



# The Senate Connection

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

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◆ **Smoking Ban:**

Today a bill imposing a smoking ban in North Carolina has followed a winding path in the Senate. Last week, Senate Democrats pulled the bill from floor consideration because they did not have enough votes for passage. The legislation was sent back to the Senate Health Care committee where it was modified to apply only to restaurants and bars but also allow local health boards to adopt more restrictive smoking regulations. Many Senate republicans oppose the bill on the grounds that it will infringe upon the rights of individuals and small business owners and violates private property rights. Republican also are concerned the bill would cause job loss and further harm the state economy given the importance of the tobacco industry to North Carolina. The bill was on the calendar today and passed the senate vote 26 aye to 18 no and was sent to the house for further consideration.

◆ **Budget and Revenue outlook:**

**Estimate of Gap between Revenues and continuation Budget changed:  
fiscal year 2009 and 2010 (Millions)**

	<b>Governor (March 2009)</b>	<b>Senate (April 2009)</b>	<b>May 2009</b>
Revenue Forecast	18,861.5	18,861.5	17,516.4
Continuation Forecast	22,113.9	22,113.9	22,113.9
<b><u>Shortfall</u></b>	-3,252.4	-3,252,4	<b><u>-4,597.5</u></b>

This table shows that North Carolinas budget as is, is still at a **4.6 billion** dollar deficit that we cannot account for.

(Source: North Carolina General Assembly Fiscal Research Division)

Week fourteen of the North Carolina General Assembly's 2009-2010 session started with a Republican press conference calling for the state to resume enforcement of the death penalty. The N.C. Supreme Court ruled late last week that the N.C. Medical Board cannot discipline doctors for participating in lawful state executions. The Medical Board's position resulted in a de facto moratorium on executions since August 2006.

There are currently 163 convicted first degree murderers on death row. "It is well past time to carry out the sentences for violent criminals who have had their punishments stayed by this moratorium," said Senate Republican Leader Phil Berger (R-Rockingham). "That is the very least that can be done to ensure justice for victims and their families."

Over objections from a bipartisan coalition of Senators, liberal Senate Democrats narrowly passed legislation Wednesday requiring local school districts to adopt policies to discipline students who harass or bully other students due to their race, color, religion, national origin, gender, socioeconomic status, academic status, appearance, gender identity, sexual orientation or disability. Opponents, including all Senate Republicans, support anti-bullying policies but argued that it is unnecessary to name specific protected classes because *all* children should be protected from bullying. The legislation will now go to the House.

In other news, a bill imposing a smoking ban in North Carolina has followed a winding path in the Senate. Last week, Senate Democrats pulled the bill from floor consideration because they did not have enough votes for passage. The legislation was sent back to the Senate Health Care Committee where it was modified to apply only to restaurants and bars but also allow local health boards to adopt more restrictive smoking regulations. Many Senate Republicans oppose the bill on the grounds that it infringes upon the rights of individuals and small business owners and violates private property rights. Republicans also are concerned the bill would cause job loss and further harm the state economy given the importance of the tobacco industry to North Carolina. The bill is set for full consideration today and information on Senate action will be included in next week's newsletter.

**Meet the Staff of the Office. Janet Black is the Legislative Assistant. She originally hails from Canada and enjoys following the Carolina Hurricanes. She has worked in this office for 4 years, before she served with Congresswoman Virginia Foxx.**

**Chris Stanley is serving an intern this year. Chris is an accounting major at NC State. The Wolfpack junior is from Johnston County.**

