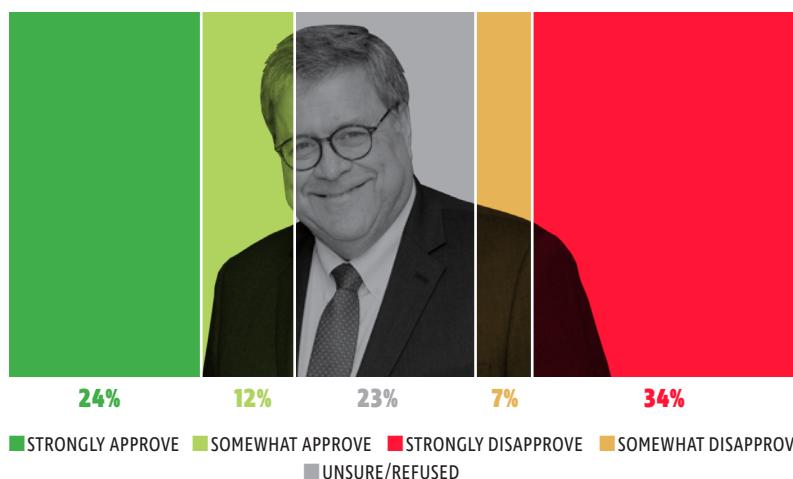
### Do you approve or disapprove of the job Donald Trump is doing as president?



### Do you approve or disapprove of the way Robert Mueller performed as special counsel?



### Do you approve or disapprove of the way Attorney General William Barr has handled Robert Mueller's investigation on Russian interference in the 2016 presidential election?



### Do you think the news media have paid too little attention or too much attention to Robert Mueller's investigation on Russian interference in the 2016 presidential election?



On behalf of the Civitas Institute, Harper Polling conducted a statewide survey from May 2 to May 5. The surveyors reached 500 likely voters using a live-caller model. The margin of error is plus or minus 4.38%. Values may not add up to 100 based on rounding.

## Carolina Journal wins four N.C. Press Association awards



From left, Carolina Journal Managing Editor John Trump, Associate Editor Kari Travis, and Editor-in-Chief Rick Henderson.

For the second straight year, the N.C. Press Association acknowledged Carolina Journal's reporting and commentary in its annual awards. CJ won in the Online Division for articles published in 2018 on carolinajournal.com.

CJ Editor-in-Chief Rick Henderson won first place in editorials, giving him two consecutive first-place finishes in the category.

Associate Editor Kari Travis also was recognized for a second year. This time she won second place for investigative reporting for an article about problems in the N.C. prison system and third place in beat news reporting for her articles about the UNC System and Silent Sam. Last year, Travis won first place in election/political reporting for a story about juvenile justice reforms in the General Assembly and third place in enterprise reporting for a series of articles

about the legislature's response to human trafficking.

Managing Editor John Trump won third place in serious columns for his Daily Journals about alcohol policy, disaster relief, and other topics.

The awards were presented in March at the NCPA's annual convention in Raleigh.

"Carolina Journal has spent the past two decades establishing itself as an indispensable source of news and analysis for North Carolinians who want to know more about their government and their state. These awards reflect lots of hard work, perseverance, and creativity. We are immensely proud of the CJ team and look forward to many more accomplishments," said John Hood, chairman of the John Locke Foundation, which publishes CJ.

CJ Staff

## COMMENTARY BY JOHN HOOD



### Odd-year primaries yield normal outcomes

Congressional elections in odd-numbered years? Odd is certainly one way to describe what many North Carolinians are experiencing right now. But in some ways, the special elections of 2019 are confirming rather than breaking the political rules.

Those elections are in the 3rd District, which spans 17 counties in eastern North Carolina, and the 9th District, which stretches across eight southern counties from Charlotte to Fayetteville. I have three observations to make about the results so far.

The first is that special elections need not produce extraordinarily low turnout. In the 3rd

District primary, for example, where top vote-getters Greg Murphy and Joan Perry qualified for the Republican runoff and former Greenville Mayor Allen Thomas won the Democratic nomination, about 14.5 percent of eligible voters cast a ballot. By comparison, the average turnout in North Carolina's 2018 primaries was 14.4 percent. It was 7.7 percent in the 2016 congressional primaries and 15.8 percent in 2014.

The second observation is that sitting state legislators tend to be strong candidates for higher office. State Sen. Dan Bishop won the 9th District GOP nomination

see HOOD PAGE 21

## QUICK TAKES

# UNC Board of Governors doesn't want to restore Silent Sam

Board Chairman Smith says next move uncertain and board doesn't want to be tied to an arbitrary deadline for Confederate monument

**S**ilent Sam should not return to the Chapel Hill campus, the leader of the University of North Carolina System's Board of Governors says.

Protesters felled the Confederate statue some nine months ago.

Board chairman Harry Smith told reporters May 22 that his views and opinions have "evolved greatly," and the board is working hard to "get it right."

The board, to the chagrin of those who want the situation re-

solved, won't set a deadline. The board announced in a news release May 14 it will again delay a decision about the monument's fate.

It seems as though no one wants to claim authority over the century-old statue. The N.C. Historical Commission, the body responsible for oversight of state monuments, made no ruling about Silent Sam after protesters removed it in August. The BOG called on UNC-Chapel Hill for a recommendation, which led to a proposal for a \$5.3 million historical center to house the statue.

The BOG rejected that idea.

Most recently, a five-member BOG task force was charged to deliver a plan for the monument by March 15, but the board extended the deadline to May, leading to yet another delay.

Smith said the task force has been "very deliberate" in trying to determine potential outcomes for Silent Sam. The university system has struggled to find a home for the statue. Former UNC-Chapel Hill Chancellor Carol Folt, who left her position earlier this year,

announced her resignation abruptly after removing what remained of Silent Sam's pedestal.

For now, the statue is in an undisclosed storage facility. Smith said the board doesn't want to rush the process with an arbitrary deadline, but thinks the task force is closing in on a plan.

The board is working with the state legislature, Smith said, though he didn't respond directly to a question about whether legislators may — or should — change the law governing Confederate monuments.

A law passed in 2015 requires the N.C. Historical Commission to approve relocation of any historical markers or monuments on public property. They can be removed temporarily for repair or renovation, or moved to another location on the original property if it has "similar prominence, honor, visibility, availability, and access." But monuments can't be taken down without the commission's backing.

Lindsay Marchello



'Silent Sam' no longer stands on his pedestal at the UNC-Chapel Hill campus in this photo taken Aug. 21, 2018.

CJ PHOTO BY DON CARRINGTON

## Rep. Chuck McGrady says he won't seek re-election in 2020

**REP. CHUCK MCGRADY**, R-Henderson, won't seek re-election when his term expires next year.

He's now serving his fifth term in the N.C. House.

"Serving in the North Carolina House of Representatives has been one of the greatest honors of my life; my gratitude to the people of Henderson County for providing me with that opportunity goes beyond measure," he said in a news release May 13.

McGrady, who is 66, taught law at Wayne State University Law School and worked as legal counsel in Atlanta.

A graduate of Mercer University School of Law in Macon, Georgia, McGrady was North Carolina's executive director for the Environmental and Conservation Organization of Henderson County, a legislative biography says. He has served on the board of directors for the Hender-

son County Board of Social Services and was first elected to serve on the Henderson County Board of Commissioners in 2004.

He was elected to the N.C. House in 2010.

McGrady, of Baltimore, has a long history of volunteerism and is a leader among Republicans for his work on the environment.

He served as chairman of the Carolina Mountain Land Conservancy, the Clean Water Management Trust Fund, the French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization, and the Land-of-Sky Regional Council of Governments. In 2012, McGrady was presented with an award given by North Carolina's 24 land trusts for his work protecting North Carolina's land and water.

He's also been a staunch advocate of a free and open marketplace and has taken the lead in efforts to-

ward easing restrictions on North Carolina's craft brewers. He also has introduced several pieces of legislation this session to fix the state's outdated Alcoholic Beverage Control system.

McGrady, in his announcement, thanked fellow legislators and staff and said it's time he returned his focus to home — to his friends and to his family, especially wife Jean.

"In the near future, I hope to hike and camp more in places that it's been my privilege to protect. And I also have a lengthy list of books that I've had to put off reading for far too long.

"For those reasons, I will not seek re-election when filing starts in seven months. I look forward to supporting the next representative of House District 117, and I will assist that person in any way I can."

John Trump



Rep. Chuck McGrady, R-Henderson, at a March 28, 2017, press conference to announce House Bill 500, legislation to ease regulations on craft breweries.

CJ PHOTO BY KARI TRAVIS



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## QUICK TAKES

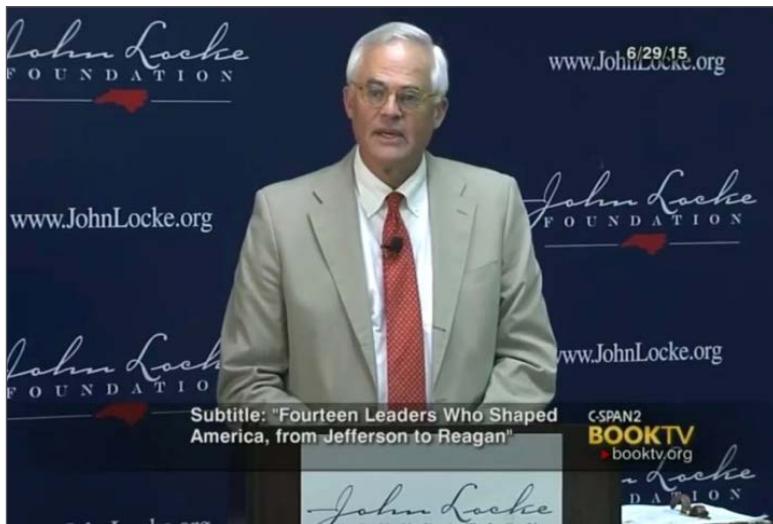
### Tucker announces Senate primary challenge on national conservative radio show

Raleigh businessman and author Garland Tucker officially entered North Carolina's 2020 U.S. Senate race during an appearance May 8 on Sean Hannity's nationally syndicated radio talk show.

Tucker will challenge first-term incumbent Sen. Thom Tillis in the Republican primary next March.

"I think the two issues that are going to be key in this race — and, really, across the country — are immigration and government spending," Tucker told Hannity during the roughly six-minute interview. "I'm really looking forward to having a debate with Sen. Tillis because we've got some substantial differences on those two issues."

Tucker praised President Trump's economic policies. "The economy under Trump is really phenomenal," Tucker said on Hannity's program. "I think what he's done to get this country back on the right track in the last two years ... as a longtime conservative, I would say it's right out of the Reagan-Thatch-



Garland Tucker discusses his book *Conservative Heroes* during a June 2015 presentation to the John Locke Foundation. Image courtesy of C-SPAN.

er playbook."

The retired chairman of Triangle Capital Corporation, Tucker is making his first run for public office. He served on the board of the conservative Civitas Institute and as a se-

nior fellow for the John Locke Foundation. He's authored books on the 1924 presidential election and on conservative heroes.

CJ Staff

### Murphy, Perry to meet in 3rd District GOP runoff; Thomas wins Dem nod

**STATE REP. GREG** Murphy will face Joan Perry July 9 in a runoff for the Republican nomination in the 3rd U.S. Congressional District. Former Greenville Mayor Allen Thomas won the Democratic nomination outright against five challengers.

The special election, set for Sept. 10, will let voters choose a successor for longtime U.S. Rep. Walter Jones Jr. The Republican Jones died in January.

The second primary features two physicians who survived a 17-candidate primary featuring six elected officials, including two other state lawmakers. Murphy, of Greenville, got 22.5 percent of the vote. Perry, of Kinston, received 15.4 percent. A candidate needed to get at least 30 percent of the vote to avoid a runoff.

State Rep. Phil Shepard of Jacksonville was the only other Republican to reach double-digit support, with 12 percent of the vote. Rep. Michael Speciale of New Bern finished fourth with 9.5 percent.

The district is considered Republican-leaning. But Jones was an



State Rep. Greg Murphy, left, will face Joan Perry July 9 in a runoff for the Republican nomination in the 3rd U.S. Congressional District.

iconoclast, strongly supporting the region's major military presence while opposing recent overseas interventions by U.S. armed forces.

He also decried rising federal deficits and debt, breaking ranks with President Donald Trump and fellow Republicans, voting against tax cuts and increases in the debt limit.

Murphy has touted his ability to pass legislation by working with

politicians of both parties. Perry said she will continue seeking support from across the district, backing Trump and fighting Democrats.

Tim Harris defeated Shannon Bray in the Libertarian primary, 75 votes to 57.

The GOP winner, Thomas, and Harris will face Constitution Party candidate Greg Holt in September.

Rick Henderson

#### DISTRICT 3 GOP PRIMARY

CANDIDATE	PCT.
GREG MURPHY	22.50%
JOAN PERRY	15.40%
PHIL SHEPARD	12.00%
MICHAEL SPECIALE	9.50%
PHIL LAW	8.70%
ERIC ROUSE	7.70%
JEFF MOORE	5.40%
FRANCIS DE LUCA	3.90%
CELESTE CAIRNS	3.50%
CHIMER CLARK	2.60%
MICHELE NIX	2.20%
GRAHAM BOYD	2.10%
PAUL BEAUMONT	1.80%
MIKE PAYMENT	1.30%
DON COX	0.60%
KEVIN BAIKO	0.40%
GARY CERES	0.30%

### Elections board will pay Brinson Bell \$30k more than predecessor Strach



State Board of Elections members Stella Anderson, Bob Cordle, Ken Raymond, and David Black at the March 4 board meeting.

The State Board of Elections wants to pay incoming Executive Director Karen Brinson Bell nearly \$30,000 more than her predecessor, Kim Strach.

During a teleconference vote May 23, board members unanimously voted to recommend the Office of State Human Resources set a \$140,000 salary for Bell. Strach, whose last day on the job was May 31, was being paid \$110,762 annually.

"I thought [she] was horribly underpaid, and she has been for some time," Board Chairman Bob Cordle, a Democrat, said of Strach's compensation. He had directed Josh Lawson, board general counsel, to investigate the salary, and recommended Bell be paid \$135,000.

Lawson said Strach's job was wrongly classified as a nonexempt position, and the job description failed to capture all of the job functions or leadership requirements. The Office of State Human Resources has since corrected those mistakes. The board didn't respond to a *Carolina Journal* query whether the classification errors entitled Strach to any back pay.

Republican board member David Black noted that the Mecklenburg County Board of Elec-

tions executive director is paid \$137,000 annually, and the state board's executive director should collect more.

Bell, of Charleston, South Carolina, was named May 13 to replace Strach. The shakeup instantly drew protests from Republicans and Democrats alike, and was roundly criticized as a partisan move. Strach was widely perceived as competent, evenhanded, and impartial.

The board named Katelyn Love to serve as acting general counsel to replace Lawson. He tendered his resignation shortly after Strach was fired. The board of Elections ousted Strach on May 13, on a party-line vote.

Strach served six of her 19 years with the state board as executive director, having built a reputation as an intrepid investigator on some of North Carolina's highest-profile election corruption cases. On her watch, elections board investigations led to criminal referrals and later convictions of former Gov. Mike Easley, state Agriculture Commissioner Meg Scott Phipps, state House Speaker Jim Black, and state Sen. Fletcher Hartsell, among others.

Dan Way

## QUICK TAKES

### New website provides deeper dive on N.C. school finances



PHOTO BY DON CARRINGTON

N.C. Superintendent of Public Instruction Mark Johnson

The Department of Public Instruction has unveiled a new tool for shedding light on state education funding.

