

# Legislative Lobbying Manual

of the North Carolina School Boards Association



*Public Education: North Carolina's Best Investment*

North Carolina School Boards Association  
P.O. Box 97877  
Raleigh, North Carolina 27624  
Telephone: (919) 841-4040  
Fax: (919) 841-4020  
[www.ncsba.org](http://www.ncsba.org)

Updated December 2015

## NCSBA Department of Governmental Relations

Leanne E. Winner  
Director of Governmental Relations  
[lwinner@ncsba.org](mailto:lwinner@ncsba.org)

Bruce Mildwurf  
Associate Director of Governmental Relations  
[bmildwurf@ncsba.org](mailto:bmildwurf@ncsba.org)

Richard Bostic  
Assistant Director of Governmental Relations  
[rbostic@ncsba.org](mailto:rbostic@ncsba.org)

Sean Holmes  
Governmental Relations Research Specialist  
[sholmes@ncsba.org](mailto:sholmes@ncsba.org)



North Carolina School Boards Association  
P.O. Box 97877  
Raleigh, NC 27624  
Phone: 919.841.4040  
Fax: 919.841.4020  
[www.ncsba.org](http://www.ncsba.org)

# Preface

The Legislative Lobbying Manual is designed to help school board members understand the legislative process. By becoming familiar with this process and knowledgeable about the issues facing education, school board members from across the state can influence legislation concerning public education.

School boards have a responsibility to be informed about legislation. Too often, legislation is passed and regulations adopted without the input of local school board members and without good information about how school systems will be affected.

It is now more important than ever for school board members to ensure that their voices are heard in the legislative process. The voice of 115 school boards and the Cherokee Central School speaking a single, united consistent message has a profound impact on legislation affecting schools.

This manual will provide the tools that you will need to become a successful advocate. It provides local school board members with an understanding of the state government of North Carolina. It also serves as a resource for NCSBA members to develop and implement an effective grassroots lobbying program. A study of this manual will introduce the school board member to the structure of government and to the policy makers who determine public policy and enact laws that affect every school district and, most important, the students who attend the public schools in North Carolina.

A democracy depends on its people to establish the direction of its government. This manual will assist you in exercising this principle.



# NCSBA Mission

The mission of the North Carolina School Boards Association, as an advocate for public school education, is to provide leadership and services that enable local boards of education to govern effectively.

The NCSBA Board of Directors has adopted the following statement of beliefs and purposes:

- the best way to educate the populace is through public schools;
- the most effective way to govern public schools is through local boards of education which are representative of the community;
- members of local boards of education make better decisions when they are educated about their roles and the issues in public education;
- legislative and policy-making bodies must provide coordinated support to public education;
- school board members must recognize and accept the importance of their roles as educational leaders;
- local boards of education are responsible for the education of all public school children; and
- school board members must make the best decisions for children and the community.



# NCSBA Purpose

The purposes of the association are:

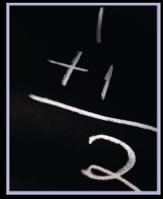
- to endeavor to bring about the general improvement and betterment of public schools in North Carolina;
- to promote greater activity and high efficiency on the part of school boards in order to secure the best possible management of the schools;
- to secure united cooperation in handling school board problems;
- to provide the legislature and other citizens with information necessary for the passage of sound education legislation; and
- to inform the public of the conditions and needs of the schools and to arouse a greater public interest in the public schools of North Carolina.



# Table of Contents

Introduction to the NCSBA Governmental Relations Office..	8
Methods of Lobbying.....	11
Using Media Relations.....	23
How the General Assembly Works.....	28
On Jones Street.....	29
How to Interpret a Bill .....	33
How an Idea Becomes a Law...37	
Map of the General Assembly..38	
Map of Downtown Raleigh ... ..40	
Appendix .....	41





Making Your Voice

Heard

# Governmental Relations

## Government Relations Office Responsibilities

NCSBA's Governmental Relations Office was created to serve as the Association's legislative/lobbying arm. The most effective lobbying is accomplished by individuals at the grassroots level. A large part of the office's role in the association involves communication. Below are the different ways the Governmental Relations Office communicates with various constituents.

### **TRACKING BILLS**

The Governmental Relations Office strives to stay current on the legislation being introduced that will affect education. In a conventional biennial session, over 2,000 bills are introduced. Hundreds of those bills affect education in some manner. With so many bills to track, narrowing the focus is necessary.

NCSBA establishes a Legislative Agenda each biennium. Bills related to these goals get top priority. Efforts on these top issues usually lead to significant debate and a variety of bills. This is not to say that other bills are not important. On the contrary, if an issue is specific to one county, mobilizing those members is very important and this is done by keeping them informed.

The office is always available to provide local board members with updated information. Please feel free to contact the office for this information.

### **LOBBYING**

The culmination of everything the Governmental Relations Office does or wants to accomplish legislatively begins and ends with the General Assembly. Therefore, a good part of the week is spent attending committee meetings; observing General Assembly votes; and meeting with and cultivating relationships with legislators, other educational groups and government agencies. Lobbying is an ongoing activity, even when the General Assembly is not in session.

### **TESTIMONY**

Another activity related to lobbying is providing testimony. NCSBA frequently appears before the House and Senate committees and study commissions that impact education as well as the State Board of Education. Whenever the office is called upon to give such statements, the staff attempts to solicit member input and consults with the Board of Directors or school administrators with expertise on the subject.

### **CORRESPONDENCE**

The Governmental Relations Office corre-



sponds with numerous professional education groups, individuals, school board members, and state and federal legislators. Sometimes correspondence is required to get or receive information, make an invitation or build relationships.

### **SCHOOL BOARD VISITS**

NCSBA's Governmental Relations staff is available to make presentations to local school boards on the important legislative issues of the day. Face-to-face visits provide the opportunity to give board members inside political information on legislative issues. They also provide an opportunity for staff to hear local concerns first hand. Obviously, time is short during the legislative session; but if local boards are interested in a presentation, call the office to work out a date and time., or other options such as webinars or Skype conferences.

### **PHONE CONTACT**

Daily contact with school board members is very important to understanding how members feel about issues. Without input from the members, the association would not know the direction the members want taken.

### **LEGISLATIVE ALERTS**

Many times legislation is moving at such a fast pace that school board members and

administrators need to call, write or e-mail their legislators within several hours or in just a few days. The Legislative Alerts will supply time sensitive legislative information to school board members and administrators via e-mail. Once you have been added to the distribution list you will receive the alerts. The information will typically include some action for you to take, such as calling your legislators.

### **WEEKLY LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY**

When the Legislature is in session, the NCSBA Governmental Relations Office compiles and distributes via NCSBA Legislative Alerts an update on the actions taken on key legislation of import to North Carolina public school systems. If action in a legislative committee or in the Senate and House sessions is pending, NCSBA may request that you contact your legislator and make your opinions known. If information or call to action can not wait until Friday we will send out an alert and please note that this means that you need to take action as soon as possible.

### **END-OF-SESSION SUMMARY**

After the Legislature has adjourned, NCSBA Governmental Relations will compile and provide an analysis of bills impacting North Carolina public schools that have passed during that session. We will also send out a monthly e-mail during the interim with any pertinent legislative updates.

# Methods of Lobbying

## The Citizen Lobbyist

Acting as a citizen of North Carolina, one is invited to visit with legislators to express concerns and try to influence legislative decisions. Individuals may do this as often as needed without being considered a “lobbyist” and need to register. The deciding factor that determines whether a person is a lobbyist is compensation.

The law identifies a lobbyist as an individual who is employed or received compensation for the purpose of lobbying; or represents another person and received compensation for the purpose of lobbying. Therefore, any person may exercise the right to be a “citizen lobbyist” as long as compensation is not received.

NCSBA has staff who are registered as lobbyists. A paid lobbyist must register with the Secretary of State and pay a fee before engaging in any lobbying activities. In addition, expense reports must be filed each month or each quarter, depending on whether expenses have been incurred.

During the recent legislative session there were 742 registered lobbyists in North Carolina.

## Why Grassroots Is Critical

The old term “there is strength in numbers” must have originated to describe the importance of grassroots lobbying. No matter how much effort is put forth from the offices of NCSBA, the importance of a well informed grassroots network of members cannot be overstated.

The goal of grassroots lobbying is to show legislators that there is a large constituency of our members throughout the state who are informed and care about the decisions they will make affecting educational issues. There are many ways you can make your interests known through writing, phone call, visits with your legislators, or through social media, these types of activities make the association a viable political player. Without the strength of its members throughout the state, our efforts would fall on deaf ears.

## Tips for Effective Lobbying

In order for North Carolina’s legislators to properly do their job, they need the help of local school board members. An elected school board member is in a position to know what state laws and policies are working in the school district. This information is critical to improving the quality of education in North Carolina. The following are tips to effectively get that in-



formation to legislators.

### SUCCESSFUL LOBBYING TIPS

1. **Lobbying is not a dirty word:** Lobbying (often referred to as “legislative advocacy”) is an important part of the democratic process. It provides legislators with information on topics with which they may not be familiar. It also gives them a different perspective



which can aid the legislator in making an informed decision.

2. **School Board Members are elected officials too:** An elected official has a lot in common with legislators. Be sure to make it clear to legislators that a school board member understands their pressures, also facing the same problems as an elected official.

3. **A Distinguished Role:** Be sure to clarify the board member’s role as a policy-maker, not just another special interest group representing education. Present yourself well and professionally in regards to behavior and dress.
4. **Cultivate the legislators who represent a district EARLY:** Legislators will be more accommodating if they know someone from contact in the home district. Make contact with the candidates running for election.
5. **Invite a legislator to the district or school board meeting:** Invite a legislator to attend a local school board meeting to discuss education issues or to visit a school. This is a good way to provide the legislator first-hand knowledge of what’s happening in education. Invite them to teach for a day, and experience what a day in the classroom entails.
6. **Know the legislators’ record:** Research past voting records on education issues and know which committees the legislators serve on as members.
7. **Answer the questions the legislator is asking himself:** When building a case, keep in mind that the legislator is probably asking himself some basic questions when considering the re-

quest. (1) Does this request make sense? (2) How will this affect my district? (3) Will anyone back home care about this issue? When laying out the case, try to answer these questions for the legislator.

