

Bill's Seat – A Report from the North Carolina Legislature - April 5, 2009

By Representative Bill Faison

Work at the Legislature is moving forward. Over 1,025 new bills have been introduced in the House. The bills are going through the committee process. Usually about 25% of the bills introduced in either the House or Senate will pass that body and move to the next. Only about 17% will pass both and become law.

Last week I met with constituents from Hillsborough, and the Yanceyville Town Board and City Manager. I also attended a conference on North Carolina's involvement in International Trade and how this could lead to jobs in our District.

Education: At the request of both the Caswell and Orange Boards of Education I introduced a bill giving control of the School Calendar back to the Boards. This would allow the Boards to set the time when school starts and stops and allow them to coordinate the school calendar with both college and community college calendars. I have concerns that this bill may not make it out of committee. UNC-TV reported Sunday that a similar but somewhat different bill for several western counties got an unfavorable vote in the Education Committee. I will work to get us a better result.

Health: We have a health crisis. Far too many people are overweight which can lead to other health problems including diabetes, heart disease, and high blood pressure. A pattern of over eating can develop from diets too high in sugar. In an effort to eliminate some of the problem from our schools, I sponsored bills requiring the State School Board to establish nutrition standards for all food sold at a school and requiring food sold in school vending machines to meet nutrition standards.

Cancer is a very real problem. Many people in our community are working for a cure through Relay For Life. This week I sponsored two bills to help. First, not all health insurance covers all cancer medications. I sponsored a bill requiring health insurance plans to cover all cancer drugs. Second, some cancer patients need help finding the best treatment. I sponsored a bill requiring the Department of Health and Human Services to establish a

program to help victims of breast and cervical cancer get the treatment they need from whatever healthcare facility in the State can best serve their needs.

A Fair Chance at State Contracts: At times in the past both minorities and women did not get a fair chance at NCDOT contracts. To help solve this problem I sponsored a bill setting a goal for NCDOT to award at least 10% of contracts to minority owned businesses and 5% to women owned businesses.

See the Bills and Contact Me: You can see the bills discussed here by going to www.ncleg.net and using the “Find Bills by Number” tool. The bills are H850, H65, H900, H899, H1020, and H896. I would really like to know what you think. Please contact me at billf@ncleg.net to share your thoughts.