

ALERTS

North Carolina Legislative Report - January 31, 2014

January 18 - 31, 2014

The General Assembly has officially completed its business for the 2013 long session. The 2014 short session will begin on Wednesday, May 14, 2014. The MVA Public Affairs Legislative Report on North Carolina will be distributed bi-weekly to keep you up to date on the latest legislative issues facing the state during the interim.

Committee Meetings

Market Based Solutions and Elimination of Anti-Competitive Practices in Health Care

On Tuesday, January 21, the Committee on Market Based Solutions and Elimination of Anti-Competitive Practices in Health Care met in Raleigh. The Committee began by hearing a presentation from legislative staff on the history of health planning and certificate of need (CON) laws. The presentation focused not only on actions within North Carolina, but also on how this issue has been addressed nationally. Presentations by legislative staff included comparisons to other states' actions with respect to CON and other actions designed to ensure availability, affordability, and adequacy of health care facilities. Next, Drex dall Pratt with the Department of Health and Human Services gave the Committee an overview of how the CON process works in North Carolina. Following these presentations, the Committee heard about specific issues with the CON law as it applies to ambulatory surgical centers. The Committee heard from several physicians and other operators of ambulatory surgical centers in North Carolina. This was followed by a presentation that compared the experience of North Carolina operators with those doing business in Georgia, which has a less restrictive CON law with respect to ambulatory surgical centers. Finally, the Committee heard a summary of the latest version of H 177 from legislative staff. That bill would loosen CON laws in North Carolina, particularly with respect to ambulatory surgical centers.

Committee on Health Care Provider Practice Sustainability and Training/Additional Transparency in Health Care

The Committee on Health Care Provider Practice Sustainability and Training/Additional Transparency in Health Care met on Tuesday, January 21. The Committee began by hearing about trends in the overall supply and distribution of optometrists in North Carolina and how these trends have been negatively impacted by the lack of a school of optometry in the State or special arrangements to reserve spots in out-of-State schools for North Carolina students. This presentation was followed by a broader presentation that addressed trends in the supply and distribution of other health care professionals. North Carolina has fewer health care professionals than the national average for most categories. For most categories, these professionals also tend to be more heavily concentrated in urban areas of the State. Following this discussion, the Committee heard several presentations on chiropractic coverage under various health plans, including the State Health Plan, and treatment outcomes associated with chiropractic care. This was followed by presentations describing some of the difficulties in comparing both cost and quality of care in the health care industry.

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House Committee on Education Innovation

The House Committee on Education Innovation held its second meeting of the interim on Wednesday, January 22 in Charlotte at the Project L.I.F.T Academy. Prior to the meeting, members and staff toured Druid Hills Elementary and Ranson Middle School in the Project L.I.F.T. zone to see firsthand the innovative strategies teachers and students are using to help improve education in the region. Following the school tours, members held their regular business meeting where they heard from Project L.I.F.T. Superintendent Denise Watts, Gaston County Superintendent Jeffery Booker and Union County Superintendent Mary Ellis on innovative practices in use in their communities. The next meeting will be held on February 19 in Raleigh.

House Committee on Banking Law Amendments

The House Committee on Banking Law Amendments met on Thursday, January 23. The Committee began with an overview of the Office of the Commissioner of Banks presented by Commissioner Ray Grace. The presentation began with a broad overview of the history and responsibilities of the Commission and then more narrowly focused on the history and responsibility of the Commission with respect to regulation of mortgage licensees. The Committee next heard from representatives of the independent mortgage license industry. The two areas of specific concern raised during this meeting were whether a representative of this industry should have a dedicated position on the State Banking Commission (a representative of the industry currently serves on the Commission, but in a position designated for a "public member" that need not have particular expertise or experience) and the assessments imposed on mortgage brokers, lenders and services to cover the costs of regulation by the Office of the Commissioner of Banks.

LRC Study Committee on Cultural and Natural Resources

The Legislative Research Commission Study Committee on Cultural and Natural Resources held its first meeting of the interim on Thursday, January 23. The Committee is charged with developing an inventory of natural and cultural resources owned or operated by the State; performing an analysis of assets in other states and the federal level to compare management, operation acquisition and divestiture strategies; and lastly, consider strategies that can lower operational maintenance costs and increase revenues. After an inventory overview by staff, representatives from Cultural Resources, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the Wildlife Resources Commission and the Department of Agriculture discussed the inventories of their respective agencies. Wrapping up the meeting was a presentation from the Program Evaluation Division on potential operational changes for State attractions that could yield savings of up to \$2 million annually. The Committee will hold its next meeting on Thursday, February 20.

Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on HHS - Subcommittee on Mental Health

The Mental Health Subcommittee of the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Health and Human Services held their first meeting of the interim on Friday, January 24. The Committee is tasked with studying progress on mental health reform, continuum of care in the system, capacity in State facilities and existing local supports for community health needs. After introductions and an overview of the Committee charge by staff, members heard presentations on the Mental Health System of Services, and Issues relating to the State's public and private psychiatric health facilities. The Committee will hold its next meeting on Monday, February 24.