State Superintendent Mark Johnson announced April 25 the launch of North Carolina School Finance, a website offering data on how public education money is spent across school districts.

The N.C. School Finance site was developed in partnership with Government Data Analytics Center of the N.C. Department of Information Technology and Cary-based SAS.

People can find numbers on large-scale school finances, such as the total amount spent for public schools from federal, state, and local sources — \$15.8 billion — or smaller numbers, such as how much the annual average pay is for a teacher in various school districts.

Perusers of the database can

find information for each school district on average teacher salaries — with and without benefits added — class sizes, and textbook funding. The website delineates spending between traditional public schools and charter schools.

The homepage of N.C. School Finance features several finance highlights:

- Annual average projected compensation for teachers for the 2018-19 year: \$53,975
- Annual median N.C. household income for 2017: \$50,320
- Annual median wage in N.C. for a person with a bachelor's degree for 2017: \$47,258
- Average instructional supplies funding per teacher in 2017-18: \$511
- Average textbook funding per student in 2017-18: \$42.

Lindsay Marchello

### U.S. Senate recognizes school choice with bipartisan National Charter School Week resolution

THE U.S. SENATE passed a bipartisan resolution May 14 celebrating the 20th anniversary of National Charter School Week.

National Charter School Week — May 12 to May 18 — celebrates the more than 7,000 public charter schools across the country in 44 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. Roughly 3.2 million students currently attend a charter school.

Senate Education Committee Chairman Lamar Alexander, R-Tennessee, and Sen. Michael Bennet, D-Colorado, introduced the resolution congratulating students, parents, teachers, and leaders of charter schools nationally for their ongoing contributions to education.

Alexander served as U.S. Secretary of Education under former

President George H.W. Bush, while Bennet was superintendent of Denver Public Schools in 2009 when he was appointed to the Senate.

The resolution came with a slew of co-sponsors, Democratic and Republican, including North Carolina Sen. Richard Burr.

North Carolina has a long history with charter schools. In 1996, the General Assembly passed the Charter School Education Opportunity Act. The law allowed the creation and funding of public charter schools in the state while capping the number of schools at 100. It wasn't until the cap was lifted in 2011 that charter schools really began to flourish. Today, 184 charter schools operate in North Carolina.

Lindsay Marchello

## NCSU study shows tax incentives harm state's economy

The economic costs of corporate tax incentives outweigh their benefits, a new study by N.C. State University researchers says.

The study focused on three types of tax incentives — investment or job creation tax credits, property tax abatements, and research and development tax credits.

Though perhaps the best-known incentive, job creation or investment credits — such as those for Amazon's HQ2 — don't have the worst impact. The study argues research and development grants, which tend to create growth for the national economy while leaving local communities behind, have the most negative effects.

What does all of this mean for North Carolina? We're ahead of the game, simply put.

In 2013, the state passed a tax law establishing a lower, flat tax rate for personal income, lowered the corporate tax rate to the lowest in the Southeast, and placed expiration dates on popular corporate tax credits, including the research and development tax credit, which was set to expire in 2016.

Researchers argue tax incentives aren't inherently bad, but they carry substantial risk



Amazon HQ2 map on official website. A new study suggests that the economic costs of corporate tax incentives outweigh their benefits.

legislatures fail to avoid. Mark Robyn, an officer for Pew Charitable Trusts, explains they can control costs by “setting caps, requiring companies to meet specific benchmarks, and funding incentives through budget appropriations rather than open-ended commitments.”

North Carolina was once again ahead of its counterparts. In 2015 the state allowed the motion picture production tax credit to expire. The next year, the tax credit was replaced by the Film and Entertainment Grant Fund, establishing a spending cap

and placing money in the budget through the appropriations process. The earlier tax credit scheme did neither of these.

“This study is a good reminder of the positive steps taken by the legislature since 2013 to simplify and reduce the tax burden for all companies with lower rates,” said Joe Coletti, senior fellow at the John Locke Foundation. “It also raises more questions on the value of those tax credits and grant-based incentive programs that do remain.”

Leonard Robinson

## Judge issues temporary restraining order blocking Vidant Health appointments

STAND DOWN. Work things out.

That's what Superior Court Judge Allen Baddour ruled May 24, granting the University of North Carolina System a 10-day, temporary restraining order against Vidant Health. UNC and Vidant — the hospital system that owns and runs the teaching hospital for East Carolina University's Brody School of Medicine — are clashing over issues of governance.

The court battle was set to continue May 29, just as *Carolina Journal* went to press.

UNC took Vidant Health to court May 20 after the nonprofit corporation decided to block the UNC Board of Governors from appointing members to the board of Vidant Medical Center in Greenville.

The move reportedly stunned the BOG. The Vidant board didn't have legal authority to make such a change, UNC said in its complaint. An affiliation agreement, original-

ly established in 1975, and renewed as recently as 2013, gives the UNC BOG appointment power over nine members of the hospital's 20-person board.

On April 24, Vidant cut off the BOG from appointing more people to VMC's board. Under the arrangement, the Pitt County Board of Commissioners would retain privileges to appoint 11 members to the hospital's board, but Vidant Health would take control over the other nine seats.

VMC receives money from the state university system, so it should be subjected to oversight from UNC, said BOG Chairman Harry Smith.

Vidant stands firm, saying the new appointment structure would allow two ECU leaders to be appointed to the hospital's board.

“This would further strengthen our great relationship with ECU and ensure they are always at the table as we work together to care for the

people of eastern North Carolina,” said Vidant spokesman Jason Lowry.

The court's restraining order is good until June 3. Until then, Vidant can't make any changes to VMC's board.

The restraining order doesn't affect much, as the hospital board hasn't made any recent changes or appointments, and members aren't scheduled to meet again until July, Lowry said.

Under the affiliation agreement, UNC has a role in the governance of its teaching hospital, Baddour said in his ruling.

“This order will allow the parties to pause and evaluate what steps will be needed to preserve the longstanding partnership between ECU and Vidant, so that all parties may better serve the people of North Carolina,” said UNC spokesman Josh Ellis.

Kari Travis

## ELECTIONS

# Candidate appealing to the center key to 9th District win, experts say

BY LINDSAY MARCHELLO

The 9th Congressional District race, one political expert says, may come down to voters' perception of which candidate has moved closer to the center.

State Sen. Dan Bishop, R-Mecklenburg, won a crowded Republican primary for the 9th District seat. Bishop got 14,361 votes, or 47.7% of the total ballots cast May 14. Just 9.68% of the district's eligible voters cast ballots.

Bishop faces Democratic candidate Dan McCready, Green Party candidate Allen Smith, and Libertarian candidate Jeff Scott in a special election Sept. 10.

Chris Cooper, a political science professor at Western Carolina University, said Bishop and McCready will work to put their opponent on a political polar cap.

"Bishop is already trying to portray McCready as being a radical on the left, and McCready is already trying to portray Bishop as a radical on the right," Cooper said.

The results didn't surprise Cooper.

"Those of us who watch North Carolina politics knew this was really the establishment candidate winning a primary, which is not in and of itself surprising," Cooper said. "The turnout was a little lower than I thought it would be."

Cooper said the margin by which Bishop won is notable, how-



**APPEALING TO THE CENTER.** The 9th congressional district race features Republican Dan Bishop, left, and Democrat Dan McCready.

ever. Stony Rushing got 19.4%, or 5,854 votes, May 14. Matthew Ridenhour got 17.2%, or 5,154 votes. The remaining seven Republican candidates received less than 10% of the vote.

"With this big of a field, if you can pull almost 50% of the vote, that's a resounding victory," Cooper said. "To some degree, that's an interesting result. I think it shows we can talk all we want about how Donald Trump has changed politics, but the reality is the establishment candidates tend to do a lot better."

McCready has based much of his campaign on his status as a Marine Corps veteran and small-business owner.

Not much else, Bishop has said.

"Dan McCready went through two elections without telling anyone where he stood on anything — that ends tomorrow," Bishop said, per a *Charlotte Observer* story. "Voters in the 9th District deserve a clear choice in this race, and we're going to give them one."

Bishop's track record, particularly his connection to House Bill 2

— the controversial "bathroom bill" — will play a role, if comments from the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee are any indication. A news release from the group says Bishop squandered \$3.76 billion from the state's economy.

"That has been the impact of Senator Bishop's political career, and it underscores the choice families living in North Carolina's 9th Congressional District face this September," Cole Leiter, DCCC national press secretary, wrote in the release.

Bishop, in an ad on his website, boasts of being "pro life, pro gun, and pro law." He calls McCready and other Democrats socialists and radicals "who hate the values that make America great."

In a news conference, reported by Spectrum News, McCready said, "We need to be lowering health care costs, protecting coverage for people with pre-existing conditions, investing in our public schools, defending Medicare, and creating good jobs," McCready said.

It's been more than a half-century since the 9th District elected a Democrat.

Republican candidate Mark Harris unofficially won the 9th District election in November against McCready, but the N.C. State Board of Elections refused to certify the results because of allegations of absentee ballot fraud. A subsequent investigation led to the arrest of

several people on election fraud charges. The State elections board ordered a new special election.

The more people talk about the absentee ballot fraud investigation, the more it benefits McCready and hurts Bishop, Cooper says.

"McCready is going to try and make it play into this race," Cooper said. "He's going to try to tar Bishop as part of this larger conspiracy."

John Dinan, political science professor at Wake Forest University, said a big question is whether the 2019 electorate will mirror voters of 2018.

"In elections held around the country in 2018, Republican candidates generally lagged behind traditional performance levels, as is typical of midterm elections, where members of the out-of-power party (in this case Democrats) are more motivated than the in-power party (in this case Republicans), and voters tend to penalize in-power party candidates," Dinan said.

"In the aftermath of the Democrats' takeover of the House of Representatives, voters are now reacting not just to a Republican president, but may also be comparing a Republican president with a Democratic-controlled House of Representatives," Dinan said.

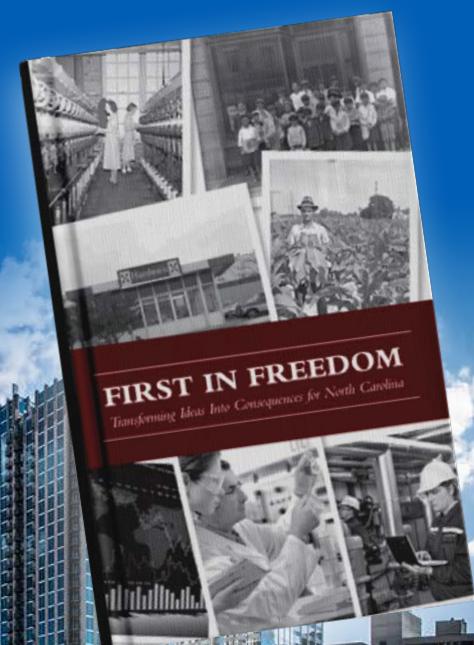
McCready has a big edge in contributions, having raised almost \$1.9 million since Jan. 1, according to federal elections filings. Bishop has raised about \$560,000.

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## ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

# Brown, others say DoD vindicates concerns about wind turbines and military operations

BY DON CARRINGTON

Sen. Harry Brown, R-Onslow, is convinced large wind energy projects, such as the Amazon Wind Farm near Elizabeth City, hinder the military's ability to conduct low-level flight training missions in North Carolina. He also thinks construction of new wind facilities could hurt the state in a future Base Realignment and Closure process.

Brown and others concerned about the compatibility of industrial-scale wind projects and military training say they recently got vindication from the Department of Defense. The director of the department's Siting Clearinghouse in Washington, D.C., which reviews and comments on proposed wind projects near military bases, said the clearinghouse has no influence on the BRAC process.

The Pentagon could decide to close a base even if a nearby wind project had been approved by the clearinghouse.

Brown's Senate Bill 377, the Military Base Protection Act, would try to block wind energy encroachment on military facilities. It bans new wind energy projects shown on a map authorized by the General Assembly and developed with military officials.

The district represented by Sen. Jim Perry, R-Wayne, includes Seymour Johnson Air Force Base. Perry recently asked Clearinghouse Executive Director Ronald Tickle "whether it is accurate that clearinghouse approval of a project does not protect a military base from



**WIND TURBINES.** Some leaders have expressed concerns regarding the compatibility of industrial-scale wind projects and military training.

closure."

Tickle said Perry is correct. "Our Clearinghouse reviews do not explicitly address a potential future [base closure proceeding]. We assess proposed wind farms based on current and reasonably foreseeable missions," Tickle said.

"Now that the DoD Clearinghouse has weighed in, it is clear that Senator Brown's concern is correct — the military will close bases regardless of whether the clearinghouse approves wind projects, and the risk of closure does not factor into clearinghouse decisions," said a press release from Perry and Sen. Jim Burgin, R-Harnett.

"This isn't about being 'anti-wind.' We would love to see wind energy grow in North Carolina and elsewhere. But it can't grow at the expense of the safety and security of North Carolina's military bases.

"The military is the second-largest employer in North Carolina and contributes tens of billions of dollars to our economy every single year.

"We have to adopt policies that minimize the risk of those bases closing down, and we are willing to continue listening to stakeholders on how best to protect the military and provide opportunities for wind development," Perry and Burgin said.

Current state law requires wind energy developers to seek a permit from the N.C. Department of Environmental Quality.

The permitting process requires review and comment from the commanding officer of each nearby major military installation as well as the Federal Aviation Administration.

Seymour Johnson operations staff raised concerns about potential wind turbine interference with low-altitude flight training in a September 2012 report.

House Bill 589, passed in 2017, imposed a moratorium through Dec. 31, 2018, on permits for wind energy facilities. It also called for the General Assembly to conduct a study and produce maps showing the military's land, air, and water-based operations in North Carolina. Brown's bill references those maps.

The bill received a received support May 5 from the Senate Commerce and Insurance Committee, and then it was referred to the Senate Rules Committee.

It didn't pass the full Senate before the legislature's crossover deadline, but the bill isn't dead. "We are having conversations about the legislation and expect to make a few changes. The bill will comply with crossover deadline rules," Brown told *CJ*.

Opponents continue to question the need for the legislation. Sen. Floyd McKissick, D-Durham, sits on the Commerce and Insurance Committee. He says Brown's bill isn't necessary, and the new information Perry shared hasn't

changed McKissick's mind.

"This did not sway me. When I read the press release, I don't conclude the clearinghouse is not effective. They have a rigorous review process. The BRAC is a separate process," he said.

In April, retired Marine Corps Lt. Gen. Gary McKissock told a legislative committee wind energy projects and other encroachments could put N.C. military bases at risk of closing during a future round of the BRAC process.

Col. Donn Yates, commander of the 4th Fighter Wing at Seymour Johnson Air Force Base in Goldsboro, told the committee additional encroachments would make it difficult to complete the base's mission.

He said his responsibilities include providing 48 new two-person fighter crews each year. The crews need to fly F-15E aircraft day or night at 500 feet or lower. "To get them to that proficiency requires hundreds of sorties per year for those 48 crews," he said.

He said he is able to carry out that mission now, but additional encroachments would cause problems for his training resources.

They include "bombing ranges, low-altitude areas to transit to those ranges, and the air space above them." The Navy operates a large bombing range in Hyde County.

Two other retired officers said current safeguards protect military bases from the potential negative effects of new wind farms. The Amazon Wind Farm is North Carolina's only utility-scale wind energy project.



## A power-hungry president, a constitutional crisis, and a democracy in peril...

President Jerome Elliott was elected with overwhelming support from the American people. His populist platform and soaring promises captivated voters. But now, after a series of increasingly unorthodox policy decisions and suspicions of sinister motives, a shadow gathers over the White House.

