



NCRGEA Government Relations Update

NCRGEA Government Relations Update #21-06 March 2, 2021

Last Week

Governor Vetoes [SB 37 – In-Person Learning Choice for Families](#). Governor Cooper took action to veto the back-to-school bill because the bill did not allow for schools to return to virtual learning should the pandemic worsen. The bill according to Governor Cooper also did not take proper precautions to address the spread of the virus among middle schoolers and high school students. The Senate has scheduled a veto override for Monday, March 1st. A veto override requires 30 favorable votes for the Senate to override a veto. The Senate missed the required vote by the slimmest of margins with a 29-20 vote. Whether these differences between the Legislature and the Governor are policy or politics, there is no doubt that any type of cooperation between the two branches of government for the rest of session is in question.

This past week the General Assembly had a busy schedule of committee meetings which will continue this week. Bills continue to roll in. On Monday seven bills in the House and one in the Senate were introduced related to administrative and technical changes to the NC Retirement System and the State Health Plan. These bills had their first reading on Monday. We will study these bills this week keep you apprised of any details you need to know and keep you updated as they make their way through the General Assembly.

Lake Case Update

On April 20, 2012, a class action lawsuit representing more than 200,000 state retirees was filed against the State Health Plan. [J. Beverly Lake, et al v. State Health Plan and State Employees, et al.](#), was filed to ensure state retirees who have earned vested rights in non-contributory (“premium free”) medical coverage will have premium free medical insurance of 80/20 or its equivalent for the duration of their retirement. The attorneys for the plaintiffs have petitioned the NC Supreme Court to hear the case which has been working its way through the court system since 2012. *The News and Observer* reporter Will Doran ran a story on February 23, 2021 [Health care costs at stake in court fight between NC and retired state workers](#). In the article Doran reports on the suits potential cost to the state should the retirees win their case and the difficulty the Supreme Court is having on deciding to hear the case.

COVID Restrictions Relaxed

The Governor last week announced he would lift the modified stay at home order and ease certain restrictions on businesses and gatherings on Friday, February 26, 2021. [Executive Order 195](#) removed the curfew in place from 10 pm- 5am and allows bars, movie theaters and entertainment facilities to raise capacity rates of 30% of maximum occupancy. Restaurants, retail businesses and fitness centers have capacity rate of 50% of maximum occupancy. Large sporting venues are limited to 15% of capacity.

The State has administered more than 2.3 million doses of vaccine with more than 1.46 million citizens receiving their first dose and more than 865,000 citizens receiving their second dose.

As the number of vaccinated citizens continue to rise and we get closer to establishing herd immunity, it is important for all retirees to remain vigilant in wearing their masks, washing their hands and maintain social distancing. **Why?** If you have received your vaccine you are not likely to get sick from COVID-19, however, you can be a carrier of COVID and spread the disease to those not yet vaccinated.

So, [get vaccinated](#) and remain vigilant in protecting not only your health but those around you.

Go to our video update by clicking on this link. <https://youtu.be/-rIPRI88nW4>

Stay Tuned!!

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