

LEGISLATIVE GOALS 2003-2004

(Adopted at Legislative Goals Conference, Jan. 16-17, 2003)

Human Resources

1. Medicaid Relief

Seek legislation to implement a 6-year phase out of county participation in the costs of Medicaid, beginning with a cap at current costs in the year 2003. **(Legislative Goals Committee Priority #1)**

2. Long-term Care

Seek legislation to improve the long-term care system in North Carolina by:

- providing incentives for the employment of direct care givers,
- providing income tax incentives for in-home services provided for family members.
- funding comprehensive long-term care planning at the county or regional level,
- expanding community alternatives for disabled adults, and
- increasing funds for Senior Centers. **(Legislative Goals Committee Priority #6)**

3. Latino Issues

Seek legislation to create a Study Commission that includes state and county officials to undertake a comprehensive study of issues affecting North Carolina's Latino population; including, but not limited to, health care and education. The commission should consider what efforts should be undertaken to fully integrate the Latino population into North Carolina's culture.

4. Mental Health Services

Seek legislation authorizing county commissioners to determine the appropriate local mix of public and private providers for those in need of mental health, developmental disabilities and substance abuse services.

5. State Health Program Mandates

Seek legislation to eliminate unfunded state health program mandates.

Taxation and Finance

1. Local Government Finance.

Seek legislation to allow all counties to enact any or all of several revenue options from among those that have already been authorized for any other county. **(Legislative Goals Committee Priority #2)**

2. Inspection Fees.

Seek legislation to allow county commissioners to charge a fee to offset the cost of restaurant inspections, and other fees to offset the costs of health and environmental services. **(Legislative Goals Committee Priority #5)**

3. Legislative Restrictions on withholding of funds.

Seek an amendment to the State Constitution of North Carolina stating: "Unless authorized by an act of the General Assembly, the Governor may not withhold from distribution funds that have been collected by the State on behalf of a unit of local government or funds the General Assembly has appropriated or otherwise committed to a unit of local government."
(Legislative Goals Committee Priority #3)

4. Sales Tax Exemption.

Support legislation to exempt counties, cities, school boards and community colleges from payment of state and local sales taxes on purchases within North Carolina.

5. Improvements to Automobile Property Tax Collection.

Support legislation to improve the system through which property taxes on motor vehicles are collected.

6. Interlocal Governmental Entities.

Seek legislation to provide that an independent government entity created pursuant to Article 20 of Chapter 160A shall have the same exemptions to the motor vehicle fuel excise tax and the State sales tax and shall have the same ability to provide for debt setoff as is currently granted to counties.

Intergovernmental Relations

1. Public Duty Doctrine.

Seek legislation to restore application of the "Public Duty Doctrine" to local governments.
(Legislative Goals Committee Priority #4)

2. E911 Fees.

Seek legislation to increase flexibility in the use of fees generated for the Emergency Telephone System Fund (E911) in order to expand the ability of counties to use these funds for purchase or lease of any and all communication equipment associated with receiving, processing or dispatching emergency calls for law enforcement, fire, medical, rescue or other public safety services, to include more effective use of Emergency 911 Services through funding of E911 services. **(Legislative Goals Committee Priority #7)**

3. Economic Development Incentives/Tools.

Seek an amendment to the State Constitution that grants local governments additional authority and tools that pertain to economic development, including Economic Development Financing, in order to create jobs in North Carolina.

4. Funding Regional Commission.

- Seek legislation to maintain and expand the state's existing financial assistance to regional Councils of Government.

- Support legislation that would allow the 17 Lead Regional Organizations to study options that allow for greater regional cooperation through councils of government.

5. Economic Development and Unemployment Rates.

Seek legislation establishing a mechanism that takes into account county unemployment rates and change in unemployment rates in the application of state incentives for economic development.

6. Session Limits.

Support an amendment to the State Constitution to require the General Assembly to adopt a state budget and any budget amendments by June 15 of each year.

7. Local Governmental Retirement System Board of Trustees.

Seek legislation that increases local government representation and specifies that these additional representatives must be members of the system. Current law established an oversight boards – one for the Teacher and State Employees’ Retirement System (14 members) and one for Local Government Employees’ Retirement System (3 members) – in which the State Board votes with the Local Board on issues affecting the Local Government Employees’ Retirement System.

8. Water Quality/Supply and Infrastructure.

- Seek legislation to provide financial resources and local regulatory control to satisfy regional water quality/supply planning needs, along with the resources necessary to meet environmentally sound water and sewer infrastructure needs.
- Seek legislation that provides additional funding for the Clean Water Management Trust Fund and the N.C. Rural Center.

9. Economic Development and Growth Management Strategy.

- Seek legislation to clarify the ability of counties through their zoning powers to implement “smart growth” strategies; including the ability to transfer density credits or severable development rights and inclusionary zoning requirements for affordable housing.
- Support legislation providing for State funding of affordable housing, environmental programs, acquisition of open space, farmland preservation, rural economic development, and economic development incentives.

