



From the Desk of **Representative**

Erin Paré

District 37

Proudly Serving Southern Wake County!

September 22, 2023

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

This week, the House and Senate passed the 2023-2024 Appropriations Act in a bipartisan vote. This budget, among many other things, expands school choice to all North Carolina families, cuts taxes, bans COVID-19 mandates, makes significant investments in infrastructure, and makes record investments in mental health. This is a smart, strategic, and responsible budget, and I am proud to vote for its passage.

It continues to be my absolute honor and pleasure to serve the people of District 37 in the North Carolina House.



-Representative Erin Paré

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RepErinParé.com



NC BUDGET

2023-24

1. TAX CUTS RETURN \$1.2 BILLION TO FAMILIES
2. EXPANDS UNIVERSAL SCHOOL CHOICE
3. \$2 BILLION FOR WATER & SEWER UPGRADES
4. INCREASES AVG. TEACHER PAY TO \$60,671
5. FUNDS VOTER ID IMPLEMENTATION
6. BANS COVID-19 VACCINE MANDATES
7. GIVES STATE RETIREES 4% COLA BONUS
8. EXTENDS FIREFIGHTER CANCER PROGRAM
9. DIRECTS 9% RAISE FOR BUS DRIVERS
10. HISTORIC \$620 MILLION FOR MENTAL HEALTH



2023-24 N.C. Budget Highlights

Provided by the Office of House Majority Leader John Bell

Topline

- Total budget allocates \$29.8 billion in FY 2023-24 and \$30.9 billion in FY 2024-25.
- Grows “Rainy Day Fund” to nearly \$5 billion for potential economic downturns and natural disasters.

Salaries and Benefits (Average over two years)

- 7.4% raise for teachers.

- Increases starting teacher salary by 11% to \$41,000.
- Increases average teacher pay to \$60,671.
- \$400 million for teacher salary supplement assistance in rural, underserved areas.
- 7% raise for principals and non-certified school staff.
- 9% raise for school bus drivers.
- 7% raise for state employees.
- 7% raise for UNC system and community college employees.
- 11% raise (16.5% with step increases) for State Highway Patrol.
- 4% cost-of-living bonus for retired state employees.
- \$39.6 million for salary increases for hard-to-fill state employee positions.

Tax Relief

- Cuts taxes by \$1.2 billion for families and businesses over the next two years.
- Accelerates reduction in personal income tax rate to 3.99% in 2026.
- Authorizes additional income rate reductions to 2.49% (if revenue-targets are met).
- Caps franchise (business) tax paid on the first \$1 million.
- Eliminates state privilege license tax on professionals.

K-12 Education

- Makes all students eligible for private K-12 school tuition assistance.
- \$709 million for school construction.
- \$10 million for school health positions, such as counselors and nurses.
- \$70 million for school safety grants.
- \$22 million in salary supplements for teachers in advanced roles.
- \$4 million to expand Advanced Teaching Roles program.
- \$9 million to cover school lunches for low-income students.
- Creates program to incentivize schools to participate in federal free meal program.
- Prohibits school districts from penalizing students with school meal debt.
- \$21.6 million for classroom materials, supplies and equipment.
- Requires seventh graders to complete career development plan.
- Requires schools to have program for students to graduate high school early.
- Expands scholarship opportunities for students who graduate early.
- Restricts State Board of Education from withholding funding for charter schools.

Higher Education

N.C. Community College System

- \$400 million to complete the four-year community college capital commitment.
- \$14.2 million to improve broadband access at all 47 rural colleges.
- \$8 million to develop career pathways for community college students with intellectual disabilities.
- \$55 million to support courses that lead to a degree in nursing or health-related fields.
- \$2.4 million to provide childcare services to parents while they attend college courses.
- \$25 million to increase financial aid to community college students.
- Improves local governance of community colleges.

UNC System

- \$530 million for UNC system repairs and renovations.
- \$80 million to expand health-related courses at UNC system schools.
- \$15 million to build research partnerships with next-generation energy businesses.
- \$47 million to support engineering programs at UNC system schools.
- \$47.2 million to support health and medical programs at UNC system schools.
- Funds new School of Civic Life and Leadership at UNC-Chapel Hill, emphasizing U.S. history, civics and free speech.
- Expands N.C. Teaching Fellows Program.

Health

- \$400 million to expand behavioral mental health programs.
- \$319 million for the construction of a new UNC Children's Behavioral Health Hospital.
- \$70 million for rural health initiatives.
- \$50 million in incentives for doctors and nurses to serve in rural and underserved areas.
- \$20 million for grants to support rural telemedicine.
- \$80 million to support families caring for children with behavioral or special needs.
- \$12.5 million to the Carolina Pregnancy Care Fellowship to support grants to pregnancy centers.
- Funds childcare stabilization grants.
- Increases compensation for direct care workers who assist individuals with disabilities.
- Increases reimbursement rates paid to Medicaid behavioral health providers.
- \$40 million for recruitment and retention bonuses to stabilize staffing at healthcare facilities.
- \$80 million for new mobile crisis teams and facilities.
- \$19.2 million to combat the opioid crisis.
- \$22.6 million to mitigate youth electronic cigarette and tobacco use.

Agriculture and Natural Resources

- \$25 million for farmland preservation.
- \$12 million for foodbanks across the state.
- \$20 million for maintenance and restoration of streams.
- \$250,000 for first annual NC Farmers Appreciation Day.
- \$37.5 million for disaster resiliency and flood mitigation
- \$56 million for parks, trails and land conservation grants.

