

2017 (FY18) FEDERAL PRIORITIES FOR NC COUNTIES: A *Quick Guide to Our Issues*

Go to www.ncacc.org/federalissues for more information.

Support Remote Sales Tax Collection (Marketplace Fairness Act) - North Carolina and its counties are losing more than \$500 million annually in sales tax revenues through untaxed remote sales. Collecting remote sales taxes is neither a new tax nor a tax increase; these revenues are already due and payable by law.

Support Funding and Legislation to Expand High-Speed Broadband Access - Adequate digital infrastructure is essential for education, economic development, health care and social services; however, many portions of NC counties do not have access to high-speed Internet. NC counties urge Congress to provide digital infrastructure funding and adopt legislation that clarifies FCC definitions for speed thresholds and unserved areas while supporting county flexibility to invest in tools that encourage high-speed internet connectivity.

Support Funding for Payment In Lieu of Taxes, Agricultural, Workforce, Economic Development and Infrastructure Programs, Including School Construction and Education Capital, That Help Counties Meet Public Needs – In both rural and urban areas throughout the state, NC counties rely on federal-local partnerships to support community and economic development, and public infrastructure. In recent years, the partnership, and the economic vitality of NC counties, has been threatened when efforts to trim the federal budget have targeted these local government programs. Funding for programs that maintain the partnerships between the federal government and county government in meeting demand for public services should remain a priority for Congress.

Support the Stepping Up Initiative to Reduce the Number of People with Mental Illness in County Jails - In North Carolina, almost 13% of the prison population requires some type of intervention due to behavioral health issues. Without the appropriate treatment and services, people with mental illnesses can continue to cycle through the criminal justice system. Support is needed for legislation and funding to promote the Stepping Up Initiative developed by the National Association of Counties, the Council of State Governments Justice Center and the American Psychiatric Foundation to help counties develop and implement efforts to reduce the number of people with mental illnesses in county jails.

Support Funding for Behavioral Health Programs and Services to Address the Opioid and Substance Abuse Epidemic – The United States is in the midst of an unprecedented opioid and substance abuse epidemic. Every day 78 people die from an opioid-related overdose. NC counties are on the front lines of this battle working with the state to develop and fund substance abuse and overdose inhibition response programs, but progress is limited without ongoing funding and support from Congress.

Support Funds for Health, Human and Economic Services Programs Including Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Federal Block Grants, and Food and Nutrition Services – Community-based programs funded through federal grants are essential to a county government's ability to meet the needs of its citizens. Counties are the first responders providing services to the public and, in particular, our nation's vulnerable populations – children, elderly and the chronically ill. Many of these services are also mandated by federal law and therefore the federal government provides funding to assist states and local communities in meeting the demand for these services. The populations that these programs help serve do not diminish with reductions in, or elimination of, federal assistance, and thus counties are forced to make up the difference.

Oppose Unfunded Mandates to Counties - Reductions in federal spending and deficits should not be accomplished by shifting costs to counties, imposing unfunded mandates. NC counties also oppose any legislative or regulatory initiatives that undermine local government decision making authority or pre-empt county programs and taxing authority.

Protect the Tax-Exempt Status of Municipal Bonds - Tax-exempt bonds are a well-established financing tool for local governments. Without this exemption, the expense of financing capital needs for critical county services will increase sharply.

Support Increased Funding for Military and Veteran Programs and Communities, Including Impact Aid and Veteran Support Services, as well as Rule Changes to Accurately Count Deployed Military Personnel and Their Families in the Census - North Carolina's counties are home to nine military bases supporting tens of thousands of military service personnel and their families. The strict discretionary spending caps as part of sequestration put additional pressure on communities that support a large national defense presence. Additional funding is needed for communities with military families and veterans, including sufficient and accurate Impact Aid funds as well as veteran housing, economic development and health services.

Support Legislation to Allow Individuals to Receive Federal Health Benefits While Awaiting Trial - Counties are required to provide adequate health care to individuals who pass through jails each year, while federal statute prohibits Medicaid matching funds from paying for that care even if the individual is eligible and enrolled.