8. **Prepare for the meeting:** Some lobbyists prepare for their meetings by role playing. Basically they are anticipating the types of questions the legislator will ask and preparing answers in advance.
9. **Honesty is the best policy:** Even though no one likes to admit that an answer is not known, it is better to admit this and offer to get the answer later. Never knowingly give inaccurate information. For one to be seen as a source of information, his or her credibility is extremely important.
10. **Always be polite and gracious:** Even if it is clear that the legislator does not agree with the school board's position, always continue to be calm and polite. Additional information can be offered to assist in the decision-making process.
11. **Leave written information:** Even if the legislator is in full agreement and will be a strong proponent of a bill, it is always helpful for them to have concise information for future reference.
12. **Make sure the legislator knows how to contact the board member:** Leave a business card, but also be sure to write a name and phone number on the reference materials that are left. Also be sure to return calls to legislators as soon as possible.
13. **Don't discount anyone:** Even if a legislator has voted against an issue in the past, be sure to remain in contact for future issues he may support.
14. **Bring media attention to the issue:** If the issue would be of interest to the general public, use the media. Begin by writing a letter to the editor or provide the local newspaper with a news release on the topic. This way, by the time the legislator is contacted, he is already aware of the issue.
15. **Follow-up by email or letter:** Once a visit is made, it is always good to thank the legislator for his time. Also, use the thank you as an opportunity to remind them on the issue.

## Writing Legislators

A personal, well written, original email or letter will have a considerable impact on legislators. As a school board member, the most effective way to write a letter or

email is as a representative of the entire board. If this is not possible, an individual email or letter is the next best thing. Try to establish a position that represents the voters of the district and the children.

### TIPS FOR WRITING LEGISLATORS

1. Use imprinted stationary when writing



a letter if possible and make sure a return address is contained within the email or letter. Many elected officials only respond to com-

munications from their district. Remember, typed letters are easier to read than handwritten letters. If your phone number is not imprinted make sure to give it in order for the member to be able to contact you quickly, if needed.

2. Be sure to identify the school board or district represented.
3. Deal with a specific issue and/or requested action and write only one letter per issue.
4. State what is being asked of the legislator and request a response.
5. Be brief and to the point. Try to make

the letter no longer than one typewritten page and send only the original copy, no copies. If possible, avoid form letters.

6. Refer to the legislation by bill number and the short title. Also indicate the status of the bill, if known.
7. Be factual and support positions with information. A clear and concise explanation will be best understood.
8. Remain courteous; do not threaten or cajole. Simply explain the local impact the legislation would have. Offer to provide additional information or arrange a meeting.

Be sure to address the elected official properly. Look up their actual office addresses or e-mails on the legislative website ([www.ncleg.net](http://www.ncleg.net)).

### NORTH CAROLINA LEGISLATORS (SENATOR OR REPRESENTATIVE)

The Honorable \_\_\_\_\_  
State Legislative Building  
16 West Jones Street  
Raleigh, NC 27601

Dear Senator/Representative \_\_\_\_\_:

### CONGRESSIONAL REPRESENTATIVES

The Honorable \_\_\_\_\_

9. Be timely. Letters sometimes arrive too early or too late to be effective. If time is short, send an email. Send a second email or letter thanking the legislator for the favorable action.

10. Many members will pay attention to emails or letters from outside the district if the legislator serves on the committee in which the bill is going to be heard. This is particularly true for committee chairmen.

11. Send NCSBA a copy, please.

**SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR WRITING  
MEMBERS OF THE US CONGRESS AND  
SENATE**

Due to precautions enacted since anthrax was discovered in letters sent to members of the US Congress and Senate, letters sent via the postal service are screened for the presence of anthrax and, therefore, may not reach their intended member in a timely fashion. Therefore, it is recommended that you send an email, or, if you are from outside the members district, send a fax.

# Addressing an Elected Official

United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator \_\_\_\_\_:

The Honorable \_\_\_\_\_  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative \_\_\_\_\_:

## Sample Letter to a Legislator to Influence Legislation

Date

Your Name and Address

The Honorable \_\_\_\_\_  
State Legislative Building  
16 West Jones Street  
Raleigh, NC 27601

Dear Representative (Senator):

I am a school board member from the county of \_\_\_\_\_ serving in my \_\_\_\_\_ term. On behalf of my county/city, I urge you to support SB\_(number and title)\_\_. This proposal would allocate \$ \_\_\_\_\_ million which \_\_\_\_\_ to be allocated to low wealth counties.

This proposal would be very **beneficial (harmful)** to my district because **we have not been able to utilize the technology available in the classroom because of the lack of funding.**

As a member of the House/Senate \_\_\_\_\_ Committee, please give this bill your full attention and consider the **positive effects this bill could have to the school districts in your area.** If you would like, I can provide you with additional information **regarding our current school tech-**



# Sample Email or Letter to a Legislator

nology plan and budget, or I would be happy to meet with you to discuss these issues.

Thank you for your leadership in support of public education. Please let me know your position on this issue.

Sincerely,

Name  
School Board Title

cc: NCSBA

## Sample Letter to Legislators to Thank Them for a Vote

Date

Your Name and Address

The Honorable \_\_\_\_\_  
State Legislative Building  
16 West Jones Street  
Raleigh, NC 27601

Dear Representative (Senator):

Thank you for your supportive committee vote on SB \_\_ (number and title) \_\_ which would earmark \$ \_\_\_\_\_ million for a \_\_\_\_\_ reserve fund. Your support of public education is appreciated by the \_\_\_\_\_ County School Board.

As this measure continues to move through the legislative process, I hope we can continue to rely on your **support and assistance in turning this proposal into law.**

Again, thank you for your support and please let me know if I can provide any assistance or information.

Sincerely,



# Sample Email or Letter to a Legislator

Name  
School Board Title

cc: NCSBA

Sample Letter to Legislators to Thank Them for a Visit or  
Attendance at a Function

Date

Your Name and Address

The Honorable \_\_\_\_\_  
State Legislative Building  
16 West Jones Street  
Raleigh, NC 27601

Dear Representative (Senator):

Thank you once again for taking time from your busy schedule to meet with me during **my visit to the Legislature**. I appreciated the opportunity we had to discuss educational issues, especially SB \_\_ (number and title) \_\_, which proposes to set aside \$ \_\_\_\_\_ million for \_\_\_\_\_

I hope you find the "fact sheet" that I left with you informational. I would like to reiterate my offer of assistance. If you are ever in need of any local data or have any questions about the impact of pending legislation, please let me know. I will make every effort to keep you abreast of the issues of concern to \_\_\_\_\_ County School Board. I would also encourage you to let me know if you are interested in visiting our schools. Our school board would be glad to be your host for the day.

Thank you for your consideration and support of public education in North Carolina. I look for-



# Sample Email or Letter to a Legislator

ward to working with you in the future.

Sincerely,

Name  
School District Title

Cc: NCSBA

## Calling Legislators

So often legislation moves at such a fast pace that in order to have an impact on its course, the Legislative Alert System is activated. The best way to do this is by phone.

## Calling Legislators

So often legislation moves at such a fast pace that in order to influence its course, the Legislative Alert system is active. This necessitates a quick method of communication. Often, a well timed phone call can be an effective lobbying tool. The main number for the NC General Assembly is 919-733-7928. However, every office number and some member's home telephone numbers are on the legislative website ([www.ncleg.net](http://www.ncleg.net)). This is also where an established relationship with a member is an invaluable tool, since you may have been given the member's cell number and can call or text him or her.

- Identify your position and school board.
- If calling the legislator's office, ask to speak directly to the legislator. Even if he is unavailable give all of the following information to his legislative assistant.
- Be brief and concise and state the purpose of the call.
- State the bill number, title and the bill's current status if known.



- State how you want the legislator to vote.
- Express your appreciation if the legislator's position on a bill is supportive. If the legislator is undecided, offer to provide more information on the subject.



- Be sure to state the issue, bill number and position if required to leave a message. Request that the legislator return the call.
- Be prepared to spend more time if the legislator wants more information.
- Leave a phone number where calls can be returned.
- Remember to be courteous even if several calls are made before speaking to the representative.
- Ask to speak to the staffer handling that issue when a member of Congress is not available.
- Send a follow-up le-mail restating the substance of the call and the legislator's position on the issue as it was understood (whether there was direct contact with the legislator or with his or her secretary).

Again, be sure to express appreciation for their time.

## Resources

NCSBA offers a wide variety of resources so that you can receive information about legislation.

### **NCSBA WEBSITE**

The Governmental Relations Section of the NCSBA website has several different tools that can be used to keep up with legislation. It also has an archive of the NCSBA Legislative Updates and a list of all bills being followed by the Association. The NCSBA website can be accessed at [www.ncsba.org](http://www.ncsba.org). The NCSBAC website is <http://www.ncsbac.org/>.

### **LEGISLATIVE ALERTS**

The legislative alert program provides information to those people who have e-mail on time sensitive issues. This will allow school board members and administrators the opportunity to contact their legislators when time is of the essence. They are sent every Friday during session, and monthly during interim. They are also sent out when action by school board members is imperative and con not wait until Friday.



### **GRASSROOTS ADVOCACY SYSTEM**

The NCSBA Governmental Relations Office's new grassroots communications system, described previously, may be accessed from the NCSBA website at [www.ncsba.org/advocacy](http://www.ncsba.org/advocacy).

### ***NCSBA Now!***

*NCSBA Now!* is NCSBA's publication. It is published once a month and is sent to all school board members, superintendents, finance officers, and board attorneys. Pertinent state and national legislative information is included.

### **BILL TRACKING**

Bills relevant to North Carolina public school districts and being monitored by the NCSBA Governmental Relations Office may be accessed at [www.ncsba.org/advocacy/legislative\\_updates](http://www.ncsba.org/advocacy/legislative_updates).

In addition to resources through NCSBA there are many other resources.

