

Bill's Seat – A Report from the North Carolina Legislature - May 15, 2011

By Representative Bill Faison

The Budget is now with the Senate. They plan to cut K-12 and Community Colleges even more, in favor of less cuts to the University System. This would mean the further dismantling of our educational system. This is bad. While we wait for the Budget to come back from the Senate, work continues.

Stopping Crime: We had a big fight last year when we tried to get DNA samples taken for certain crimes. DNA is taken with a cotton swab inside the cheek and is minimally invasive. Many of us see DNA just as we see finger prints, only better. It helps identify the guilty and free the innocent. Some members of the House resist taking DNA. Clearly, we are better off finding the guilty before they rape, rob or murder someone else. Moreover, if someone has been wrongly identified, DNA can prove their innocence and set them free. To my way of thinking, DNA evidence only does good things. Last week we expanded the list of felonies for which DNA evidence can be taken.

Early Voting: Traditionally voting occurred on just one day. Far too many people were denied the ability to vote because of conflicts of circumstances. The Legislature passed a bill allowing voting over an 18 day period, sometimes referred to as early voting. Last year 46.7% of North Carolinians voted during early voting. A new House member from Rockingham County filed a bill, supported by several Republicans, to cut a week out of early voting. This will make it more difficult for people to vote. Even the guy filing the bill last voted during the time now being removed. All of the Democrats, joined by three Republicans, voted against the bill. The rest of the Republicans voted for and passed the bill. This is another bad idea the Governor should veto.

Unemployment Insurance: We have unemployment benefits to provide a safety net for folks. In the best of times jobs can be uncertain. In the worst of times, such as now, it can be certain that a number of folks will lose their jobs. We have unemployment benefits so that those losing their jobs do not have to go hungry. Currently the long term unemployment benefits provided by the Federal Government due 37,000 people are not being paid because the Senate will not pass the necessary legislation. The House has passed the needed bill. The Senate is playing politics. It loads up

the unemployment bill with unrelated items in a fight with the Governor. The Senate needs to stop using people as political pawns and go to work for the people.

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 discussed here are H483, H658 and H383. I would really like to know what you think. Please contact me at Bill.Faison@ncleg.net to share your thoughts.