

North Carolina Legislator Profile

Rep. Mike Clampitt: House District 119 Haywood, Jackson, Swain Counties

“If more people would be interested in the killing and the destruction of a human life by abortion than they are about the animal wildlife kingdom, I think our world would be a better place.”-1/20/17

Real Facts NC’s legislator profile series continues to examine key North Carolina legislators. Here we look at Republican Representative Mike Clampitt, a Republican representative from House District 119 in Haywood, Jackson, and Swain Counties. Clampitt, a freshman legislator, had run twice before against incumbent Joe Sam Queen for H119 before finally beating Queen by around 300 votes in November 2016. Before being a perennial candidate Clampitt worked at the legislature.

In his first term in the NC House, Clampitt has quickly forgotten his district, supporting economic policies that benefit the wealthy over working families in his district.

Summary:

While Rep. Clampitt’s district struggles economically, he voted for economic policies that benefit the wealthy over working families.

- *Clampitt voted for a budget that favored tax cuts for the wealthy, did not restore child care tax credits, and siphoned money away from public education.*

Rep Clampitt voted against public education, despite it being the largest employer in Jackson and Haywood counties.

- *The budget funded the controversial school voucher program and shortchanged teachers by failing to meaningfully raise teacher salaries.*

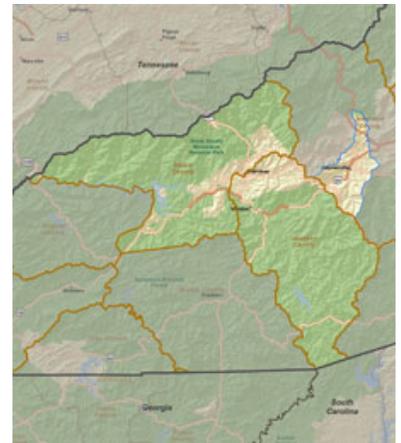
Rep Clampitt voted for legislation that loosened environmental restrictions.

- *Clampitt voted for SB 131, which eased policies meant to protect stream beds and air quality.*
- *Clampitt voted for S16, a bill that loosened water quality rules and imposed limitations on local governments’ power over landfill permits.*
- *Clampitt voted for H56, “the junk drawer of environmental laws” that took away some county authority to regulate landfills.*

Rep. Mike Clampitt



District 119



While Rep. Clampitt's district struggles economically, he voted for economic policies that overwhelmingly benefit the wealthy.

The districts Clampitt represents are struggling. All three counties Clampitt represents have a higher percent poverty rate than the statewide average along with a higher childhood poverty rate and a lower median income. The median income in Swain county is almost \$20,000 less than the national average.

Poverty, Child Poverty, and Median Household Income in HD119							
Year	State / County Name	All Ages SAIPE Poverty Universe	All Ages in Poverty Count	All Ages in Poverty Percent	Under Age 18 in Poverty Count	Under Age 18 in Poverty Percent	Median Household Income in Dollars
2016	United States	315,165,470	44,268,996	14	14,115,713	19.5	\$57,617
2016	North Carolina	9,885,985	1,523,034	15.4	490,775	21.7	\$50,595
2016	Haywood County	60,059	9,545	15.9	3,066	28.2	\$45,290
2016	Jackson County	38,489	8,051	20.9	1,728	24.2	\$44,004
2016	Swain County	14,108	2,357	16.7	796	25.4	\$38,996

(United States Census, Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates, retrieved [2/20/18](#))

Despite the economic hardship in Rep. Clampitt's district, he voted for a budget that favored tax cuts for the wealthy, did not restore child care tax credits, and siphoned money away from public education.

Rep. Clampitt voted for S257 and for the veto override. (S257 Veto Overriden, [6/27/18](#))

Budget favors tax cuts for the wealthy, lowering the corporate income tax rate to 2.5 percent from 3 percent. "The budget will make a series of tax cuts in 2019, a delay from earlier House and Senate tax cut proposals that would have taken effect in 2018. It will reduce the personal income tax rate from 5.499 percent to 5.25 percent and raise the standard deduction – the amount on which people pay no income taxes unless they itemize – to \$20,000 for married couples filing jointly from \$17,500. It will also lower the corporate income tax rate to 2.5 percent from 3 percent. "We are providing tax relief for middle class working families and businesses, and we're doing it in a prudent way," Dollar said." (News & Observer, [6/28/17](#))