Joint Legislative Commission on Governmental Operations

The Joint Legislative Commission on Governmental Operations met Tuesday, January 28. The Commission heard first from the Department of Commerce. Secretary Sharon Decker and Interim CEO Richard Lindenmuth updated the commission on the status of the Economic Development Partnership of NC, Inc. In an effort ensure a smooth transition, the Commerce officials reported that they are slowing down the planned transition process and won't begin moving divisions to the partnership until at least July 2014. As a result, the General Assembly will convene for the Short Session prior to the transition start, giving members another opportunity to weigh in on the move.

Dr. June Atkinson, State Superintendent of Public Education, and county superintendents from Beaufort and Davie County schools spoke to the Commission regarding the implementation of the Read to Achieve program. Atkinson said that the new method of assessing third-graders' reading level puts added pressure on students and teachers and will require a many of those students to attend weeks-long summer reading camps in order to be promoted to the fourth grade. She believes the large number of tests required by the legislation is causing lower morale amongst teachers and too much stress for students who are losing interest in school due to so much testing.

The Commission also heard updates about trends in Medicaid spending and data, state revenue, and expenditures from statewide reserves.

In the News

News & Observer: Cooper takes on McCrory, GOP lawmakers in new video

Charlotte Observer: GOP Senate candidates call for limited government

Fayetteville Observer: Lawyer Stokes to seek Franks' Cumberland District Court judge seat

Citizen Times: MacQueen makes bid for Congress

Independent Tribune: Harrisburg businesswoman to challenge Pittman for NC House seat

News & Observer: Lenovo strikes \$2.9 billion deal for Google's Motorola handset unit

WRAL: Commerce slows transition to public-private partnership

WRAL: Tillis: Teacher, state employee raises in budget mix

News & Observer: Amazon's decision to collect NC sales taxes could mean \$20M to \$30M for state

Charlotte Observer: Ex-anchor Vince Coakley enters congressional race

Star News: Kure Beach mayor sees backlash for seismic testing support

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News & Observer: Governor restarts advisory business council

News & Observer: NC Revenue Department agreed not to disparage company behind \$85 million failed tax software system

Star News: Gov. McCrory tours site of future pellet facility

Charlotte Observer: New N.C. jobs plan headed to McCrory's desk

Press Release: Lewis Hannah Announces Candidacy for North Carolina House Run

AP: Hagan to get rival in Democratic primary in NC

News-Record: Davis announces run for 6th Congressional District

News-Record: Jeff Phillips to run for Howard Coble's seat

Calendar

Mon, February 03, 2014

10:00 AM

Child Fatality Task Force

1027/1128 LB

1:00 PM

House Committee on Mechanics Liens and Leasehold Improvements (LRC)(2013)

415 LOB

Tue, February 04, 2014

10:00 AM

Joint Legislative Administrative Procedure Oversight Committee

544 LOB

10:00 AM

Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee

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643 LOB

1:00 PM

Joint Legislative Workforce Development System Reform Oversight Committee

544 LOB

1:30 PM

Joint Legislative Commission on Energy Policy -- CORRECTED

643 LOB

Wed, February 05, 2014

10:00 AM

Task Force Against Fraud in Older Adults

1027/1128 LB

10:00 AM

Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Unemployment Insurance

544 LOB

Thu, February 06, 2014

9:00 AM

Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Information Technology

544 LOB

10:00 AM

Joint Legislative Economic Development and Global Engagement Oversight Committee

643 LOB

2:00 PM

Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Information Technology

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IBM Main Campus, 1 Davis Drive, Durham, NC 27709

Fri, February 07, 2014

9:00 AM

Joint Legislative Transportation Oversight Committee

1228/1327 LB

Tue, February 11, 2014

9:30 AM

Revenue Laws Study Committee

544 LOB

10:00 AM

Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Health and Human Services

643 LOB

Wed, February 12, 2014

9:30 AM

Environmental Review Commission

643 LOB

10:00 AM

Perinatal Health Committee

1027/1128 LB

12:00 PM

*Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Health and Human Services, Public Guardianship Subcommittee --
CORRECTED*

1228/1327 LB

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1:00 PM

Purchase and Contract Study Committee (2013)

544 LOB

Thu, February 13, 2014

1:00 PM

Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Justice and Public Safety

643 LOB

Mon, February 17, 2014

10:00 AM

House Committee on Treasurer Investment Targets and State Employee Retirement Options (LRC)(2013)

1027/1128 LB

Tue, February 18, 2014

9:00 AM

Committee on Market Based Solutions and Elimination of Anti-Competitive Practices in Health Care (LRC) (2013)

643 LOB

Wed, February 19, 2014

9:30 AM

Agriculture and Forestry Awareness Study Commission

Eastern North Carolina

1:00 PM

Joint Legislative Program Evaluation Oversight Committee

544 LOB

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Thu, February 20, 2014

9:30 AM

Committee on the Assessment of Regulated and Non-Regulated Industry Utility Fees (LRC)(2013)

544 LOB

10:00 AM

Committee on Common Core State Standards (LRC)(2013)

643 LOB

Mon, February 24, 2014

10:00 AM

Intentional Death Health Committee

1027/1128 LB

Mon, March 10, 2014

10:00 AM

Unintentional Death Committee

1027/1128 LB

Mon, April 07, 2014

10:00 AM

Child Fatality Task Force

1027/1128 LB