

# Bill's Seat – A Report from the North Carolina Legislature - March 20, 2011

By Representative Bill Faison

The Legislature continues voting on new legislation while committees have hearings on new bills. Seventeen new laws, law changes or resolutions were passed last week. In addition, eighty-five new bills and resolutions were introduced, and of those I sponsored thirteen.

**Protecting Our Community from Drunk Drivers:** In 1988 almost as many people died in auto wrecks (47,087) as died from combat in the entire Viet Nam Conflict (47,424). 51% of those auto deaths were alcohol related. Public awareness programs, law enforcement efforts and stricter laws have helped bring down both the total number of yearly auto deaths (37,261 in 2008) and the percentage related to alcohol (37%) while the number of drivers has been going up. Both my mom and dad were killed by a drunk driver in a head-on collision. I know firsthand how awful this can be for a family. I sponsored a bill called Laura's Law to increase the punishment for DWI offenders who have three or more aggravating factors and authorizing the Court to require continuous alcohol monitoring for certain offenders. I voted for the bill and it passed. I am now working with MADD and Craig Lloyd to introduce additional DWI restrictions intended to help protect you.

**Open Government Records:** You should have access to all records of the Legislature, Cities, Counties, and the Executive Branch of Government. After all, it is your government and you should be able to see all that it does. The best way to do this is by statute. I am trying to get this done. The Repub Rules Co-Chair is resisting passing a bill and trying to put it to a Constitutional Amendment vote. If the Constitutional Amendment were to pass a state wide referendum it would give the same rights as the bill. The difference, a Constitutional Amendment would cost the State and/or the Counties approximately \$450,000 to run the vote. This is a waste of money when we can have the same result at no cost to you as a tax payer.

**Bad Ideas Make Bad Laws:** There are some bad ideas that have been put into draft legislation and are working their way through the Legislature. Some examples include changing the concealed carry laws to allow concealed weapons in restaurants serving alcohol and parks where little league games are played. Declaring identification cards issued by other governments not valid ID making it harder for farm workers to buy liability

insurance putting the rest of us at risk for uninsured wrecks. Yet another is aimed at creating separate currency for N.C. Heaven only knows what will be introduced next. Someone call David Letterman.

**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 H49, H87, H111 and H33. 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.