### **LEGISLATIVE WEEK IN REVIEW**

Each week that the legislature is in session PBS hosts Legislative Week in Review on Fridays at 10 p.m. and Sundays at 2 p.m. This show reviews all the major events in the General Assembly that week.

# How to Use the NCGA Website

The screenshot shows the NCGA website interface. At the top, the NCGA logo is displayed. Below it is a navigation menu with tabs: HOME, HOUSE, SENATE, ABOUT NCGA, AUDIO, CALENDARS, COMMITTEES, LEGISLATION/BILLS, REDISTRICTING, WHO REPRESENTS ME?, and CITIZEN GUIDE. A search bar is located in the top right corner, with four search options: FULL SITE SEARCH, SEARCH BILL TEXT, FIND A BILL, and VIEW MEMBER INFO. Each search option has a dropdown menu and a 'Go' button. A yellow arrow points to the SEARCH BILL TEXT search bar. Below the navigation menu is a welcome message and a news section. The news section has two columns: House of Representatives and Senate. Each column has a photo of the chamber, a date and time for the next session, and links for House/Senate Calendar, Chamber Audio, Bills with Action by Day, and Bills Filed by Day. A yellow arrow points to the Chamber Audio link in the House section. On the right side, there are two sections: NCGA DIVISION LINKS and SHORTCUTS. The NCGA DIVISION LINKS section lists various divisions and opportunities. The SHORTCUTS section lists links for General Statutes, Session Laws, Staff Contact Info, NCGA Mobile website, and Help. A yellow arrow points to the Chamber Dashboard icon in the SHORTCUTS section. At the bottom, there is a News & Information section and a Legislative Calendar section. The Legislative Calendar section shows the date Wednesday, August 13, 2014, and the time 10:00 AM for a Senate session. A yellow arrow points to the Legislative Calendar section.

The NCGA website provides a variety of information that is very useful to be aware of its available. Here are a few of the most helpful links.

The top right corner is a very powerful search engine that allows you to find any bill. If you know the bill number you simply put it in. If you do not know the bill number then you can put some key words in the top bar. You can also use this to look up old session laws. The last bar is a quick list to any of the legislator's sites. There you can find out a quick bio on them, the committees they serve on, and their voting record.

The "Who Represents Me?" tab at the top of the website is an easy link to an interactive map which allows you to type in your address and it will tell you what House and Senate members represent you.

The Chamber Dashboard is on the lower right hand side and is a new addition to use while members are in session. You can click on that site and pick which chamber you would like to follow. It automatically

updates with what bill they are currently debating, any amendments, and will give you the votes. This is important if there is a piece of legislation you are following and would like to follow along with the chamber audio.

There is a link under each chamber for chamber audio. This gives you real-time audio to the session of the day where you can listen in remotely and follow the chamber and be very cognizant of what is going on at the legislature. This is very useful when there is an important bill and immediate action may be necessary.

The Legislative Calendar section gives the times and locations of committee meetings, press conferences, and session of the week. It is an essential tool in knowing what is coming up.

# Using Media Relations

## North Carolina Capitol Press Corps

To assist in spreading the word about education issues to the media, here is a list of the North Carolina's Capitol Press Corps. This list should be helpful when seeking to expand attention on issues to other areas of the state. The press corps maintain offices in the Legislative Building and reports on the activities of the General Assembly.

### **President: Loretta Boniti**

Time Warner Cable News - (919) 612-9036

### **Asheville Free Press**

Kirk Ross: [kmr@rossalmanc.com](mailto:kmr@rossalmanc.com), (919) 265-4347

### **Associated Press**

Office: (919) 510-8937  
Press Room: (919) 821-4208  
Fax: (919) 821-0127  
4800 Six Forks Rd, Suite 210  
Raleigh, NC 27609  
Gary Robertson: [grobertson@ap.org](mailto:grobertson@ap.org)  
Katelyn Ferral: [kferral@ap.org](mailto:kferral@ap.org)  
Emery Dalesio: [edalesio@ap.org](mailto:edalesio@ap.org)

### **Capitol Press Association**

Office: (919) 836-2858  
Press Room: (919) 832-8358  
PO Box 191  
Raleigh, NC 27602

### **Capital Correspondence**

Office: (919) 781-5370  
Press Room: (919) 306-1231  
Fax: (919) 571-2728  
PO Box 5934  
Raleigh, NC 27650  
Joe Johnson: [capitalcorrespondence@gmail.com](mailto:capitalcorrespondence@gmail.com)

### **Fayetteville Observer**

Fayetteville Office: (910) 486-3512

Raleigh Office: (919) 828-7614

Paul Woolverton: [woolvertonp@fayobserver.com](mailto:woolvertonp@fayobserver.com)

### **Greensboro News and Record**

Office: (336) 373-4476  
16 W. Jones Street  
Raleigh, NC 27601  
Amanda Lehmert: [amanda.lehmert@news-record.com](mailto:amanda.lehmert@news-record.com), (336) 370-7075, (336) 339-0712

### **Indy Week**

Office: (919) 286-1972 ext. 155  
302 E. Pettigrew, Third Floor  
Durham, NC 27707  
Lisa Sorg: [lsorg@indyweek.com](mailto:lsorg@indyweek.com)  
Billy Ball: [bball@indyweek.com](mailto:bball@indyweek.com)

### **Insider State Government News Service**

Office: (919) 836-2804  
Press Room: (919) 832-8358  
PO Box 191  
Raleigh, NC 27602  
Contact:  
Clifton Dowell: [cdowell@ncinsider.com](mailto:cdowell@ncinsider.com), (919) 836-2804  
Patrick Gannon: [pgannon@ncinsider.com](mailto:pgannon@ncinsider.com), (919) 836-2801



**NC Public Radio**

Pressroom: (919) 831-9862  
16 W. Jones Street  
Raleigh, NC 27601-1096  
Jessica Jones: [jjones@wunc.org](mailto:jjones@wunc.org)  
Jorge Valencia, [jvalencia@wunc.org](mailto:jvalencia@wunc.org), (202) 997-1128  
Reema Khrais, [rkhrais@wunc.org](mailto:rkhrais@wunc.org), (919) 260-9778

**News & Observer/The Charlotte Observer**

Office: (919) 829-4520  
Press Room: (919) 833-4446  
Fax: (919) 829-4529  
PO Box 191  
Raleigh, NC 27602  
Lynn Bonner:

[lbanner@newsobserver.com](mailto:lbanner@newsobserver.com), (919) 829-4821  
Rob Christensen:

[rchristensen@newsobserver.com](mailto:rchristensen@newsobserver.com), (919) 829-4532  
Craig Jarvis:

[cjarvis@newsobserver.com](mailto:cjarvis@newsobserver.com), (919) 829-4576  
John Frank: [jfrank@newsobserver.com](mailto:jfrank@newsobserver.com), (919) 829-4698  
Jim Morrill:

[jmorrill@charlotteobserver.com](mailto:jmorrill@charlotteobserver.com), (704) 358-5059

**North Carolina Health News**

Office: (919) 295-6246  
16 W. Jones Street  
Raleigh, NC 27601  
Contact: Rose  
Hoban: [rose.hoban@gmail.com](mailto:rose.hoban@gmail.com), (510) 384-0832

**Time Warner Cable News**

Office: (919) 882-4040  
2505 Atlantic Avenue, Suite 102  
Raleigh, NC 27604  
Loretta Boniti: [loretta.boniti@twcnews.com](mailto:loretta.boniti@twcnews.com), (919) 612-9036  
Tim Boyum (Capital Tonight Host): [tim.boyum@twcnews.com](mailto:tim.boyum@twcnews.com), (919) 612-3099  
Ben McNeely (Capital Tonight Producer/Scheduler): [ben.mcneely@twcnews.com](mailto:ben.mcneely@twcnews.com), (919) 618-2543

**UNC-TV**

Office: (919) 733-9345  
Fax: (919) 733-9273  
16 W. Jones Street  
Raleigh, NC 27601  
Kelly McCullen: [kmccullen@unctv.org](mailto:kmccullen@unctv.org)

**UNVC-40 TV**

Office: (910) 486-2509  
230 Donaldson St.  
Fayetteville, NC 28301

**Wilmington StarNews**

16 W. Jones Street  
Raleigh, NC 27601  
Molly Parker: [molly.parker@starnewsonline.com](mailto:molly.parker@starnewsonline.com)

**WNCN-NBC 17**

Office: (919) 836-1717  
1205 Front Street  
Raleigh, NC 27609  
Beau Minnick: [bminnick@wncn.com](mailto:bminnick@wncn.com)  
(919) 306-6516

**WPTF-Radio**

Office: (919) 878-1724  
3012 Highwoods Blvd, Suite 201  
Raleigh, NC 27604  
Bruce Ferrell: [bferrell@ncnn.com](mailto:bferrell@ncnn.com), (919) 878-1724

**WRAL-TV**

Office: (919) 821-8622  
Pressroom: (919) 828-8527  
Fax: (919) 821-8541  
PO Box 12000  
Raleigh, NC 27605  
Laura Leslie (Capitol Bureau Chief): [lauraleslie@wral.com](mailto:lauraleslie@wral.com), (919) 619-3099  
Mark Binker: [mbinker@wral.com](mailto:mbinker@wral.com), (919) 621-0970  
Cullen Browder: [cbrowder@wral.com](mailto:cbrowder@wral.com)

**WTVD- ABC 11**

Office: (919) 683-1111  
411 Liberty Street  
Durham, NC 27701  
Jon Camp: [jonathan.camp@abc.com](mailto:jonathan.camp@abc.com), (919) 972-1234  
Joel Brown: [joel.brown@abc.com](mailto:joel.brown@abc.com), (919) 730-8598

## Working with Media

The media are important resources for school board members to use to reach the citizens and legislators in their school districts with their message. The impact of the local media in the district far outweighs the impact of the national media. An editorial or article in the hometown newspaper carries great weight and can influence public opinion. Through the media you can:

- rally others to support legislation or local issues of importance to the school board;
- expand influence beyond the local board;
- educate the public on key educational issues;
- mobilize public support for a board position; and
- publicize the needs and activities of the county school district.

