

# Bill's Seat – A Report from the North Carolina Legislature – April 24, 2011

By Representative Bill Faison

House committees conduct Budget hearings this week. The plan is to finish committee work on the Budget this week and vote it next week. Big changes are coming. Education may be hurt badly.

**The Senate Puts NC At Risk for \$11 Million in Federal Fines:** Federal law requires N.C. to give timely notice before making changes in the State's health plan. Failure to do so obligates N.C. for \$11 million in federal penalties. The Governor negotiated with House and Senate Repub leadership to make changes and give the required notice. The Repub Leadership in the House struck a deal with the Governor and with bi-partisan support, the House did its part to give the required notice. The Republican Senate leadership is at odds with NCAE (the teachers' state organization). They think the health plan deal is too good to teachers and would not take the necessary steps in time to avoid the penalty. We just cannot afford an \$11 million penalty in this economy. The Repubs in the Senate need to get over it, come to the table and work with the Governor and House members to move our State forward. If our Governor cannot get the penalty waived we, as tax payers, are stuck with the bill. We cannot afford this conduct.

**Saving Money on Paving:** We need to get the costs of government services down. One of those services is paving. Technology has advanced so that recycled asphalt is safe to use for road construction. It is cheaper than new asphalt. Using recycled asphalt is good for our environment and for our pocketbooks. I voted for and the House passed a bill allowing the Highway Department to use recycled asphalt.

**Making it Harder for Injured Patients to Recover:** Based on New England Journal of Medicine research, more than 9,000 folks in our State each year suffer permanent injury or death from preventable medical mistakes. According to an official of the Physicians' Health Plan (PHP), a project of the Medical Society, approximately 15% of NC doctors are so impaired by drugs, alcohol or psychiatric problems that they cannot safely treat patients. Unfortunately only about a third of these are identified at any given time. For more information on the PHP see [www.ncmedsoc.org/pages/public\\_resources/php.html](http://www.ncmedsoc.org/pages/public_resources/php.html). The Medical Society, N.C. Chamber of Commerce and a group of insurance companies successfully lobbied Repub Senators to pass a bill making it almost

impossible for any injured patient or their family to recover for most medical mistakes. The Repubs in the House backed off of the worst things in the Senate bill. Still they penalize injured patients trying to recover for devastating losses.

**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 S323, H821, and S33. 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.