

## Greg Murphy: House District 9

Pitt County

**“I hope to be able to contribute to the health, education and welfare of the people of eastern North Carolina and our entire state.”- Greg Murphy (02/16/17)**

In this legislator profile, we focus on Rep. Gregory Murphy, the Republican representative from District 9. Murphy was appointed in 2015 to fill the vacancy created when Brian Brown left to work for Sen. Thom Tillis.

Since his appointment in 2015, Murphy has fallen in line with his Republican colleagues to enact policies that weaken environmental protections, shortchange education, and prioritize tax cuts for the wealthy over policies that help hardworking North Carolinians, including rural communities, teachers and families.

### **Summary:**

***Murphy missed 30 percent of the votes so far in the House during the 2019-2020 session. He missed a total of 115 more votes than a Representative who is currently undergoing chemotherapy.***

- *Murphy missed 195 of the 662 votes so far in the 2019 session.*
- *Rep. Sydney Batch, who is currently undergoing treatment for breast cancer, missed only 80 votes so far this session.*

### ***Murphy repeatedly supported policies that shortchange education***

- *Murphy voted for a budget that failed to raise teacher pay, provide a subsidy for out of pocket expenses, or raise per pupil spending.*
- *Murphy supported H13, which mandated a reduction in class size but failed to provide funding.*

### ***Murphy voted for bills that prioritize tax cuts for the wealthy over the welfare of middle class North Carolinians.***

- *Murphy voted for a budget that made state employees hired after 2021 ineligible for healthcare after they retire and failed to provide a child care tax credit.*

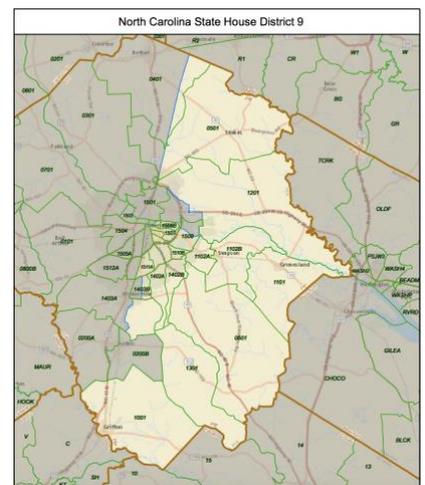
### ***Murphy prioritized the interests of large business over North Carolinians' access to clean air and water***

- *Murphy voted for Senate Bill 16, which prioritizes the interest of big business over North Carolinians' access to clean water.*
- *Murphy voted for H576, which would allow landfill operators to dispose of “garbage juices” by “spraying it into the air over their property.” This bill disproportionately affects communities of color and low wealth communities.*

Rep. Greg Murphy



House District 9



- *Murphy voted for H467, which was passed in response to pending lawsuits against Smithfield Foods, and limits the amount of money people could receive in lawsuits filed against agricultural operations*

**Pitt County has significantly higher rates of poverty and child poverty than statewide average**

**The district Murphy represents has higher rates of poverty and a lower Median Household Income.** Pitt County has a higher percent poverty rate than the statewide average along with a higher childhood poverty rate and a lower median income.

Poverty, child poverty, and median household income NC v Pitt County								
Year	State/ County Name	All Ages Poverty Universe	All Ages Poverty Count	All Ages Poverty Percent	Under 18 Poverty Universe	Under 18 Poverty Count	Under 18 Poverty Percent	Median Household Income
2016	North Carolina	9,885,985	1,523,034	15.4%	2,261,651	490,775	21.7%	\$50,595
2016	Pitt	170,345	36,594	21.5%	38,277	9,256	24.2%	\$45,918

(United States Census, Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates, retrieved [02/22/18](#))

**Murphy missed 30 percent of the votes in the 2019 House session so far, a total of 115 more votes than a Representative who is currently undergoing cancer treatment.**

**Murphy missed 195 of 662 votes so far during the 2019-20 House session. Rep. Sydney Batch only missed 80 votes so far.**

Rep. Greg Murphy missed 195 of 662 votes this session. (NCLEG, retrieved [7/12/19](#))

