

Bill's Seat – A Report from the North Carolina Legislature – July 3, 2011

By Representative Bill Faison

Over the past seven years very few partisan issues were brought up for a vote. Examples of partisan legislation include resolving the disputed Superintendent of Public Instruction race in 2004. All the Democrats voted for the Democrat and the Republicans voted for the Republican. There were more Democrats than Republicans and the Democrat won. Another example is the Racial Justice Act which says that if someone can convince a Superior Court Judge that the death penalty was imposed because of the color of their skin (a very high burden to meet) then their sentence would be changed to life in prison without the possibility of parole. Every Democrat voted for it and every Republican voted against it. The bill passed in 2009. During past Sessions we would see 2-5 partisan votes in the Long Session and a similar number in the Short Session. This year there were sometimes that many partisan votes in a single day.

Vetoing Bad Partisan Legislation: The Governor has vetoed 15 of the 396 bills passed by this Legislature. She vetoed the Budget that takes NC down to 49th nationally in per pupil spending and takes teacher pay down to 45th, and fires 14,500 people unnecessarily which will result in another 15,000 +/- people losing their jobs, according to an independent research group. The Republican led House overrode this veto hurting so many people.

Education: She also vetoed a bill targeted at hurting the teachers' organization, NCAE, for opposing and speaking out against the harm this Budget does to education. The Republicans in the Senate got mad with NCAE and to hurt them passed special legislation to make it harder to collect their dues. This abuse of power is downright un-American. Our most basic freedom is to speak out against government action we oppose without fear of retaliation from the government. I voted against the bill but the Republicans passed it anyway. Thank goodness the Governor stood up to those Senators.

Fracking: Fracking was also vetoed. The Senate Republicans introduced a bill that could ruin your well water. Under the cover of increasing energy and creating jobs a bill was introduced to promote a way of getting at possible marginal oil reserves called "fracking". A half billion dollars was set aside to deal with well water contamination. With this much set aside to deal with the damage it is clear they plan to do a lot of damage.

People in our area depend on their wells and do not want anyone messing with them or ruining their water. I voted against the bill but the Republicans passed it anyway. The Governor stood up for the people and vetoed this one too.

Other Vetoes: I will tell you more about vetoes next week.

Contact Me: The bills discussed are H200, S727, and S709. I would really like to know what you think. Call me at 919-715-0319 or email me Bill.Faison@ncleg.net to share your thoughts.