



Representative McLawhorn's News from Raleigh

May 1, 2008

Protecting our communities is one of our most important duties in the General Assembly. As we get closer to returning to session, I wanted to give you an update on some of the work my colleagues and I have been doing in the interim to address public safety issues. You'll be hearing more about these issues after we return to session May 13.

As always, thank you for the opportunity to share this information with you and please let me know if there's anything I can do to help you.

Select Committee on Street Gang Prevention

This committee, of which I am a member, met twice during the interim to study effective ways to combat gang violence. The group heard from the Governor's Crime Commission about some gang prevention programs funded out of the \$1.5 million appropriated in the last budget cycle and received an update on the distribution of the \$4.76 million appropriated for this cycle. The committee also received reports on local police department initiatives and heard from other interested groups, including the North Carolina Gang Investigators Association.

The committee received status reports on the Street Gang Prevention Act, which passed the House last session and is now pending in the Senate. The Senate's Select Committee on Street Gang Prevention held public hearings in Wilmington and Charlotte.

Joint Legislative Committee on Domestic Violence

The Joint Legislative Committee on Domestic Violence, of which I am the House Chairman, studies ways to reduce domestic violence in North Carolina and protects the interests of victims of domestic violence. Members of the committee have recently considered notifying victims when a protective order is issued. These orders become effective when they are handed to the defendant. Experts recommend that victims do not return home until the order has been served for their own safety. Committee members have also considered ways to increase funding to meet the increasing need for domestic violence assistance.

Joint Select Committee on Emergency Preparedness and Disaster Management Recovery

The Joint Select Committee is studying issues related to emergency preparedness and disaster management. The committee has met twice this interim and has heard from representatives of numerous agencies, including the Division of Public Health, the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, the State Energy Office, the North Carolina National Guard and the Division of Emergency Management.

The committee has several issues under review for recommendations to the General Assembly, including laboratory and personnel needs in the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services to improve detection of and response to food borne pathogens; strengthening local emergency management response capabilities; and planning for special needs populations in emergency response. The committee is planning a report about these issues for the 2008 Session of the General Assembly.

Joint Legislative Corrections, Crime Control and Juvenile Justice Oversight Committee

The Joint Legislative Corrections, Crime Control and Juvenile Justice Oversight Committee studies the correctional, law enforcement and juvenile justice systems in North Carolina. The committee makes recommendations to the General Assembly on ways to help the systems improve their methods to protect the public and punish and rehabilitate offenders.

This session the committee has heard reports from agencies it oversees on several issues including youth development centers, immigration enforcement and ethical policies in law enforcement agencies. The committee will recommend a bill that would change the law governing the release of information when a juvenile escapes from custody of the Department of Juvenile Justice.

Joint Select Committee on Inherently Dangerous Animals

The Joint Select Committee on Inherently Dangerous Animals studies ways to protect the public from health and safety risks involved with dangerous animals. The committee also studies the best ways to provide these protections while protecting the interests of these animals.

Members of the committee have heard presentations on the issues and legislation on dangerous animals in North Carolina. The committee has also considered a bill (SB 1477) detailing the requirements for keeping certain animals.