As of January 2017, NC's corporate income tax is the lowest in the nation according to the Tax Foundation. "North Carolina's corporate income tax rate, which dropped to 3 percent in January, is the lowest in the nation, according to the Washington, D.C.-based Tax Foundation. The foundation is an independent tax policy research organization that analyzes state tax codes and advocates for competitive policies. In North Carolina, the business tax has been reduced each year since 2013, when the state legislature approved a number of significant changes to the tax code. The state's corporate income tax has dropped from 6.9 percent to 3 percent over the past four years, giving North Carolina the lowest corporate income tax rate of any state that levies the tax, according to the foundation." (Economic Development Partnership of NC, [1/4/17](#))

The Republican budget continues the trend of cutting taxes rather than raising per pupil spending. "This budget will cut individual income tax rates to 5.25 percent from 5.499 percent and the corporate rate to 2.5 percent from 3 percent in the second year, costing the state \$900 million annually

when fully implemented. This means that the legislature will eventually have cut \$3.5 billion annually in all its tax cuts – money that could have gone for services. North Carolina, for example, ranks 41st nationally in per pupil spending for public education. Here is a question for lawmakers: Which is most likely hindering industrial recruitment and economic development in small-town North Carolina – high taxes or poor schools?” (News & Observer Editorial, [6/24/17](#), S257, Vetoed [6/27/17](#), Senate Veto Override [6/27/17](#), House Veto Override [6/28/17](#))

Cooper: “Good child care is expensive, and this credit will help bring down the costs that working families face.” “Governor Roy Cooper has proposed creating a child and dependent care tax credit he said in a news release will help working families afford the cost of child care. “Good child care is expensive, and this credit will help bring down the costs that working families face,” said Cooper. “This tax break will help ensure that children all across the state will show up at kindergarten ready to learn. As the General Assembly begins their budget process, I urge them to include this child and dependent care tax credit that would benefit over 200,000 North Carolina families.” (WNCT, [5/3/17](#))

The Republican House & Senate budgets do not provide a child care tax credit. (Governor’s Office Press Release, [6/1/17](#))

Rep. Clampitt voted for a budget that guts public education despite public schools being the largest employer in Haywood and Jackson Counties.

Haywood County Consolidated Schools and Western Carolina University are the largest employers in Haywood and Jackson Counties respectively. (NC Dept of Commerce, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages Largest Employers, retrieved [2/20/18](#))

The House budget would have eliminated the NC Promise tuition break for Western Carolina, the largest employer in Jackson County. “The House budget would eliminate the NC Promise tuition break for out-of-state students at three UNC campuses, ending a key component of the program before it begins. The Senate, where the NC Promise plan was born last year, left the tuition break intact for North Carolinians, as well as out-of-state students. The idea was to reduce tuition significantly at three UNC campuses – Western Carolina University, UNC Pembroke and Elizabeth City State University. Starting in fall 2018, North Carolina students would pay an in-state rate of \$500 per semester and out-of-state rates would have \$2,500 tuition per semester. The legislature had pledged to increase funding to the campuses to make up for the tuition revenue loss. House budget writers apparently want to concentrate its investment on North Carolina students, while also providing for an anticipated enrollment increase at the campuses. The House would kick in \$40 million in 2018-19 to cover the tuition reduction.” (News & Observer, [5/25/2017](#))

Rep. Clampitt voted for a budget that siphoned funds away from public education and into controversial school voucher programs.

Budget allocated \$45 million to the controversial voucher program and stipulates that the state will add \$10 million more to the program annually. “The budget gives \$45 million this year for the controversial voucher program which allows parents to send their children to private schools using taxpayer-funded scholarships. Cooper has strongly criticized the program, saying those schools lack accountability. The budget says the state will add \$10 million more to the voucher program annually, until it hits \$145 million in the 2027-28 school year.” (News & Observer, [8/8/17](#), S257, Vetoed [6/27/17](#), Senate Veto Override [6/27/17](#), House Veto Override [6/28/17](#))

Budget requires the governor to recommend the same plan for the next decade. “It also says the governor’s budget proposal has to recommend that same plan, for the next decade. Cooper said that’s a large amount of spending that he and future governors shouldn’t be forced to support. “But for the unconstitutional interference by the General Assembly, the Governor would not include nearly a billion

dollars in vouchers in his proposed budgets during his term,” he said in Tuesday’s court filing. Cooper argues in the filing that the governor should get to decide what he or she recommends, instead of being legally required to recommend a policy that the current members of the N.C. General Assembly want.” (News & Observer, [8/8/17](#), S257, Vetoes [6/27/17](#), Senate Veto Override [6/27/17](#), House Veto Override [6/28/17](#))

Vouchers “siphon funds away from the underfunded public school system and sends those tax dollars to private schools without accountability and transparency measures.” “Proponents of school vouchers say that the program enables low-income families to opt out of failing public schools to attend private institutions that offer better educational environments. But critics of the program say that the vouchers siphon funds away from the underfunded public school system and sends those tax dollars to private schools without accountability and transparency measures that ensure students are indeed getting a better education. The Opportunity Scholarships law also fails to ensure that private schools receiving tax dollars do not discriminate against students on the basis of religion or sexual identity.” (WRAL, [1/27/17](#))

Rep. Clappitt voted for a budget that shortchanges teachers by failing to meaningfully raise teacher salaries.

