

Bill's Seat – A Report from the North Carolina Legislature – June 12, 2011

By Representative Bill Faison

A Legislative Session lasts two years. There is a Long Session in odd numbered years and a Short Session in even numbered years. All new bills for a Session must be filed by a date certain in the middle of the Long Session. A bill must pass either the House or the Senate by a date certain in the Long Session or it cannot be considered further by either in the Long or Short Sessions. That date is called the Crossover Date. For the House that was last Thursday. There is always a big push around crossover. Last week we did back to back marathon sessions for legislation to meet Crossover, debating, amending and passing approximately 150 bills. The push was made all the more intense because we may recess this week.

Budget Veto: The Budget hurts people. It takes away approximately 15,000 real jobs. In addition it targets and hurts education. It raises \$100 million in NEW TAXES (fees) but fails to continue a one cent sales tax that would save all of the jobs. The Governor has vetoed the Budget. 5 Democrats made deals for public projects in their Districts and voted with the Republicans to pass the Budget. Their votes were not needed for passage but are needed to override the historic first Budget veto. The Gang of 5 have steadfastly promised to vote to override the veto. There is a lot of pressure being put on them from teachers, education groups and others to support the veto.

Education Battles: The Republican leadership is in a fight with teachers and NCAE, the teachers' state organization, over the deep Budget cuts to Education. In response to criticism from NCAE the leadership has passed legislation targeted at hurting NCAE by making it less convenient for members to pay dues. The legislation repeals laws permitting dues check offs.

Moreover, they have decided to prohibit our university system from considering high school accreditation as a basis for university admission, scholarships or loans. High School accreditation has always been a source of pride for teachers, staff, and students. This is in response to problems in the Buncombe County School Board. Everyone's schools are being devalued to deal with a local problem better handled with a local solution.

Protecting Your Home: You should have the right to protect yourself and your family in your home. Anyone breaking into your home is there to

do you harm of one kind or another. The Castle Doctrine says if someone breaks into your home and you shoot them, then no civil or criminal liability on your part. I voted for the Castle Doctrine and it passed.

Contact Me: You can see the bill discussed here by going to www.ncleg.net and using the “Find Bills by Number” tool. The bills are H200, S727, H342, and H650. I would really like to know what you think. Please contact me at Bill.Faison@ncleg.net to share your thoughts.