## Press Releases

A press release is the basic means of official communication with the media. To be effective, each message should tell the facts: who, what, when, where, why and how. Each release should also be dated and a contact person listed. Here are

some other ideas.

- Write an attention-grabbing headline.
- Write the release to read like a news story. Present your viewpoint in a positive way.
- Make the school board or school district the active player in the first sentence and quote a spokesperson.
- Include a release date, contact name and contact phone number.
- Make a mailing list of local media outlets.
- Learn the times for news shows and deadline times for newspapers.
- Keep a clipping file of all education stories to know which reporters cover which topics.
- Provide the press release to other local groups and civic organizations who may be supportive of the board's position.

## Letter to the Editor

A letter to the editor is another effective way to speak out on an issue, respond to an article or editorial, or express positions

personally. Letters to the editor can have an extraordinary impact. Even a letter that does not get published is valuable, since it may be considered by a newspaper's editorial board reviewing an issue. Here are some guidelines to follow when writing a letter to the editor:

- Be brief and focus on one issue. Long letters could be edited. Many papers have limited space.
- Refer to a recent event or an article that appeared in the paper if possible.
- End the letter by asking for an action, such as readers' contacting their legislators on this issue.
- Give an address, school district and phone number so that the newspaper can verify authorship, but ask that the phone number not be published.
- Be sure to clip the letter and mail it to legislators if it is published.

## Press Conferences

A press conference should be reserved for a time when there is a significant development that is newsworthy. Hold the press conference on a date when there will be significant attention given to the issue or after several articles have already ap-

peared on the subject or are likely to be written.

Here are some other things to keep in mind when holding a press conference:

- Make sure there is not a big competing event.
- Hold a press conference at 10 a.m., 11 a.m., 1 p.m. or 2 p.m. for recording for primetime news shows.
- Notify the press ahead of time with the date, time, location, and topic. You may use a format similar to that provided for a press release, substituting "Press Conference" for "Press Release."
- Identify a spokesperson if there is a group presentation.
- Keep comments brief and provide written copies of the statement.

Other means of working with the media include:

1. Arrange editorial board meetings. Use editorial board meetings to bring attention to upcoming issues and/or legislation. If it's important enough, the press will cover it and may even pressure your lawmaker about it.
2. Offer to be an information source. Regularly contact your local media

and offer to provide as much information as you can on education issues. Make sure the information you give the press is accurate and newsworthy.

3. Develop an editorial opinion piece. Write an editorial opinion piece for your local newspaper on a bill or issue of importance to you. An opinion piece need only be a longer version of a letter to the editor.
4. Put your issue on the air. Most television and radio stations have programs featuring time for public comment. Try to schedule an appearance on these programs. If a radio or television station comes out against an issue you support, ask for equal time to state your opinion.
5. Invite the media to special events. Letting the media in on the good things going on in your school district can have a positive effect on how your community and your legislators view your schools and the job you're doing as a school board member.

# Social Media

Social media is having a greater presence in people's lives both personally and professionally. As elected officials, school board members must especially be aware of this. Your social media accounts receive much more public scrutiny, but can also be a very useful tool.

## NCSBA Twitter

NCSBA has a twitter account run by the government relations office that is updated with relevant information as up to the moment as possible. With events that are of utmost importance, we will try to always live tweet . This is an easy way to stay informed on what is going on in governmental relations.

Please follow us ! @NCSBAGovtRel  
For the main twitter follow @NCSBA

NCSBA's Governmental Relations staff has created a list within the @NCSBAGovtRel that tracks all current legislator's accounts. To follow our list simply go to the @NCSBAGovtRel profile page, then click the profile icon which is a circular icon to the left of the following button and choose Lists from the pop up menu and choose the NC Legislators and click subscribe.

page that we ask you to follow. There you can find articles posted that show the positive impact that public schools have on communities around our state. Advocacy

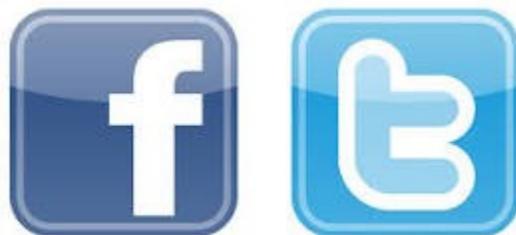
Increasingly, more and more legislators, staff, lobbyists, and the media are on Facebook and Twitter in reference to the legislative arena. Many engage with the public on the issues of the day. This is a great way to get more of an idea of what is really going on at the legislature and what people are hearing. It would be very helpful for us to also be able to send out quick calls to action from twitter and to begin receiving immediate feedback on critical issues.

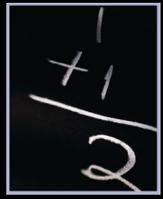
Please remember that if you choose to engage legislative members on social media to always be respectful and courteous and to simply explain your point of view.

Social media is another vital way for your important voice as a leader in your community to be heard not only by your constituency but also by those who represent you in Raleigh.

## NCSBA Facebook

NCSBA also has a Facebook





# How the General Assembly Works

# On Jones Street

## State Legislative Building

North Carolina is one of only two states that has a separate legislative building from its capitol. The Legislative Building was built to house a growing legislative branch and staff. Funds for the building were appropriated by the General Assembly in 1959. In 1961 the General Assem-



bly appropriated an additional one million dollars for furnishings and equipment.

The building is built on a podium of North Carolina granite; walls and columns are made of Vermont marble. The podium on which the building rests is 340 square feet, and the building itself is 242 square feet. The Great Seal of the State, located at the main entrance, is 28 feet in diameter. A carpeted main staircase, 22 feet in width, leads from the front entrance to the third

floor public galleries of the Senate and House.

Senate and House chambers, each 5,180 square feet, occupy the east and west wings. Brass doors, each weighing 1,500 pounds, open each chamber to the rotunda. Chandeliers in the chambers and main stairwell are eight feet in diameter and weigh 625 pounds each. The garden courts and rotunda are decorated with tropical plants and trees.

Additional renovations have been made to increase space and to improve meeting room facilities. A new Legislative Office Building opened in 1982, and nearly half of the members of each chamber and the support divisions of Legislative Services are now located in the Legislative Office Building.

## Structure of the General Assembly

The General Assembly can be a confusing place, but there is a formal process that the business of lawmaking follows. Understanding the process and structure is the first step to becoming part of it. The only way to succeed is through understanding and direct involvement.

The North Carolina General Assembly is composed of two chambers—the Senate



and the House of Representatives. Each chamber has its own elected leaders and committee structure. Nonetheless, the General Assembly, also known as the legislature, adopts the State Budget. The governor was granted veto power for most legislation commencing in 1997. The General Assembly still has considerable control over funds that are allocated for educational programs.

#### **THE SENATE**

The Senate is made up of 50 members elected from Senatorial districts. The lieutenant governor serves as president of the Senate. In the mid-80s the president pro tempore was granted extraordinary powers to operate the Senate. He is elected by and from the Senate membership. Senate committees are appointed by the president pro tempore. The president (lieutenant governor) has no voting privilege except to break a tie.

#### **THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

The House of Representatives has 120 elected members. House committees are appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives. The Speaker is elected by and from the membership of the House. A speaker pro tempore is also elected to serve in the Speaker's absence.

#### **GENERAL ASSEMBLY FACTS**

- Each legislator is elected in even numbered years for a two-year term.
- The General Assembly is required to meet for a long legislative session in odd numbered years which typically lasts from January to July.
- In even numbered years the General Assembly meets for a short session from May to July, primarily to adjust the budget passed during the long session.
- During the session, the Senate and the House generally meet on Monday evenings, early afternoons Tuesday through Thursday, and on Fridays near the end of the session. Committee meetings are generally held in the mornings and late afternoons.

#### **The Committee Structure**

The committee structure is very important because it is where the bulk of the General Assembly's work is done. Some committees have permanent standing subcommittees.

Committee members in the House are ap-

pointed by the Speaker and usually reflect the party membership in the House. In the past the Senate's president pro tempore appointed committee members of the majority party, and the minority party leader designated the minority party's members. In 1997 the president pro tempore began to appoint both. These assignments are made at the beginning of each session.

Every member of each house serves on either the Finance Committee or the Appropriations Committee. Most members serve on several other committees.

Daily sessions of the General Assembly are arranged so that committee meetings are held on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday mornings. Principal clerks prepare a daily calendar that lists committee meetings, and these are posted. The list also appears on the legislative website.

Once a bill has been introduced, it must be assigned to a committee. Bill assignments in the House are made by the Speaker of the House and in the Senate by the chairman of the Rules Committee. This is an important step, because the bill assignment can have an impact on whether the bill is voted out favorably or is killed in committee.

After the bill is assigned, the committee may

- report the bill out of committee favorably
- report the bill out favorably with an amendment(s)
- recommend a committee substitute
- recommend against passage of a bill. The bill then dies in that committee and receives no further consideration.

In most committee settings, the legislator who introduces a bill explains its provisions and committee members may ask questions for clarification. At this time interested individuals may be allowed to appear before the committee to express support or opposition.

If a bill is reported out of committee favorably to the floor, either the committee chair, another committee member, or the bill's sponsor is given the opportunity to explain the bill on the floor.

Committee meetings are open to the public.

#### **APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE**

Any bill requiring state funds must go through the Appropriations Committee in both the House and Senate.

The Appropriations Committees in the House and Senate draft the state's annual budget for approval by the members of the

General Assembly.



### **CONFERENCE COMMITTEE**

Once a bill has been passed in the House and Senate, a Conference Committee is appointed (if there are differences in the bills as passed by the House and Senate) by the Senate and House leadership. That Conference Committee is charged with working out the differences between the two bills and

adopting wording for the final legislation to be enacted. The House and Senate must vote to approve the Conference Committee report.

Committee. Lastly, any issues dealing with taxes or would be in the Finance Committees.