Rep. Sydney Batch missed 80 of 662 votes this session. (NCLEG, retrieved [7/12/19](#))

**Rep. Batch is undergoing cancer treatment and sometimes carpooled with another member to session because she was too weak to driver herself.**

**Batch underwent a mastectomy in May 2019 and her breast cancer treatments are ongoing.** “Batch underwent a mastectomy in early May after being diagnosed with breast cancer last year. She had planned to take at least three weeks off to recover, but was forced to come back to work early after she and other Democrats realized their GOP colleagues were trying to capitalize on her absence in order to pass this bill. “It’s extremely frustrating to me, because I would think that there would be people who would have the decency, including Speaker Moore, to say that someone deserves to be able to recover after having a major surgery,” Batch told HuffPost. “Moore is well aware of what’s happening with me and that I’m dealing with ongoing treatment,” she added. “I have not asked for a lot.”” (HuffPost, [5/23/19](#))

**Rep. Ashton Clemmons has driven Batch to and from sessions because she was too weak to drive herself.** “Clemmons and Jackson, who is minority leader of the state House, said Batch, a working mother of two, was in pain and visibly shaking when she showed up for the last few House sessions. Clemmons has driven Batch to and from sessions since she’s still too weak to drive herself.” (HuffPost, [5/23/19](#))

## Murphy repeatedly supported policies that shortchange education

**Murphy voted for the 2017 budget, which prioritized tax cuts over raising teacher pay or per pupil spending.**

➤ **Note:** *Murphy voted for S257 and the veto override (S257, veto overridden [6/28/17](#))*

**Starting teacher pay remains at \$35,000 under the Republican budget.** “Under the teacher pay plan, teachers with 17 to 24 years of experience would see some of the biggest raises. Starting teacher pay would remain at \$35,000, but teachers at most experience levels would get a raise.” (News & Observer, [7/1/17](#); S257, Vetoed [6/27/17](#), Senate Veto Override [6/27/17](#), House Veto Override [6/28/17](#))

**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](#))

**Murphy supported a budget that allocated \$45 million to the controversial voucher program, but failed to provide a stipend to aid teachers with out of pocket expenses.**

**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](#))

**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](#))

**Republican lawmakers did not include Gov. Cooper’s recommendation of a stipend to aid teachers with out-of-pocket expenses in the final budget proposal.** “He also criticized lawmakers’ decision to omit his proposed stipend for teachers to help buy classroom supplies, a lack of funding for teaching assistants, school nurses and school counselors and shifting more money into the Opportunity Scholarships private school voucher program. “Teachers see through dishonest budget gimmicks,” Cooper said as he was surrounded by a group of teachers at the Executive Mansion.” (WRAL, [6/26/17](#))

**Murphy voted for H13 which mandated a reduction in class size without providing necessary funding.**

➤ **Note:** Murphy voted for H13. (H13, ratified [04/27/17](#))

**House Bill 13 would cap individual K-3 class sizes at 22 to 24 students.** “House Bill 13, sponsored by Republican Rep. Chuck McGrady of Hendersonville, would cap individual K-3 class sizes at 22 to 24 students, depending on grade level. Maximum average class sizes would range from 19 to 21 students.” (News & Observer, [1/25/2017](#); House Bill 13, signed by Gov. Cooper on [4/27/2017](#))

**The mandate for smaller class sizes will cost North Carolina school districts as much as \$388 million more per year.** “New state-mandated smaller class sizes in elementary schools will cost North Carolina school districts as much as \$388 million more per year in operating costs as well as significant capital costs, according to a new report. Districts will need to find between 3,000 and 5,400 teachers to comply with smaller kindergarten through third-grade class sizes, which the liberal N.C. Justice Center’s Education & Law Project says is the equivalent of an unfunded mandate of between \$188 million to \$388 million.” (News & Observer, [4/17/2017](#); House Bill 13, signed by Gov. Cooper on [4/27/2017](#))

