



From the Desk of **Representative**

Erin Paré

District 37

Proudly Serving Southern Wake County!

September 23, 2026

This is a Special Edition newsletter providing highlights of legislative accomplishments in the 2025-2026 session of the General Assembly.

This is only a partial list - there are many more new laws that I could mention. Please feel free to contact me if you have specific questions about any issue.

I want you to read this newsletter and come away with the assurance that I listened to you and took action, and made promises to you that I kept.

I appreciate your support as I continue to work on your behalf. Thank you for the opportunity to serve the people of District 37 in the NC House.

Thank you for reading my newsletter for legislative updates and District 37 news.

-Representative Erin Paré



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RepErinParé.com



LOWERING COSTS

In the 2025-2026 Legislative Session, Rep. Erin Paré sponsored and passed several measures aimed at lowering costs for North Carolinians:

- Cut the state income tax rate again to 3.49%, which equals an overall cut of 30% in the state income tax since 2021.
- Passed the Power Bill Reduction Act, which is estimated to save ratepayers \$15 billion on utility bills.
- Introduced a bill to require big tech to absorb the cost of their fuel instead of passing those costs on to you.
- Passed the Ratepayer Protection Act which requires data centers to supply their own energy, so you don't get saddled with those costs.
- Introduced a bill to eliminate North Carolina's tax on groceries.
- Introduced a bill to eliminate North Carolina's tax on prescription drugs.
- Introduced a bill to expand the property tax exemption for seniors. This bill passed the Pensions Committee.
- Leading the charge for property tax reduction and reform as the Chair of the House Select Committee on Property tax Reduction and Reform, aimed at taking a dual approach to limit property tax increases by local governments and at the same time rollback overgenerous nonprofit exemptions and loopholes in the law to recover forgone revenue for local governments.

REP. ERIN PARÉ LED THE PASSAGE OF HISTORIC TEACHER PAY RAISES

The state budget appropriates \$642.6 M in FY 2026-27 to provide an average 8% average raise for teachers.

Starting teacher pay increased to 53,838 (\$48,000 base pay+ local supplements.)

This puts NC at #1 in the South in starting teacher pay.

This is the largest across the board teacher pay increase in 15 years, and the largest starting teacher pay increase in 50 years.

Teacher Bonuses:

- \$500 for teachers 0-15 years.
- \$1,000 for teachers 16+ years.
- On average, teachers with 25+ years of experience would earn an estimated \$72,847 including State and local supplements.

- This proposal would continue a trend of historically large Republican-led investments in teacher pay. Under GOP leadership, teacher pay has risen faster and more consistently than under previous Democrat-controlled governments.

PROPERTY TAX REDUCTION AND REFORM

As Chairwoman of the House Select Committee on Property Tax Reduction and Reform, Rep. Paré has introduced several bills to reform property taxes in North Carolina:

1. HB59 "Modify Homestead Exclusions" This bill will provide game-changing relief to senior citizens, who are longer-term tax paying residents, and are being pushed out of their homes due to sky-high property tax increases. This bill expands the existing senior/disabled homestead exemptions and includes added relief for long-term residents.
2. HB 1089 "Constitutional Amendment Property Tax Levy Limit" This bill will add a constitutional amendment question to the ballot in November asking the public whether the General Assembly should provide limits to property tax increases.
3. HB 1042 "Affordable Housing Exemption Modification" This bill closes a loophole in state law which has allowed for-profit companies to take advantage of a property tax exemption created for nonprofit organizations to provide affordable housing. Closing this loophole will recover future forgone revenue to counties that is currently being spread across residential taxpayers.

Rep. Paré believes that the General Assembly can provide reasonable limits on property tax increases via a formula that provides predictability to the taxpayer while ensuring that local governments have the revenue they need for public services.

POWER BILL REDUCTION ACT

As you know already, utility rates are determined by the NC Utilities Commission, not the General Assembly.

But as a small business owner myself, (and a homeowner who is unhappy about my power bills), I am proud to sponsor the Fuel Cost Sharing bill and the Power Bill Protection Act which corrects the practice of...

1. Unnecessarily shifting costs to you that should be absorbed by big tech (like Duke) instead;
2. Eliminates a political and arbitrary "climate justice" target in law that will force big investment in green energy technology earlier than is cost-wise, which is estimated to raise power bills by approx \$13 - \$15 billion.

2026 STATE BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

Summary and Area Highlights

Tax Package

Current Personal Income Tax reduction schedule:

- 3.49% beginning as early as tax year 2027 if revenue triggers are met
- 2.99% beginning as early as tax year 2028 if additional revenue triggers are met
- 2.49% beginning as early as tax year 2029 if final revenue triggers are met
- Additional trigger opportunities continue through tax year 2034 if prior triggers are not met earlier.