### **CAUCUS**

Caucuses is the name for a grouping of legislative members with a common interest or goal. The two main caucuses are for each of the parties in each chamber. There is also a Joint Republican Caucus and a Joint Democrat Caucus. These are very important meetings in which the parties decide how they will vote as a group on bills before they are on the floor. These meetings are only for legislative members and select staff. Knowing when a caucus will meet is crucial in trying to influence a large group of votes or if a bill will even be heard.

### **STUDY COMMITTEES**

Study committees (commissions) can operate between legislative sessions to carry on committee business and/or conduct related studies. Their charges are specified within the study bills.

### **EDUCATION COMMITTEES**

Educational issues are heard mainly in the House and Senate Education Committees, but there are issues which can come under other committee jurisdiction, such as school governance, which would be in a Judiciary Committee or Government

# How to Interpret a Bill

## GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA ---A SESSION 20XX

H---C

D---1  
HOUSE BILL 202\* ---B  
(Public)

Short Title: Moment of Silence. ---E  
Sponsors: Representatives Smith, Jones, . . . ---F  
Referred to: Education. ---G

February XX, 20XX ---H

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17

### A BILL TO BE ENTITLED ---I AN ACT TO REQUIRE THE OBSERVANCE OF A MOMENT OF SILENCE IN ALL SCHOOL UNITS AND TO ENSURE FREEDOM OF RELIGION IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

Section 1. G.S. 115C-47(29) reads as rewritten: ---J

“(29) To Authorize Require the Observance of a Moment of Silence. Silence  
in All School Units. -- Local boards of education may Every local board of  
education shall adopt policies ---L

---K

a policy to authorize require the observance of a moment of silence at the  
commencement of the first class of each day in all grades in the public  
schools.

Sec. 2. G.S. 115C-47 is amended by adding a new subdivision to read:

---O \*(29a) To Ensure Freedom of religion. -- No local board of education  
shall have a policy of denying, or that effectively prevents . . . ---M

Sec. 3. This act becomes effective July 1, 20XX, and applies to all school years  
beginning with the 20XX-XX school year. ---N

### LEGEND

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| A. Session year, which remains same for both years of biennium. It will read, “Ratified Bill” under headline if the bill passes and becomes law.  | amended or there is a committee substitute by a different committee, the new committee will show here on the next printing.   |
| B. Bill number. House and Senate have their own numbers. Low numbers are assigned early in the session and the numbers continue, in order, for the short session.   | H. Date of the original printing of the bill. This date will not change unless the bill is amended or there is a committee substitute. In that case, the bill will be reprinted and the new date will appear under the bill number (b). |
| C. S stands for Senate; H stand for House.  | I. Full title of the bill.  |
| D. 1 indicates first version. If bill is amended, each subsequent version will be indicated by the number. Ex. 2 means second version; D means draft. Color of paper the bill is printed on also changes with versions. It is important to have the latest version of bill. | J. Statute being rewritten as proposed by this legislation.   |
| E. The short title is the one commonly used to refer to the bill.   | K. Line numbers help during discussion of the bill.   |
| F. Sponsors are legislators who approve of and sign onto the bill at the time it is drafted. Additional legislators who are co-sponsors will appear on later versions.  | L. Words that have a line through them are being eliminated from the current statute.   |
| G. After first reading, a bill is referred to a committee for further consideration before floor debate. If the bill is   | M. Words that are underlined are being added to the current statute.  |
|   | N. The effective date. If bill is ratified, it will carry the signature of the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House.  |
|   | O. Adds a new section and new provisions.   |



## How a Bill Becomes Law

The legislative process begins when ideas are generated that need to be addressed through legislation. Ideas can come from individual constituents, special interest groups, state agencies, legislators, or the Governor’s office. The following are the steps that need to be followed for a bill to become a law.

### **INTRODUCTION**

A member of the General Assembly introduces a new piece of legislation or a bill. A bill number is then assigned by the Clerk’s office. Numbers are assigned in order of introduction. Therefore, if a bill is the 3rd bill introduced in the House it would be HB-3, (HB—House Bill). The 4th bill to be introduced in the Senate is SB-4 (SB—Senate Bill).

### **READING**

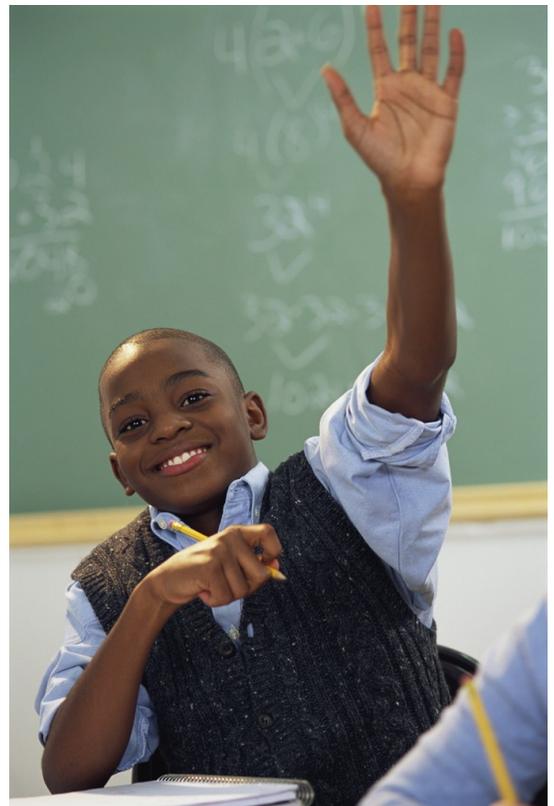
Once the bill is introduced, its title is read for its first reading in the chamber in which it is introduced. There are no votes taken on first reading. The bill is assigned to a committee. House committee assignments are made by the Speaker of the House and by the Rules Committee chairman in the Senate.

### **COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION AND**

### **REPORT**

At this point the bill may be voted out of committee favorably in its original form, favorably with amendments, with a committee substitute, or unfavorably. The bill may also be referred to another committee or to a subcommittee. The committee process is a critical step in the life of a bill because the bill can be amended or substitutes can be offered which could change the bill considerably. The committee can also halt the progress of the bill and “kill” the bill.

### **SECOND READING**



If passed out of committee and/or sub-committee the bill is then brought to the floor of the chamber in which it was introduced and a second reading can be decided to be held. During this reading members may debate, add amendments and/or vote to pass or not pass the bill.

### **THIRD READING**

The third reading allows for more debate and consideration of the bill before a vote is taken. Amendments can also be added. At this time a final vote is made by the members to decide on passage of the bill.

### **PASSAGE**

If the bill passes the chamber in which it is introduced, the bill is then sent to the other chamber for consideration and the entire process begins again.

### **CONFERENCE COMMITTEE**

If the bill is passed in the other chamber in a different version, a Conference Committee is assembled from members of both chambers to hammer out differences in the House and Senate versions of the bill. The committee adopts a Conference Committee report and determines the final wording of the legislation. The Conference Committee Report must be voted on by both chambers and is not amendable.

### **VETO AND ENROLLMENT**

Enrollment is the final step in which a bill becomes law. In November 1996 the citizens of North Carolina voted to provide their governor the power to veto almost all legislation. Specifically exempt are proposed amendments to the NC and US constitutions, joint resolutions, appointments to public office, redistricting for state and congressional districts, and local bills. These bills become law when ratified and signed by the presiding officers of both chambers. All other bills are subject to gubernatorial veto.

Once the governor receives the bill he can veto it within

- 10 calendar days if the General Assembly is in session
- 30 calendar days if the General Assembly has adjourned sine die
- 30 calendar days if legislators have adjourned for more than 3 days to reconvene later (days include weekends and holidays)

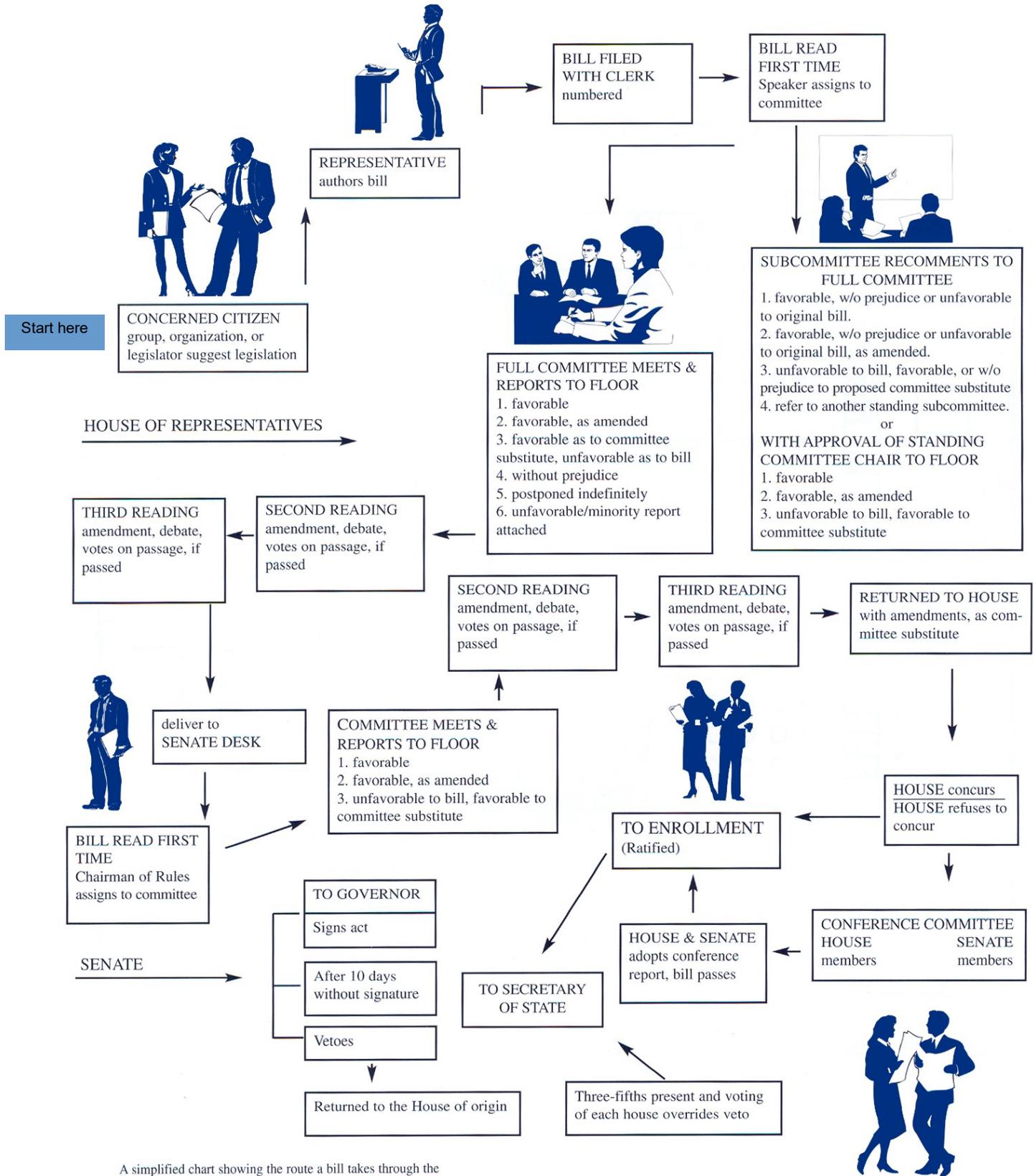
If he does not veto the bill within these limits, they become law.

