



NC Justice Center

Opportunity and Prosperity for All

2008 Legislative Agenda

The 2007 session of the N.C. General Assembly was one of the most successful in years. Working together, state lawmakers lifted up a number of public solutions that will make North Carolina a fairer, wealthier, and healthier state with a more open and ethical

government. Much more, however, remains to be done – especially for working families and our most vulnerable individuals. During the upcoming 2008 “short session,” each of the following policy proposals deserves urgent attention if North Carolina is going to build on last year’s successes.

■ Increase Access to Safe, Decent and Affordable Housing

- Provide annual funding of \$50 million to the NC Housing Trust Fund.
- Expand the Home Protection Pilot Program to all of NC and increase program funding.
- Improve landlord-tenant laws to protect tenants from abuses and discrimination.
- Remove the sunset on the state Low Income Housing Tax Credit Program.

■ Support and Protect Workers

- Protect agricultural workers from dangerous pesticide exposure.
- Adopt an Ergonomics Standard to protect workers from serious repetitive motion injuries.
- Guarantee that workers are provided with a minimum number of paid sick days annually to care for themselves, sick children and parents.
- Repeal the prohibition on collective bargaining for public employees (HB 1583).

- Increase access to postsecondary education for low-wage, dislocated and disadvantaged workers by maintaining tuition affordability and increasing need-based financial aid.
- Provide funding to eliminate the child care subsidy waiting list and increase provider reimbursement rates.
- Insure adequate funding for the unemployment insurance system, including the insurance trust fund, employment services, ESC operations and the Worker Training Trust Fund.

■ Address the Home Foreclosure Crisis

- Provide funding for housing counselors and legal service providers to protect homeowners from unfair foreclosures.
- Improve protections for homeowners in the foreclosure process.
- Regulate mortgage servicing companies to prevent consumer abuses.
- Protect homeowners from foreclosure “rescue scams” (HB 1708).

- Provide opportunities for reasonable home loans and affordable rental housing by providing increased funding to the NC Housing Trust Fund.

■ Improve Tax Fairness and Adequacy

- Adopt a “combined reporting” format for multi-state corporations’ tax filings (SB 244 & HB 462).
- Ensure that any tax reductions target low- and moderate- income taxpayers.
- Preserve the Highway Trust Fund-General Fund “transfer” until replacement revenues are found.
- Ensure fairness in valuing affordable rent restricted properties for property taxes (SB 1309).

■ Ensure a Sound Basic Education for all Children

- Ensure students with special needs receive education services (HB 12).
- Ensure accountability and transparency in public school funding.
- Reduce the dropout rate and the number of student suspensions.
- Protect students from bullying and harassment (H1366).

■ Improve Access to Health Care

- Guarantee choice of affordable health plans for all children.
- Create a deep discount health plan to provide affordable choice for small businesses.
- Provide \$14 million in recurring funding to the Home and Community Care Block grant to

eliminate the waiting list for services to help elderly and disabled persons remaining in their homes.

- Ensure appropriate treatment and placement for persons with mental illnesses, developmental disabilities and substance abuse problems.

■ Improve Access to (and Fairness in) the Courts

- Increase funding for civil legal services.
- Raise the presumptive age for adult criminal prosecution to 18.
- Fairly compensate victims of eugenics sterilization.
- Provide recurring funding for juvenile crime prevention programs.
- Establish a procedure by which a death sentence can be overturned if the sentence is based on race (HB 1291)

■ Improve NC’s Transportation System

- Adopt a standards-based prioritization process for transportation spending.
- Dramatically increase funding for public transportation in order to combat sprawl and support the needs of seniors, the disabled, and persons of low-income.

■ Address the Barriers to Re-entry for People with Criminal Convictions

- Provide a process for obtaining housing, medical treatment, training and jobs.
- Provide funding to community based services.
- Provide a system for removing the stigma of a conviction after a showing of rehabilitation.

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