

# Bill's Seat – A Report from the North Carolina Legislature - July 12, 2009

By Representative Bill Faison

While the Appropriations Chairs for the House and Senate have been negotiating toward a compromise Budget, work at the Legislature continues.

**High Speed Broadband Internet Availability:** Most of our District does not have access to high speed internet. We have some in Hillsborough, Yanceyville, Efland, Milton, and Prospect Hill and few other places. But most people do not have access. Through the work of my committees at the Legislature the Broadband providers have mapped availability. If you would like to see the availability near your home, right down to the street level, go to [www.ConnectNorthCarolina.org](http://www.ConnectNorthCarolina.org).

**Education:** Dropout prevention is a very serious problem. Some folks think one way to deal with the dropout problem is to make kids stay in school longer. Some want to raise the dropout age to 18. Others want to leave it at 16. Others think compulsory attendance will not address the problem. Nonetheless, we have been working on changing parts of the compulsory attendance law without changing the age.

**Protecting the Community:** Solicitation of children for sex over computers is a problem. Now there are devices that work like computers but are not called computers, mostly cell devices with internet access. To protect children we have expanded the definition of solicitation of children to include using these devices to prey on children.

**Helping Our Service Men and Women:** Service men and women have practical problems to deal with just like the rest of us. For example, if their driver's license expires while they are overseas, there is nothing they can do to solve the problem until they get back and then they need a grace period to get it done. We passed a new law giving them sixty days after returning from overseas to renew an expired driver's license.

**An Open and Free Press Protects Us All:** It is very important that our Press have access to government documents. The Press not only keeps us informed but it also keeps governments accountable by providing folks with

the truth about what is being done in the name of government. For the Press to do its job, access to government documents is very important. If a government can keep documents away from the Press, they can keep the truth away from the people. We should not let that happen. I sponsored a bill setting up a procedure for the Press to more quickly and inexpensively get access to government documents. If the government unjustly stonewalls and withholds documents, and eventually a court orders the documents turned over, then the government may also be compelled to pay attorney's fees incurred by the Press.

**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 S708, S65, H98 and H1134. 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.