If the governor vetoes the bill, he must do so within the time limits indicated. He must explain his reasons in a message and return the bill to the chamber in which it was introduced.

The General Assembly shall then decide if they will reconsider the bill. The bill cannot be amended. At this time the General Assembly must make an affirmative or negative vote to override a veto. A 3/5 vote by both Houses is necessary to override a veto. The votes to override begin in the chamber in which the bill was originally filled and if successful goes to the other chamber.

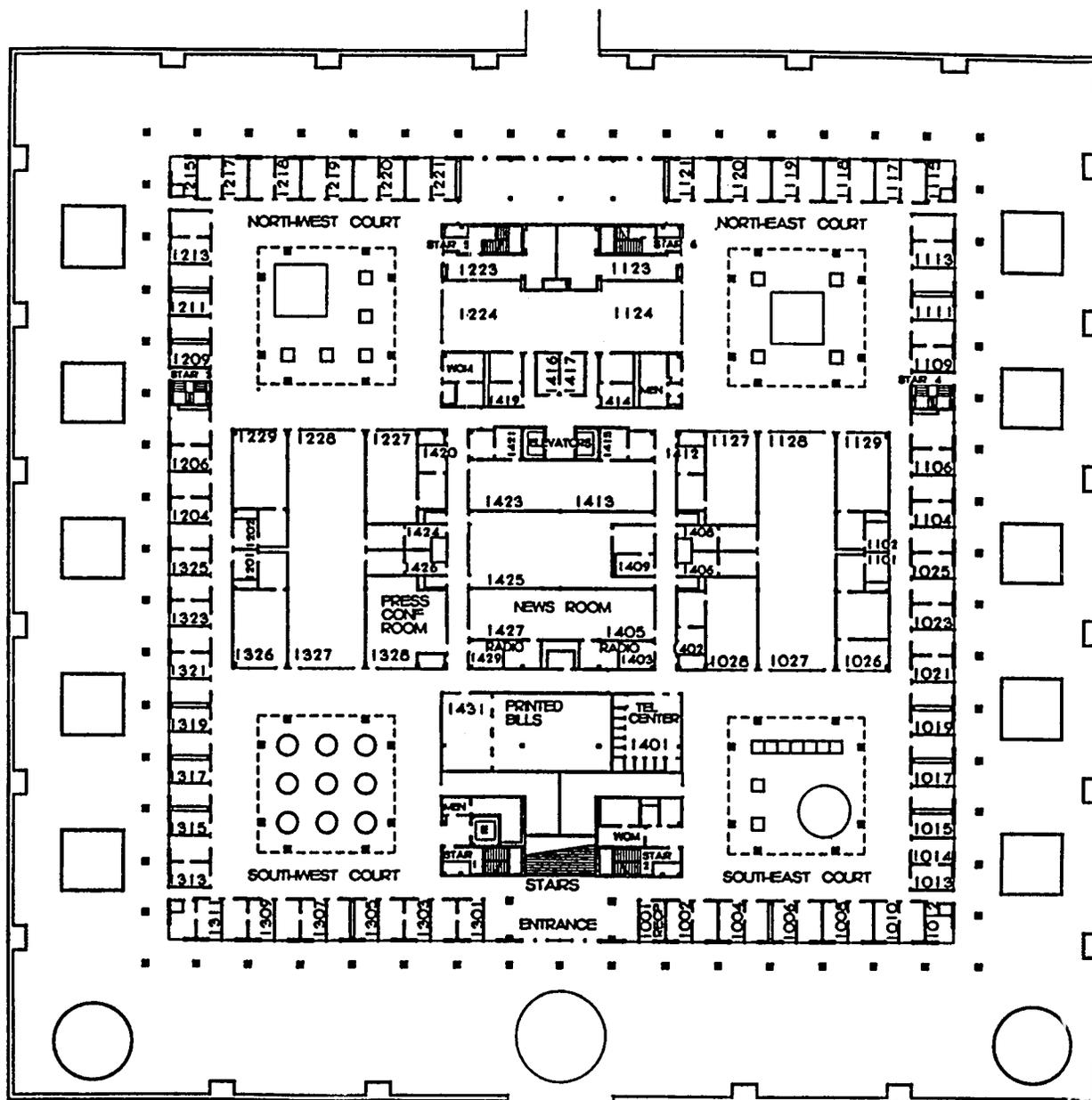
If the General Assembly is not in session, a process to reconvene is available. If the General Assembly does reconvene, no other matters may be considered.

# How an Idea Becomes a Law



A simplified chart showing the route a bill takes through the North Carolina Legislature. Bills may originate in either House. This bill originated in the House of Representatives.

