

Bill's Seat – A Report from the North Carolina Legislature - June 6, 2010

By Representative Bill Faison

The House Budget came on for a vote last week. It is very important to know what folks in our District think about the Budget and other things. I spend a lot of time talking with folks. In the last week I held "Town Hall" meetings and listening sessions in Hillsborough and Yanceyville. In addition I attended the Ground Breaking for the expansion of Caswell Family Medical, Pelham VFD Fish Fry, Prayer Faith Ministry Gospel Music Festival, and Hillsborough Exchange Club Dinner and Reverse Raffle. Folks tell me their concerns, share ideas on how to save money in State Government and tell me about problems they have discovered and give me their ideas of how to solve the problems. All of this is really helpful.

Education: One of the concerns many people have shared with me is the time and expense wasted on unnecessary tests. Only a very few tests are Federally mandated. The End of Grade Tests (EOG/EOCs) are not Federally mandated but required by our State. Because schools and teachers are rated on how well kids do on EOG/EOCs, a lot of class time is spent teaching how to take the test instead of teaching the course. These standardized tests tell us how good kids are at taking tests but not how much they know about the course. We needed to stop these useless tests. I supported legislation to end the EOG/EOCs and argued we should end EOG/EOCs in debate on the Floor. The House voted to end the EOG/EOCs.

Ending the EOG/EOCs has a second benefit. It allows us to take over \$5 million spent on EOG/EOCs and spend it on school supplies to benefit our children.

Budget: The House passed the Budget on a final vote taken just after midnight last Friday morning. The House Budget cuts more than \$750 million out of last year's Budget. It does not raise anybody's taxes. The House Budget is different than both the Senate's and the Governor's Budgets. The Budget now goes to a conference committee made up of the House and Senate Budget Chairs, who together with the Governor will hammer out a compromise. It is too early to say for sure what will be in the final Budget. Some highlights from the House Budget follow:

Jobs: Over 1,800 teacher jobs are saved by taking some of the lottery money earmarked for construction and spending it on teachers. The House Budget saves all teacher jobs.

Our community colleges are training folks for new and better jobs. A lot of people have signed up for courses to help them. The Budget fully funds growth in community college enrollment.

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 bill is S897. I would really like to know what you think. Please contact me at Bill.Faison@ncleg.net to share your thoughts.