**The new mandate did not come with any extra money to implement the changes.** “School leaders complain, though, that the new round of state changes didn’t come with any additional money. ‘It’s as though someone thought of this great idea but didn’t see how this would affect real people when it was implemented,’ said Daugherty, who is also instructional program specialist for fine arts and distance learning for Davidson County schools.” (News & Observer, [1/18/2017](#); House Bill 13, signed by Gov. Cooper on [4/27/2017](#))

**Murphy has voted for bills that prioritize tax cuts for the wealthy over the welfare of middle class North Carolinians**

**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](#))

**Murphy voted for a budget that made state employees hired after 2021 ineligible for healthcare after they retire.**

**Under the Republican budget, state employees hired after 2021 will not be eligible for health insurance after they retire.** “People who go to work for the state beginning January 2021 will no longer qualify for state health insurance when they retire, a provision in the budget that caught critics by surprise. Republican state senators want limits on future retiree benefits to control costs and get the state more in line with perks private-sector employees get. The state employee health plan has a \$42.2 billion unfunded liability, estimated future costs that are outpacing revenue. The retiree health care provision is in the budget the legislature passed this week. Republican senators filed a bill limiting future state employees’ retirement benefits that received a committee hearing earlier this year. That bill never went to a vote. The change will not affect current employees or retirees, or anyone hired before 2021.” (News & Observer, [6/23/17](#); S257, Vetoed [6/27/17](#), Senate Veto Override [6/27/17](#), House Veto Override [6/28/17](#))

**Eliminating retirement health benefits could hurt recruitment and retention of state employees, including teachers.** “Representatives from state employee, retiree and teacher organizations said eliminating the retirement benefit will hurt recruitment and retention. State salaries don’t compete with private-sector wages, they said, so retiree benefits are an important lure. Mark Jewell, executive director

of the North Carolina Association of Educators, said everyone thought the proposal to end retiree benefits was dead. “Then, it sneaks up buried in the budget,” he said. Ending state health coverage for retirees is going to make it harder to hire teachers, he said. New teachers won’t want to stay in the profession for 30 years. “We have a statewide teacher shortage crisis,” Jewell said. “This is going to exacerbate it.” (News & Observer, [6/23/17](#); S257, Vetoed [6/27/17](#), Senate Veto Override [6/27/17](#), House Veto Override [6/28/17](#))

**Murphy voted for a budget that failed to provide a child care tax credit.**

**Governor Cooper’s budget calls for the reinstatement of the Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit, which could help more than 200,000 families pay for child care.** (Governor’s Office Press Release, [6/1/17](#))

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

**Murphy prioritized the interests of large business over North Carolinians’ access to clean air and water**

**Murphy voted for H576, which would allow landfill operators to dispose of “garbage juices” by “spraying it into the air over their property”.**

➤ **Note:** *Murphy voted for H576. (H576, vetoed by Gov., [6/30/17](#))*

**H576 would allow landfill operators to use aerosolization to dispose of leachate by “spraying it into the air over their property” without a permit.** “House leaders are pushing ahead with a proposal to require state environmental regulators to allow the disposal of landfill wastewater and fluids that leak out by spraying it into the air over their property without a permit. The process, called aerosolization, is favored by the waste industry and by other industries that deal with large quantities of wastewater. As amended Thursday, however, it would not apply to dewatering coal ash.” (WRAL, [4/20/17](#); H576, vetoed by Gov., [6/30/17](#))

**Leachate refers to the “garbage juices” that percolate and react beneath waste that typically contain dangerous materials such as lead, mercury, and other toxic materials.** “Beneath the 5.5 million cubic yards of “airspace” — the amount of trash mounded above ground — garbage juices percolate inside the landfill liner. That liquid then drains into a giant holding tank, where it mixes and percolates and chemically reacts. Although the landfill is permitted to accept only “non-hazardous” waste, no one is opening every bag and checking for pesticide containers or cleaning solvents. The leachate — or landfill juice, to be inelegant for a moment — often contains lead from electronics, mercury from batteries, bacteria and viruses from dirty diapers; antibiotics, hormones and other toxics from routine prescription and specialized chemotherapy drugs; volatile organic compounds from plastics, toner cartridges, glues and cleansers.” (NC Policy Watch, [5/2/17](#))

