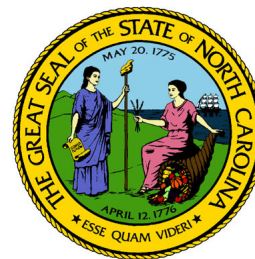




Rep. Ruth Samuelson

Online with Ruth

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July 30, 2009

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Raleigh, NC

Folks, I have started this newsletter numerous times since the budget went in to conference. Each time I was hoping to report that we had resolved some of the pressing issues that often prompt you to contact me. While we have now made measurable progress on a few of the concerns, the budget remains unresolved. The media reports regularly on the ebbs and flows, but what will be in or out of the final version remains in the hands of the Democrat leadership.

As minority members, the Republicans have made some progress influencing the budget debate by suggesting, publicly and privately, areas where the state can save money or maximize efficiencies. I am pleased that the “Continuing Resolution” we passed this week provided for the hiring of teachers so that our students can start the new school year on time.

(If you want to follow all the political give and take on the budget from opposing insider views, check out www.johnlocke.org and www.ncpolicywatch.com . I am not endorsing either of these organizations but they will make you think!)

Progress report

- **H1305, Beach Plan Changes;** A number of you wrote me regarding this bill which attempts to balance the increased risk of storm damage to coastal properties with the ability of insurance companies to cover that risk. I voted for the version that passed the House, but it appears to be stalled in the Senate. If you still have concerns about the bill, I suggest you contact your Senator as session is nearing a close for the year.
- **S461, Racial Justice Act;** Federal and State law already prohibit racial discrimination in imposing death sentence for first degree murder (and any crime), so I voted against this measure. This bill goes far beyond existing law by allowing use of statistics in a particular county or district to prove that if another person was possibly discriminated against, this murderer may not be subject to the death sentence for first degree murder, notwithstanding lack of real evidence of actual discrimination. This bill is also stalled in the Senate.
- **S600, Condemnation of Conservation Easements;** I am pleased to say that this bill is NOT stalled in the Senate. Senator Dan Clodfelter and I sponsored companion bills in the House and Senate to create a fair and reasonable process for public condemnations that involve lands protected with a conservation or historic preservation easement. After extensive negotiation with various stakeholder groups, the final bill passed the Senate this week. One supporter of the bill was quoted as saying that “in the long run this will turn out to be THE most significant piece of legislation for the protection of easement properties.”

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- **H1637, Modernize Precious Metal Business Permitting;** The rising price of gold and other precious metals has highlighted the need to modernize the state permitting and record keeping process for precious metals businesses. This bill was also heavily negotiated in the House and now resides in the Senate. My co-sponsor, Rep. Margaret Dickson (D-Fayetteville) is helping me push to get it heard and voted on before we adjourn for the year.

I hope this brief summary helps you follow the news from Raleigh. You may want to use the state website, <http://www.ncga.state.nc.us>, to track one of the four bills I've detailed above or any other bill that you may be interested in following.

Please let me know whenever you have a question or a concern. Your emails and calls do make a difference. I can be reached in my legislative office at (919) 715-3009 or you can email ruths@ncleg.net or samuelsonla@ncleg.net .

Please continue to keep all of us who work in government in your thoughts and prayers, especially as the important budget negotiations continue.

It is my privilege to serve you.

Ruth

P.S. On a more personal note, as of last week, I am a GRANDMA! The family is doing well and I will gladly share photos to all who ask!

"One person can make a difference. You don't have to be a big shot. You don't have to have a lot of influence. You just have to have faith in your power to change things."

-- Norman Vincent Peale

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Susan Phillips Legislative Assistant