

## New Year Brings New Leadership to North Carolina State Government

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The new year brings a number of new leaders to State government in Raleigh. These changes could impact policy in significant ways. Details about the changes are outlined below.

### **Governor**

After a vote count that extended into December, Attorney General Roy Cooper (D) was elected Governor. His margin over former Governor Pat McCrory (R) was about 10,000 votes.

Cooper's senior staff includes—

- Kristi Jones, Chief of Staff, a position she held in AG Cooper's office
- Ken Eudy, Senior Advisor, a former communications executive
- Stephen Bryant, Deputy Chief of Staff, a former top aide to AG Cooper
- Julia White, Deputy Chief of Staff, a former top aide to AG Cooper
- William McKinney, Legal Counsel, a position he held in AG Cooper's office
- Charlie Perusse, State Budget Director, a position he held under a prior Governor and former COO of the UNC system
- Jenni Owen, Policy Director, a former faculty member at the Duke University Sanford School and a senior policy advisor to a past Governor
- Brad Adcock, Legislative Director, a former lobbyist for Blue Cross Blue Shield and member of the UNC Board of Governors

### **Governor's Cabinet**

Governor Cooper has appointed the leadership of eight of the ten agencies that comprise his Cabinet. The General Assembly enacted a law late in 2016 requiring that such appointees be confirmed by the State Senate, a matter which is currently being litigated.

Here are his Cabinet appointments thus far—

- Administration—Machelle Sanders, a former executive with biotechnology and pharmaceutical companies

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- Commerce—Tony Copeland, a lawyer and former Assistant Secretary of Commerce and telecommunications executive
- Environmental Quality—Michael Regan, a former US EPA and Environmental Defense Fund leader
- Health and Human Services—Dr. Mandy Cohen, COO and Chief of Staff with the US Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services
- Natural and Cultural Resources—Susie Hamilton, a State Representative from Wilmington
- Public Safety—Erik Hooks, former Assistant Director of the State Bureau of Investigation
- Transportation—Jim Trogdon, a former COO of NC DOT, senior transportation staffer at the NC General Assembly, and National Guard Major General
- Veterans and Military Affairs—Larry Hall, a State Representative from Durham, who is a former Marine

The Governor has not yet made announcements about leaders of the Departments of Information Technology and Revenue.

***Council of State***

In addition to the Governor, there are nine other statewide elected officials comprising the Council of State. Four of these nine are new members.

Incumbents that were reelected:

- Lt. Governor Dan Forest (R)
- Agriculture Commissioner Steve Troxler (R)
- Auditor Beth Wood (D)
- Labor Commissioner Cherie Berry (R)
- Secretary of State Elaine Marshall (D)

The new members are:

- Attorney General Josh Stein (D) – a former State Senator from Wake County and head of the Consumer Protection Division under AG Cooper
- Insurance Commissioner Mike Causey (R)—a former insurance agency owner and farmer from Guilford County

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- Superintendent of Public Instruction Mark Johnson (R)—a lawyer who formerly worked for a technology company and served on the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County School Board
- Treasurer Dale Folwell (R)—a CPA from Forsyth County, a former State Legislator, and head of the NC Employment Security Commission

**General Assembly**

The 2016 election did not change the party control and leadership in the General Assembly. Republicans hold large majorities in both houses (35 to 15 in the Senate and 75 to 45 in the House), which means if their members vote on party lines, they have “super majorities” to override gubernatorial vetoes.

Senate Phil Berger (R-Rockingham) remains as President Pro Tem and leads the Senate. Senator Louis Pate (R-Wayne) is Deputy President Pro Tem and Senator Harry Brown (R-Onslow) is Majority Leader. Senator Dan Blue (D-Wake) is the Democratic Leader.

Speaker Tim Moore (R-Cleveland) was reelected to his post. Representative Sarah Stevens (R-Surry) is the Speaker Pro Tem and Representative John Bell (R-Wayne) is Majority Leader. Representative Darren Jackson (D-Wake) is the Democratic Leader.

Legislators returned to Raleigh on January 25 to begin work.

**Judiciary**

Voters elected Superior Court Judge Mike Morgan (D-Wake) to the Supreme Court in November. He defeated incumbent Bob Edmunds (R-Guilford). The party balance on the Court is now 4 to 3 in favor of Democrats.

The General Assembly in December altered the appeals process so that many cases will now go first to the Court of Appeals (where they may be heard by all 14 judges at once in some instances), instead of to the Supreme Court. All four Republican candidates for the Court of Appeals won in November and Republicans now hold a 10-4 majority at that Court.

For more information, contact a member of the Brooks Pierce Government Affairs Team, linked below.

*\*Government Relations Advisors Elizabeth Biser and Chris McClure are not licensed to practice law, and they do not provide legal advice.*

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Marcus Trathen

Ed Turlington

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