

Bill's Seat – A Report from the North Carolina Legislature - March 15, 2009

By Representative Bill Faison

This past week two members of the Orange County School Board came to visit with me in support of their goals. I have met with the Caswell School Board and they have very clearly presented their goals.

Education: Everyone knows to stop for a school bus that has its stop sign extended and its lights flashing. Still every year some people pass a stopped school bus, and sometimes kids are hurt or killed. For the safety of our kids, I sponsored a bill to authorize the use of video cameras to not only detect but also to prosecute this crime.

The School Boards of Caswell and Orange Counties have both asked for legislation to return to them control of when schools start and stop. They want control of the school calendar. Several years ago control of the calendar was taken away from all local school boards and given to the State Board of Education. The local boards have really good reasons for wanting local control and I have agreed to do what I can to help. I am working on legislation to do this.

Our community colleges continue to take a lead role in trying to help folks train for both a job and a better job. Childcare can be one of many challenges for adults trying to go back to school. Childcare can be a big portion of any young family's or a single parent's budget. We already fund some daycare but not nearly enough to meet the students' needs. I sponsored a bill to expand the funding for this program as a way of helping more people get back to work.

Health: This week there was a focus on babies' health. I sponsored two bills to protect babies. The first is intended to reduce deaths from Sudden Infant Death Syndrome by educating new parents about safe sleep practices to avoid strangulation and suffocation. The second is intended to educate people about injury and death from Shaken Baby Syndrome.

Helping Firefighters and EMS: Our Firefighters and EMS personnel are an important and vital part of our community. They look after the rest of us

when we and our property are most vulnerable. This week I sponsored several bills to help. First, a bill that increases fire and rescue pensions from \$170 to \$173 a month without raising the required contribution. Second, a bill that authorizes training youth between 15 and 18 to become volunteer fire fighters and EMS personnel. Finally, a bill that would allow volunteer fire departments and volunteer EMS squads to get a refund of all sales taxes paid.

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 H440, H540, H479, H478, H549, H557 and H511. I would really like to know what you think. Please contact me at billf@ncleg.net to share your thoughts.