



Senate Connection

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

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Sen. Andrew Brock
Republican

This Week:
**Getting Tough on Crime
PLUS a Special Budget
Update!**

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Senator Brock Calls on the General Assembly to Pass Legislation to Protect Expectant Mothers from Violence

Recent tragedies in North Carolina and around the nation have inspired Senator Brock to renew his call for the General Assembly to pass his bill to protect expectant mothers from violence. “Vicious attacks against pregnant women are, unfortunately, on the rise in this country. These are despicable crimes and our laws need to catch up to the reality of times,” Senator Brock said. Perhaps the best known instance of violence against expectant mothers is the murder of Laci Peterson and her unborn son by husband Scott Peterson. Another story which has made the news recently is the murder of Jessie Davis of Ohio who was in her ninth month of pregnancy; the father of the child is suspected in the murder.

Unfortunately, North Carolina has experienced similar tragedies recently. On June 14 twenty-two-year-old Jennifer Kathleen Nielsen was murdered while delivering newspapers for USA Today. Nielsen was eight months pregnant and already the mother of two. Although the crime, and others like it, have sparked outrage across the state, the legislature has refused to act. “North Carolinians are sickened when they hear that an expectant mother and her unborn child have been killed, but the Democratic leadership of the General Assembly is so out of touch with the average citizen that they have not passed a single piece of legislation to protect mothers and their babies,” commented Senator Brock.

Nationally thirty one states have enacted laws which criminalize the murder of an unborn child. North Carolina is the only state in the southeast to not have such a law on the books. Not only do we lack appropriate statutes in this state, but our State Supreme Court ruled against the unborn in 1989 when they said that causing harm to a mother which results in the death of her unborn child does not amount to murder.

“We need to reestablish a culture of life in North Carolina and we need to enact common sense legislation that recognizes that when you kill a pregnant woman you end the lives of not one, but two individuals. For too long the Democrats who run our state have chipped away at our culture of life. If there was ever an argument for changing the leadership in Raleigh it’s this issue,” Senator Brock said.

Protecting Those Who Protect Us

Senator Brock is calling on his colleagues to support legislation to make it a felony to assault a police officer. House bill 1765 is sponsored by Rep. Karen Ray (R-Iredell County) and Rep. Ray Warren (D-Alexander, Catawba).

“The men and women of North Carolina’s police forces put their lives on the line every day to ensure that we’re safe. When they leave their homes each day they have no idea what they’re going to encounter. However, by toughening the penalties for assaulting a police officer we can get people off the streets who want to harm our officers and hopefully give these brave individuals just a little more peace of mind,” Senator Brock said.

Budget Update!

Unfortunately, the Democratic leadership of the General Assembly will not produce a budget for legislators to vote on by the end of the fiscal year June 30. The leadership of both the Senate and the House continue to negotiate a compromise between their two respective chambers. This week, in response to the slow progress on the part of the Democratic budget negotiators, the Senate and House GOP leadership unveiled their own compromise plan. Composed using the actual budgets proposed by each chamber and the rules of the conference committees, Republicans have crafted a budget which spends less, cuts taxes, and fully funds every major line item in the budget at or above levels proposed by Democrats.

“This Republican budget proves that it’s possible to fully fund our State’s priorities and be fiscally responsible at the same time,” Senator Brock said.

PRESS RELEASE—Office of Senate Republican Leader

Republicans Offer Budget Solution *Increases Education Funding – Cuts Taxes*

A two-year fiscal plan, introduced Tuesday by Senate Republican Leader Phil Berger (R-Rockingham) and House Republican Leader Paul Stam (R-Wake), proposed increases in education spending for dropout prevention, vocational education and community colleges. With a projected state surplus of over \$1.5 billion, the bulk of which consists of excess tax collections, the Republican plan also provides broad tax relief and spends less money than the previously passed House or Senate Democrat budgets. Democrats are stalemated in their effort to adopt a budget before the June 30 end of North Carolina's fiscal year. The Republican proposal establishes a framework for a bipartisan partnership to fashion a workable budget to adequately fund state programs and cut tax rates.

Highlights from the Republican plan:

- Keeps promise to sunset the "temporary" increases of sales and personal income taxes (total tax reduction of \$300 million per year)
 - Spends less overall than Senate or House Democrat budgets and less than Governor Mike Easley's proposed budget
 - Funds all major line items in the state budget at levels that meet or exceed amounts approved by Democrats
 - Cuts personal income taxes in all brackets by .25 percent this year (\$358 million dollars in annual savings for North Carolina's families)
 - Reduces North Carolina's highest in the southeast corporate income tax rate by .40 percent in 2009 (\$72 million dollars in annual savings to allow North Carolina businesses to grow)
 - Provides reserve appropriation of \$20 million for mental health
 - Repays the \$90 million Governor Easley took from the State Retirement Fund
 - Funds \$25 million in second year for an innovative pilot vocational program in public schools
 - Funds Communities in Schools (a proven dropout prevention program) at higher level than either House or Senate Democrats
 - Phases out transfer of road taxes from Highway Trust Fund
 - Medicaid swap along lines of recently announced Republican plan (similar to original plan advanced by Senator Dan Clodfelter); takes pressure off local property tax rates
 - Funds payment of recently announced Republican roads and infrastructure bond package (\$2 billion subject to vote of the people)
 - Fully funds rainy day fund and repair and renovation fund
 - Public school teacher pay raise of 5 percent
 - State employee raise of 4 percent
 - Incorporates Senate Budget provisions to combat Medicaid fraud, provide non-profit accountability, cap North Carolina's highest in the southeast gasoline tax, and provide needed additional funds for courts (assistant D.A. positions, support positions)
 - "Surplus" in both years and projected into future years
 - Increases funding for community colleges and allied health training programs
- Significantly limits non-voted debt (COPs financing) from both Senate and House budgets

Senator Berger made the following statement:

"As this plan demonstrates, we can meet North Carolina's needs, spend less, and allow our citizens to keep more of their hard-earned money. This plan will put North Carolina on sound fiscal and economic footing for years to come. Reductions in sales and income taxes alone will make our state more competitive with neighboring states and keep more than \$1 billion in the pockets of North Carolina's families.

"With North Carolina's high school dropout rate over 35 percent, it is imperative that we find new ways to keep our students in school so they can graduate prepared to compete in the global economy; we can do that by prioritizing new education spending. To achieve that goal, Republicans propose targeting additional money to public schools and community colleges to fund alternatives to the current one-size-fits-all approach to education. We must employ new solutions, including additional vocational opportunities in high school and expanded career offerings in community colleges.

"To create a favorable environment for new jobs and a strong economy, Republicans have proposed \$2 billion in infrastructure bonds primarily for roads; we also support added capital spending for our universities and for upgrades to water and sewer systems. In addition to building needed infrastructure, Republicans advocate lower taxes for small businesses so North Carolina companies can compete and create new opportunities, thereby making our state more attractive to new and expanding businesses. This plan does that by reducing individual and corporate income tax rates.

"Given the current budget surplus, estimated at about \$1.5 billion, the people of North Carolina deserve to have some of their hard-earned money returned. Sadly, Senate and House Democrats are locked in a battle with each other to find new ways to spend money and raise taxes instead of passing a reasonable budget. If Democrats adopt our approach, they can fund government at or above levels they have already supported and will, additionally, put over \$1 billion back into the pockets of North Carolina's families. We welcome the opportunity to partner with the Democrat majority to adopt a bipartisan plan for North Carolina's future."