

North Carolina Legislator Profile

Rep. Nelson Dollar (R-Wake) House District 36

“[The General Assembly] did the best that could be done for education with the resources that we had available to us at the time.” -Nelson Dollar (Winston-Salem Journal, 7/24/14)

Rep. Nelson Dollar is a Republican representing House District 36. He has been in the General Assembly for over a decade and has been senior Chairman of the Appropriations Committee since Republicans took control of the House in 2011. Working as House Republicans main budget writer Dollar, according to the News & Observer, “officially [...] is senior chairman of the House Appropriations Committee. Unofficially, he’s the House gatekeeper.”

Dollar consistently uses his gatekeeping power and influence to write budgets and policies that deeply cut education funding, failing to provide teachers with salary increases that meet the national average. While claiming there is not enough funding to increase teacher pay and provide stipends for teachers spending out of pocket money, he found ways to lavishly spend taxpayer money on himself and his friends. Dollar went on a taxpayer-funded “booze cruise” that cost taxpayers over \$31,000. The cruise provided complimentary gift bags, beer, and wine to Dollar and 13 other legislators while North Carolinians were stuck waiting in long lines and in traffic delays. **While failing to improve per pupil funding he did think there was more money to pay politicians, sponsoring a bill to raise his own pay in 2017.**

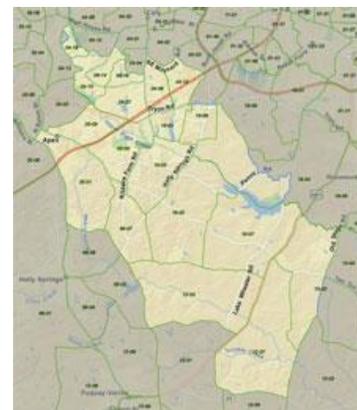
Dollar used his position of power in the Republican House caucus to get lucrative consulting contracts for his business. Since 2004, Dollar’s consulting firm, J.N. Dollar & Associates received over \$700,000 in disbursements from registered North Carolina campaign committees, including disbursements from 13 legislators while they were in the state legislature.

In addition to providing tax breaks for his wealthy friends and spending taxpayer dollars on himself, Dollar consistently voted against policies that would benefit his constituents. He voted against Medicaid expansion, advocated for cutting child care subsidies, and supported a budget that eliminated the ability to access health insurance for state employees hired after 2021.

Read on for more information about Dollar.



Rep. Nelson Dollar



House District 36

Summary

Dollar, one of the most influential members of the House, consistently voted for policies that shortchange education at every level, instead prioritizing tax cuts for big corporations and his personal gain.

- Dollar supported budgets that cut as much as 20 percent of the Pre-K budget and has voted for budgets that cut university funding.
- **Dollar is the architect of a budget provision that made fully funding enrollment growth in schools optional, making it easier for Republicans to continue to cut educating funding.**
- Dollar voted for the 2016 Republican budget that kept teacher pay below \$35,000 a year.
- Dollar voted to lower class sizes but failed to provide additional funding to offset the cost.
- Dollar voted for a budget that allocated only a 6.5 percent pay raise for teachers whereas Gov. Cooper's proposed budget allocated an 8 percent pay raise.
- **Dollar voted for H13, which reduced class sizes to 19 to 21 students for K-3 classes at a cost of \$388 million per year.**
- Rather than providing money to subsidize out of pocket expenses for teachers, Dollar supported a budget that continued the Republican trend of cutting corporate taxes
- **Dollar went on a taxpayer funded "booze cruise" with 13 other legislators, which cost taxpayers \$31,101 and showed his true priorities.**
- Dollar sponsored a 2017 bill to pay himself more.

While dramatically slashing education funding, Dollar used his influence to get payouts of over \$700,000 from campaign committees for his own business, and cut billions in taxes for big corporations

- Dollar's business, J.N Dollar and Associates, received over \$700,000 from NC campaign committees since Dollar joined the legislature.
- **His firm experienced a jump in earnings after he joined the legislature, and in the 2014 election cycle, booked nearly \$150k of work for the NCGOP**
- Dollar supported the Republican agenda that placed tax breaks for out of state corporations ahead of raising teacher pay to the national average.

In addition to providing tax breaks for big corporations and spending taxpayer dollars on himself, Dollar consistently voted against policies that would benefit his constituents. He voted against Medicaid expansion, advocated for cutting child care subsidies, and supported a budget that eliminated the ability to access health insurance for state employees hired after 2021.