Revised Personal Income Tax reduction schedule:

- 3.49% for tax years 2027–2029
- 3.24% for tax years 2030–2032
- 2.99% for tax years 2033–2034
- After 2034, allow up to two additional 0.25% reductions—from 2.99% to 2.74%, and then from 2.74% to 2.49%—but only if new revenue triggers are met.
- Aligns with 15 years of GOP tax reductions, putting more money back in the pockets of NC taxpayers.
- Republicans are delivering historic raises while maintaining the fiscal discipline that made North Carolina one of the strongest economies in the country.

Salary Package

Teachers

- 8% average raise for teachers.
- This is the highest average raise in decades. (2006) and the highest teacher pay raise since Republicans took power.
- Starting teacher pay increased to 53,838 (\$48,000 base pay+ local supplements.)
- This would put NC at #1 in the South in starting teacher pay.

Teacher Bonuses:

- \$500 for teachers 0-15 years.
- \$1,000 for teachers 16+ years.
- On average, teachers with 25+ years of experience would earn an estimated \$72,847 including State and local supplements.
- This proposal would continue a trend of historically large Republican-led investments in teacher pay. Under GOP leadership, teacher pay has risen faster and more consistently than under previous Democrat-controlled governments.

State Employees

- 3% across-the-board raise.
- Prioritizes bonuses for lower-income state employees, ensuring they are focused on those who need it the most.
- Non-Teacher Bonuses:
 - \$1,750 for those making less than \$65,000.
 - \$1,000 for those making more than \$65,000.

Retirees

- 2.5% across-the-board COLA bonuses.

Law Enforcement/NCSHP/Correctional Officers

- Minimum 13% across-the-board raise for state law enforcement and correctional officers at the Department of Adult Corrections
- 20.3% average raise for SBI
- 17.7% average raise for NCSHP
- Local law enforcement officers will receive a one-time \$1750 bonus.

Highlights by Budget Area

Agriculture and Natural and Economic Resources

- \$54M for Farmland Preservation to preserve rural working lands under intense development pressure.
- \$45M towards Emerging Contaminant Mitigation Fund to assist and support local governments in identifying and remediating PFAS.
- \$10M towards Tobacco Trust Fund to support economic opportunities across rural NC.
- \$7M for NC Zoo's Asia, capping a decade-long zoo expansion project
- Helene
- \$450M to match pending federal aid for Western NC
- \$100M in capital grants for local government building and infrastructure repairs
- \$75M for additional housing repair, reconstruction and support programs
- \$30M in additional funding for reconstruction of damaged and destroyed private roads/bridges
- \$20M in additional loan capacity for local government cashflow loans.
- \$18M in wildfire mitigation-related funding

Justice and Public Safety

- \$30M in School Safety Grants that provides funds to support students in crisis, school safety training, and the purchase of safety equipment.
- \$30M to the Private Bridge and Road Program. Transfers funds from the Helene Fund to support the Private Bridges and Road program for Helene recovery.
- Provides funding for 24 SBI positions to support investigations and enforcement activities related to drug crimes, vapor product laws, and other areas of SBI jurisdiction.
- 10 Capital Criminal Appeal Attorneys to meet the new timeline and increased caseload created by Iryna's Law.

Information Technology

- \$27 million for cyber security upgrades
- \$500k for CJ LEADS (database of offenders for state and local law enforcement)

Health and Human Services

Child Care:

- Increase the childcare subsidy market rates to the seventy-fifth percentile as recommended by the 2023 Child Care Market Rate Study for children in three-, four-, and five-star-rated childcare centers and homes.
- Sets a state rate floor for center-based and home-based care shall be set at the seventy-fifth percentile statewide market rate as recommended by

the 2021 Child Care Market Rate Study for children in three-, four-, and five-star-rated childcare centers and homes.

- Additional Increases for State operated Health Facility Nurses and other Healthcare workers. Brings their total salary increase to 5.5%. This includes those who work in Dept of Adult Corrections.
- Provides funds to increase the wages of direct care workers who provide services for individuals on the State's Innovations waiver and for Personal Care Services.
- Provides \$4M R to DHHS to Increase Program integrity and oversight of the Medicaid Program.

Transportation

The Transportation Budget invests \$5.15 billion in North Carolina's transportation network focused on enhancing DMV services, roads, bridges, transportation safety, ferries, airports, and infrastructure resilience.

With substantial State investments bringing DMV's total funding to \$237.8 million, North Carolina residents can expect shorter DMV wait times, expanded driver license office hours, and new DMV locations.

