



North Carolina NOW Legislative Update #1 —4 February 2019

The General Assembly reconvened on Wednesday, January 30 to begin this year's session. Members were sworn in on January 9, and this link lists the newly elected members of both parties: <https://www.ncallianceforhealth.org/2019-nc-general-assembly-session-convenes/>

On January 30, NC NOW, a lead organization of the NC-ERA Alliance, joined an Alliance call-to-action at the General Assembly. Advocates engaged in constituent visits to share materials supporting the Equal Rights Amendment and to call on their representatives to co-sponsor ERA bills this session. ERA bills sponsored by Senator Floyd McKissick, Jr. (Senate) and Representative Carla Cunningham (House) are expected to be filed on March 5.

A press conference to announce the filing will be held on March 5, at 1pm in the press conference room in the 1300 quadrant of the Legislative Building.



ERA Advocates at the NC General Assembly on January 30
Photo by Mike Oniffrey

Read more about the event and see more pictures at "ERA Advocacy Day at NCGA a Big Success! 1/30/19" at <https://wp.me/p22b2e-1Ve>

This session will be different from recent sessions because for the first time since 2013 the Republicans no longer hold a veto-proof majority in either the House or the Senate. This change will mean that the majority party will have to work with Governor Cooper to get bills passed. Compromise is in the air.

Governor Cooper has announced that one of his top legislative priorities is to pass legislation to expand Medicaid eligibility under the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare), something that 36 states and the District of Columbia have already done. There is finally a real chance of accomplishing this goal during this session, but advocates must be active and vocal in support. Bills to expand Medicaid have already been filed (HB5/SB3).

An informal poll has identified the five issues North Carolinians most want the legislature to act on this session: (1) Medicaid Expansion, (2) Election Oversight and Security, (3) Redistricting and Voting Rights, (4) Gun Control/Gun Rights, and (5) Preserving Public Education. This link has good background information on all of these issues: <https://www.newsobserver.com/news/politics-government/article224701515.html>

Of special interest to NC NOW members and supporters is Attorney General Josh Stein's legislative plan to clear the backlog of untested rape kits statewide: <https://www.newsobserver.com/news/politics-government/state-politics/article225192005.html>

In a procedural move worth noting, Republicans have revived "floaters." Four designated members have been given the privilege of voting in any committee to assure that the majority party can pass or block bills in committee in spite of absences or defections. See: <https://wcti12.com/news/state-news/house-republicans-reinstituting-floaters-to-advance-bills>

Senate Bills

SB3/HB5: An Act to Close the Medicaid Coverage Gap

1/31/2019: Senate Rules

SB9: Female Genital Mutilation Clarify/Prohibition: Makes it a Class C felony to mutilate female genitals or for a parent or guardian to cause or consent to female genital mutilation of a minor.

1/31/2019: Filed

House Bills

HB5/SB3: An Act to Close the Medicaid Coverage Gap

Expands Medicaid coverage and includes a Medicaid Coverage Gap Assessment that will require hospitals to pay the state share of the program and administrative costs associated with the program.

1/31/2019: Health; if favorable, Appropriations; if favorable, Rules

HB10: Repeal 2015 Law Pertaining to Monuments: Repeals law that prohibits removal of historical (i.e., Confederate) monuments.

1/31/2019: State and Local Government; if favorable, Appropriations; if favorable, Rules