10. Transportation Planning and Funding.

- Seek funding of the Transportation Improvements Plan (TIP), Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO's), Rural Planning Organizations (RPO's), and local/regional transit authorities.
- Support a fundamental change in the state's planning/organizational structure currently in use to allow for more formal input by local government and a funding formula that provides adequate financial resources to address the state’s ever-growing transportation needs.

11. Workforce Development.

Support legislation to coordinate workforce development programs and funding of the North Carolina Employment Training & Grant Program.

12. Library Maintenance of Effort.

Seek legislation to repeal or revise the administrative rule that requires local funding of libraries at continuous levels in order to receive funding from the State Aid to Public Libraries Fund.

13. Affordable Housing.

Seek appropriations by the General Assembly authorizing recurring funds for the North Carolina Housing Trust Fund to provide new home ownership opportunities and affordable rental homes for those qualified under the North Carolina Housing Trust Fund.

14. Homeland Security and Regional Emergency Preparedness.

Seek legislation to re-establish and fully fund the Regional Emergency Management Program and support state efforts to provide planning services for homeland security on a regional basis.

15. Ordinance Authority and Enforcement Mechanisms.

Seek legislation to obtain ordinance authority and enforcement mechanisms comparable to municipalities as to nuisance abatement, regulation of unsafe buildings, and minimum housing codes.

16. Retirement System Resources.

Support funding initiatives designed to bolster the Local and State Retirement Systems' ability to provide quality customer service to their members.

17. Annexation

Support legislation to require the approval of the Board of County Commissioners of an adjoining county when a city in which the city hall is located in another county seeks to annex property in the adjoining county.

18. Elections Directors and Employees

Seek legislation to clarify the status of directors of elections and other elections employees as employees of local boards of elections, entitled to the protection of the State Personnel Act and the Tort Claims Act and represented by the Attorney General's Office in all matters.

19. Hurricane Relief Fund

Oppose legislation that would transfer funds appropriated for the Hurricane Floyd Disaster Relief Project in an effort to balance the state budget.

20. Compensation for taxes on land used for mitigation

Support legislation to require compensation from state agencies and units of local government for lost property taxes when they purchase mitigation land in other jurisdictions if it results in substantial, adverse fiscal impact to the host county.

Public Education

1. Oppose Taxing Authority for Local School Boards

Oppose legislation to authorize local boards of education to exercise independent taxing authority. **(Legislative Goals Committee Priority #8)**

2. Charter Schools

Seek legislation to retain the ceiling on the number of charter schools allowed statewide and to provide for better state oversight and accountability of charter schools. **(Legislative Goals Committee Priority #9)**

3. School Construction Funding

Seek legislation to grant to all counties the authority to implement funding options available to some counties, other than property taxes and sales taxes, to fund school construction, school construction debt retirement or other capital needs as determined by the Board of County Commissioners. **(Legislative Goals Committee Priority #10)**

4. Resolution of School Budget Disputes

Seek legislation to amend G.S. 115C-431 to:

- Make optional the requirement for a joint meeting between the local school board and the board of county commissioners.
- Require that the courts consider factors in addition to the sum of money necessary to support a system of free public schools to include: other funding responsibilities of the county, prevailing economic conditions, ability to pay, and tax effort.

5. Standard Course of Study

Seek legislation to allocate sufficient state revenues to make the standard course of study available in every public school throughout the state.

6. Public School Capital Building Fund

Seek legislation to assure that the Public School Capital Building Fund remains intact and to direct the State Treasurer to report on long term commitments that are dependent on this fund.

7. Community College Appointments

Seek legislation to allow each board of county commissioners which participates in funding to appoint one county commissioner to the Board of Trustees of the several Community Colleges in the case of multi-county campuses and, if two additional members are included on the Board, that these be jointly appointed by the boards of county commissioners of counties which participate in funding.

8. Reinstigate State Funding of School Utility Costs

Support legislation to reinstitute state funding of local school system utility costs.

9. Add School Nursing

Support legislation to appropriate state funds to add school health personnel in all counties so that over a three-year period the state reaches a nurse/student ratio of 1:750.

Criminal Justice

1. Service of Process Fee

Seek legislation to increase the civil service of process fee to from \$5 to \$25 over a five-year period.

2. Video Poker

Support legislation that would ban video poker machines.

3. Gun Permits

Seek legislation establishing a non-refundable fee for gun permits applications.

4. Medical Care, Prisoners

Seek legislation authorizing counties to charge a \$10 co-payment for prescription medications provided to inmates.

5. Criminal Justice Partnership Act

Seek legislation to restore full funding for the Criminal Justice Partnership Act.

6. Appeal, Juvenile Treatment Orders

Seek legislation to amend G. S. 7B-2604 to give the county the right to appeal when a judge issues an order that a juvenile be evaluated and treated at county expense.

Agriculture

1. N. C. Cooperative Extension.

Support legislation to maintain the funding for the Extension function and the Research function housed within NC Cooperative Extension.