When thirty-four state governors call for a constitutional convention to reform the federal government, Elliott fears losing control. In a desperate attempt to maintain power, he orders the revered 82nd Airborne Division to march on the convention and arrest its participants as domestic insurgents. The Georgia National Guard mobilizes to stop them, and the two forces clash in the small town of Madison. These actions echo across the nation, polarizing the populace and threatening to erupt into violence between the people and their government.

Meanwhile, television reporters Nicole Marcel and Luke Harper race to discover the truth behind the president's actions, while United Nations investigator Percy Leach digs deep into Elliott's past. Chasing facts and whispers alike, they uncover the roots of dark truths that, if realized, risk sundering the very fabric of American democracy.

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## ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

# Solar energy output ratings misleading, if not deceptive, critics say

BY DAN WAY

In its application to build a solar facility on Gov. Roy Cooper's Nash County property, Durham-based Strata Solar said its generating capacity would be about 5 megawatts. Enough energy to power continuously about 3,750 homes.

But the plant won't generate 5 MW of energy 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Much of the time it won't produce anything. "Solar is an intermittent energy source, and therefore the maximum dependable capacity is 0 MW," the application notes.

Cooper's application isn't unusual. Engineers who've worked with electric utilities say solar facilities generate no power most of the day and seldom reach peak generation, yet they are marketed by how many megawatts of electricity they can produce during the rare times they're at maximum output.

The ratings are ambiguous at best and deceptive at worst, raising significant public policy concerns, engineers say.

Herb Eckerlin is a retired engineer who has designed power plants for the electric utility industry and professor emeritus at N.C. State University. Eckerlin has been a proponent of solar energy for more than 40 years and remains a fan. He designed and built the N.C. State Solar House, a nationally recognized education and demonstration center for residential solar power.

But he doesn't like the way ratings are reported and accounted for.

Eckerlin said county officials who approve zoning and other permits for solar facilities, and state lawmakers who pass laws regulating and rewarding solar plants with subsidies, can be misled by the megawatt ratings assigned to a solar application.

Officials often interpret the MW rating as a constant flow of electricity. In reality the rating reflects only potential — a maximum output that occurs for about one hour around noon on a sunny day. A solar plant generates less than the megawatt rating the other 23 hours and no power at all the 14 hours the sun is down.

"It misrepresents reality," Eckerlin said of the megawatt labels. "It gives people the impression that this particular system can do much more than it really can. It misleads the public. It misleads the legislators. It misleads the county commissioners. It misleads everybody."



**OUTPUT RATINGS CRITIC.** N.C. State professor emeritus Herb Eckerlin designed the N.C. State Solar House, but he's a critic of the ways the solar industry markets its power.

As a result, many incorrectly believe solar power is available on demand, solar and conventional power sources are interchangeable, and programs like the Green New Deal would let solar replace conventional power sources, Eckerlin said.

"I don't think that anything that we're doing is misleading," said Sam Watson, general counsel for the N.C. Utilities Commission. Regulations require applicants for a solar facility to inform the commission about the potential maximum output so electric utilities can decide how to connect the solar power with the electric grid, he said.

"I think there's plenty of folks that are educating the public on the pros and cons of solar energy," Watson said, including its intermittent characteristics.

Gary Rackliffe, vice president of smart grids and grid modernization at ABB Inc. in Raleigh, which deals in solar equipment and power grid operations, said a solar facility can meet the megawatt rating only when all of its panels receive full sunshine.

**The plotlines tell a story: On mostly cloudy or rainy days, the solar array powering the house produced less than 10% of its maximum rated capacity.**

Electric utilities such as Duke Energy and Dominion Energy must keep redundant fossil fuel-fired electric sources operating constantly to fill in immediately when solar power is disrupted by clouds, rain, and nightfall.

Making matters more costly, the federal Public Utility Regulatory Policies Act requires utilities to buy all commercial solar power generated, even if it's more expensive than energy from other sources

such as nuclear, natural gas, or hydro power.

Eckerlin has expressed his concerns as a consultant for opponents of solar projects in North Carolina and other states. He's testified before legislatures and other government panels.

And still, he remains a backer of solar energy. He says the industry should be honest about the capability and limitations of a solar power plant, rather than use a fictitious megawatt rating.

Eckerlin captured data from instruments at the N.C. State Solar House to create plotlines graphically illustrating solar power's intermittent nature.

The plotlines tell a story: On mostly cloudy or rainy days, the solar array powering the house produced less than 10% of its maximum rated capacity. A mostly cloudy day recorded occasional blips of about 45%. The number never exceeded 10% on a rainy day.

Eckerlin said those fluctuations would be the same regardless of a solar facility's size. They illustrate

that assigning a megawatt rating to a solar power plant has no meaning.

Lawrence Watts of Greenville, a retired engineer who worked at Duke Energy's predecessor Carolina Power & Light, agrees with Eckerlin. He used solar facility data he got from a power company and converted it into a series of plotlines covering several 24-hour cycles in January, June, and August 2016. His diagrams resembled Eckerlin's — a Bell curve sharply rising and falling during the narrow time band power is generated.

Watts said power companies are stressed with high electricity demand in the morning, late afternoon, and evening. They charge higher rates and make much of their profit in those peak demand hours, the time little or no solar power is produced.

"The hardest information to get in America is the production of a solar farm," Watts said. "The people that own solar farms don't want you to know how little they produce before 10 o'clock in the morning."

Solar enthusiasts misrepresent solar efficacy by omitting peak demand shortcomings, Watts said. That influences public policy when, for example, they push officials to convert farmland into solar installations.

Eckerlin suggests the solar industry created the maximum capacity megawatt rating system to disguise actual power generation, which is much lower and more erratic than industry marketers like to admit.

Rackliffe said solar energy can be stored in batteries on sunny days when there is more supply than demand. Battery storage lets solar energy be used during peak demand when solar installations aren't generating electricity.

Costs of solar batteries are dropping — from about \$1,000 per kilowatt hour in 2010 to less than \$200 today. "But that's not necessarily cheap," Rackliffe said. Solar batteries account for a small percentage of electricity storage on the grid. About 94 percent of storage comes from pumped hydro power.

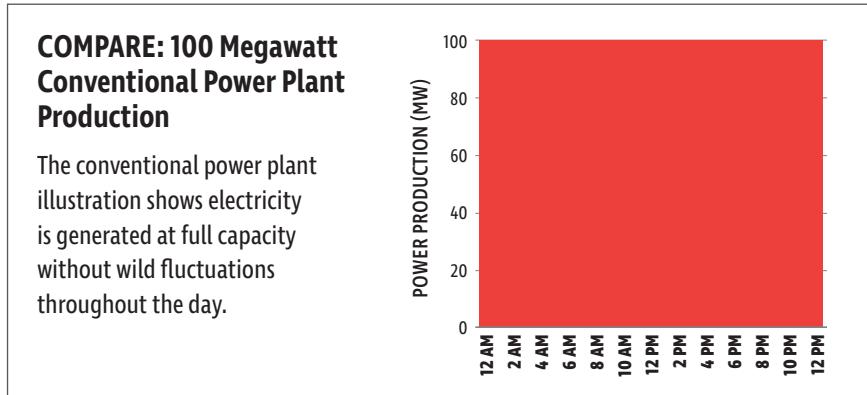
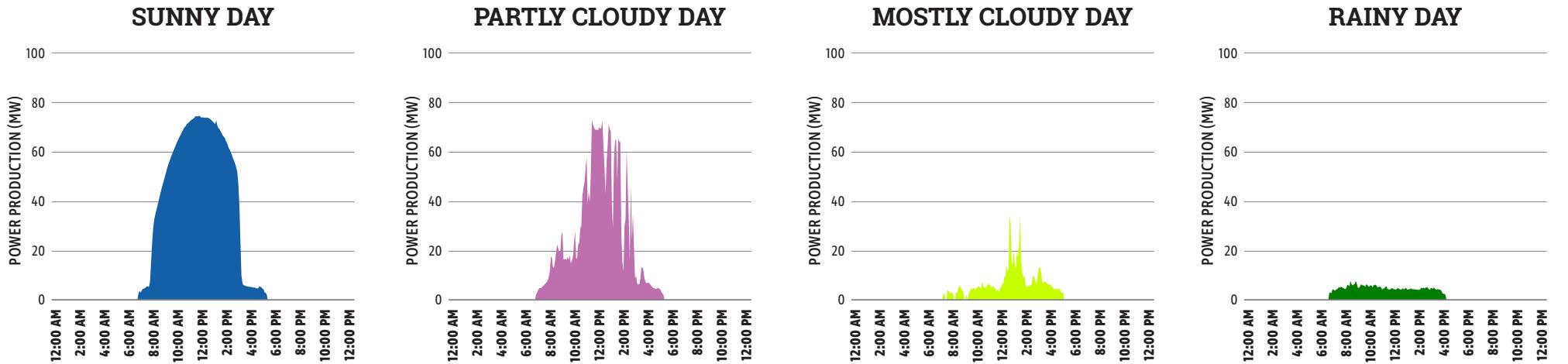
To store 1 kilowatt of electricity to produce just one hour of operation would require a storage pod the size of a shipping container, Rackliffe said. By comparison, a typical nuclear plant generates a gigawatt of electricity, he said. That's 1 million kilowatts.

PHOTO BY DAN WAY

# ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

## 100 Megawatt Solar Farm Production

Engineers who have worked in the electric utility industry say rating solar power plants by the maximum number of megawatts they can produce in peak operating conditions is a deceptive system because they seldom reach that level of output. Solar facilities only generate power six to eight hours a day, and it's far lower than their rating labels. That misleading rating approach leads to wrong assumptions and bad public policy. These plotlines illustrate the difference between rating capacity and actual power production during variable weather conditions. They are based on data captured from the N.C. State University Solar House.



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

SOURCE: Herb Eckerlin, N.C. State University emeritus professor



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# EDUCATION



CONTINUED CONFRONTATION. Protesters at the Legislative Complex in Raleigh listen to speeches May 1.

DON CARRINGTON

## Will continued teacher confrontations eventually hurt their cause?

BY LINDSAY MARCHELLO

A sea of red shirts and picket signs flooded downtown Raleigh May 1, and, for now, public opinion may be in their favor.

But are the teachers and N.C. Association of Educators, which organized the rally, overplaying their hands, two policy experts ask.

The educators' demands are many: \$15 hourly wages for all school personnel, more support staff, restored pay for master's degrees, reinstated state retiree health benefits, and Medicaid expansion.

The teachers marched from the NCAE headquarters to Halifax Mall, where they took part in a rally and met with legislators. Unlike last year's May 16 rally, teachers didn't crowd the General Assembly, but instead held meetings outside.

What's their endgame, asks Andy Taylor, a political science professor at N.C. State University.

"If the policy gets closer to their goals, what do they do next?" Taylor asked. "I think you're seeing this a little bit, which may be problematic for broad, popular support, in that some of this is morphing into a broader left-wing, progressive agenda rather than the needs of teachers, students, and the public school system."

David McLennan, professor of political science at Meredith College, said the rally could result in opposite outcomes.

"On one hand, it's a symbolic demonstration of strength to get that many teachers literally right outside the legislature. ... Legislators would be foolish to think this doesn't mean something electorally," McLennan said.



**Some of this is morphing into a broader left-wing, progressive agenda rather than the needs of teachers, students, and the public school system.**

- Andy Taylor, political science professor

But, McLennan said, closing numerous school districts for the rally has a marked downside. Parents with students in those school districts may have had to scramble to find child care and food. Some may be questioning raises for teachers and increased retirement benefits while their salaries stay the same.

The Meredith professor said the rally agenda has expanded since last year. This may have boosted the number of protesters, but it also may have dissuaded some who don't support the larger political goals.

"They may have needed to do this to bring more people out to show the support, but on the flip side that could end up hurting their cause for teachers because people may not be able to support a \$15 an hour wage or Medicaid expansion," McLennan said.

Though not marketed as a partisan event, some see the teacher march as a political rally and the NCAE as an extension of the Democratic Party. Gov. Roy Cooper and the Rev. William Barber were among the rally's many speakers.

"Educators are key to strong, safe communities. And you deserve support in the many roles you play,"

Cooper said in prepared remarks.

"That means significantly better pay for all teachers and principals, including our veteran teachers and support staff. It means more school support staff like nurses and counselors. It means modern, safe classrooms. And it means respecting your work and treating you like the professionals you are. ...

"And that's why you're here today to push for Medicaid expansion. To make sure families have health care coverage, including badly needed access to mental health treatment. More mental health coverage will keep us healthier and safer."

A news release from Senate leader Phil Berger, R-Rockingham, said just 18 requests came in to meet with Republican senators

continued NEXT PAGE

# EDUCATION



**LEADING THE CHARGE.** N.C. Association of Educators President Mark Jewell led the rally May 1 at Halifax Mall.



**APPEARANCE BY THE GOVERNOR.** Gov. Roy Cooper, with First Lady Kristin Cooper at his side, urged teachers to continue their fight at the May 1 march on Raleigh.

continued from PREVIOUS PAGE

during the event.

“Of the thousands of people who will be here, hardly any scheduled meetings with legislators,” Sen. Ralph Hise, R-Mitchell, said in the news release. “This is not advocacy. This is not a ‘work day.’ This is a political rally for Democrats that’s keeping nearly 1 million kids out of school.”

More than 30 school districts closed May 1 so that teachers could participate in the NCAE-sponsored event, keeping a majority of North Carolina’s public school children out of the classroom for the day. But rally-goers contended the event was for the children, and walking out of the classroom was needed to get legislators’ attention.

“I want them to understand that every time they make a cut in some department, that it has a trickling effect, and it affects many different things,” said Betty Greene, a high school science teacher from Wilson County. “Where they see a slight savings it actually goes all the way down to the elementary level and affects our kids.”

Greene said teachers know what’s needed in their classrooms, and legislators need to hear their concerns.

North Carolina is a right-to-work state, where public-sector collective bargaining is prohibited. The state doesn’t have an official teachers’ union, but NCAE operates similar to one. It wants to end that prohibition.

“I want to see [teachers] have a right to collective bargain,” said a rally attendee who gave his name as John Smith. “That’s a law that definitely needs to be changed. It basically equates to slavery. They are trapped.”

On April 24, NCAE President Mark Jewell spoke in favor of a bill that would allow public-sector col-

lective bargaining. Senate Bill 575, introduced by Democratic senators, would allow more than 600,000 public employees to participate in union activity, though striking would still be illegal.

One of the few demands the NCAE may gain is restoring master’s degree pay for teachers. A few days before the march, the House unveiled its budget proposal, which included bringing back higher pay for teachers who earn master’s degrees for a subject they teach.

The budget proposal also includes an average 4.8% increase in teacher pay, 6.3% raise for assistant principals, and a 10% raise for principals. Noncertified school staff will get a 1% pay raise or \$500, whichever is greater.

Whether the May 1 rally actually accomplishes anything tangible remains to be seen, Taylor said.

Republican lawmakers have been quick to point out teacher pay raises over the past few years and increases in school security funding, but whether those things can be connected to last year’s teacher rally isn’t clear.

“Momentum is obviously in favor of the things that the marchers want anyways,” Taylor said. “That’s either because of them or just because of public opinion and status quo policy.”

Where does the march go from here? Taylor asks. One possibility is it continues as an annual event, with the rally agenda expanding further beyond educational demands.

“I think we’re getting to a stage where the teachers might go from being seen as a group that the vast majority of the public supports, understands what they’re going through, and believes they deserve more in terms of salary, staff support, [and] textbooks to one where they see the teachers as part of an increasingly progressive interest group,” Taylor said.



**UNIONIZING.** N.C. AFL-CIO organizers speak to rally attendees at the May 1 rally.



**CAPITOL BUILDING.** A banner backing the teacher walkout was attached to the west side of the Capitol.

# EDUCATION

continued from PAGE 1

learning,” said Middle Fork Principal Tasha Hall-Powell, who, alongside ASU faculty and administrators, has poured her energy into the project.

