

## 2021 NCACC Legislative Items from Durham County

(Public Education)

1. **Goal Title:** Seek legislation to create a blue-ribbon panel of expert educators to study, develop and implement critical training programs to help NC students recover from the education slide resulting from the COVID related transition to virtual learning.

**Goal Description:** As school systems worked to transition from in person classes to remote learning situations brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, there is evidence to suggest that many students have undergone an educational learning slide, causing them to fall behind on traditional grade levels and skill sets. With the help of world class educators and administrators, strategies to reverse this trend should be created and implemented in school systems statewide. Once approved the strategies should be fully funded by the state.

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(Justice and Public Safety)

2. **Goal Title:** Seek legislation to increase the amount paid to county jails by the state to the full cost reimbursement for housing sentenced inmates.

**Goal Description:** In the age of the pandemic there is the need to perform COVID testing on inmates, along with other increased safety costs associated with keeping inmates healthy. State jails are experiencing a significant increase in overall operational costs. The state's current daily rate of \$40 is significantly insufficient to meet the current costs of services. In FY 2018-19 the cost per inmate per day was calculated to be \$199.55 and certainly than number has increased.

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(Taxation and Finance)

3. **Goal Title: Expand Current Legislation for the Property Tax Homestead Circuit Breaker (§ 105-277.1B.) to the Eliminate the Age Requirement.**

The current circuit breaker program limits the amount of annual property taxes the owner pays on their permanent residence. The tax bill is limited to a fixed percentage of income, and any

taxes owed above that limit will be deferred until a “disqualifying event.” This program requires a new application to be filed every year. By eliminating the age requirement from the Circuit Breaker program, counties could assist families during a tough period.

*Examples of a “disqualifying event” include the death of the property owner; the transfer of the property; or the owner moving to a different permanent residence. Deferred taxes that become due must be repaid with interest, but only the most current 3 years of deferred taxes must be paid at the time of a disqualifying event.*

The legislative request to expand the circuit breaker would eliminate the age requirement, and “income” is defined the same way. For the current program, there is an additional requirement—the owner must have both owned the property, and lived in it as their permanent residence, for at least five years.

Qualifying owners whose 2019 income was \$31,000 or less will pay no more than 4% of their income in property taxes. If the 2019 income was more than \$31,000 but not more than \$46,500, the owner will pay no more than 5% of their income in property taxes.

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- 4. Goal Title:** Seek additional revenue sources, including statewide bond and lottery proceeds, to equitably address statewide public school and community college capital challenges.

**Goal Description:** This is a longstanding goal that has for many years been a top priority by members of the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners. The NCACC advocacy team has vigorously worked to press this issue with lawmakers in the General Assembly. There have been several pieces of legislation introduced in both chambers.

- 5. Goal Title:** Support reinstatement of affordable housing tax credits that were suspended in 2015.

**Goal Description:** This continues a goal that was the Number 3 Priority from Taxation and Finance in the NCACC package in '19-20 session. The NCACC advocacy team responded that these particular tax credits were suspended in 2015 and efforts towards restoration continued during the previous session. ( 2015-House Bill 89)

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(General Government)

- 6. Goal Title:** Seek legislation for improved funding resources for transit and transportation.

**Goal Description:** Strengthen the connections between the State's rural and urban economies through the expansion of transit and passenger rail. Secure set-aside dedicated funding to be used as a match to pursue federal discretionary grant funding to introduce passenger rail in under-developed rail corridors and to expand transit within and between our rural and urban areas.

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(Health & Human Services Committee)

- 7. Goal Title:** Increase emergency childcare funding to ensure the safety and stability of our childcare system

**Goal Description:** Our childcare system, which operates on very thin margins, is at a crisis point in Durham and across the state due to the pandemic. In Durham, many licensed child care sites are still closed, and those that are open are operating at reduced capacity, with higher burdens/requirements and significantly increased costs. Ensuring that childcare sites are able to reopen, stay open, and operate safely is critical to the health and development of our youngest children, the financial security of our families, and the health of our economy. Additional funding to support a strong childcare system in our state will go a long way in helping us weather and recover from the pandemic.

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- 8. Goal Title:** Seek additional state funding to NC food banks to support their outreach to reduce food insecurities

**Goal Description:** The Coronavirus pandemic has significantly exposed the depth of food insecurity long existing in our state. Since the pandemic hit, food insecurity has increased as much as 38% (Food Bank of Central and Eastern NC). North Carolina is the 10<sup>th</sup> hungriest state in the nation according to Hunger in NC. It is estimated that 604,000 NC households don't have enough to eat. Additional funding from the state would go a long way toward reducing and eliminating food insecurity among our residents.

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**9. Goal Title: Protect and preserve federal Social Services and Human Service Block Grants:**

**Goal Description:** Advocate for the state of North Carolina to not reduce or reallocate federal block grant dollars intended for local Departments of Social Services to meet the needs of the vulnerable citizens served. Such block grants include:

- Social Services Block Grant
- Home and Care Community Block Grant
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- Community Development Block Grant

Such funding provides critical and needed supports to NC residents and allow Social Service departments to provide critical protective services to children, families, adults, and seniors.

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**10. Goal Title:** Increase funding and enhance services for Adult Protective Services and Guardianship Services while also improving behavioral health services for vulnerable, older, and disabled adults.

