



The Senate Connection

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

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◆ Probation Offenders:

At the end of March Senate Republican Phil Berger praised N.C. Department of Correction for heeding his call to provide information about thousands of missing criminals on probation on its Web site. Citizens may now search for missing probationers by name or county. Berger also suggested that the department ramp up its public relations efforts by issuing weekly news releases with photographs that highlight the top ten absconders for each county.

“The first obligation of our state government must be to keep North Carolina safe,” said Berger. “I commend the department of Corrections for taking important first step to make citizens aware of dangerous criminals that may be lurking in their communities. However, I hope that the Department will do even more to educate the public by releasing photographs and information about missing criminals to local media outlets.”



A little background about this topic: Nearly 600 people were killed by convicted criminals on probation and the state also lost track of nearly 14,000 of these probationers.

In February, Berger introduced legislation that would permit all sworn probation and law enforcement officers to conduct warrantless searches of convicted criminals as a condition of probation. In addition, he called Governor Beverly Purdue to provide the public with information about “lost” criminals through state Web sites. The bill has not been voted on yet, and should be coming up on the calendar in the next few weeks.

◆ Other controversial Bills:

1. The Senate Health Care Committee advanced a bill to ban smoking in restaurants and offices in the state. The committee modified the bill passed earlier this month by the House which would have exempted business that only serve people over the age of 18. Opponents of the bill emphasize the rights or individuals and small business owners as well as private property rights. They also talked about the importance of the tobacco industry and its jobs to the state economy.

2. Healthy Youth act, [House bill 88](#)

◆ **Finance Committee Proposal:**

The Senate Committee previewed an outline of legislation Wednesday designed by democrats to raise additional revenue to cover the 500 million dollar gap in their spending plan. This proposal would also result in significant changes in North Carolina's tax system. Initial indications are that the bill would slightly reduce sales and income tax rates, increase the base of income subject to taxation, add a new sales tax to several personal services such as mechanical and home repairs and raise taxes on cigarettes and alcohol. Senator Berger of Rockingham said "While I support



efforts to improve our tax system and lower income tax rates, Democrats are using this bill as a way to hike taxes under the guise of modernization. This is the tax part of their tax and spend."

Visit the link for the Institute of Emerging Issues website and check out the [tax calculator](#) to see the effect of rate changes on the states revenue and balance the budget on your own!

◆ **Upcoming Legislative Bills:**

-[Senate Bill 400](#)

No increase in UNC In State Tuition

-[Senate Bill 87](#)

Taxpayer Protection Act, Impose Constitutional limits on the growth of the State Budget

-[Senate Bill 571](#)

Televisive Legislative Session, An act to study the possibility of televising the legislative session and committee meetings.

-[Senate Bill 123](#)

An act to allow warrantless searches of probationers and parolees by law enforcement officials.