Lab schools operate much like charter schools, offering flexibility and independent decision-making to those who lead them. As “schools of choice,” the lab schools receive per-pupil money from state, local, and federal governments. They also get support from UNC, with a \$2 million annual budget specially allocated by the legislature.

Critics of lab schools originally complained the plan would usurp the authority of traditional public schools. Some saw it as a betrayal of public schools and the teachers they employ. When a school became a lab school, teachers and staff were told they could reapply for their positions.

Lawmakers were essentially blaming teachers for the school’s low performance, Allen Bryant, an associate professor of elementary education at Appalachian State’s Reich College of Education, told NC Policy Watch in 2018.

“We are firing all of the teachers,” Bryant said. “They are invited to reapply, which is as dehumanizing and belittling as you could imagine.”

Of the 45 staff members at Middle Fork Academy, only 18 returned after it became a lab school.

The idea for lab schools has never been about who holds territory or control, Powell told *CJ*. Education, after all, is ultimately all about what’s best for the kids.

“What we’re trying to do is just mold, and create, and shape better children, so that when they go back into Winston-Salem schools you’ve got children you can work with in a way you wouldn’t have before,” Powell said.

UNC lab schools are able to build a curriculum from the ground up and experiment with different teaching techniques. Each part of the coursework is tailored to the needs of the respective students.

Middle Fork is focused on literacy, or more important, on English language arts, Frye told *CJ*. ASU’s goal is to develop students’ reading, writing, speaking, and listening abilities, she said.

Rice, a renowned poet from Northern Ireland, has become a fix-

ture in teaching students how to read, hear, speak, and write by exposing the children to the poetic art.

It’s just one example of how academic flexibility allows the school to experiment with creative teaching methods, Frye said.

## A focus on literacy

Middle Fork’s curriculum, developed by ASU alum and adjunct professor Amie Snow, is always evolving. Snow, who works as curriculum director, turns new ideas into lesson plans. Teachers at the Walkerton school are free to give input — and voice concerns — about content areas that maybe aren’t working in the classroom.

“They come in, and they say, ‘We want you to try this, and here’s why,’” said Melissa Boyd, a

first-grade teacher at Middle Fork. “‘Tell us what you need to do this. How can we help you?’ That’s amazing. You don’t get that in a lot of other places. ... They treat us like professionals. They know that we know what to do. They know we wouldn’t be here if we didn’t know what we are supposed to do for these children.”

Before coming to Middle Fork, Boyd was a middle school teacher at a traditional public school, where she noticed some missing pieces. Too many children

couldn’t read, and it was affecting their entire educational experience.

“I started to see gaps in how children were coming to middle school and they don’t know how to read,” Boyd said. “It was always a comprehension problem, but I was thinking there has to be more to it. If they can’t read it, how can they understand it? Maybe it’s not a comprehension problem. Maybe it’s a decoding problem.”

Read to Achieve — a state-mandated effort to get K-3 students reading at grade level — is falling short of its goals, Boyd said, and standardized tests aren’t showing promised gains.

“[Legislators] keep pouring in money and resources, and they aren’t changing anything,” Boyd said.

School district officials took various avenues to improve Middle Fork’s performance before it was turned into a lab school, Powell said, but nothing worked.



**PROUD STUDENTS.** Middle Fork students Nathan Wadkins, Jaylyn Kirkpatrick, Tyshawn Jones, and J’Korri Dobson proudly display “Progress Mountain,” inspirational art designed to mark student achievements throughout the school year.

PHOTO COURTESY OF TROY TUTTLE, APPALACHIAN STATE UNIVERSITY

## IN THEIR OWN WORDS



**Sheri Everts**  
Chancellor  
Appalachian State University

“We are so proud of the successes of our students, families, teachers, administrative staff, faculty, student teachers, and interns, all of whom have been dedicated to the success of the Academy from the moment we knew we would be implementing a lab school.

Our focus from the beginning has been on the success of the Academy students, and they have had the full commitment and dedication from the university from the start. We have already realized successes that are measurable with test scores

— and that are described in terms of students’ love for learning by their teachers and families. As we consider the important question of how we develop a model for replicating the successes we have seen, it will be important to have this conversation broadly with the other lab schools and their UNC System partners to identify what is working, determine the real-life pathways to success, and ensure student success across the lab school model. As we do so, it will be key to keep our focus on recognizing the promise each student possesses.”



**FOCUS ON LITERACY.** Appalachian State University Chancellor Sheri Everts reads to students at Middle Fork during a campus visit.

PHOTO COURTESY OF MARIE FREEMAN, APPALACHIAN STATE UNIVERSITY

continued PAGE 13

# EDUCATION



**FACILITY.** The Appalachian State University Academy at Middle Fork



**FLEXIBILITY AND FREEDOM.** First-grade teacher Melissa Boyd loves the flexibility and freedom offered by Middle Fork Academy's experimental curriculum.

## More about the Academy at Middle Fork

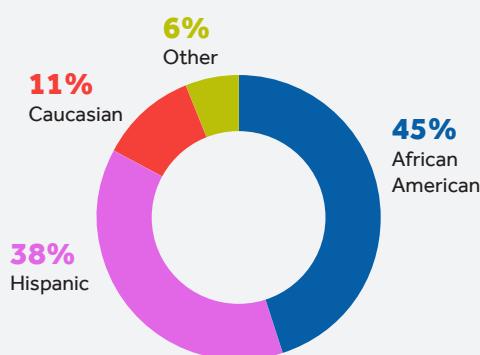
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Current number of students attending the Academy at Middle Fork

# 315

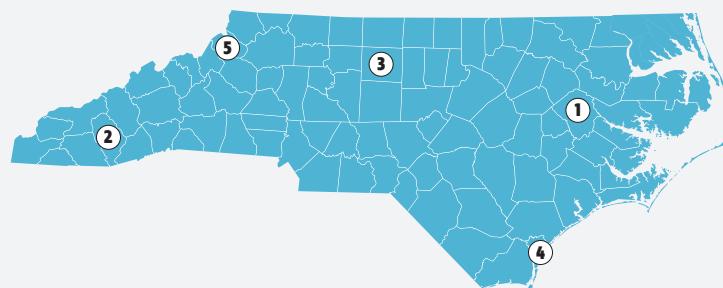
The Academy at Middle Fork's enrollment goal for 2019-20

## Student demographics



## The Five Open and Operating Lab Schools of the University of North Carolina System

The University of North Carolina System has five open and operating lab schools — with plans to open one more at UNC-Charlotte, in partnership with Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools. Every lab school is different, but all are designed to help low-performing students rise to their potential. Each university has the freedom to decide on a school format, and UNC students benefit from teaching opportunities afforded inside the walls of each institution.



*"I would be remiss if I didn't remark on just how much time, energy, and money, and I mean dollars, our institution has invested in this. I think we ought to applaud them for that, because I think it signals how important they think the work is."*

**- Andrew Kelly, UNC senior vice president for strategy and policy**

**1. East Carolina University** operates the ECU Community School at South Greenville Elementary School in Greenville. ECU's lab school, in partnership with Pitt County Schools, opened in 2017 to serve the second, third, and fourth grades. It is expanding over the next few years to reach students in pre-K and fifth grade.

**2. Western Carolina University** runs the Catamount School on the campus of Smoky Mountain High School in Sylva. The lab school, in collaboration with Jackson County Schools, opened in 2018 and serves sixth, seventh, and eighth grades.

**3. UNC-Greensboro** oversees Moss Street Partnership School in Reidsville. The campus, in partnership with Rockingham County Schools, serves grades K-5. The school opened in 2018.

**4. UNC-Wilmington** opened the D.C. Virgo Preparatory Academy in Wilmington. The K-8 school is a year-round program that opened in 2018. UNC-Wilmington, which partnered with New Hanover County Schools, describes its lab school as a family-friendly environment focused on whole-child and community-based learning methods.

**5. Appalachian State University** developed the Academy at Middle Fork in Walkertown. The university, in partnership with Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools, opened its K-5 school in 2018.

continued from PAGE 12

Student performance is on the rise, now that the school has the flexibility to mold its lessons to the needs of each student, Snow said. Previously, when the school remained under Winston-Salem/Forsyth County district rules, the emphasis was to "drill down constantly in reading and math." Now, all subjects meld, with reading serving as a foundation for science, social studies, math, and much more.

"I've been in public schools for 17 years as a teacher and as an instructional facilitator, but here has by far been the best year," Snow said. "It has been the busiest. It's

definitely been worth every moment we have put into it."

## The big picture

Lab schools like Middle Fork are seeing an uptick in performance, but the journey for them, and others, hasn't been without obstacles.

After the state legislature directed UNC to open eight schools, system administrators were faced with a monumental task: Make it work. No instruction manual existed, yet a deadline loomed, said Andrew Kelly, UNC senior vice president for strategy and policy.

Just getting five schools up and running was a major success, Kelly told *CJ*.

"There are a lot of players involved, and you're really merging two heavily regulated sectors," Kelly said of K-12 and higher education. "None of this was particularly easy."

In 2017, lawmakers added a ninth lab school to UNC's slate. Given logistical challenges — namely, UNC-Charlotte's request for a one-year delay in opening its lab school — UNC officials are asking the number of lab schools be reduced to six.

Which doesn't mean the university won't be adding more. UNC just wants to get it right, Kelly said. Projects like this take time and money, and "budgets are finite."

The intertwining of the community, the school district, and the university is an important achievement

for lab schools, said Kelly, and the General Assembly has shown a commitment toward making those partnerships a success.

"One of the things I hope people recognize is how terrific this is as a distillation of what universities can bring to their communities, beyond growing students and doing research. This is a mix of all of it. Of education, research, and public service," Kelly told *CJ*.

It's too soon to predict outcomes, but school districts, universities, and lab school staffers should get all the credit for realized successes, he said.

The students at Middle Fork are engaged, happy.

Poetry is flowing, and the classroom brims with conversation as the

third-graders consider — with great concentration — the subject of their poems.

"We want you to think about your favorite place," Frye says. "That could be lots of different places — like in your room, or on the sofa, or outside."

Students begin spouting ideas. The gym. The mountains. The beach. With so many ideas, some voices get drowned out. But one, from a little girl in the back of the room, rises above.

"School," she says, much to the enthusiasm and joy of Frye, Rice, and Snow. And the first line of her poem — simple, and carved in large, block letters — says, "I see my favorite teacher."

## COMMENTARY

## Rural schools matter, and here's why



**DR. TERRY STOOPS**  
VICE PRESIDENT FOR RESEARCH  
JOHN LOCKE FOUNDATION

In a 1958 *American Mercury* essay titled, "Rural Schools: Are They Worth Keeping?" renowned political historian Russell Kirk observed that all Americans have a stake in the future of American rural life. He declared, "The American rural population has grave enough difficulties already, without the fresh blow of being deprived of their own schools by act of legislature. If our rural communities decline further, much that is healthy in American life will be in peril."

Kirk's specific concern was the centralization of public education through the forced consolidation of rural schools. But his broader worry about the demise of the rural school rings true today.

From the outside looking in, one might be tempted to dismiss talk of decline in North Carolina and the South generally. In the latest edition of *Projections of Education Statistics*, National Center for Education Statistics researchers



projected North Carolina would increase its student enrollment by around 84,500 children, or 6.2 percent, between 2016 and 2027. The Southeast has the largest projected enrollment increase of any region in the nation, with Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, and South Carolina leading the way.

The NCES data provide only statewide projections, however. The reality is that enrollment growth is not distributed evenly across regions. N.C. Department of Public Instruction data show urban and suburban corridors in our state enjoyed double-digit

growth since 2008 (although recent enrollment stagnation in the state's two largest urban districts, Wake and Charlotte-Mecklenburg, suggests that those days may be coming to an end). At the same time, about seven of 10 school districts in North Carolina had net enrollment decreases. Nearly every district with an enrollment drop was a rural one. Districts in the struggling northeast region of North Carolina were hit hardest. Halifax, Northampton, Washington, Bertie, and Warren counties posted the five largest percentage drops in student enrollment between 2008 and 2018.

Even seemingly trivial enrollment declines can produce persistent financial struggles. In general, state education funds are allocated based on student enrollment. Barring a radical change in the education funding system, rural districts will continue to receive fewer taxpayer dollars from the state, a worrisome prospect for schools that rely heavily on state-funded dollars for personnel and don't have a sufficient county tax base to make up the difference. These difficulties are compounded by the fact that many rural districts have considerable teacher recruitment and retention challenges, as rural communities are less likely to satisfy the preferences, desires, and needs of teacher candidates than their urban and suburban counterparts.

In recent years, public policy researchers have begun to draw attention to the virtues and shortcomings of rural education. Michael McShane and Andy Smarick's superb 2018 book, *No Longer Forgotten: The Triumphs and Struggles of Rural Education in America*, is a broad survey of the rural education policy landscape and a welcomed primer on a subject too long neglected by researchers, policymakers, and practitioners. McShane and Smarick suggest moving beyond the "deficit mind-set" model.

Rather, stakeholders should focus on "building the strengths of rural communities and the citizens who inhabit them." Fortunately, that's a conviction shared by the N.C. Rural Center, Golden LEAF Foundation, and numerous other nonprofit, governmental, and philanthropic groups that serve rural communities throughout North Carolina.

The challenge will be persuading policymakers to abandon formulating, implementing, and monitoring top-down, one-size-fits-all school reform strategies that often dismiss the legitimate concerns of rural families. Just because school districts encounter similar educational, social, and institutional difficulties doesn't mean those problems should be confronted in the same way. This is why a menu of reform options, particularly those that maximize support, flexibility, and choice, should be available to rural districts.

Russell Kirk concludes his essay with a warning: "One of the fairly sure conclusions to be drawn from a serious study of history is that great nations appear to decay when their rural population and their rural vigor have been impaired."

Strengthening rural education is valuable for its own sake. More important, it's critical to the future of North Carolina, and it's essential to the preservation of the Republic.