A few of these highlights for DMV are noted as:

- \$5.22 million to raise Driver License Examiner pay, increasing starting salary from approximately \$44,200 to \$52,000
- \$3 million for additional driver license and ID card production capacity
- \$3 million for new DMV compliance and oversight staff
- \$1.94 million for extended weekday hours and year-round Saturday service at busy DMV offices
- \$760,722 to operate four newly authorized driver license offices

In addition to these improvements to DMV, the State has also invested heavily into transportation infrastructure such as:

- Strengthening road maintenance in North Carolina by bringing the General Maintenance Reserve to \$963.2 million statewide.
- Investing \$24.2 million in safety projects through the Spot Safety Program, including roadway improvements, traffic signals, signage, lighting, and the wildlife crossings program.
- Investing in aviation infrastructure, including \$32 million in regional airport grants.
- Funding pavement preservation and bridge programs to extend the life of existing infrastructure while simultaneously increasing safety and protecting taxpayer dollars.

NEW DMV IN FUQUAY-VARINA

Promises Made, Promises Kept.

As a House Budget Chair, I am proud to have delivered a new, 4x expanded and fully funded DMV office in Fuquay-Varina.

We are going from 4 to 14 examiners at this new office, and it will serve as both a Driver's License and Motor Vehicle Registration location.

I am thankful for the partnership with Commissioner Tine and his team. This is huge for our community!

IRYNAS'S LAW

Iryna Zarutska was a refugee from Ukraine minding her own business on a light rail train in Charlotte when a 14-time repeat offender stabbed her in the throat, killing her for no reason. This happened last week in NC's largest city - Charlotte.

As a result, the General Assembly passed into law "Iryna's Law" which ended cashless bail for violent offenders and tightened pretrial release rules that allowed dangerous criminals to walk free.

INCREASE ACCESS TO SMALL BUSINESS HEALTH INSURANCE

This session, Rep. Paré filed HB 156 "Increase Access for Small Employers/Insurance". This bill passed the House with near unanimous support last session and this session. This bill reduces the employee threshold for level-funded plans from twelve to five. These health insurance plans are popular among small businesses because they provide an affordable way for small businesses to provide health insurance to their employees.

Forty-six states in the nation have level-funded plans, and only three of those states have an employee threshold above five; North Carolina is one of them and the only state in the southeast above five. This is a good bill for small business in North Carolina and to increase access to health insurance for the people of NC. An important note - the passage of this bill could help insure more people through their employer who are now receiving coverage through Medicaid expansion.

In addition, Rep. Paré voted for another measure that passed the General Assembly which created new affordable health insurance plans for small businesses. Both of these measures increase access to affordable health insurance for more North Carolinians.

WAKE COUNTY ETJ EXPANSION HALT

Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ) = Regulation without representation.

My bill HB 173 will halt ETJ expansion in Wake County for three years.

District 37 property owners who are impacted by ETJ expansion proposals do not wish to be regulated by a municipality that their property is not located in and where they have no vote. This bill will pause ETJ expansion in Wake giving time for the County to work with municipalities and property owners on a responsible way forward.

This bill passed into law and received the support of the Wake County Farm Bureau and the NC Realtors.

PUBLIC SCHOOL CENTRAL OFFICE SALARY TRANSPARENCY

Unlike any other taxpayer funded government job in North Carolina, the salary information for public school central office employees is not accessible to the public. The language of my bill HB 56 "Publish Central Office Employment Information" passed into law. This law requires NC public school districts to post on their website the salary information for central staff employees.

To view Wake County Public School's Central Office Salary Information, visit:
<https://wcpss.net/about-us/finance>

SECURED MILLIONS IN HOSPITALITY TAX GRANTS FOR FUQUAY-VARINA AND HOLLY SPRINGS

The Town of Fuquay-Varina has received \$4.25M in Wake County Hospitality Tax funds for Fleming Loop Park, and Holly Springs received \$1.79M in Hospitality Tax funds for the North Main Athletic Complex. I am proud to have been an integral part of these awards.

For a little background, Fuquay-Varina and Holly Springs residents have been paying a 1% prepared food and beverage tax every time they go out to eat for years which has contributed to the county's total hospitality tax pot.

This significant amount of tax revenue generated in Fuquay-Varina and Holly Springs, by mostly local residents, has for the most part been invested in other communities in Wake County over the years and, in particular, not in Fuquay-Varina or Holly Springs.

I felt it was time for a correction to happen here which is why I advocated so strongly for Fuquay-Varina and Holly Springs to be prioritized in this years' competitive grant process. This is a very positive result, and I am very thankful to the County for working with me.

NC HOUSE PAGE PROGRAM

The program offers high school students a firsthand look at the legislative process.