- Dollar supported tax reform that eliminated tax breaks for middle class North Carolinians
- **Dollar chairs both the Health Committee and the Healthcare Reform Committee and has opposed policies that would make healthcare affordable for everyone.**
- In 2018 Dollar voted against expanding access to health care despite the fact that NC has the third most expensive health insurance in the country.
- Dollar voted for the 2017 budget that reduced accessibility of health care by eliminating health insurance eligibility for state employees hired after 2021.
- Dollar voted for the tax cap constitutional amendment that locks in tax breaks for the wealthy
- Dollar supported reducing child care subsidies in both 2011 and 2017.

Dollar, one of the most influential members of the House, consistently voted for policies that shortchange education at every level, instead prioritizing tax cuts for big corporations and his personal gain.

Dollar supported budgets that made deep cuts to education, affecting Pre-K and University programs.

In 2011, Nelson Dollar supported a budget that “cut 20 percent of the Pre-K budget.” “The GOP budget in 2011 cut 20 percent of the Pre-K budget, though [Governor Beverly] Perdue used money from other programs to pay for more children to go.” (The News & Observer, 04/30/13)

The 2011 budget cut 12,000 jobs in education including 80,000 teacher assistant jobs. According to North Carolina Policy Watch Executive Director Chris Fitzsimon, this budget slashed “12,000 jobs in education,” including “8,800 teacher assistant jobs.” (The Southern Pines Pilot, 04/29/11)

Dollar criticized Gov. Purdue’s proposal to provide pre-K education to all at-risk 4-year olds.

“Fulfilling a judge’s ruling that North Carolina provide pre-kindergarten education to all at-risk 4-year-olds could mean boosting state spending on the program by more than \$300 million annually within four years, according to data provided...to legislators” in 2011. “The Legislature appropriated \$128 million” in 2011 “to provide education to 24,750 4-year-olds,” and “there could be more than 42,000 additional preschoolers annually that meet economic or developmental requirements to be labeled at-risk but currently aren’t served.” Nelson Dollar “suggested it was careless of [Governor Beverly] Perdue to propose the expansion without options to pay for it in the coming years.” “If the governor wants to recommend moving in that direction, then the governor needs to put forward a plan as how to we would pay for that program,’ Dollar said.” He continued, “it just seems like the governor is wanting to obligate us to move down a path that could cost the state some \$300 million with no real way to pay for it.” (The Associated Press State & Local Wire, 10/11/11)

In 2014 Nelson Dollar praised a budget that made deep cuts to universities and left “in place all the cuts to public schools made” in 2013, including “the reduction in teacher assistants.” “In 2014 “the House’s scaled-down budget” left “many cuts passed” in 2013 “in place, including an additional \$73 million reduction to the University of North Carolina system in the fiscal year that” began in mid-2014. “House Budget Committee chair Nelson Dollar said the mini budget was a ‘fulfillment of the top priorities of this General Assembly and as a fulfillment of our commitment to education in this state at all levels.’ That’s an odd way to describe a plan that makes another round of deep cuts to universities and leaves in place all the cuts to public schools made” in 2013, including “the reduction in teacher assistants, instructional support personnel and help for kids with limited English proficiency.” (Lenoir News-Topic, 07/03/14)

Dollar is the architect of a budget provision that made fully funding enrollment growth in schools optional, making it easier for Republicans to continue to cut educating funding.

Dollar defended a provision in the budget that made it easier for the state to cut funding for public education that would be a major policy change without debate. “A little-noticed addition to the state budget may have far-reaching consequences for education spending. As future budgets are constructed, the state will no longer automatically pay for growth in public school enrollment. It’s a major policy change that was added to the compromise budget that was passed in the waning days of the [2014] session without debate. Without enrollment growth as a cornerstone for future public school budgets, districts won’t know until legislators pass a budget how much more money they’ll have to hire teachers, provide special services for at-risk or gifted students, or pay for other needs.” (The News & Observer, 08/06/14)

The provision was never publicly “announced, explained, or debated” before the budget passed. “It was never publicly announced, explained or debated before the budget was enacted.” (News & Record, 08/12/14)