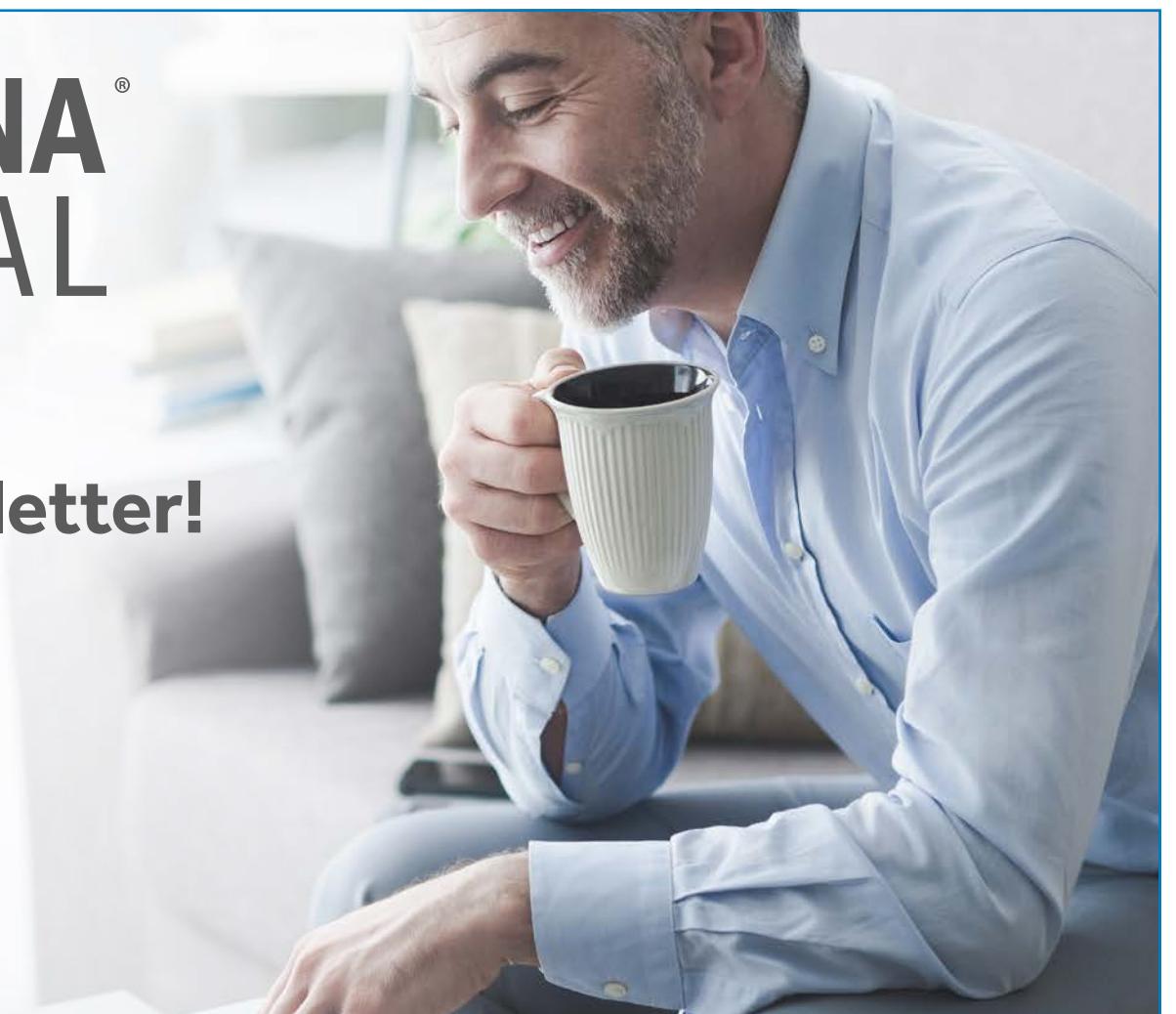


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## COMMENTARY

## A tale of two op-eds and the 2020 Senate race



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

As a regular consumer and producer of opinion columns, it's possible this observer tends to inflate their importance in the world of N.C. politics.

But two op-eds clearly have played significant roles in the opening stages of the fight for Republicans' 2020 U.S. Senate nomination. Whether those op-eds have any long-term impact remains to be seen.

Incumbent Sen. Thom Tillis faces his first re-election contest next year. Heading into that race, a Feb. 25 column in the *Washington Post* focused national attention on Tillis, and not necessarily for reasons he would have liked.

The senator devoted much of his op-ed to pledging support for President Trump's agenda of securing the southern border. Tillis also took shots at congressional Democrats. He accused them of obstructing Trump's plans for dealing with the border and immigration.

But it was the Republican senator's bottom-line conclusion that attracted notice. "I would vote in favor of the resolution disapproving of the president's national-emergency declaration, if and when it comes before the Senate," he wrote.

How could Tillis support the president on border security, yet oppose the national-emergency declaration designed to help



**SEN. THOM TILLIS.** Tillis published an op-ed in February declaring opposition to President Trump's national emergency declaration. He later changed his mind.

implement Trump's policies? The senator pointed to the proper separation of powers between Congress and the federal government's executive branch.

He cited his concerns "as a conservative" about a precedent "future left-wing presidents will exploit." Those future presidents could follow Trump's lead to "advance radical policies that will erode economic and individual freedoms," Tillis wrote.

Nothing about the preceding paragraph would appear out of place in the writing, floor debates, or stump speeches of a standard-issue, right-of-center Republican lawmaker. But the practical impact of Tillis' principled stand was direct opposition to Trump. The president's supporters cared little about the senator's purported principles or the proper balance between Capitol Hill and the White House.

By the time the Senate voted on the emergency declaration, 17 days after the op-ed's publication, Tillis had changed his mind. From the Senate floor, he explained that conversations with Trump administration officials and fellow senators had addressed his concerns. He voted with the president.

But the damage was done. Trump supporters didn't rally to his defense. They didn't praise his decision to set his reservations aside and stick with the team.

Those who might have credited Tillis for standing by his principles no longer had a reason to do so. And most observers considered the episode to offer evidence of a "full flip-flop," quoting a *Raleigh News & Observer* headline.

One person who clearly followed the proceedings with interest was retired Raleigh business executive Garland Tucker. Speaking May 8 with nationally syndicated radio



**GARLAND TUCKER.** Tucker is challenging Tillis in a 2020 primary, promising support for Trump, though Tillis' camp accuses him of "assembling an anti-Trump team."

host Sean Hannity, Tucker referred to Tillis and "the famous *Washington Post* op-ed." "When he got a lot of pressure from conservatives back home, he flip-flopped on that issue," Tucker said to Hannity's audience. "I think on immigration he's been very, very weak."

Tucker featured that "famous" op-ed in his first television ad challenging Tillis' re-election bid. Vying against the incumbent in a Republican primary, Tucker pledged to distinguish himself from the sitting senator both on immigration and government spending.

The challenger also promises support for Trump. He compares the president's economic policies to those of conservative heroes Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher. "When I'm elected senator of North Carolina, I'm going to support him 100 percent on what he's doing with the economy, for

sure," Tucker told Hannity.

Those words haven't protected Tucker against a charge from Tillis' camp that the challenger is actually an "anti-Trump activist" who is "assembling an anti-Trump team."

What's the basis for Tillis' accusation? Tucker's own words.

He wrote an op-ed for the *News & Observer* in September 2016, shortly before Trump's presidential election victory. Tucker labeled Trump a "flawed candidate." The op-ed critiqued Trump's character and temperament. It questioned his consistency on policy issues. Tucker pledged with reluctance to support Trump over Democratic rival Hillary Clinton.

Responding in May to criticism of that nearly three-year-old column, Tucker told the *N&O* that he "wouldn't retract anything" in it. He labeled Trump's performance in office "one of the most pleasant surprises I've ever seen." Tucker says he's now pleased that Trump was elected, and "I shudder to think there's any chance he might not get re-elected."

Regardless of Tucker's explanation, Tillis supporters might continue to mine that 2016 op-ed for damaging material. They will hope to plant seeds of doubt about Tucker's devotion to Trump and his policies.

Much will happen between now and the March 2020 Republican primary. Both Tillis and Tucker will have plenty of ways to share their opinions with GOP voters. One can only guess whether either of these two potentially damaging op-ed columns will sway voters as they head to the polls.

But it seems clear that Tillis' and Tucker's writing has helped set the stage for the campaign that lies ahead.

NORTH CAROLINA

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# EDUCATION

## The high price of salaries in the UNC System



**ANTHONY HENNEN**  
COLUMNIST

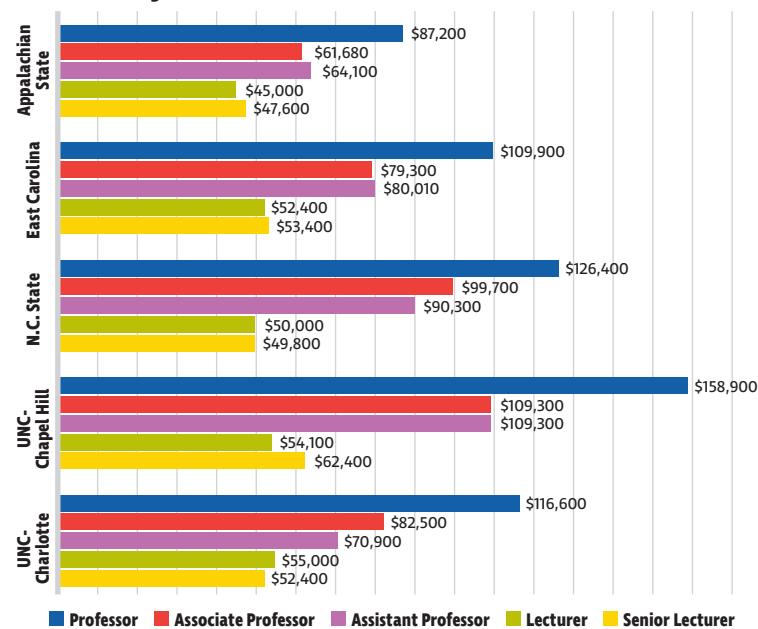
Faculty pay can vary greatly across universities and even within the same university system. Among University of North Carolina schools, the type of institution can matter as much as a professor's job title. Yet for even the most highly paid professors, their salaries are eclipsed by administrators.

A Martin Center analysis of salary data from the 2018-19 school year broke down median professor pay by title at Appalachian State University, East Carolina University, N.C. State University, UNC-Chapel Hill, and UNC-Charlotte to give the public a rough idea of how some UNC institutions pay their workers.

Unsurprisingly, UNC-Chapel Hill and N.C. State lead in teacher pay. The strong research focus at Chapel Hill and N.C. State requires high salaries to attract academic talent. Private-sector demand can also drive up salaries. Computer science professors, for example, are routinely poached from colleges because tech companies can offer them salaries out of reach in the higher ed world for all workers who aren't athletic coaches.

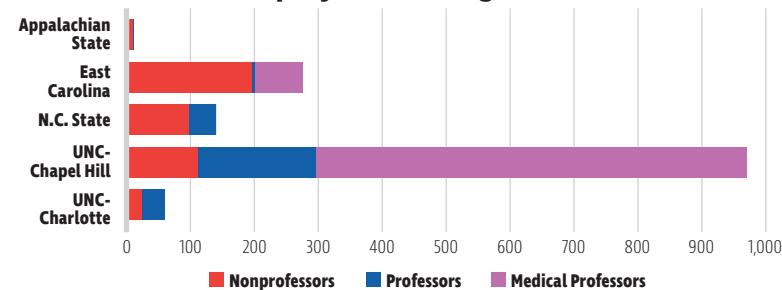
UNC-Chapel Hill has 35 research professors earning \$131,200 and 142 research assistant professors

### Median Pay for UNC Professors, 2018-19



NOTE: The "teaching instructor" and "instructor" titles are used as substitutes for "lecturer" and "senior lecturer," respectively, because East Carolina does not have those positions.

### Number of UNC Employees Earning Over \$200,000



earning \$87,200. N.C. State has 108 "named professors" earning \$174,400, 12 research professors earning \$125,700, and 44 research assistant professors earning \$70,700.

As with many colleges who view athletics as a branding or prestige tool, the highest-paid employee at N.C. State is head football coach David Doeren, who earns a base salary of \$1.5 million, followed by

men's head basketball coach Kevin Keatts, with a base salary of \$1.1 million. Chancellor Randy Woodson is the third highest-paid employee at \$632,810. Assistant coaches and vice chancellors round out the top 10. In fact, of the 139 N.C. State employees earning more than \$200,000, only 42 are professors.

At less research-intensive universities with smaller athletic programs, the pattern isn't as dramatic, but it still favors top administrators. Chancellor Philip Dubois is the highest-paid employee at UNC-Charlotte, with a base salary of \$461,300, followed by men's head basketball coach Ronald Sanchez at \$450,000 and provost and vice chancellor Joan Lorden at \$343,000. Of the 58 UNC-Charlotte employees earning more than \$200,000, 35 are professors.

When medical faculty are classified apart from regular faculty, it becomes clear that highly paid administrators are the norm, as can be seen in the bottom table.

The growth in administrative positions (and their paychecks) isn't a new story, nor are administrators the only ones driving college costs higher. The administrative growth — or bloat, depending on how one values it — is a reflection of higher education's expansion beyond teaching and research.

American higher education can't function today without a large number of administrators to run the arms and extensions of the university. As schools offer more services, they can't avoid hiring more bureaucrats, be they highly paid managers or low-level workers.

More university vice presidents, provosts, deans, assistant deans, financial analysts, counselors, health workers, and human resource staff add up. Their growth indicates a stronger focus on the business and noninstructional student services aspects of universities today.

Across higher ed, professional positions can account for 25% of on-campus jobs.

The administrative growth isn't entirely unwelcome, however. Students demand more mental health services than in the past, for example, and colleges have more public relations workers and lawyers at their disposal to handle on-campus scandals. Students and their parents may grimace at their tuition bills every semester, but they also embrace many aspects of the modern expansive college.

The dominance of university administrators is here to stay. Faculty will have to adjust to the shifting power dynamics on campus, as will students, their parents, and alumni. This shift can be seen in the high pay of provosts and deans, among other top administrators. Professors in the UNC System may have enviable salaries, but the occasional media characterization of professors as highly paid with strong job security isn't necessarily an accurate picture of who gets the biggest paycheck on campus. Instead, it's the university workers outside the classroom who draw them.

*Anthony Hennen is writer/editor at the James G. Martin Center for Academic Renewal.*

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# EDUCATION

## What's important to know about screens and reading



**KRISTEN BLAIR**  
COLUMNIST

In a world accustomed to skimming and scanning, what promotes deep reading? Paper or screen? Does the medium matter? As schools integrate digital resources and tools broadly into curricula and teaching, such questions need good answers. Fortunately, evidence is accumulating, with big impacts for learning.

New research, published in the *Journal of Research in Reading*, affirms the medium does matter — but what to do about it isn't always clear. A meta-analysis conducted by education researcher Virginia Clinton of 33 rigorous studies shows performance is better with paper. Differences between paper and screen are small but consistent. "There is legitimate concern that reading on paper may be better in terms of performance and efficiency," Clinton writes.

Genre matters, too. Clinton found no difference for lighter, narrative texts. But comprehension



of dense, expository texts suffered on screens. Screen readers were also overconfident, thinking they understood more than they did.

Should we dump devices? Push paper? No, but it's smart to be strategic about screens and reading. A guiding directive: Know yourself and how you like to read.

I interviewed Clinton for additional perspective. The primacy of paper, she says, is a "pretty resounding finding" throughout research. What's behind it? Personal preference is a "huge factor." Most

people prefer paper. In one study with participants who preferred screens, "any detriment of screens went away," Clinton says. "So, if you like a screen, you read just as well from a screen as from paper."

Contextual cues play a part. "A screen is a cue that what you're doing is more casual and light," Clinton says. "There's some research that indicates [readers] see the paper as a cue that means you're supposed to focus," she adds. "That could explain both the overconfidence piece as well as the



**Experts say we're honing pervasive digital-era reading habits — to process a barrage of information — that war with deep reading.**

... comprehension benefit."

This research is highly relevant for schools, especially as use of open educational resources — which are mostly digital — grows. In 2015 the U.S. Department of Education launched the #GoOpen initiative, encouraging states to transition to free, openly licensed educational materials. Twenty states, including North Carolina, signed on.

It's worth noting that reading preference can often be accommodated with OER. Clinton, who studies OER in higher education, says of textbooks vetted through networks like the Open Textbook Library: "One of the criteria is that [they're] downloadable and printable. An open textbook does not mean it has to be electronic. You can print them out, or you can order a bound copy."

For students, Clinton advises, "Reflect on your preferences. If you

really prefer reading from paper, then it may be worth the cost to you to print it out and read it that way. That may be enough of a bump in your comprehension and your awareness of your reading to be worth [it]."

More research is coming. Screens offer interactive capabilities that studies utilizing static content aren't assessing. Clinton plans to study interactivity next, looking at what the medium can do.

More fundamentally, experts say we're honing pervasive digital-era reading habits — to process a barrage of information — that war with deep reading. We need to do better at winnowing wheat from chaff, identifying when to focus, when to skim.

Honoring paper preferences when possible and practical makes sense. But there's more to do. The way forward, writes neuroscientist Maryanne Wolf in *The Guardian*, is to "identify and redress" what's being lost, cultivating a "bi-literate" reading brain capable of the deepest forms of thought in either digital or traditional mediums."

