

Capital Dispatch: Activity Picks Up at North Carolina General Assembly

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Since legislators returned to Raleigh on January 25, activity has increased on Jones Street.

Some Bills of Interest

Among the bills introduced this week were:

- *Education omnibus bill for K-12 schools (H 26)*

This bill contains a number of provisions related to K-12 schools. As the bill moves through the legislature, other items will probably be added.

- *Repeal literacy requirement for voting (H 44)*

This bill would place repeal of the literacy test for voting before the voters in November 2024. That provision is currently in section 4, Article VI of the North Carolina Constitution and states, “every person presenting himself for registration shall be able to read and write any section of the Constitution in the English language.”

- *Medical billing transparency (S 46)*

This bill addresses “surprise” billing by out-of-network providers.

- *Repeal Certificate of Need (CON) laws (S 48)*

State law currently requires providers seeking to locate certain medical facilities, offer certain medical services, or purchase certain medical equipment to obtain a CON. The bill would repeal this requirement. One of the unresolved issues in the debate over expansion of Medicaid insurance coverage is whether CON laws should be changed.

- *Parents bill of rights (S 51)*

Among other things, this bill bans curriculum on gender identity, sexual activity or sexuality in multiple elementary school grades; requires schools to make textbooks and other materials available for parental review at the schools and online; and requires notice to parents prior to any changes in the name or pronoun used for a student in school records or by school personnel. It also lists a number of rights for parents on matters including participation in reproductive health and

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safety education programs; medical or religious exemptions from immunization requirements; and opting out of certain data collection on their child.

- *Protect critical infrastructure (S 58)*

This bill would increase the punishment for property crimes committed against facilities involved in the transmission of telephone, broadband, or cable telecommunications services and facilities involved in the production, storage, transmission, or distribution of electricity, fuel, or another form or source of energy. This issue is on the mind of many legislators given the recent attack on electric infrastructure in Moore County.

Information about bills and work of the General Assembly can be found at its website: www.ncleg.gov.

Confirmation of Adult Correction Secretary

The Senate Judiciary Committee on Wednesday approved the nomination of Todd Ishee to be Secretary of the new Department of Adult Correction. Ishee has worked for decades in corrections and formerly served for three years as Commissioner of Prisons in the North Carolina Department of Public Safety. Ishee's nomination is expected to be considered by the Senate Select Committee on Nominations next week, after which it can be considered by the full Senate.

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