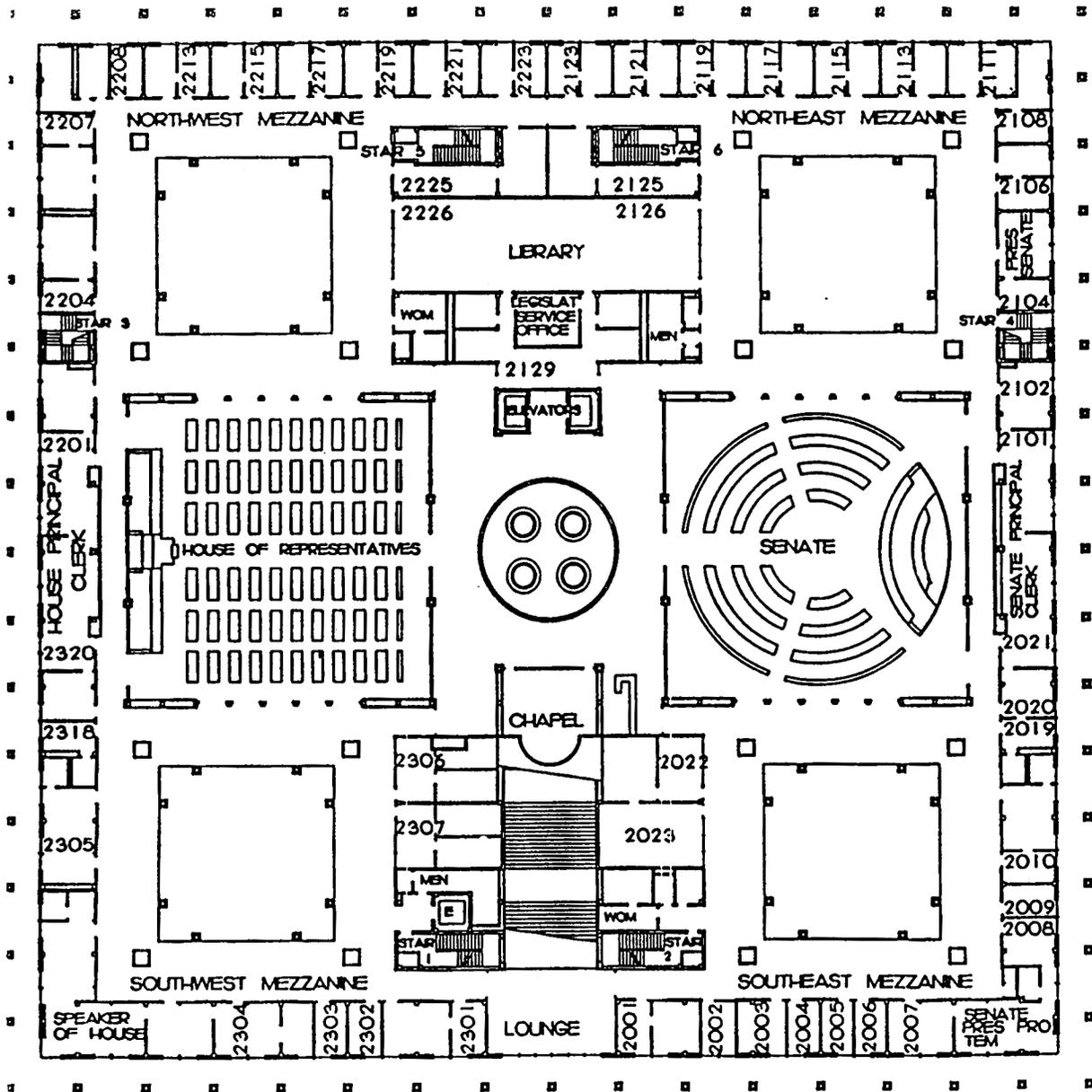
# Map of the General Assembly



FIRST FLOOR PLAN



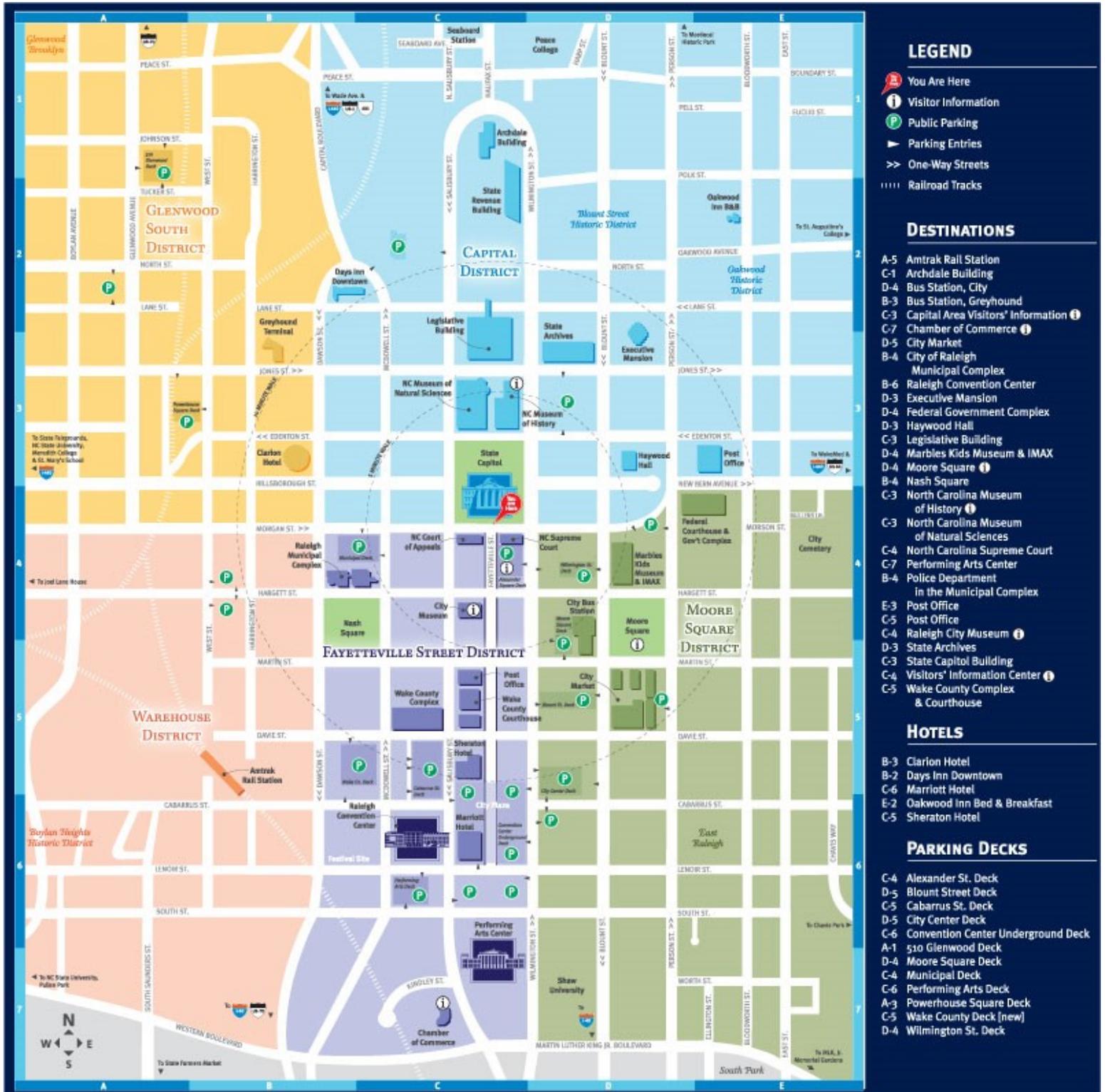
# Map of the General Assembly

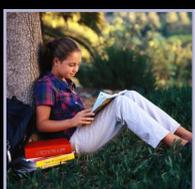
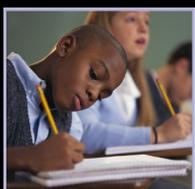
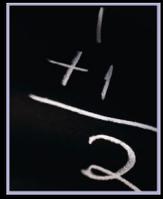


SECOND FLOOR PLAN



# Map of Downtown Raleigh





# Appendix

# Glossary of Legislative Terms

## -A-

**ACT:** Legislation enacted into law. A bill which has passed both houses of the Legislature, been enrolled and ratified.

**ADJOURNMENT:** A legislative house ends its business day by recessing until a stated time on another day or until the time fixed by its rules for reconvening. Constitutionally either house may, of its own motion, adjourn for a period not in excess of three days. Sine die (“without day”) adjournment is the final action of a legislative session.

**ADOPTED:** Simple resolutions, amendments and committee substitutes are “adopted”, joint resolutions and bills are “passed”. Adopt means to consent to or accept; pass means to enact by the requisite number of votes.

**AMENDMENT:** Changes in any bill (or other proposed legislation) may be offered either by a committee or an individual legislator in the form of an amendment to a specific portion of the pending measure.

**AMENDMENT, CONSTITUTIONAL:** see Constitutional Amendment.

**AMENDMENTS, COMMITTEE:** Committee amendments are offered ahead of any other amendments and generally are adopted since the acceptance of these was a condition of the committee having reported the bill favorably.

**AMENDMENTS, FLOOR:** Amendments offered by legislators in their individual capacity during session.

**APPEAL:** Any member may appeal from the ruling of the Chair on questions of order; on such appeal no member may speak no more than once, unless by leave of the House. A two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members present shall be necessary to sustain any appeal from the ruling of the Chair.

**APPORTIONMENT:** The legislative act, performed every 10th year following a Federal census, of drawing district boundaries so as to provide representation for the people in the Senate and House of Representatives.

**APPROPRIATIONS BILL:** This is a bill authorizing the spending of public money.



## **-B-**

**BILL:** A bill is a proposed law sponsored by a legislator.

**BILL HISTORY:** All versions of a bill, with amendments and/or committee substitutes and votes kept in the Principal Clerk's office and the library.

**BUDGET:** The detailed statement by the Governor of the money needs of the departments of the state for the next two fiscal years.

**BY REQUEST:** A legislator may add "by request" to his name in introducing a bill. This means he has introduced the bill at the request of a constituent, some governmental agency, or an organization.

## **-C-**

**CALENDAR:** The Calendar is a listing of the bills (and other proposed legislation) reported from committees and generally ready for floor consideration. Usually, a Calendar is the printed daily list of the bills, by their titles. However, calendar can be used in an intangible sense, as a stage in the process of making a bill eligible for consideration. The Calendar also lists meetings of committees scheduled for two days and public hearings five days prior to their occurrence. Calendars are available to legislators and the public on the morning of each legislative day.

**CAUCUS:** A private meeting of legislators. The caucus may be members of a political party or members from a geographical area. Legislative officers are designated and nominated within the political parties at caucuses. Party positions on pending legislation may be determined in caucuses.

**CENSURE:** A resolution adopted by a house of the Legislature condemning the conduct of one of its members or of some other public official -- a step short of either expulsion or impeachment.

**CHAIR:** The Chair is used to describe the presiding officer as, for example, a Member



inquires, “How did the Chair rule on the gentleman’s point of order?” or, responding, “The Chair rules the amendment out of order.”

**CHAMBER:** Official hall for the meeting of a legislative body.

**CHAPLAIN:** When a clergyman is designated by the presiding officer to serve for the duration of a legislative session, he is known as the chaplain.

**CLINCHER MOTION:** The “clincher motion” consists of a motion to reconsider, followed by a motion to table the motion to reconsider. Since the motion to table may not be debated, an immediate vote is taken. If the same number of people who voted to defeat the bill then also vote to table the motion to reconsider, the motion to table is adopted and a two-thirds vote would be required to revive the bill.

**COMMITTEE:** A committee is a group of persons chosen to perform specific functions. Legislators use a number of committees. The most familiar are ‘standing’, which are those with a continuing responsibility in a general field of legislative activity: for example, appropriations. There are also ‘select’ committees, whose members are “selected” to do a particular job: for example, to study alcoholic beverage laws. Often a select committee will be an interim committee, meaning that it will do its work between regular sessions of the Legislature. A ‘conference’ committee may be appointed by the House Speaker and the Senate President to see what can be done when the houses have agreed in principle but differ in detail on a specific piece of legislation. By bringing together interested members of the two houses, agreement often can be reached that might not be possible if the houses had to limit their negotiations to shuttling paper back and forth. Rarely, a house will meet as a ‘Committee of the Whole’, a device which enables the House to use the greater flexibility of procedure available to committees. Whatever the house does in a committee of the whole must be done over again when the body resumes its meeting as the House. Joint committees are composed of House and Senate members.

**COMMITTEE REPORT:** All House bills and resolutions shall be reported from the committee to which referred with such recommendations as the committee may desire to make, except in the case where the principal introduced requests in writing to the Chairman of the committee that the bill not be considered. Bills may be reported “favorable”, “favorable, as amended”, “unfavorable as to bill, favorable as to committee substitute



bill”, “reported without prejudice”, “postponed indefinitely”, “unfavorable” or “unfavorable/postponed indefinitely, with a minority report attached.”

**COMPANION BILL:** Identical bill introduced in both houses.

**CONCURRENCE:** When one house agrees to an amendment/committee substitute adopted by the other house, the action is known as concurrence.

**CONFERENCE COMMITTEE:** A conference committee is actually two committees, one from each house, meeting together to attempt to work out language acceptable to the Senate and House on some measure upon which agreement could not be reached through amendments. A majority of the members of the committee from each house must agree before the conference committee report may be submitted to the Senate and House. Neither house is obligated to accept the report but usually they do since the alternative could be the failure of the legislation for that session.

**CONFLICT OF INTEREST:** A Member may request that he be excused from voting if he feels the legislation being considered may directly affect him professionally or personally.

**CONSTITUENT:** A citizen residing within the district of a legislator.

**CONSTITUTION:** A written instrument embodying the fundamental principles of the state that guarantees powers and duties of the government and guarantees certain rights to the people.

**CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT, STATE:** An amendment to or revision in the Constitution may be initiated by the General Assembly, but only if three-fifths of all the members of each house shall adopt an act submitting a proposal to the qualified voters of the state for the ratification or rejection.