Wolf calls it a "new literacy for the digital age." It's hard but important work.

*Kristen Blair is a Chapel Hill-based education writer.*

## Making a lame case for diversity



**CHARLES GESHEKTER**  
COLUMNIST

**ABIGAIL STEWART** and Virginia Valian are senior psychologists at the University of Michigan and Hunter College, respectively. As an opponent of group preferences and double standards to achieve diversity among university faculty, I read their book, *An Inclusive Academy*, hoping to learn something from people with whom I disagreed.

This study confirms the tenacity of diversity activists and bureaucrats whose "numbers game" continues to embroil universities. For any contemporary campus, the authors find much diversity to consider toward achieving genuine inclusivity — "race and ethnicity, gender, sexuality, rank, ability status, age, dependent-care demands, partner status, health,

and more." Even more?

Since the late 1960s, what began as equitable outreach programs (or affirmative action) hardened into demands for equality of outcomes. By the 1990s, diversity had become synonymous with racial or ethnic preferences. It referred to a growing list of groups that a burgeoning administrative elite identifies as deserving special treatment.

As defenders of diversity, Stewart and Valian want universities to use race-conscious profiling as a way to fight racism. By permitting preferences to combat discrimination, their illiberal justifications undermine the norms of academic focus, disregard disciplinary specialization, encourage mediocrity, and foster cynicism.

As actively open-minded thinkers, Stewart and Valian accept that "disagreement is fundamental to academic discourse" and that "respectful, serious engagement with those who do not support change at the outset nearly always helps sharpen our ideas and allows us to improve them."

But their book ignores scholar-



**As diversity 'change agents' become regular participants in hiring committee deliberations, we should expect them to create an endlessly adversarial realm.**

ship that criticizes the ethics or legality of the diversity ideology. For instance, the chapter on "The Benefits of Diversity and Inclusion" cites 110 sources, but not one from critics such as Richard Sander, Gail Heriot, Shelby Steele, Heather Mac Donald, John McWhorter, or Stephan and Abigail Thernstrom.

A tendentious chapter on "Retaining Faculty" describes hostile university workplaces where the demands of so-called "work-centric" academic jobs somehow afflict women. The authors use the word "change" 12 times in one

paragraph, concluding, "change often begets more change." They acknowledge "changing individuals' beliefs and attitudes is not only difficult, but smacks of a kind of social engineering that is distasteful to most faculty members." I wonder why?

In pursuit of inclusivity, Stewart and Valian embrace stereotypes. They homogenize women and ethnic minorities, claiming they've suffered under a capricious yoke of white males that precluded them from being evaluated on merit.

Their solution to ending discrimination is to have diversity "minders" inserted at every level of any faculty search. To advance inclusivity, Stewart and Valian advocate group double standards as a way to tackle injustice. They propose outsiders be appointed to all faculty search committees, even for fields that lie far outside one's own discipline. As diversity "change agents" become regular participants in hiring committee deliberations, we should expect them to create an endlessly adversarial realm.

Stewart and Valian conclude

that constant pressure to maintain inclusive policies must ultimately come from upper-level academic bureaucrats. Only they have the power to police faculty searches and reward courageous personnel who tackle the tricky issues of equity, diversity, and inclusivity. The authors believe that one's identity group contributes to gender-focused or race-based approaches to the creation of knowledge. Such empty platitudes create an atmosphere in which academic progressives can support double standards and group preferences and deny that the finest thinkers, critics, researchers, and teachers are not linked to any one group.

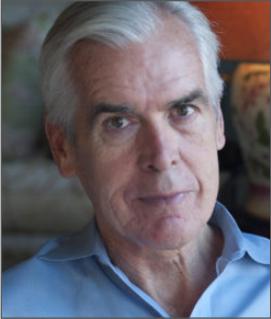
An indictment of male faculty for past mistreatment of women and minorities fuels the struggle of Stewart and Valian to make universities more inclusive. The obstacles seem insurmountable, hence their work as activists and consultants is never done.

*Charles Gesheker is a historian of modern Africa whose specialization is 20th-century Somalia.*

# GOVERNMENT

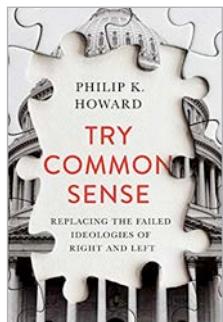
## Government reform requires fresh dose of common sense

### Q & A



**Philip Howard**  
Author & Attorney

Many of us read about a government program and say to ourselves, "That just doesn't make sense." **Philip Howard** has spent much of his career fighting government activities that defy common sense. Howard first attracted widespread attention with his 1995 book, *The Death of Common Sense*. He also has founded the group Common Good. Howard's latest book is titled *Try Common Sense*. He discussed themes from his recent work during an interview with Mitch Kokai for Carolina Journal Radio.



*Try Common Sense: Replacing the Failed Ideologies of Right and Left*

**MK:** I understand this latest book really does focus on government being broken because there's not enough common sense in many ways.

**PH:** Well, that's because we make common sense illegal. And so I propose a new governing vision that gives back to people the freedom to use their judgment, including in public choices, and to be accountable for how they do.

**MK:** I understand that part of this is basically a reset of how government works. How so?

**PH:** Yeah, so what's happened is that, over the last 50 years, the bureaucracy has grown in ways that nobody ever really intended. At this point, in federal law alone it's 150 million words. No one can know it. No small businessman can know all the rules that apply to him and such. And it's literally impenetrable.

Even the people in government don't have the authority to give a permit. In the crisis in 2009, President Obama got \$800 billion from Congress to stimulate the economy, including to rebuild broken infrastructure, and he spent almost none of it because he didn't have the authority to give a permit. It would take five or 10 years to give a permit to do what everybody knew was obvious.

**MK:** So if we have to do this reset, what's the first thing we do?

**PH:** Ultimately, what's needed in this situation — because Congress is hopeless — but frankly most legislative bodies can't sit there with hundreds of people and say, "Gosh, how would worker safety work better?"

So the way this always works is you appoint a small recodification commission and a small group of experts. That's what happened with the Uniform Commercial Code in this country in the 1950s. Come up with a plan, and then it gets approved or not or modified by Congress. But a small group comes up with a plan that basically tries to correct for 50 years



**HOWARD:** "if you look at all the Democratic candidates today, you can't find one who has any idea about how to make government work better. They're talking about socialism, or Medicare for All, or the Green New Deal, or something like that."

of mistakes in each area of law.

**MK:** And, from what I understand, part of what the correction would involve would be allowing people who are in government to actually do their jobs, make decisions, not have to try to comply with the bureaucratic dictates.

**PH:** Well, yeah. It gives everybody more freedom to adapt to the particular situation, but key to this is being able to hold government officials accountable. Somebody abuses their power. If they're a jerk, they ought to be able to be fired. And I just got a call from the White House recently, asking me if I could help come up with a complete overhaul of that system of public employment, which I've written a lot about. And that's absolutely critical to this idea of pushing the reset button.

**MK:** So is the problem tied to the people involved, or is it the system? If the people were given more flexibility, would we see better outcomes?

**PH:** It's both. The culture of government is awful now. Washington: I get a rash whenever I go over the bridge from the airport. It's just a horrible place. People wouldn't know what responsibility was.

One of the things I suggest in my new book, *Try*

*Common Sense*, is that we move most agencies out of Washington and move them around the country. So, you know, we can move the Department of Transportation to North Carolina. Right? I mean, why not? It would work better. The Centers for Disease Control — that's in Atlanta. It works better than agencies in Washington.

But for democracy to work you need to let the people who are elected make new choices, and that includes choices about who's implementing the law. And right now, all the links in that chain are broken. One of the points that I make that people just don't understand: The cure to red tape is responsibility and accountability. You don't need all this red tape. You don't need to spend five years on a permit if you let people use their judgement and be accountable if they do a bad job — if they're on the take or something.

So [it is] the only way to actually alleviate the frustration and the alienation, I mean, laws piled up so much that everybody is now trained to go through the day saying, "Can I prove what I'm about to do is legally correct?" Businesses don't give job references, and teachers won't put an arm around a crying child. It's madness.

**MK:** Do you get a sense that the people who are working in government now want that responsibility and

accountability? Or do they like the system where they can write their way out of responsibility by making sure they just check the boxes?

**PH:** Responsibility is their worst nightmare. They absolutely don't want responsibility. And the only way to make them take responsibility is to fire them if they don't. ... Not everything in government is broken. You can find agencies where people do a good job and such. If you look at those agencies or go to any public school that works well, you'll find people who wake up in the morning saying, "I'm going to go make sense of these choices and make this work."

So nothing works unless a person makes it work. In the history of civilization, nothing ever got accomplished because somebody followed a rule. Rules are there to prevent bad things from happening. They don't make good things happen. But that's one of the reasons I think we should move the agencies out of Washington. We need new people.

**MK:** I understand that one of your arguments is that we have reached the political state that we have now largely because people have been so fed up with this system. One of the things that attracted them to Donald Trump was he wanted to come in and wreck the bad system.

**PH:** Sure. I mean Donald Trump is just a symptom of this extraordinary alienation from government by the American people. They hate it. And yet, if you look at the candidates — if you look at all the Democratic candidates today — you can't find one who has any idea about how to make government work better. They're talking about socialism, or Medicare for All, or the Green New Deal, or something like that. They're not talking about actually making government responsive.

And if you go to the Trump administration, they have the kind of right instinct about fixing government, but their only idea is sort of deregulation, which is good in some areas. Some things we shouldn't be regulating.

But it's not the cure for red tape. The cure for red tape is responsibility and accountability. ... People want clean water and clean air. But it shouldn't drive people nuts. You shouldn't have inspectors giving fines to farmers because there's insignificant runoff.

**MK:** You've been watching this for years. You've been writing about it since the 1990s. How convinced are you that at some point we are going to take these steps to reinject common sense into the system?

**PH:** Oh, great question. I can't make change. You can't make change. Change is happening. Donald Trump is a symptom of change. Washington might as well be the court of Louis XVI. It's collapsing. People hate it. So it's going to change, but look at where the needle is going. Look at where the left is going — the lunacy.

What's needed is a radical centrist platform. The forces of change will come from the people. What I'm worried about is that there's no coherent vision of what the change ought to be, and what I'm preaching, if you will, is a system that gives back to humans the freedom to take responsibility and where law as a framework for freedom is not an instruction manual that tells us how to live our lives correctly.

It's just absurd.

## SOCIETY

## Feminist movement has had adverse impact for many men

## Q &amp; A



**Mona Charen**  
Senior Fellow  
Ethics and Public Policy  
Center

There's no doubt that the feminist movement has had major impacts on the lives of women. Pundits and policy experts have devoted much less attention to the consequences for men. Mona Charen, senior fellow at the Ethics and Public Policy Center, discussed feminism's influence on men during a recent presentation for the John Locke Foundation. Charen also delivered the 2019 John W. Pope Lecture at N.C. State University. Charen shared highlights of her work during an interview with Mitch Kokai for Carolina Journal Radio.

**MK:** I'm guessing most people, when they think about the feminist movement and the impact that it's had, think about women. Why should we also be thinking about how this has affected men?

**MC:** It's a huge untold story. We have a culture and a society that is very focused on the needs of women, often in very good ways. Women have special needs at work. Women have to deal with sexual harassment. Women have challenges of various kinds with juggling home and family plus work.

All right, that's fine. But what we don't tend to pay much attention to is that men in our society are falling behind in worrisome ways. We have now a situation where 60% of the undergraduate bachelor's degrees that are awarded go to women [and] a similar number of graduate degrees in many fields. Women are graduating from high school at higher rates than men. Women are employed at higher rates than men.

Men are also falling away from their family responsibilities and from fatherhood. And what I'm worried about, and what I think our culture needs to grapple with and pay attention to, is that the decline of men as fathers, and the decline of appreciating that very important role in their lives and in our society, has had many, many very baleful effects.

It's had bad effects on women. Girls who grow up without fathers in the home have many more problems than girls who have involved dads. But what we found recently — what the social science tells us and what some of those data that I was just citing suggest — is that growing up in a fatherless home is much more devastating for boys, and they are paying a much heavier price in terms of life success.

So boys who grow up without dads, we all know that they're much more likely to get involved with the criminal justice system. That's a well-known statistic, but it's also true that they're less ambitious, less likely to want to go to college, and less likely to be employed as adults than



**CHAREN:** "We're all connected. There's so much of a tendency to say what's good for women versus what's good for men. ... We cannot bifurcate what's good for the sexes that way."

their sisters who grew up in the same home without a father.

And so we need to be particularly attentive to the fact that boys need dads in order to grow up healthy and happy and, frankly, marriageable. When guys grow up without fathers, they are much less likely to be the kind of men that women want to marry. And so that's another aspect of this.

We're all connected. There's so much of a tendency to say what's good for women versus what's good for men. What I said in my talk — what I say in my book, *Sex Matters* — is that we cannot bifurcate what's good for the sexes that way. We're too connected. If women are thriving at the expense of men or if men are failing to thrive, it affects women and vice versa.

**MK:** Do these harmful effects for men, do you think, result from the feminist movement, or is this just something that has happened because of such a focus on women — that men have [been] left behind?

**MC:** That's a very, very complicated question. I think, to a degree, especially the early second-wave feminists that are sort of the iconic — you know, Betty Friedan and Gloria Steinem



**What I'm worried about, and what I think our culture needs to grapple with and pay attention to, is that the decline of men as fathers, and the decline of appreciating that very important role in their lives and in our society, has had many, many very baleful effects.**

and Germaine Greer and so forth — that crowd certainly contributed to this problem because they weren't content to talk about women's advancement. They also denigrated men, and they denigrated marriage. They felt that marriage was a trap for women, and they were very, very keen to destroy what they called the patriarchy. And by that they meant not just that men tend to have the corner offices, but that marriage itself was a kind of oppression of women.

And I think that as a mat-

ter of intellectual history, that did affect the culture. It did serve to devalue marriage and diminish its importance for many people. Obviously, there are other things going on as well.

The economy is changing to less of an industrial economy. We're now in a postindustrial or information-age economy. The kinds of jobs that our economy now tends to provide tend to be service-oriented jobs where women might have a slight advantage because women are more interpersonally sophisticated, shall we say, than men. In general, not always, but these things are roughly true. And so those things are also contributing, but I do think that the feminist movement, insofar as it denigrated marriage and the importance of fathers in particular, played a role.

**MK:** We could talk for a long time about what we do now that we know about the problem. What do you see as sort of the first thing we need to recognize and address now that we know that this problem exists for men?

**MC:** We need to focus on the fact that people in the upper third of our society, college-educated and above, have figured out that marriage is important. They have a plan for their chil-

dren, and they know that in order for their kids to take their places in the upper echelons of our society, that they need two parents and that they need fathers, for the most part.

Obviously, [with] same-sex couples that's not always going to be possible, but with the other two-thirds of our society, which is the vast majority of Americans, marriage has fallen so far out of favor that it is almost not the norm now. If you look at the numbers of high school dropout women, for example, who have their first baby out of wedlock, it's something like 67%. And it is no longer the norm for people with little or only some college education.

So what do we do about that? Well, one thing — and I'll quote Charles Murray here — Murray says that the elites need to preach what they practice. ... Don't keep it a secret that this is one of the ways that you can have a successful life and a middle-class income or above, and that your children are likely to thrive.

**MK:** A very important message. Do you get the sense that some people are now getting this? That the evidence is so obvious that people see there's a need to act?

