



Legislative Update 19-21 July 11, 2019

Budget in Limbo [H 966 -2019 Appropriations Act](#)

It's a stalemate. At least for now.

A Republican-led House of Representatives initiated the budget process this year; the House and Senate compromised working together to have a budget. The budget adopted by the House and Senate was then vetoed by Democratic Gov. Roy Cooper.

With the supermajorities broken from the 2018 elections, we're now in uncharted territory. For the House to override the Governor's veto, it must pull a minimum of seven Democrats across the aisle to vote with the now slimmer Republican majority. Or, the legislature can go back to the negotiation table with the Governor though from what we've gathered, discussions so far have proceeded as anything but swimmingly.

A "Reconsideration of Veto" (H966) was filed and showed up on the legislative calendar earlier this week. If the override does gain momentum -- which it very well could -- the breakdown of potential yeas and nays is razor thin. So much so even a couple of absences from House members could determine the its success or failure.

To date, the House has yet to take an override vote up on the floor.

And the story gets more complicated. Earlier this year, Governor Cooper and Senate President Pro Temp Phil Berger drew political lines in the sand over Medicaid expansion. The Governor insists that the State expand Medicaid to serve up to 500,000 needy residents. Sen. Berger has come back with an emphatic "no."

Perhaps a compromise?

And so, there's a blame game between the General Assembly and the Governor's office right now, one of deflective accusations shared through daily press conferences. Though on the issue of Medicaid expansion at least one compromise option seems to have come to life.

The House has its own version of Medicaid expansion, [H 655 NC Health Care for Working Families](#). This bill works to provide Medicaid coverage for those North Carolinians currently in the "doughnut" hole of health insurance who have too much income to meet current Medicaid thresholds but too little income to qualify for coverage through the Health Marketplace. The bill also clarifies eligibility to participate in the program.

Though this compromise may have something for everyone, we're a bit doubtful that H655 will gain much support from either the Senate or the Governor. Why? Those lines drawn in the sand by both Sen. Berger and Gov. Cooper on Medicaid expansion some months ago now seem to have become walls.

What happens if the legislature finishes its business without budget deal?

The House and Senate could recess until a budget compromise is worked out or they can adjourn and leave town without a budget. Should this scenario happen last year's budget will continue in effect at the same funding levels.

We will keep you informed, so ...

Stay Tuned!!

Richard Rogers
NCRGEA Executive Director