- ✓ 4-DAY LONG EXPERIENCE
- ✓ OPEN TO GRADES 10-12
- ✓ FIRST-COME, FIRST-SERVE

APPLY NOW

[ncleg.gov/House/PageProgram](https://www.ncleg.gov/House/PageProgram)



The 2026 Short Session House Page Applications are available online beginning **Monday, January 5, 2025**. The Page website can be accessed by visiting the following: <https://www.ncleg.gov/House/PageProgram/>.

GENERAL INFORMATION:

- Pages may only serve one time in the House.
- Each Representative is allotted **up to 5 Page appointments** during the 2025 Long Session.
- **Current sophomore, junior, and senior high school students will be eligible to apply.**
- Check the House Page website for participant eligibility requirements and available dates to serve as a House Page.
- House Pages are processed on a first-come, first-served basis.
- House Page applications are accepted until all weeks are full.

2025-2026 General Assembly Biennium

Rep. Paré introduced, sponsored, or co-sponsored the following bills. [Please find links to all of these bills here.](#)

Introduced bills:

HB 14 "Gambling Losses Tax Deduction"
HB 56 "Publish Central Office Employment Information"
HB 59 "Expand Elderly/Disabled Homestead Exclusion"
HB 94 "Dis. Veteran Homestead Excl. Prequalification"
HB151 "SchCalFlex/Wake/CC"
HB156 "Increase Access for Small Employers/Insurance"
HB 173 "Wake County ETJ"
HB 189 "Red Light Camera Interval"
HB 192 "Raise Teacher Pay & Dollar Allotment Study"
HB 352 "Modify Water and Sewage Project Bid Req."
HB 571 "Funds for PTSD Treatment for Police Officers"
HB 672 "Physician Assist. Omnibus/Team based/Compact"
HB 811 "Taxpayer Transparency Act"
HB 837 "Study Alternative Methods for Highway Funding"
HB 896 "Jesse's Law"
HB 1020 "PESA Class Aids and Wartime Veteran Funds"
HB 1042 "Affordable Housing Exemption Modification"

Sponsored bills:

HB 4 "Sam's Law"
HB11 "No Tax on Tips, Overtime, Bonus Pay"
HB 15 "Support Private Property Rights"
HB 46 "Make Health care Affordable"
HB 76 "Protect Access to In Vitro Fertilization"
HB124 "Adopt Official State Cookie"
HB125 "Adopt Official State Star"
HB137 "Gabe Torres Act"
HB 35 "Establish Military Appreciation Month"
HB 39 "Disabled Veteran Motor Vehicle Tax Exclusion"
HB 67 "Interstate Medical Licensure Compact"
HB118 "Disabled Veterans Tax Relief Bill"
HB133 "NC Farmland and Military Protection Act"
HB 137 "Gabe Torres Act"
HB 186 "Stars and Stripes Commitment Act"
HB 309 "Bldg. Code Fam. Child Care Home Class"
HB 364 "STIP Grant Anticipation Notes"
HJR 379 "Application for a Convention of States"
HB 389 "Child Care Workforce Pilot Program/Funds"
HB 402 "NC REINS Act"
HB 406 "Clarify Motor Vehicle Dealer Laws"
HB 412 "Child Care Regulatory Reforms"
HB 418 "K-5 Performing and Visual Arts Requirement"
HB 465 "Waive Renewal Fee/Military Drivers Licenses"
HB 480 "Medical Board Licensing Efficiency Act"
HB 488 "Modify School Performance Grades"
HB 523 "School Social Workers/Master's Pay"
HB 542 "Child Care Mental and Behavioral Services/Funds"
HB 581 "Career Pathways Transparency Act"
HB 588 "School Psychologist Omnibus"
HB 610 "Study Year-Round School"
HB 611 "Increase AP's in Public School"
HB 794 "Study Highway Patrol Staffing/Salary Scale"
HB 800 "Review Effectiveness & Delivery of Child Care"
HB 814 "Power Infrastructure Resiliency & Eff. (PIRE)"

HB 854 "Require Licensure of Educational Interpreters"
HB 877 "Childcare Pilot"
HB 912 "The Hometown Opp. for Mentoring Educators Act"
HB 1032 "Repeal Two Percent Local Grocery Tax"
HB 1074 "Prescription Drug Expenses Tax Deduction"
HB 1086 "Childcare Initiative Funds/Reform/Study"
HB 1089 "Constitutional Amendment Property Tax Levy Limit"
HB 1110 "Early Intervention School Attendance Pilot"
HB 1124 "Interstate Compact of School Psychologists"
HB 1163 "Workforce Act of 2026"
HB 1192 "Energy and Housing Affordability Act"
HB 1199 "The SEATBELT Act"

Do You Have Unclaimed Cash with the State Treasurer's Office?



Click Here to Find Out!

Contact



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