**MC:** I'm not so sure about that, but what I do think is that it very much matters how you frame it. You cannot come to people and chastise them and say, "You're a bad person because you had a baby out of wedlock or you fathered children out of wedlock." They're following the social norms that they inherited. They didn't think they were doing anything particularly wrong.

It's up to us to say, "Hey, you might want to rethink this. Here are the facts. Here are things that you might not have heard about." I quote a young woman from an inner-city high school, a beautiful young gal. Smart. She said, "I never was told about the success sequence." That is that you should do these things in order and be sure to be married before your first child. She said, "No one ever talked about that with us."

## EDITORIAL

# Budget standoff highlights policy differences

As we go to press, the state Senate is passing its version of a \$23.9 billion General Fund budget for the next fiscal year. By the time you read this, the Senate and House might have resolved their differences in a conference report, passed it, and sent it to Gov. Roy Cooper.

Who probably will veto it.

None of this is surprising. The Democrat Cooper vetoed the last two budgets he got from the Republican-led General Assembly. But the 2017-18 legislature had enough Republicans to override the vetoes.

Last November's election results flipped the odds to Cooper's favor. Republicans lost their veto-proof supermajorities in both the House and Senate. And yet each chamber passed its budget along party lines. Since Cooper has rejected the GOP's priorities, the simplest way he could enact his vision is by refusing to let any new fiscal plan take effect without concessions from lawmakers.

Cooper could have chosen to sit down with legislative leaders and make deals. But he hasn't. And the plans passed by the Senate and House show such negotiations aren't likely.

The governor is treating the budget fight as the unofficial launch

of his 2020 re-election campaign. Legislative leaders are plenty happy to contrast their vision of the role of government with his. As a result, we have a budget stalemate which could last for months. Neither side seems inclined to compromise, as each offers a different set of priorities for governance.

If a new budget isn't in place by July 1, the current tax and spending programs will stay in place until a fresh budget becomes law. With plenty of money flowing into the state treasury to cover spending obligations, state government will stay open.

The likely standoff might last a long time.

While we take issue with some of the legislature's choices, lawmakers clearly have a better idea than the governor does of managing state finances and public policy.

The fight is worth it.

For instance, Cooper insists on expanding Medicaid coverage under the Affordable Care Act. Doing so in the budget appears easier than moving a separate bill. Set aside the problems with expanding Medicaid coverage primarily to people who are single, childless males, as Obamacare expansion would do. And the evidence that Medicaid patients often get worse

care than uninsured people who rely on clinics and emergency departments for their treatments.

Cooper's budget doesn't pay for Medicaid expansion.

John Locke Foundation Health Policy Analyst Jordan Roberts has noted that Cooper's budget has expansion costing an extra \$6.3 billion over two years. Federal taxpayers (including North Carolinians) will pick up 90% of that spending. Since Uncle Sam already has run up more than \$23 trillion in public debt, the money really will come from today's young workers.

Even so, N.C. taxpayers would remain on the hook for \$631 million over two years. Cooper's budget proposal covers \$78.2 million — a mere 12% of the cost. The rest would require spending cuts or higher taxes.

Cooper also would leave less than \$80 million of his \$24.5 billion General Fund plan unspent. (The House and Senate leave unappropriated \$619 million and \$743 million, respectively, allowing more flexibility in case of emergencies or other unanticipated problems).

And the governor wouldn't cut taxes. The General Assembly's plans raise the standard deduction or "zero tax bracket" — the amount of money you can earn

without paying income taxes.

The increase is a tax cut for every working North Carolinian. There's also a solid business tax cut in the legislative proposal, a reduction in the franchise tax, which businesses must pay whether they're wildly profitable or barely able to make payroll.

Legislative leaders have been eager to call the governor's approach a return to failed policies of the past, and they're not far wrong. The General Assembly's agenda — cutting and simplifying taxes, streamlining regulations, expand-

ing school choice, and boosting infrastructure repair and upgrades — has made North Carolina a better place to live, learn, work, raise a family, and operate a business.

The governor's plans would reverse many policies which spurred that progress.

There's some room to compromise, but only if Medicaid expansion is off the table. If Cooper won't relent, then each side seems happy to stand by its goals and let North Carolina voters decide next year.

If so, here's hoping they choose wisely.



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## COMMENTARY BY JOHN HOOD

### Odd-year primaries yield normal outcomes

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outright. State Rep. Greg Murphy won 23 percent of the vote in the initial 3rd District primary, while his state House colleagues Phil Shepherd and Michael Speciale came in third and fourth place, respectively.

What explains these effects? A name on the ballot multiple times is a plus, as is news coverage of legislative service. But another clear advantage is that legislators are used to raising money.

Speaking of which, however, my third observation is that significant expenditure is a necessary but insufficient condition for success. The second-place finisher in the initial 3rd District contest, Perry, isn't a lawmaker or previous candidate. She did well — coming in first or second in eight of the district's counties — because she was able to translate many years of civic and political engagement into a well-funded campaign as well as independent expenditures on her behalf by pro-life groups. Similarly, in the 9th District, Dan Bishop also enjoyed both fundraising success and independent expenditure support (from the Club for Growth, an economic-freedom organization).

But the effects of campaign spending are often exaggerated. Celeste Cairns in the 3rd and Leigh Brown in the 9th attracted major support from the Club for Growth and the National Association of Realtors, respectively. But they lacked a compelling message, a reason voters should have preferred them to better-known candidates. If money were the overwhelming determinant of political success, as some claim, Cairns and Brown should have fared a lot better than they did.

Both of North Carolina's special congressional elections will conclude Sept. 10. Bishop will face Democrat Dan McCreedy, Libertarian Jeff Scott, and the Green Party's Allen Smith in the 9th District. In the 3rd, the Democrat Thomas will face the winner of the GOP runoff between Murphy and Perry, as well as Libertarian Tim Harris and the Constitution Party's Greg Holt.

Those general elections will be largely about President Trump versus the increasingly left-wing Democratic caucus on Capitol Hill. Again, no big surprises.

# Freedom can fuel faster growth

North Carolina's economy is doing well. With a headline unemployment rate of 4 percent and a healthy 2.8 percent jump in inflation-adjusted median household income last year, North Carolinians are better off economically than they have been in years.

Our state doesn't have the top-performing economy in the country, however. Does that mean North Carolina's rightward turn on economic policy was a mistake?

Over the past five years, the 10 states with the biggest gains in gross domestic product were Washington, Oregon, California, Utah, Colorado, Florida, Idaho, Georgia, Arizona, and Nevada. What do these states have in common?

Not politics. Five voted for Hillary Clinton. Five voted for Donald Trump. During most of the period, most had either Republican governors or legislatures or both. But California, Washington, and Oregon are deep blue.

With regard to public policy, while seven of the 10 states rank relatively high in economic freedom according to ratings by the Fraser Institute and the Cato Institute, those same three blue states do not.



**ECONOMIC FREEDOM.** Investment and job creation are shifting westward and southward, following America's population shifts.

I'll cut to the chase — the common denominator is geography. Broadly speaking, America's population is shifting westward and southward. Investment and job creation are, too. From 2013 to 2018, the regions with the fastest GDP growth were the Far West (3.7 percent), Rocky Mountains (3.1 percent), Southwest (2.5 percent), and Southeast (2.1 percent).

Across a range of statistics and time periods, the fastest-growing economies in the Southeast are Florida and Georgia. North Carolina is typically third or fourth — higher than the regional average,

to be sure, but not as high as Florida and Georgia.

Since 2013, North Carolina lawmakers have enacted a series of major tax cuts and regulatory reforms. Understandably, progressives dislike these decisions. They think our state would be better off if the legislature had kept taxes and regulations higher and spent more taxpayer dollars on education, health care, and other programs.

They can't hold up Florida or Georgia as examples of their preferred policy mix, however. Florida has no personal income tax. Georgia's overall tax burden

is lower than North Carolina's, although the structure of our tax system has become more pro-growth than theirs in recent years.

Where Georgia really shows us up is regulation. Although North Carolina has made significant progress in this area, it's still easier to create and operate businesses in Georgia. Overall, Florida ranks first and Georgia ranks seventh in economic freedom, according to both the Fraser and Cato methodologies. North Carolina is in the teens or worse, depending on the measure.

Most academic studies find that, everything else being equal, economic freedom is better for growth than the high-tax, high-expenditure, high-regulation model progressives advocate. California is an outlier, not an exemplar. Its location, resources, capital stock, and importance to the burgeoning trade of the Pacific Rim are so valuable that even foolish policy choices haven't run its economy aground — yet.

North Carolina should aspire to top the Southeast in economic performance. We should also aspire to be first in freedom in the Southeast. The two goals aren't just consistent. They're related.

### HIGHER EDUCATION

## State ranks high in college funding

**NORTH CAROLINA** appropriates less taxpayer money to state colleges and universities in real terms than it did before the onset of the Great Recession. Tuition has risen markedly and now accounts for a larger share of total revenue. But our state remains one of the most generous in the country when it comes to funding higher education.

How can all three statements be true? Because North Carolina's starting position was so high.

According to the latest report from the State Higher Education Executive Officers Association, North Carolina appropriated \$12,496 per full-time-equivalent student in 2008. Only Wyoming and Alaska reported higher funding levels that year.

In 2018, North Carolina's appropriation per student was \$10,429. Average tuition rose as appropriations dropped, but not dollar for dollar. In 2008, average tuition per student was \$3,745, accounting for about 23 percent

## \$10,429

North Carolina's 2018 appropriation per student

of North Carolina's \$16,241 per student in total educational revenue. In 2018, tuition averaged \$5,515 per student, or about 35 percent of the \$15,944 in revenue per student.

In other words, while things have changed somewhat, it would be a stretch to describe the change as radical. Having previously ranked third, North Carolina now ranks sixth in the nation in appropriations per student. In only seven other states is tuition lower as a share of revenue.

These numbers do tell us something important not just about higher education in North Carolina but about policy reform in general: Change tends to be incremental, not dramatic.

A traditional argument for taxpayer subsidy of education reflects the economic concept of "positive externalities." When students obtain valuable knowledge, skills, and credentials, they and their families benefit. But other people in society can benefit, too. They can get better employees or employers, benefit from new inventions and innovations, and live in safer, healthier, and better-led communities because those communities contain more, and better-educated, graduates.

Whether these purported benefits actually materialize for any particular student, or collectively at a scale large enough to justify the cost, is a matter for another day. Assume that they happen as advertised. What is the likely share of those benefits that are external to the parties directly in on the transaction — students, their families, and those who work in higher education?

If you think three-quarters or

more of the benefits are claimed by society as a whole rather than by students and families, then North Carolina's previous level of subsidy probably made sense to you. But I doubt you'd have much of a leg to stand on.

Our state constitution requires that the benefits of our public colleges and universities be "as far as practicable ... extended to the people of the state free of expense." In recent years, North Carolina's funding policies have become more practicable in my view. Now let's focus on the most-pressing issue: reducing the real cost of delivering educational services, rather than just shifting the cost from one set of pockets to another.

That may mean employing technology, redesigning programs, redistributing them among campuses, and scrutinizing nonteaching positions. And, yes, it probably means doing these things incrementally, not suddenly.

## COMMENTARY

# School choice allows parents to choose sacrifice, inconvenience to help their children succeed



**JOHN TRUMP**  
MANAGING EDITOR

**W**e got lucky. By “we” I mean my family, which includes my wife and twin boys, who are now 16.

They have never attended a traditional public school. They haven’t attended a private school, either.

But that’s the great thing about freedom of choice. It gives N.C. parents options, in this case the ability to choose where they send their children to learn.

The boys attended a charter-magnet school for kindergarten through part of fifth grade, which was interrupted when openings became available at a new charter middle school about 15 miles away. We drove them to school in

the morning and picked them up in the afternoon, a process which, all told, took a couple of hours.

Was this inconvenient for my wife and me? Sure, it was.

Did we have to make sacrifices because we believed such an educational environment was best for our children? You bet.

We didn’t choose to take advantage of N.C. charter schools because of a prejudice or an intangible distaste for traditional public schools. Rather, we chose these types of schools simply because we believed they would best suit our children.

Many educators throughout North Carolina do great work, in and out of the classroom.

Yet parents know their children best. Or, at least, they darned well should. Parents know their children’s idiosyncrasies and peccadillos. Parents can identify burgeoning strengths and potential weaknesses. Parents, and their children, rush in to fill those gaps.

So when it came time for the boys to enter high school, we con-

sidered our options.

One of the boys, we thought, would most likely be fine in a traditional public school, maybe even thrive there. The other, we believed, was an imperfect fit for the one-size-fits-all method of traditional public education.

We took advantage of our power to choose, appreciating our choice to live in a state that allows parents such remarkable flexibility.

We applied to charter schools throughout the Triad. Then, I got a job in Raleigh, so we started applying in the Triangle, too. We entered the lottery for Raleigh Charter High School, arguably the best high school in North Carolina and among the top several dozen in the country.

It was not unlike entering an actual lottery, in which money is the prize. Uh, good luck with that.

Raleigh Charter got 1,423 applications for admission for the 2020-21 school year, including 1,152 for ninth grade. An admissions lottery was held March 22, and 150 rising freshmen were accepted, the

school’s website says.

“Due to the high number of applications,” the school’s website says, “nonsibling ninth-graders had a 7% chance of being accepted to RCHS in this year’s lottery.”

After we applied a couple of years ago, we got a letter telling us we were fifth on an obviously lengthy wait list. (Twins, by the way, don’t get a double shot at the lottery. Instead, they both get in on the same number.)

“We’re in,” I told my wife. Still dubious, she scoffed.

“There’s no way anyone will turn down the chance to attend Raleigh Charter,” she said.

We got in. People are incredulous when we tell them where our kids attend school. Dumb luck, we say, even considering Raleigh Charter is in an older, smaller building. There is no cafeteria, no auditorium, and no athletic fields.

None of that matters, really.

No doubt, we appreciate the gravity of this auspicious selection, and, I think, as the boys prepare to enter their junior years

at RCHS, they’re starting to realize their good fortune, as well.

But critics, mostly Democrats, would rather charter schools just go away. That won’t happen, but they will move to inhibit growth nonetheless.

Critics of charter schools argue school choice programs, like charter schools, siphon money and resources from traditional public schools. These critics are pursuing caps on growth and even a moratorium on new charters, pending further study — misguided ideas aimed at eliminating competition and propping up failing public schools.

Any studying should be left to students, of course, and those parents willing to accept a daily inconvenience. Those parents who will make the necessary sacrifices to give their children the best chances for success.

Raleigh Charter is successful for myriad reasons, though communication is high on that list. Teach-

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## Has a key economic rule been broken?



**MICHAEL WALDEN**  
COLUMNIST

**I TOOK MY FIRST** economics course 50 years ago. In that course, students learned several rules about how the economy supposedly worked. One of the rules concerned the relationship between unemployment and inflation. The rule stated there was an inverse relationship between the unemployment rate and the inflation rate. This means that as the unemployment rate goes down, the inflation rate rises, and vice-versa.

The rule was based on the idea that lower unemployment generates faster rising wages for workers. Since labor is a key ingredient in making most products, if labor is more expensive, so too will be the cost of things we buy.

Most of us would like to have a low-low situation, that is, both low unemployment and low inflation. So the rule is significant because it suggests an economy can’t have both — indeed, an economy has to enjoy one and endure the other.

The rule about unemployment and inflation has dominated the economics profession for decades. It has also been a key factor for economic policymakers, particularly at the Federal Reserve. This is because the “Fed” is mandated to watch both unemployment and inflation and use its influence to prevent either one from getting out of control.

The unemployment/inflation rule can go a long way in explaining the recent actions of the Fed. During the years of the Great Recession and immediately afterward, unemployment was high and inflation was virtually nonexistent. This situation allowed the Fed to focus on stimulating the economy and thereby lowering unemployment. The Fed did this by keeping interest rates low (in fact, at 0%) and pumping credit into banks.