**Aerosol droplets from leachate could threaten neighboring or downwind properties.**

“Aerosolization blasts leachate through a high velocity fan, turning it into droplets that evaporate or blow away, reducing leachate volumes. Critics worry that the aerosol droplets, containing toxics or bacteria, may threaten neighboring or downwind properties. A larger question is why, if the technology can be operated safely - something that the industry claims, but that has not been demonstrated to any state agency - it needs a special exemption from state permitting laws.” (Southern Environmental Law Center, Retrieved [5/5/2017](#))

**H576 disproportionately affects communities of color and low wealth communities.**

**Communities where over half the residents are people of color are 2.8 more likely to be near a solid waste facility, according to research published in Environmental Health Perspectives.** “The adjusted prevalence odds of a solid waste facility was 2.8 times greater in block groups with ≥50% people of color compared with block groups with < 10% people of color, and 1.5 times greater in block groups with median house values < \$60,000 compared with block groups with median house values ≥\$100,000. Among block groups that did not have a previously permitted solid waste facility, the adjusted hazard of a new permitted facility was 2.7 times higher in block groups with ≥50% people of color compared with block groups with < 10% people of color.” (Environmental Health Perspectives, [07/09/2007](#))

**Scientists: “Solid waste facilities are disproportionately located in communities of color and low wealth”** Solid waste facilities present numerous public health concerns. In North Carolina solid waste facilities are disproportionately located in communities of color and low wealth. In the absence of action to promote environmental justice, the continued need for new facilities could exacerbate this environmental injustice.” (Environmental Health Perspectives, [07/09/2007](#))

**Murphy voted for H467, which limits the amount of money people could receive in lawsuits filed against agricultural operations.**

➤ **Note:** Murphy voted for H46 and the veto override. (H467, veto overridden [5/11/17](#))

**H467 would limit the amount of money people could receive in lawsuits filed against agricultural operations for disturbances.** “The bill would limit the amount of money people could collect in lawsuits filed against agricultural operations for disturbances such as odors and pollution. Under the bill, the person suing could be compensated only for the decrease in rental income the property could generate because of the smells and gases coming from hog farms, as opposed to being compensated more generously for the loss of quality of life as a jury sees fit.” (News & Observer, [4/5/2017](#); H467, Senate overrode the veto on [5/11/2017](#))

**About 500 rural neighbors of massive hog farms say that clouds of flies and intense smells remain a problem, causing headaches and infusing households.** “The 2014 lawsuits by about 500 rural neighbors of massive hog farms allege that clouds of flies and intense smells remain a problem nearly a quarter-century since industrial-scale hog farming took off. The smells can spark headaches and infuse households, they complain. Wind-driven spray has been known to coat a home’s exterior in liquefied excrement, some said. The smell clings to clothes.” (WRAL, [4/9/2017](#))

**Former NC hog farmer Don Webb: “an American should not have to smell someone else’s feces and urine. And that’s what they want to force with this bill.”** “Don Webb, a former hog farmer from eastern North Carolina, was livid as he addressed the room. “When I found out what I was doing to my neighbors, I got out of the hog industry,” he fumed. “It was a feces and urine factory, and not a waste factory. I’m a human being. I’m an *American*. And an American should not have to smell someone else’s feces and urine. And that’s what they want to force with this bill. You want to play with my constitutional rights to not be able to sue. You want to take away because I’m not a millionaire. You want to take that right away from me, and other people. You’ve got no right to do it, and you know it. I’m telling the truth! You know you’re wrong.” (IndyWeek, [4/5/2017](#))

**H467 was passed in response to pending lawsuits against Smithfield Foods.**

**House Bill 467 passed in response to 26 lawsuits pending against Smithfield Foods.** “The legislature passed House Bill 467 last month in response to 26 lawsuits pending in federal court against the state’s largest hog producer, Murphy-Brown, a subsidiary of Smithfield Foods. In the suits, nearly 500 residents say hog farms have made their lives unbearable from odors, flies, buzzards, pigs carcasses and other problems.” (News & Observer, [5/5/2017](#); H467, Senate overrode the veto on [5/11/2017](#))

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