HEADLINE: Big pay raises? N.C. gives teachers just a tank of gas (Charlotte Observer, Op-Ed, [6/21/17](#))

Many educators, including veterans of 25 years, will only see an increase of \$30 a month, merely a tank of gas. “The newly unveiled North Carolina state budget does include increases in teacher pay, but they are neither big nor dramatic. Many educators – including veterans who have devoted 25 years or more to our state’s children – will see an increase of \$30 a month. That amounts to little more than a tank of gas, which will hardly be enough to allow teachers to quit their second or third jobs.” (Charlotte Observer, Op-Ed, [6/21/17](#), S257, Vetoes [6/27/17](#), Senate Veto Override [6/27/17](#), House Veto Override [6/28/17](#))

Rep. Clappitt voted for legislation that loosened environmental protections in the state.

Clappitt voted for SB 131, eases policies meant to protect stream beds and air quality.

➤ **Note:** SB 131; House Adopted Conf Report [4/25/17](#), Senate Passed 3rd Reading [4/26/17](#), Signed [5/4/17](#)

Senate Bill 131 would ask the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to double the amount of development near streams that can be displaced without requiring offsetting improvements.

“Some of the more contentious environmental provisions would: Ask the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to permit the state to double the amount of development near streams that can be displaced without requiring offsetting improvements elsewhere. Allow sand dredged from shoals offshore from the capes to be used in beach renourishment even if it doesn’t meet state requirements making sure it is compatible. The bill also deals with the regulation of general contractor’s licenses, eliminating some counties from vehicle emission standards because they have improved, and the disposal of dead reptiles.” (News & Record, [4/5/2017](#), SB 131; passed its second reading in the Senate on [4/11/2017](#))

Senate Bill 131 would eliminate certain counties from vehicle emission standards. “Some of the more contentious environmental provisions would: Ask the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to permit the state to double the amount of development near streams that can be displaced without requiring offsetting improvements elsewhere. Allow sand dredged from shoals offshore from the capes to be used in beach renourishment even if it doesn’t meet state requirements making sure it is compatible. The bill also deals with the regulation of general contractor’s licenses, eliminating some counties from vehicle

emission standards because they have improved, and the disposal of dead reptiles.” (News & Record, [4/5/2017](#); SB 131, passed its second reading in the Senate on [4/11/2017](#))

Senate Bill 131 would allow developers to destroy up to 300 feet of stream bed without having to offset the loss. “Legislation proposed by state Senate could further erode protections for North Carolina waterways. Senate Bill 131 would make it possible for developers to destroy up to 300 feet of stream bed without having to offset the loss elsewhere. The current regulation allows for loss of 150 feet without mitigation.” (The Washington Daily News, [3/31/2017](#); SB 131, passed its second reading in the Senate on [4/11/2017](#))

Under Senate Bill 131, companies would only have to pay for the length of stream they destroyed that falls over the threshold of 300 feet. “But under the proposed language, developers could damage 300 feet before paying a mitigation fee. And if the company destroyed 301 feet of stream, it wouldn’t have to pay for the entire length of damage – just the amount over 300 feet. In this case, just 1 foot.” (NC Policy Watch, [3/15/2017](#); SB 131, passed its second reading in the Senate on [4/11/2017](#))

Environmental advocates had concerns about the bill

Environmental groups, including The Sierra Club, have concerns about the bill. “Environmental groups don’t like the bill any better than they did last year. Some of the concerns The Sierra Club has includes doubling the amount of development near streams that can be displaced without requiring offsetting improvements elsewhere, potentially allowing erosion-control sandbags to stay in place indefinitely on beaches, and relaxing restrictions on what material can be used for beach nourishment.” (News & Observer, [3/16/2017](#); SB 131, passed its second reading in the Senate on [4/11/2017](#))

Rep. Pricey Harrison said, “It’s still a net loss for the environment.” “Rep. Pricey Harrison, a Democrat from Greensboro, thanked the Republican sponsors of the bill and the GOP leadership in the House for working with her to remove what she called some of the worst provisions in the proposal. However, Harrison voted against the bill. ‘It’s still a net loss for the environment,’ she said.” (News & Record, [4/5/2017](#); SB 131, passed its second reading in the Senate on [4/11/2017](#))

