

Old North State Report – Feb. 20, 2023

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REVISION TO VETO OVERRIDE RULE

The North Carolina House of Representatives will operate under new rules that give members less notice than in prior years for efforts to override gubernatorial vetoes.

The GOP majority on Wednesday approved rules allowing legislators to vote to override vetoes on the same day the House receives an official notice of the veto — or the same day the state Senate overrides it. Pursuant to Rule 44.2 of House Bill 102, if an override vote is not taken in either of those scenarios, House members must wait until it is printed on the calendar published by the House Clerk — giving them about a day's notice.

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STATE FORECASTS \$3 BILLION SURPLUS IN 2023

North Carolina state government is on track to see a double-digit percentage increase in revenues by the end of the fiscal year compared to the total that legislators used in fashioning this year's budget, according to a report released Wednesday.

A new revenue forecast agreed upon by General Assembly staff economists and Gov. Roy Cooper's state budget office projects that the state will take in \$33.76 billion for the fiscal year ending June 30.

The projection means that Republican legislators and Cooper, a Democrat, have some additional one-time money to consider when they broker the next two-year budget in the coming months. Employee and teacher pay raises, capital improvements, reserves, and tax cuts are among the use options.

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MEDICAID EXPANSION BILL SENT TO SENATE

Legislation that would expand Medicaid coverage in North Carolina to hundreds of thousands of low-income adults through the 2010 Affordable Care Act advanced to the Senate with House approval Thursday.

A second day of strong bipartisan support for the legislation — the chamber gave initial approval to the measure on Wednesday — affirms that approving expansion during this year's legislative session is within reach.

“This is a part of history and we need to move this forward so that we can have serious discussions with the Senate,” bill sponsor Rep. Donny Lambeth, a Forsyth County Republican, said before Thursday’s 92-22 vote. Two-thirds of House Republicans voting joined all Democrats present in backing House Bill 76.

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MEDICAL MARIJUANA DEBATE CONTINUES

The push to legalize medical marijuana in North Carolina is back underway at the General Assembly, with a bill that failed to clear key legislative hurdles last year beginning that journey again.

The measure was discussed in the Senate Judiciary Committee on Wednesday, but a vote on it was postponed until next Tuesday, Feb. 21. If it passes that committee, as expected, it will move to the Senate Finance committee for more discussion.

Senate Bill 3 is functionally the same measure state lawmakers debated last year. It would legalize marijuana prescriptions for about a dozen named conditions, including cancer, epilepsy, Crohn’s disease and Parkinson’s, as well as any terminal illness. It also sets up a “Compassionate Use Advisory Board” that can add more conditions in the future.

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MEDICAL BILLING TRANSPARENCY BILL UP FOR SENATE FLOOR VOTE

Senate Bill 46, Medical Billing Transparency, was introduced earlier this month. The bill would require healthcare facilities to notify patients of any healthcare providers at the facility who may not be in the patient’s insurance network.

The legislation made its way through both the Senate Health Care and Rules Committees this week and could be heard on the Senate floor next week.

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