

North Carolina Legislative Update, February 1, 2019

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State legislators returned to Raleigh this week to begin work for the 2019 session. This year's "long session" is expected to last through the summer as members enact a two-year budget and consider hundreds of bills.

Rules Changes

Each biennium both chambers adopt a set of rules that govern how they operate. This year's rules for both the House and Senate were similar to those of the 2017-18 session, with a few exceptions. The Senate revised its rules to require that Senate Democratic Leader Dan Blue (D-Wake) be given 24 hours' notice that a veto bill may be considered by the Senate. Among the proposed House rule changes are an extra dress code provision that prohibits any male from wearing any head covering on the House floor or in the visitor gallery, unless his religion requires.

Ethics Commission

On Thursday, the Senate Rules Committee approved the General Assembly's four nominees to the state Ethics Commission. The Senate is expected to vote on the following nominees Monday night. The nominees are former Sen. Shirley Randleman, R-Wilkes, Clarence Newsome of Mecklenburg County, former Democratic Speaker Carl J. Stewart, Jr. of Gaston County, and former Rep. Roger West, R-Cherokee.

Supreme Court Vacancy

Following the announcement that NC Supreme Court Chief Justice Mark Martin would be stepping down, a group of more than 50 House Republican legislators wrote to Gov. Roy Cooper on Thursday asking him to replace Justice Martin with "someone with a similar ideological background and pedigree." Earlier in the week, Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Warren Daniel (R-Burke) asked Cooper to promote Republican Justice Paul Newby to chief justice and then pick a Republican judge to fill Newby's seat. Governor Cooper has not yet given any indication to who he might appoint.

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

PEOPLE

Katelyn Kingsbury

Marcus Trathen

Ed Turlington

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