



Representative McLawhorn's News from Raleigh

May 15, 2008

On Tuesday, I returned to Raleigh for the first day of the "short session." Typically during this session, legislators adjust the state budget approved in the previous session and take up some of the unresolved matters from the previous year. Most of those matters are contained in funding bills filed last year and still eligible for consideration this session. I will remind you about some of them this week.

Thank you for your continued interest in state government. Please let me know if I can be of assistance.

This Week in the House

_This week House members welcomed Representative Sandra Spalding Hughes to her first session. Rep. Hughes was confirmed as the replacement for former Representative Thomas Wright who was administered the oath on April 15. The House still has a vacancy resulting from the retirement of former Rep. Pete Cunningham.

_House members passed a joint resolution (SJR 1580) to honor Korean War Veterans. North Carolina is home to more than 110,000 military personnel and almost 770,000 veterans. Of the 36,568 Americans killed in the Korean War, more than 800 were North Carolinians. In 2000, there were more than 100,000 Korean War veterans in North Carolina, three of whom were awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor.

_My colleagues and I also adopted a resolution (HR 2133) to honor the 237th Anniversary of the Battle of Alamance. Before the American Revolution, a group of farmers known as the Regulators rebelled against local officials because of excessive taxes and illegal fees. The Alamance Battleground is now a state historic site where visitors can learn about colonial life.

Funding Bills Eligible for Consideration

Health Care

_A bill (H97) to provide funds for the Workforce Improvement for Nursing Assistants: Supporting Training, Education, and Payment for Upgrading Performance (Win a Step Up) program passed its first reading in the House. The program's curriculum features information and exercises involving appropriate care for individuals with dementia, anxiety, depression and other severe mental health problems. The bill is in the Committee on Appropriations.

_House members passed a bill (HB 1522) to clarify local management entity (LME) board membership regulations. If the bill is signed into law, an individual who contracts with an LME for the delivery of mental health, developmental disabilities and substance abuse services may not serve on the board of the LME while the contract for services is in effect. It is currently in the Senate Committee on Health Care.

_Last session members of the House passed a bill (HB 1784) to improve the quality and accessibility of mental health, developmental disabilities and substance abuse services. The bill requires providers to document services provided and adequately train staff. This bill is also in the Senate Committee on Health Care.

Taxes

_House members may consider a bill (HB 184) to deduct compensation paid by the armed forces to military personnel on active duty from state taxable income. The bill is currently in the Committee on Finance.

_House members may consider a bill (HB 526) to provide an income tax credit for builders of energy efficient homes. If the bill becomes law, taxpayers who build a federally qualified energy efficient home will be eligible for a tax credit of \$1,000. If the home is a state-certified energy-efficient home, the taxpayer could be eligible for a \$2,000 tax credit. The bill passed its first reading in the House and is now in the Committee on Finance.

Justice

_A bill (HB 43) to help victims of domestic violence is eligible for consideration this session. The bill provides funding and increases funding for several programs related to domestic violence including the Family Court Program and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families funds for domestic violence prevention. The North Carolina Council for Women and the Domestic Violence Commission may also receive funds to build shelters for victims. The bill also includes funding for the Governor's Crime Commission to provide supervised visitation and exchange centers as well as funding to adjust the salary and benefits for the abuser treatment program coordinator. The bill passed its first reading and is now in the Committee on Appropriations.