Economic Development and Infrastructure

- \$2 billion for more than 200 local water and sewer infrastructure projects.
- \$1.25 billion for Regional Economic Development Reserve.
- \$500 million to NCInnovation for research and development projects at N.C. universities.
- \$25 million to Golden LEAF Foundation for rural economic development.
- \$107.8 million for Megasites Readiness Program.
- \$10 million for Selectsites Readiness Program.
- \$9.2 million for data modernization and IT projects.
- \$2.6 million to facilitate economic development throughout the state.
- \$7.6 million for broadband internet administration.
- \$397 million for workforce development programs.

Public Safety

- \$3 million for the N.C. State Highway Patrol.
- \$2 million to replace and update State Crime Lab equipment.
- Expands Criminal Justice Fellows program.
- Insulates SBI from political interference by making it an independent department.
- Funds new SBI positions to investigate organized retail theft, officer involved shootings and internet crimes against children.
- Funds 16 new judges and establishes eight public defender districts with 134 positions.
- Funds 15 new Medicaid investigation positions to combat fraud.
- \$1.9 million for grants to local emergency management offices.
- \$29 million to provide services and housing for homeless veterans and victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking.
- \$15 million to support volunteer fire and rescue/emergency medical services departments.
- Extends program providing payments to firefighters with cancer diagnosis.

Military and Veterans

- \$1.5 million for Veterans Justice Initiative to help prevent mental health emergencies.
- \$11.4 million for N.C. National Guard to enhance cybersecurity and protect critical infrastructure.
- \$3 million for grants to County Veterans Offices.
- \$13.5 million for scholarships for children of wartime veterans.
- \$1 million to maintain military presence and defense industry across the state.
- \$6 million to Purple Heart Homes to assist disabled and aging veterans with housing.
- \$750,000 to Military Missions in Action to support disabled veterans with housing modifications.

Transportation

- \$1.1 billion for construction projects
- \$700 million for highway maintenance programs.
- \$300 million to 38 airports for improvement.
- \$34 million for improving DMV programs.
- Doubles the period drivers licenses are valid from eight to sixteen years.
- Requires independent study on modernizing and privatizing DMV.

Other Key Provisions

- Prohibits COVID-19 vaccine mandates for state agencies, local governments and public schools and universities.
- \$2.7 million to fully implement voter ID.
- Prohibits State Board of Elections from joining the consortium of election officials, ERIC, Inc.
- Prevent local governments from restricting the use or applying fees for plastic bags.
- Stops Green New Deal and cap-and-trade energy mandates.

Representative Paré Secures Critical Funding for Southern Wake County

\$28.6M Town of Fuquay-Varina Water & Sewer Conveyance Line Project

\$15.4M Town of Holly Springs Water & Sewer Conveyance Line Project

\$856,000 Town of Fuquay-Varina for a new fire engine

\$400,000 Town of Holly Springs for the police department emergency communication center

\$315,000 Town of Fuquay-Varina for school resource officers

\$1.5M YMCA of the Triangle supporting at-risk youth

\$750,000 US Veterans Corps

\$750,000 Military Missions in Action

\$50,000 Meg's Smile Foundation

Representative Paré On the Budget



HB8 Computer Sci. Grad. Requirement

HOUSE ROLL CALL VOTE TRANSCRIPT

FOR ROLL CALL #584

2023-2024 Session

HB 8: Computer Sci. Grad. Requirement.

Vote: M11 Concur Sen. Amd. 1 and 2

Roll Call #584

Outcome: PASS

Sponsor: Paré

Time: 9/21/2023 11:02 p.m.

Total votes: 110

Ayes: 102

Noes: 8

Not Voting: 0

Excused Absence: 10

Excused Vote: 0

House Bill 8 “Computer Science Graduation Requirement” passed the General Assembly and has been sent to the Governor for his signature. Representative Paré has been working on this bill with N.C. Superintendent of Public Instruction Catherine Truitt since the Select Committee on Advancing Women In STEM concluded its work in late 2022.

"Over 70% of future jobs will require a baseline knowledge in computer science, and this new high school graduation requirement will help equip our students with the tools they need to compete in the future job market." said Rep. Paré. "Thank you Sen. Amy Galey, Sen. Michael Lee, Rep. Jon Hardister, Rep. Representative John Torbett, and Rep. Hugh Blackwell for working with me on this bill."

The bill passed with two amendments from the Senate regarding community college accreditation and protecting children from harmful material on the internet.

Beltway Confidential

North Carolina Republicans are taking a stand for common sense, fairness

By Jennifer Balkcom

September 21, 2023 10:10 AM



Click below for an excellent article by Rep. Jennifer Balkcom about the passage of HB574 “Fairness In Women’s Sports Act”.

Rep. Paré is a primary sponsor of this bill. She is proud to defend women’s sports and common-sense in North Carolina.

[North Carolina Republicans are taking a stand for common sense, fairness](#)

News Clips

[Casinos are out, Medicaid is in for state budget votes Thursday, Friday– The Center Square](#)

[Universal school choice makes its way into NC budget– Carolina Journal](#)

[Public schools will also benefit from Opportunity Scholarship expansion– Carolina Journal](#)

[Changes in store for NC's judicial system under proposed budget– Carolina Journal](#)

[State Health Plan Report Accuses NC Hospitals Of 'Massive' Price Markups– Winston-Salem Journal](#)

[HPU Poll: NC Still Feeling Impacts of Inflation– highpoint.edu](#)

[Report: Hospitals noncompliant with price transparency, make huge price markups – The Center Square](#)

[Strides being made in new businesses and education in NC– Carolina Journal](#)

[8 NC barbecue restaurants make Southern Living's Best in the South list- Yahoo News](#)

[A look at North Carolina's first year with the 988 mental health crisis line- NC Health News](#)

[NC Museum of History to fund field trips for K-12 schools- Queen City News](#)

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