**CO-SPONSOR:** The Legislator introducing a bill is known as the primary sponsor and his name appears first on the jacket and in the Journal. Other members who sign the bill are co-sponsors.

## **-D-**

**DEAN:** The senior member of a legislative house as determined in years served.



**DEBATE:** Debate is a formal statement of the reasons for (or against) some proposed action. A legislator desiring to debate first must gain recognition from the presiding officer, who possesses inherent discretion in extending this privilege. In other words, when two legislators arise at approximately the same moment, the presiding officer decides which shall speak first.

**DEBATE, LIMITS ON:** No member shall speak on, debate, or solicit cosponsors for, a bill or resolution at its first reading. No member shall speak more than twice on the main question, nor longer than 30 minutes for the first speech and 15 minutes for the second speech; nor shall he speak more than twice upon an amendment or motion to reconsider, commit, appeal or postpone, and then no longer than 10 minutes for the first speech and five minutes for the second speech. A member may speak only once and not more than 20 minutes on the question of the adoption of a minority report.

**DELEGATION:** Legislators from the same voting constituency.

**DISTRICT:** The area from which a Senator or Representative is elected. The boundaries of districts are drawn in the decennial reapportionments.

## **-E-**

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** A law becomes binding upon the date specified in the law itself.

**ELECTRONIC VOTING:** The device by which legislators record their presence and votes from their desk on the floor of the House. Red and green lights beside their names on panels show how the legislators voted by automatically totaling and reflecting the results.

**ENGROSSED BILL:** When a bill has been amended, it is rewritten to show the language as adopted. This rewriting is ordered by the house of origin (i.e. the House cannot order a Senate bill engrossed and the reverse is also true).

**ENROLLED BILL:** The final copy of a bill passed by both the House and Senate.



## **-F-**

**FISCAL NOTE:** A fiscal note seeks to state in dollars the estimated amount of increase or decrease in revenue or expenditures and the present and future implications of a piece of pending legislation.

**FLOOR, THE:** This is synonymous with the Chamber, as when a person says, “I’m going to the floor.” Or, in stating an intention to speak, “I’m going to take the floor.”

## **-G-**

**GERMANENESS:** The relevance or appropriateness of amendments or substitutes.

**GERRYMANDERING:** Legislative district boundary lines drawn to obtain partisan or factional advantages.

**GRANDFATHER CLAUSE:** Laws providing new or additional professional qualifications often contain a “grandfather clause” exempting persons presently practicing an affected profession from having to comply.

## **-I-**

**IMPEACHMENT:** Procedure to remove from office public officials accused of misconduct.

**INDEFINITE POSTPONEMENT:** A motion to indefinitely postpone consideration of a bill is equivalent to killing it. Such a motion may, if carried, be reconsidered.

**INTERIM:** The interval between regular sessions.

**INTRODUCTION:** The formal presentation of a proposal after it has been processed.



## **-J-**

**JOINT SESSION:** The House and Senate meet jointly in the House Chamber for the Governor's address, to confirm appointments and elect persons to various boards.

**JOURNAL:** The official chronological record of the action taken and proceedings of the respective houses.

## **-L-**

**LAW:** The final product of the legislative process.

**LAY ON THE TABLE:** Postponement of the matter before the house, the motion shall be seconded before the motion is put to the vote. When a question has been tabled, it shall not thereafter be considered except on motion to reconsider, or motion to remove from the table approved by a two-thirds (2/3) vote.

**LEAVE OF ABSENCE:** Permission granted by the House to a member who wishes to be absent for a specific period.

**LINE-ITEM:** An item which appears in a general appropriations bill on a separate line, apart from the overall funding of an agency.

**LOBBY:** The act of persons who seek, directly or indirectly, to encourage the passage, defeat or modification of any legislation. Lobbyists are required by law to register with the Secretary of State's office.

## **-M-**

**MAJORITY:** A quorum consists of a majority of the qualified members of the House, thus half of the membership plus one.

**MAJORITY LEADER:** A member of the majority party designated to be leader.

**MANUAL:** Publication containing histories and information relative to the state in gen-



eral.

**MEMBERS ELECT:** Members elected but not having taken the oath of office or officially serving.

**MESSAGE:** The House and Senate communicate with each other by messages. Each bill is transmitted from one house to the other by a document which tells what action has been taken. When the Governor addresses the Legislature it also is called a “message.”

**MINORITY LEADER:** A member of the minority party designated to be leader.

**MINORITY REPORT:** When a bill is reported by a committee with a recommendation that it not be passed or that it be postponed indefinitely, a minority report may accompany the bill. One-fourth (1/4) of the members of the committee who were present and voting when the bill was considered in committee must sign the report and submit it in an attempt to bring the bill before the House.

**MOTION:** Formal proposal offered by a member of a deliberative assembly.

## -N-

**NONCONTROVERSIAL BILLS:** Generally a bill on which the explanation can be concluded in a brief period of time. Local bills are often considered noncontroversial.

## -O-

**OFFICERS, NON-LEGISLATIVE:** The portion of the legislative staff elected by the membership, such as the Principal Clerk, Reading Clerk and Sergeant-at-Arms.

**OMNIBUS BILL:** A bill relating to a single subject but combining many aspects.

**OTHER BODY:** In the House this means the Senate and vice versa.

**OUT OF ORDER:** Not being conducted under proper parliamentary rules and proce-



dures.

## **-P-**

**PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY:** Question posed to chair for clarification of a point in proceedings.

**PERSONAL PRIVILEGE:** Upon recognition by the Speaker for that purpose, any member may speak to a question of privilege for a time not to exceed three minutes. Questions of privilege shall be, first those affecting the rights of the House collectively, its safety, dignity, and the integrity of its proceedings; second, the rights, reputation, and conduct of members, individually, in their respective capacity.

**POINT OF ORDER:** Calling attention to a breach of order or rules.

**PRESS:** Reporters wishing to take down debates may be admitted by the Speaker, who shall assign such places to them on the floor or elsewhere, to effect this object, as not to interfere with the convenience of the House.

**PREVIOUS QUESTION:** A motion to close debate and bring the pending question or questions to an immediate vote.

## **-Q-**

**QUORUM:** A quorum consists of a majority of the qualified members of the House.

**QUORUM CALL:** A method used to establish the presence of a majority for the lawful transacting of business, often heard just before the taking of the vote on a controversial measure, putting the legislators on notice that a significant call is about to be taken.

## **-R-**

**READINGS:** Presentation of a bill before either house by the reading of the title; a



stage in the enactment of a measure. Each bill must receive three readings by title.

**RECALL:** A motion which enables either house to recall a bill previously passed.

**RECESS:** Intermission in a daily session.

**RECOMMIT:** To send back to committee.

**RECONSIDERATION:** A motion which, when granted, gives rise to another vote annulling or reaffirming an action previously taken.

**REFERENDUM:** A method by which a measure adopted by the legislature may be submitted to popular vote of the electorate.

**RESOLUTIONS:** Resolutions do not have the effect of law, as bills do; they are used instead to express opinions of the House, to create study commissions or committees or establish investigative committees, to honor deceased persons, and to adopt House rules and internal affairs. Joint resolutions pass through both houses. Simple resolutions are adopted by one house.

**ROLL CALL:** The vote on an issue before the body; either by electronic voting or by voice vote, names of members being called in alphabetical order and recorded.

**RULES:** The rules of each house determine how it shall go about its daily conduct of business.

**-S-**

**SELECT COMMITTEE:** Special committee created for the purpose of dealing with a specific and, generally, a rather narrow situation.

**SENIORITY:** Seniority is a measure of a legislator's service. Preferential treatment is sometimes given to senior members in regard to committee, seating, and office assignments.

**SESSION:** Period during which the legislature meets. The General Assembly meets in 'regular' session every two years, in which all types of legislation may be considered.



‘Second’ session is the continuation of a regular session occurring in the years between regular sessions and usually are limited to certain legislation. ‘Extra’ sessions are special sessions called for and limited to specific legislation. ‘Daily’ sessions are the meetings of the House or Senate on a day to day basis. ‘Joint’ sessions are the meeting of the House and Senate together.

SINE DIE: Adjournment “without day” being set for reconvening. Final adjournment.

SPEAKER: The presiding officer of the House of Representatives. He is designated by the majority party in caucus and then elected by the body for a term of two years.

SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE: Substitute presiding officer. He is designated by the majority party in caucus and then elected by the body.

SPECIAL ORDER: Matter of business set for a special time and day designated.

SPONSOR: Legislator who is the primary author of a bill or amendment.

STANDING COMMITTEE: Regular committees of the legislature set up to perform certain legislative functions.

STATUTES: Compilation of laws of North Carolina in bound form. Updated after each session.

STOPPING THE CLOCK: The clock in the Chamber is literally stopped if the hour set for adjournment arrives without having completed the work for the session.

SUBCOMMITTEES: Subcommittees are often appointed within a committee to handle a particular piece of legislation and report to the full committee. The full committee need not accept the recommendation but usually does.

## **-T-**

TABLE: A means of disposing of a bill or other matter without further debate. Usually tabling is a final disposition but it is possible to take from the table by a two-thirds vote.

TERM: Duration of offices of an elected official.



TITLE: A concise statement of the contents of a bill.

**-V-**

VETO: The action of a governor in disapproval of a measure. North Carolina is the only state whose governor does not have this power.

VOTE: Formal expression of will or decision by the body.

**-W-**

WALK, TAKING A: Legislator who leaves the Chamber or a committee meeting so he will not have to record a vote is said to be “taking a walk.”

WELL: The area between the rostrum and the first rows of seats in the Chamber is known as the well.

WITHOUT OBJECTION: Much of the business of the Chambers is done “without objection”. This means the presiding officer has not put a motion to the body to dispose of a matter proposed by a Member. “Without objection” is the same as saying “by unanimous consent.”

**-Y-**

YIELD: The relinquishing of the floor to another member to speak or ask a question.

*Glossary prepared by the House Principal Clerk's Office, 1989 Session*