By 2015, with the national unemployment rate cut in half to 5% and forecasted to go lower, the Fed began to raise interest rates in an effort to slow economic growth and contain inflation. By early this year, the Fed had raised its key interest rate from 0% to 2.4%.

But then a funny thing happened. Economists and others began to notice the inflation rate

was not accelerating. Instead, it was staying in a range of between 2% and 2.5%.

One explanation is the Fed’s policy was working. Higher interest rates were slowing the economy and preventing the inflation rate from rising. But there’s just one thing wrong with this reasoning. The pace of economic growth actually accelerated between 2015 and 2019.

This turn of events has led some economists to question the traditional unemployment/inflation rule. If the rule is broken, the big question is why?

There are two possible answers — automation and global trade. The use of machinery and technology in the workplace is replacing workers in many industries. Look at manufacturing. Although there has been a slight rebound since the Great Recession, manufacturing employment is down 35% from its peak in the 1970s, even while manufacturing output is up 42% since just 1997. Automation means fewer workers are needed to make more output, thereby shrinking the impact higher wages have on general inflation.

The same is the case for global trade. Buying more products from foreign countries allows

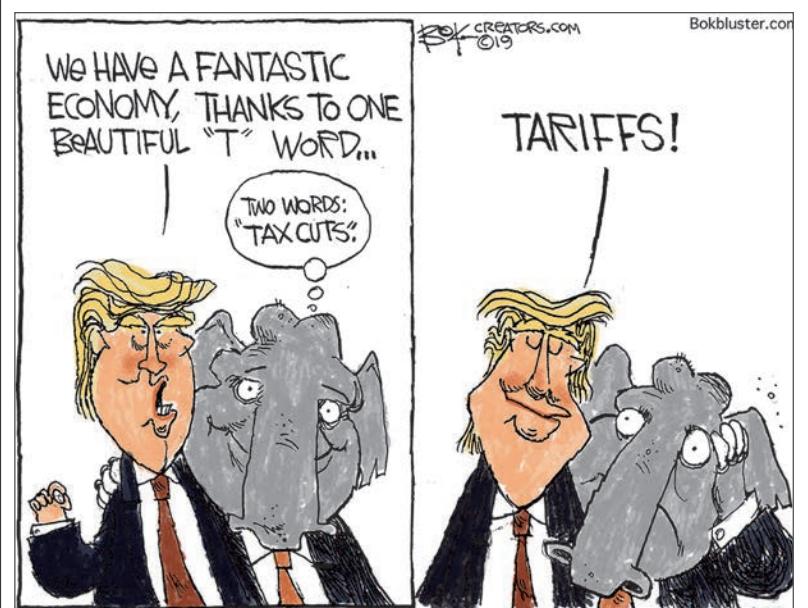
U.S. consumers to access bigger pools of labor, most of whom are paid lower wages than their U.S. counterparts. So, a tight U.S. labor market can be avoided by companies using workers in other parts of the world.

If the unemployment/inflation rule no longer holds, there are both good and bad results. The good result is we can finally have both low unemployment and low inflation at the same time. The bad result is the

end of the rule has largely occurred because there are now substitutes for U.S. workers in the form of automation and foreign trade.

This is a lot for policymakers — particularly at the Fed — to digest.

P.S. In a recent column I said the North Carolina state portion of the gas tax was 18.05 cents per gallon. It’s actually 36.2 cents per gallon. My mistake. I also said the rate has risen faster than general inflation since 2010. This is still accurate.



## COMMENTARY

## Electoral College has little to do with race, slavery



**ANDY TAYLOR**  
COLUMNIST

Given the result of the 2016 presidential election, it's not surprising Democrats are talking a lot about the Electoral College as the 2020 campaign gets under way. A number of their candidates want it abolished. Race has become a central feature of the debate. Prominent scholars on the left assert the Electoral College was established to safeguard and propagate the institution of slavery, and that alone makes it an abomination. I'm going to chime in.

Slavery was quite clearly on the minds of delegates to the Constitutional Convention in 1787. Virginian James Madison stated publicly in mid-July that the South's black population was a liability in a direct national vote for the office of president. But the final agreement on the Electoral College came six weeks after the notorious compromise granting states seats to the House of Representatives based on

their population calculated with slaves counting as three-fifths of a white person. The focus of delegates in their discussion of what would become the Enumeration Clause in Article I was Congress, the branch they believed would be most powerful. Only in the last days of the convention, and after having considered many different plans for presidential selection, did the framers settle on the Electoral College. As a form of indirect election that mixed popular democracy with federalism, its appeal was broad.

Setting the motives of delegates aside, the Electoral College forced the South to "play fair." A simple popular vote would have provided all states with greater incentives to cheat, by falsifying census data and manipulating voting rights, rules, and reported outcomes. Given how easy this would have been at the time, they would surely have done so. The Electoral College has given us a number of elections tainted by accusations of chicanery — 1824, 1876, 1960, and 2000. Before the Civil War, the contests of 1824, 1840, and 1844 were so close in the national popular vote that many Americans would have questioned the result. In 1860 Abraham Lincoln won a precarious popular



**The reason only two presidents came from 'free' states before 1836 was not the Electoral College, but the North's incapacity to stick together and unwillingness to offer candidates committed to fighting slavery.**

vote plurality, but a decisive Electoral College majority. Under direct election, Democrats and Southerners may well have used legal and political tools to prevent his ascension to the presidency.

The Electoral College was also not "rigged" to produce outcomes conducive to slavery. The three-fifths compromise ensured white adult males in slaveholding states exercised disproportionate influence. But it did not give them an electoral majority. The 1790 census shows, for example, Northern non-slaveholding states — Delaware, Maryland, and Kentucky did not join the Confederacy but contained sizable slave populations — could single-handedly determine the fate

of the presidency if they voted as a block. This was true even in 1824 after the small slave states of Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi — advantaged by the two electors every state receives regardless of population — had joined the Union. That year, John Quincy Adams of Massachusetts captured the White House.

The reason only two presidents came from "free" states before 1836 was not the Electoral College, but the North's incapacity to stick together and unwillingness to offer candidates committed to fighting slavery. With the possible exception of 1812, it wasn't until 1856 that we have a truly sectional result. The two geographic blocks generally had the same profile — a couple of very large states and a few smaller ones. But the North always had the edge, in both electoral votes and white male population. After 1840, the North grew more rapidly, became more unified, and its candidates won many more presidential elections.

In the same vein, a central attribute of the Electoral College is the winner-take-all or "unit" rule — in which the candidate who gets a plurality of a state's popular vote wins the entirety of its electors. That's why we say the really influ-

ential states in presidential elections are "battlegrounds," where the outcome will be close, today places like Florida and Ohio. Each citizen's vote for the winner there is worth more in the Electoral College than a vote cast for the winner in California or Texas; that is, by someone who lives in a solidly blue or red state.

The data before 1824 are meager, but, with the possible exception of 1836, antebellum popular vote outcomes were appreciably closer in Northern states. Because the North was divided, the Electoral College's unit rule inflated the chances of a candidate backed by majority sentiment in its states at the expense of the favorite of a more unified South.

The Electoral College is not the evil institution many claim it to be. I don't think there's any doubt it was elitist — electors could act independent of the popular vote in the early years — and retains counter-majoritarian characteristics as we saw in 2016. It has little to nothing, however, to do with race and slavery.

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

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ers, parents, and students listen to one another. They talk to one another, and they are honest with one another.

"Our faculty is focused on really building relationships with kids and taking those relationships and focusing on the curriculum and helping kids grow individually," Raleigh Charter Principal Lisa Huddleston recently told *Carolina Journal*.

Much talk in the General Assembly over the next several months and years will focus around bonds and other funding methods to build new, multimillion-dollar schools. There will be rallies and intensive lobbying, all toward that goal.

Educators and schools will ask for — even demand — more money and better benefits. They'll want smaller classes and more money for supplies.

It will be interesting to learn how much these same people talk about helping students, individually. How much they talk about building relationships, with parents and students, even if those relationships require certain levels of sacrifice and inconvenience, for either side.

I guess we'll see.

## Alcohol reform may be coming to N.C., and it's about time



**BECKI GRAY**  
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT  
JOHN LOCKE FOUNDATION

**THE N.C. ALCOHOLIC** Beverage Control system — created in 1937 in the wake of the repeal of Prohibition — for the past 80-plus years has remained mostly static.

But this may soon change, as lawmakers have offered several proposals to repair the broken, outdated system.

But what's interesting this session, despite the many past attempts to reform the system, is that the proposed changes by lawmakers are simple and workable.

Long-needed reforms to modernize, build efficiencies, enhance consumer choice, and streamline a cumbersome system are long overdue. But even if substantive reform this session is unrealistic, smaller provisions have been well-received and, in turn, would have a significant impact on loosening the current rigid ABC system to encourage and to grow a burgeoning industry.

Each state regulates the production, sale, and distribution of alcohol, and North Carolina is just one of 17 states with a "control model." North Carolina, however, is the only state in which local government boards control liquor sales, operating through 170 separate boards appointed and controlled by county or municipal officials. This unique model has evolved over the years into a cumbersome, inefficient system that is rife with mismanagement, wastes taxpayer money, limits consumer choice, and chokes out competition.

It's past time North Carolina gets out of the liquor business, opens the market to competition, and encourages opportunities for entrepreneurs.

Comprehensive reform, as suggested in House Bill 971, would eliminate local ABC boards and treat the distribution, sale, and permitting of spirituous liquor the same as it does beer and wine. H.B. 971 would maintain the current wholesale distribution system, amend excise taxes — redirecting proceeds to local governments — authorize the sale of the state's warehouse, ABC stores, and current inventory, and dedicate funds for public safety concerns.

The bill would limit the authority of the ABC Commission to administer laws governing spirits, as well as enforcing those laws through state Alcohol Law Enforcement.

North Carolina would add liquor sales and distribution to the current three-tier system, which is now working for beer and wine. Spirits, in limited and controlled amounts, could be available wherever beer and wine are now sold.

Replacing local revenue from liquor sales is — and has been in previous discussions — a large hurdle toward reform.

So, then, how would the state collect and distribute taxes under a reformed system? The current excise tax would go from 30% of the sales price to a flat \$28 per gallon. Of the taxes collected, 25% would go to local governments.

Taxes from beer and wine could be used for any purpose, but taxes from spirits would be applied specifically to: treatment of alcoholism (4%); research and education (15%); enforcing the pertinent laws (11%); and the rest for any public purpose. Each year, the Department of Health and Human Services would get \$2 million for alcoholism treatment and education, and the ABC Commission would get \$8.5

million for operating and administrative costs. Wholesalers would pay excise taxes.

Getting out of the liquor business means liquidating assets. By Jan 1, 2020, ABC would sell the state warehouse — and any liquor in its possession — by public sale through a wholesaler. Proceeds would flow into the General Fund. By Jan. 1, 2020, all 170 of the local boards would liquidate their assets, with wholesalers bidding on liquor held by the boards. Funds from the sale would go to counties or municipalities for public school capital expenses.

The reform proposal gets the state out of the liquor business and builds on the current structure for beer and wine. It builds efficiencies in an outdated system, gives consumers more choice, and streamlines access for business.

Meanwhile, about a dozen additional proposals are being considered this session that would support a free and open market by increasing competition, expanding consumer choice, and encouraging entrepreneurs to start and grow businesses.

In the end, this isn't really about alcohol. Rather, it's about government's role in growing North Carolina's economy.

# HEALTH CARE

## Americans should be skeptical of single-payer promises



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Ten years ago, the passage of Obamacare vastly increased the federal government's role in our health care system. The health care overhaul was sold to the American people as a solution for skyrocketing costs and high uninsured rates. While some uninsured gained coverage, the law further complicated America's complex system, which continues to fail so many of our citizens. Despite the glaring shortcomings in our current system, which is riddled with government intervention, many are calling for the next step: a single-payer system. Americans should be skeptical.

Single payer, Medicare For All, or a universal health care system are some of the terms commonly used to describe the pie-in-the-sky system proposed as the new fix for Americans' health care problems. Although there are different pro-

posals to thrust the government further into the health care sector, the most popular plan championed by Sen. Bernie Sanders would grant full control to the government. Fellow Democratic presidential nominees, such as Sens. Elizabeth Warren, Kamala Harris, and Cory Booker, are co-sponsors of the legislation. Not everyone on the Left fully endorses this plan, however.

Sanders' plan would transition to a single-payer system. A recently released report by the Congressional Budget Office noted a single-payer system has four essential factors. It would rely on the government to operate major functions of the plan, such as eligibility, benefits, and payments for services. All eligible enrollees would be required to pay into the system. Receipts and expenditures would be reflected in the government's budget, and private insurance would be outlawed or play a minor role.

Medicare For All as envisioned by Sanders would eliminate almost all private insurance and provide all Americans with coverage, including primary care, hospital visits, long-term care, vision, dental, and prescription drugs in a plan administered by the government.



**Moving to a single-payer system would be the final blow to patient choice in America's health care system, not to mention a blow to taxpayers' already thinning wallets.**

Indeed, most Americans would probably enjoy having such benefits. Polling by the Kaiser Family Foundation finds 71 percent of respondents favored a National Medicare For All plan after hearing it would guarantee health insurance for all. But Americans should be concerned about the tremendous costs of such a plan.

The most substantial effect on the economy would be the almost complete removal of the private sector in health care. Sanders' program would shift more than half the country into a government plan by removing the market for private insurers. Support for the Medicare For All program fell to 37 percent in the KFF poll

when respondents heard private insurance would be eliminated. Through competition and innovation, the American health care system has produced some brilliant modernizations in medicine. Putting control in the hands of the government would likely stifle that innovative drive.

So how would the government, assuming the responsibility for administering the plan, pay for such a large system? Under Sanders' plan, patients would be subject to no out-of-pocket spending. Instead, taxes would rise, particularly on the wealthy, to pay for the program. KFF poll data show support for the Medicare For All program falls to 37 percent when respondents are told most Americans would be required to pay more in taxes. Moderate estimates put the price tag at about \$30 trillion over the first 10 years. The U.S. government is projected to run an \$897 billion budget deficit in 2019, adding to our federal debt of \$22 trillion. The federal government will have difficulty paying for its growing obligations to Social Security and entitlement programs, let alone the trillions needed to pay for Sanders' massive new program.

Would everyone get the care they need in a single-payer sys-

tem? Probably not. Reports from other single-payer countries paint a sobering picture. For example, patients in the U.K. and Canada can experience significant wait times for certain medically necessary services. Support for Medicare For All in the KFF poll fell to 26 percent when respondents were told the system might lead to delays in people getting some medical tests and treatments. Research has shown that when patients are responsible for less of the bill, health care consumption increases, much of it unnecessary. In a country where upwards of 327 million people would be crammed into one health care program, it's not difficult to imagine the effects on wait times.

Conservatives believe public policy is most effective when it's administered as close to the intended population as possible. I believe the policy distance between patients and Washington, D.C., is a critical problem in our health care system. Health care reform needs to focus on shifting the balance of power back to the patient, instead of toward the government. Moving to a single-payer system would be the final blow to patient choice in America's health-care system, not to mention a blow to taxpayers' already thinning wallets.



# #TodayWe

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everything it should be.

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Our health care system needs to change. Costs continue to rise, and navigating care can be frustrating and complex. This isn't sustainable or acceptable. Blue Cross NC is taking concrete steps to achieve higher quality care that is more affordable and provides a better experience. And we're getting closer to that goal every day. In one of the boldest moves to value-based care in the nation, we are changing how we pay for care by working with doctors and hospitals to hold each other accountable to patients' overall health. But more work lies ahead.

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