**Goal Description:** Adult Protective Services is a state mandated service for Social Services that requires County Departments to receive reports, assess, and plan for services for disabled adults who have been abused/neglected/exploited. In FY 16, 77% of the total funds for this service were county funds, while the state only contributed 3%. In addition, caseloads have increased, and county funding has increased 6%, to the 77% level. The Department request the state allocate a recurring appropriation of at least \$7,000,000 to fund this mandated service or develop a funding formula that shares the non-federal costs 50/50.

Guardianship services is a mandated requirement of the Department of Social Services. DSS is the only public guardian now prescribed in General Statutes. In FY 2019, This service was funded with 76% county funds and only 3% of state funds. This caseload has grown substantially for Social Services due to the DSS being the only public guardian option. The Department seeks a recurring appropriation of at least \$6,000,000 to be allocated to County Departments of Social Services for Guardianship services.

The Department requests these funds be adjusted annually to compensate for growing workloads/caseloads. This goal is a recommended goal of the NC Directors of Social Services Association and the NC Board of Social Services Association.

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- 11. Goal Title:** Support legislation to increase state funding for federally/state mandated child welfare services to be at least a 50/50 share of the non-federal costs between the county and state for all required child welfare services/expenses and create caseload standards and evidenced based practice models.

**Goal Description:** Counties across North Carolina bear most of costs to administer federally and state mandated child welfare services, including Child Protection, In-Home Services, and Foster Care/Permanency Planning. Outside of available federal funds, the county supplies most of the non-federal costs. In addition, House Bill 630 and the new child welfare reform act is putting additional strain and pressures on County Departments of Social Services to meet very strict performance standards. County Departments of Social Services are often resource restricted in providing quality services, due to a lack of supportive funding from the state. To have a true partnership, the state should share equally in all non-federal costs to provide these critical services, allowing more opportunity for counties to secure needed staff, training, and quality assurance for effective services.

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## SUPPORT NCPHA ADVOCACY COMMITTEE PRIORITIES FOR 2019/2020

1. **Support** the local health directors' \$8 million appropriation request to fund the local communicable and emerging disease program for communicable disease staff in every health department.
2. **Support** increased funding to expand the school nurse program to the goal of a public health department Registered Nurse in every school.
3. **Support** legislation that will close the health insurance coverage gap in North Carolina and provide access to affordable coverage to the nearly 400,000 individuals living in the coverage gap. The appropriate legislation must address four key principles which are: Accessibility, Affordability, Accountability, and Economic Development. Care4Carolina will lead on this issue.
4. **Support** discretionary funding for local public health departments to address local needs and priorities identified through processes such as the Community Health Assessment.
5. **Endorse** a request to enhance schools' accountability and reporting to provide quality physical education. This includes updating the State Board of Education Healthy Active Children Policy and enhancing the reporting about Physical Education in schools within this policy. NC Alliance for Health will lead on this issue.
6. **Endorse** a request for \$1 million in recurring funds to expand the North Carolina Healthy Food Small Retailer Program. The Healthy Food Small Retailer Program taps into a community's existing retail footprint to make healthier food options more accessible by providing equipment and technical assistance to small store owners in food deserts, allowing them to stock and sell fresh, healthy options. NC Alliance for Health will lead on this issue.
7. **Endorse** a request for \$3 million in recurring funds to expand evidence-based tobacco cessation and prevention services in North Carolina, including QuitlineNC. Additional funding is required to meet the demand of North Carolina tobacco users who want to quit. NC Alliance for Health will lead on this issue.
8. **Endorse** a request to appropriate *at least* \$7 million in recurring fund for tobacco use prevention programs for the 2019-20 fiscal year and *at least* \$7 million for the same programs in the 2020-21 fiscal year. An appropriation of \$7 million per fiscal year is the absolute minimum amount required to ensure these evidence-based programs are effective in reducing teen tobacco use in North Carolina. NC Alliance for Health will lead on this issue.

9. **Oppose** privatization of State control system for the sale of liquor, or to support current control system. Specifically, NCPHA authorizes the use of its name, to be listed along with other organizations, on a website that the NC Association of ABC Boards has developed to oppose privatization and to retain the current system of control for the retail sale of spirits. NC Association of ABC Boards will lead on this issue.

**General Support** for the following:

1. **Endorse** Local Health Directors policy statement on Supporting Efforts to Prevent Firearm Misuse, Injury and Death: <http://www.ncalhd.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/NCALHD-Firearm-Approved-Statement.pdf>
2. **Endorse** Local Health Directors policy statement on Immunizations: <http://www.ncalhd.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/ImmunizationPosition.pdf>
3. **Endorse** NACCHO policy statement on Water Quality: <https://www.naccho.org/uploads/downloadable-resources/15-06-Water-Quality.pdf>
4. **Endorse** the Local Health Directors policy statement on opioid misuse at: [http://www.ncalhd.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/NCALHD-Opioid-Abuse-Work-Group-Position-Statement\\_FINAL.DOCX.pdf](http://www.ncalhd.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/NCALHD-Opioid-Abuse-Work-Group-Position-Statement_FINAL.DOCX.pdf)
5. **Endorse** the Early Childhood Action Plan being implemented by NCDHHS: <https://www.ncdhhs.gov/about/departments/initiatives/early-childhood/early-childhood-action-plan>

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