

# Bill's Seat – A Report from the North Carolina Legislature – April 17, 2011

## By Representative Bill Faison

The Legislature continues voting on new legislation while committees have hearings on new bills. 41 new laws, law changes or resolutions were passed last week. The time for filing new bills has passed. Both the House and the Senate are working through committees. Not all introduced bills are good ideas. Last week a Senator brought to House Finance Committee a bill to take parking fines in one coastal town away from the schools and give the money to the town. The bill died in committee.

**Protecting Farms From City Expansion:** Many cities/towns are expanding as our State's population continues migrating into more urban areas. Cities/towns react by expanding not only their town limits, but also their extra-territorial jurisdiction and regulations to cover the property near their borders. I voted for and the Legislature passed a bill I sponsored to prevent cities/towns from applying their regulations to farms. We need to balance city/town growth with the importance of preserving and protecting family farms. This time the farms win.

**Privatizing Prison Maintenance:** The House Repubs have been talking about turning over to private companies many things done by the State. It would mean firing a lot of loyal state employees, and would not gain us any savings in the short run. Worse, in the long run it probably costs all of us more, meaning our taxes would go up. I think it is a bad idea. Last week the Repubs passed a bill to expand the Department of Corrections privatized prison maintenance program in its Eastern and South Central operational regions. So far the maintenance jobs at the prisons in our District are safe.

**Encouraging Electric Vehicles:** We need to buy less gas and have a smaller carbon footprint. Technology is catching up with our needs. Hybrid and electric cars are now available. To encourage people to use electric cars we passed a bill permitting electric cars in rush hour vehicle lanes even if only one person is in the car. More people from our area now travel far from home to find work. Hopefully, this will eventually help them.

**Educational Testing:** We have been working on educational testing in past Sessions. We have been working to eliminate meaningless tests that force teachers to waste meaningful class time teaching kids how to take the test. A bipartisan group of legislators has been working to limit testing to

meaningful tests. The ACT test has been determined to best measure high school students readiness for college. Last week I voted for and the House passed a bill requiring the State Board of Education to administer this test, funds permitting.

**See the Bills and Contact Me:** You can see the bills discussed here by going to [www.ncleg.net](http://www.ncleg.net) and using the “Find Bills by Number” tool. The bills are S288, H168, H335, H222 and H766. I would really like to know what you think. Please contact me at [Bill.Faison@ncleg.net](mailto:Bill.Faison@ncleg.net) to share your thoughts.