



Bulletin #05-22

Thursday, June 23, 2005

CONFEREES, CONTINUING RESOLUTION AND THE END GAME

Both Houses of the General Assembly appointed conferees this week to work out differences between the two on the state budget. House conferees include members of the Appropriations subcommittees who voted in favor of the House budget. Senate conferees include the 28 members of the Senate who are members of the majority party. Names of conferees are available on the General Assembly's Web site.

Meanwhile, recognizing that a budget will not be finalized before the end of the fiscal year next week, legislators began discussion of a continuing resolution to keep the state government functioning beyond July 1. The Senate Finance Committee considered [H1630](#) at its meeting Thursday morning. The bill, approved by the House in early June, would continue government activities for 30 days from the date of enactment and would continue the half-cent sales tax, scheduled to "sunset" June 30. It would also extend the 8.25 percent upper individual income tax bracket, enacted in 2001 and scheduled to sunset June 30, through the 2006 and 2007 taxable years.

The appointment of conferees and consideration of a Continuing Resolution mark the beginning of the final stage of the budget process, or the "end game." Completion of the budget sets the stage for completion of the General Assembly's 2005 regular session.

SUBCOMMITTEE PROPOSES ELECTION REFORM

A Senate subcommittee this week reported a bill designed to reform North Carolina's voting system. [S223](#), introduced by Sen. Ellie Kinnaird (Orange), was presented to the Senate Judiciary Committee No. 1 on Thursday, June 23. The bill, as proposed by the subcommittee, includes an appropriation of \$20 million to help counties comply with the requirements for additional voting equipment. Officials with the State Board of Elections have estimated that 85 percent to 90 percent of existing systems will have to be replaced to comply with state and federal mandates. Approximately \$53 million in federal funds is available, but the total cost is expected to approach \$70 million if the requirements contained in [S223](#) are enacted. The full Senate Judiciary Committee is expected to consider the bill next week.

BILLS OF INTEREST

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Updates

[S396](#) "Allowing counties to make changes in service districts created pursuant to Article 16 of Chapter 153A of the General Statutes." Sen. David Hoyle (Gaston). ([Bulletin #07](#), March 10, 2005; [Bulletin #12](#), April 14, 2005; [Bulletin #20](#), June 9, 2005). This bill was favorably reported in the House on June 8. It was approved on second reading June 15 and on third reading June 21.

TAXATION AND FINANCE
Updates

[S682](#) “To extend to public health authorities, sanitary districts, and metropolitan sewerage districts the set-off debt collection procedures currently available to counties and cities.” Sen. Robert Holloman (Hertford). ([Bulletin #09](#), March 24, 2005; [Bulletin #12](#), April 4, 2005). This bill was favorably reported in the House on June 14. It was approved on second reading June 21 and on third reading June 22.

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