Senate Bill 131 keeps with Republican priorities of deregulating North Carolina’s bureaucracy. “Eliminating excessive rules and red tape through commonsense deregulation of North Carolina’s bureaucracy has been a priority of conservative leaders in the General Assembly since 2011. ‘**The Regulatory Reform Act of 2016-17 keeps our promise to improve North Carolina’s regulatory system and get government out of the way of private sector citizens and businesses in our state,**’ said House Committee on Regulatory Reform Chairman John Bradford.” (speakersmoore.com, [4/6/2017](#); SB 131, passed its second reading in the Senate on [4/11/2017](#))

Clampitt voted for S16, a bill that loosened water quality rules and imposed limitations on local governments power over landfill permits.

- **NOTE:** S16 passed the Senate on 3rd reading on [2/23/17](#), passed the House on 3rd reading [6/15/17](#), Senate adopted the conference report on [8/3/17](#) and House adopted conference report on [8/3/17](#), the Governor vetoed the bill on [8/14/17](#) and the House and Senate overrode the Governor’s veto on [10/5/17](#).

Senate Bill 16 is a “16-page grab bag of deregulation provisions. It loosens water quality rules and imposes limitations on local governments power over landfill permits, changes that the Democratic governor called dangerous in his veto message.” “SB 16, titled “Business

Regulatory Reform Act of 2017," is a 16-page grab bag of deregulation provisions. It loosens water quality rules and imposes limitations on local governments power over landfill permits, changes that the Democratic governor called dangerous in his veto message." (News & Observer, [9/29/17](#))

Environmental groups were concerned about a provision in the bill “that would prevent cities from requiring better stormwater control when properties are redeveloped.”

Environmental groups were concerned about a provision in the bill “that would prevent cities from requiring better stormwater control when properties are redeveloped.” “Environmental groups expressed concern with a provision that would prevent cities from requiring better stormwater control when properties are redeveloped, even if the property was originally "grandfathered in" with little or no runoff control when current stormwater runoff laws were passed.” (WRAL, [6/14/17](#))

“Under this bill, if a pre-existing development gets reworked, new stormwater control measures can be required only on the amount of impervious surface added to the development, not on the full property.” “The chambers also passed Senate Bill 16, which would roll back local governments' ability to require extra stormwater mitigation on redeveloped properties. Under this bill, if a pre-existing development gets reworked, new stormwater control measures can be required only on the amount of impervious surface added to the development, not on the full property.” (WRAL, [8/3/17](#))

Environmental groups were concerned that retrofit opportunities would be lost, “making it harder to achieve clean water standards.” “Environmental groups were concerned, saying retrofit opportunities would be lost, making it harder to achieve clean water standards. Another section of the bill broadened an exemption from coastal stormwater rules for residential projects.” (WRAL, [8/3/17](#))

Clampitt voted for H56, a bill that took away some county authority to regulate landfills and was called “the junk drawer of environmental laws”

- **NOTE:** H56 passed the House on 3rd reading [4/24/17](#), Passed the Senate on 3rd reading on [6/27/17](#), Senate adopted the conference report on [8/30/17](#) and House adopted conference report on [8/31/17](#), the Governor vetoed the bill on [9/21/17](#) and the House and Senate overrode the Governor's veto on [10/4/17](#).

H56 took away some county authority to regulate landfills. “House Bill 56 also includes provisions to create a new storm damage mitigation fund for the coast, as well as language that takes away some county authority to dictate that garbage collected within county borders also be dumped there.” (WRAL, [8/31/17](#); H56, veto overridden, [10/14/17](#))

NC Policy Watch called H56 “the junk drawer of environmental laws” and Rep. Deb Butler said it “suffers from an identity crisis.” “House Bill 56 is the junk drawer of environmental laws. Buried beneath the assorted mundane provisions are three that harm the environment and one that pretends to protect the public health. •repealing the plastic bag ban on the Outer Banks; •allowing law enforcement to cut back riparian buffers to supposedly root out crime; •relaxing regulations on landfills; •and, in a late and controversial addition, appropriating \$185,000 to the Cape Fear River public utility and \$250,000 to UNC Wilmington to address the GenX contamination in the river and drinking water supplies downstream. It also requires DEQ to issue a notice of violation to Chemours, the company responsible for discharging GenX and other contaminants into the river, by Sept. 8 or provide a report to lawmakers explaining why it hasn't. “This bill is a contradiction and suffers from an identity crisis,” said Rep. Deb Butler, a Democrat who represents part of New Hanover County.” (NC Policy Watch, [9/1/17](#))

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