



Rep. Ruth Samuelson

# Online with Ruth

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July 16, 2008

**LEGISLATIVE UPDATE**

Raleigh, NC

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We are nearing the end of my first term as your representative in the North Carolina House of Representatives. I have learned a lot these two years and hope you have too! Since I do not face opposition in the fall, you can expect more updates from me during the next term.

### **Budget Update:**

The Budget was passed this week by both chambers and is waiting for the governor's signature. Though I supported the House version, I voted against it this time, primarily due to the significant increase in non-voter-approved debt included in the conference budget.

Here are a few positive aspects of the budget:

1. Significant reductions in spending increases over last year and previous years, though the total increase for the term is approximately 13%.
2. No new tax increases
3. Teacher and all other state employees' pay were raised proportionally
4. Took the first step toward stopping the transfer of road money out of the Highway Trust Fund.

The major negative aspects of the budget were:

1. Excessive debt (\$1 billion without voter approval) will mortgage our future
2. Transportation is again shortchanged with grossly inadequate funding.

An editorial in the Charlotte Observer, July 11, 2008, can be viewed here:

<http://www.charlotte.com/171/story/708025.html>

### **Drought Update:**

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We have had a good bit of rain lately, but much of the state is still in Extreme or Exceptional drought. Since it is likely we will face additional droughts in the future, it was important that we develop a workable response plan. HB 2499, Drought/Water Management Recommendations, was passed in the House Environment and Natural Resources Committee on July 8th. While some of the new initiatives will need to be tweaked over time, the important thing is that something was accomplished and guidelines set down for the next drought. It should be on the House floor for a vote this week. (HB 2499 was amended by the Committee to remove all restrictions on private wells. The private well issue will be discussed in a "study committee" during the interim period.)

**Transportation:**

A number of you contacted me regarding the excessive noise coming from I-485. You will be pleased to know that HB 2730, DOT Study Noise Walls, which I sponsored, has passed out of committee and will be studied during the interim period. I will do my best to see that something is done with the results of the study to correct the noise. Thank you for your patience and understanding.

**Jesse Helms:**

Senator Jesse Helms' funeral was on Tuesday. The service was very nicely done, full of happy remembrances of the Senator, his quirks and his staunch character. Even those who opposed his positions as a Senator, spoke well of his commitment to principle.

I'll close with a popular Helms quote and wish you a blessed remainder to your summer. Please continue to contact me whenever you need help or information. I appreciate your input on pending legislation and events happening in Charlotte.

*"It has always been my contention that there is no sense in being in office if you don't have the courage to do what is right, even if it is the most unpopular position in the world."*      *Senator Jesse Helms*

Please feel free to contact us with any concerns or comments you may have. We look forward to hearing from you. You can reach us at our Raleigh number at (919) 715-3009 or you can email us at [ruths@ncleg.net](mailto:ruths@ncleg.net) or [samuelsonla@ncleg.net](mailto:samuelsonla@ncleg.net)

Best wishes,  
Representative Ruth Samuelson  
District 104, Mecklenburg County