



The Senate Connection

Connecting Davie and Rowan Counties with news from the
Office of Senator Andrew Brock

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- **Government Corruption:**

This week started with Senate and House republican leaders calling on Gov. Beverly Purdue to appoint an independent investigator to look into the “lost” travel records of former Democratic Gov. Mike Easley. An ongoing news and Observer series has brought to light a pattern of questionable activity surrounding Easley's terms as governor including possible violations of ethics and campaign finance laws. The newspaper reported that Easley took multiple free and undisclosed flights on private or corporate aircrafts. The Highway Patrol is charged with providing security for the governor and Perdue ordered the patrol to comply with media request for copies of records relating to Easley's travel while governor. The patrol now says they have released all records even though there are unexplained gaps, including the entire year of 2005 for which no records were provided. An internal review by the patrol fails to account for the “lost” documents.

“Given the unfortunate recent history of political corruption in North Carolina state government, these are troubling revelations,” said Berger during a Tuesday morning press conference. “Any connection between hidden campaign contributions and taxpayer funded benefits for politicians and their families strikes at the heart of our system of government. The people of North Carolina deserve to know the truth; these travel records didn't walk away on their own. Those responsible for keeping records which are now “lost” are not the proper ones to investigate what happened as any internal investigation will be subject to conflict of interest .”

Senator Berger and House Republicans Leader Paul Stam also called on the co-chairman's of the Senate and House Committees on Appropriations on Justice and Public Safety to investigate the missing travel records.

Senator Eleanor Kinnaird and Senator John Snow responded that they “do not think that it is necessary or appropriate to convene the committee to find why the records are “lost.”



On Wednesday, Democratic Senator Kay Hagan offered her opinion that Republican U.S Attorney George Holding should remain in his post until he completes investigations of Gov. Easley and Former Democratic Senator John Edwards.

“ Senator Hagan has done the right thing and has demonstrated that cleaning up corruption in the state government should be a top priority,” said Berger. “For far too long, some state-level politicians have been more concerned with protecting political friends and allies than with rooting out corruption. I hope that Gov. Beverly Perdue and our state's Democratic legislative leaders will learn from Senator Hagan's example and put principle above politics.”

◆ **Other Senate News:**

Governor Purdue signed the smoking ban bill into law this week. The measure, which will prohibit smoking in all restaurants and bars, will go into effect in January.

Finally a Senate committee advances legislation requiring taxpayers to pay campaign expenses for candidates for local municipal office. Republicans argued that this will force citizens to pay for campaigns of candidates they do not support. “With all of the fiscal problems currently facing our state and local governments, the last thing needed in a new spending plan to benefit politicians,” said Berger.



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