The House Speaker Pro Tempore didn’t know the budget he supported included the change in how future growth is funded until he read about it in the paper. “House Speaker Pro Tem Paul ‘Skip’ Stam said he didn’t know the budget he supported included the change in how future student growth is funded. ‘The first I read about that was in...[the] paper,’ he said.” (*The News & Observer*, 08/06/14)

Dollar defended the provision that makes fully funding enrollment growth optional. “Dollar, a Cary Republican and chief budget writer for the state House, said eliminating the ‘average daily membership’ calculation, as it’s called, will make the budget clearer for the public.” In the years before this change became law statewide enrollment growth was “lower than projected and when legislators subtract money from their proposed budgets, it looks like a funding cut when the change is just accounting for money not needed, he said. ‘Clearly, the General Assembly will always fund growth in average daily membership,’ Dollar said. ‘We want the public to know what the real budget is, what’s being spent from one year to the next.’” (*The News & Observer*, 08/06/14)

Dollar voted for the 2016 budget, which kept starting teacher pay at \$35,000 a year.

Starting teacher pay remained 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)

Many educators, including veterans of 25 years, only saw 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, Vetoed 6/27/17, Senate Veto Override 6/27/17, House Veto Override 6/28/17)

Compared to Gov. Cooper’s plan, the 2018 Republican budget shortchanges education funding.

The budget includes a 6.5 percent teacher pay raise on average. “The full plan was released Monday night. It includes 6.5 percent teacher pay raises on average, \$15 million for prison security upgrades and previously announced initiatives to lure large companies to the state and study little-known contaminants in state rivers.” (Associated Press, 5/28/18; S99, Senate veto override [6/7/18](#), House veto override [6/12/18](#))

Democrats laid out plans for an 8 percent teacher pay raise on average. “However, Cooper and his fellow Democrats had laid out plans for an even higher teacher pay raise of 8 percent, on average. Cooper’s plan is slightly more generous to teachers in their first five years on the job, and then both he and the legislature have the same figures for raises in the next 10 years of a teacher’s career. But once teachers hit their 15th year on the job, Cooper’s plan would again become more generous.” (News & Observer, [5/28/18](#))

Dollar voted for H13, which reduced class sizes to 19 to 21 students for K-3 classes at a cost of \$388 million per year.

Under House Bill 13, maximum average class sizes would range from 19 to 21 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)

Dollar and the Republican-led NCGA failed to allocate an additional funding to offset the cost of lower class size requirements.

Republicans in the General Assembly reduced class size but did not provide additional funding to schools. “The General Assembly is planning to reduce class sizes for kindergarten through third grade this fall but to do so means teachers are needed for those classes. With no added funding, some districts might need to cut art, music, or phys ed teachers to be able to make the class size requirements.” (WNCN, 2/16/2017; 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)

While unable to find the money to subsidize out of pocket expenses for teachers, Dollar cut billions of dollars in corporate taxes.

Teachers across the country spent \$500 to \$1000 out-of-pocket for classroom supplies and job-related expenses last year. “According to a recent report from “Time,” the Education Market Association says most teachers across the country spent \$500 to \$1,000 annually out of their own pockets for classroom supplies and job-related expenses last year. The report said that \$1.6 billion in school supply costs are shifted from parents or cash-strapped school districts onto teachers themselves.” (Gaston Gazette, 5/6/17)

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)

The 2017 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)

Dollar went on a taxpayer funded “booze cruise” with 13 other legislators, costing taxpayers \$31,101, showed his true priorities

Dollar went on a taxpayer-funded “booze cruise” with 13 other legislators. “I felt like I had been attacked,’ said Beaty, who fired back with ads chastising Dollar for attending a taxpayer-funded ferry cruise during the Tall Ship celebration. The so-called “booze cruise” took a state ferry out of service to give VIPs a front-row seat for the festival in Beaufort over the July 4 weekend. Although Dollar repaid the state for his expenses on the cruise, Beaty’s ads employ a Love Boat theme. Dollar blames the Democratic Party, which financed the ads.” (WRAL, 10/31/06)

The cruise “took a state ferry out of service to give VIPs a front-row seat for the festival in Beaufort over the July 4 weekend.” “I felt like I had been attacked,’ said Beaty, who fired back with ads chastising Dollar for attending a taxpayer-funded ferry cruise during the Tall Ship celebration. The so-called “booze cruise” took a state ferry out of service to give VIPs a front-row seat for the festival in Beaufort over the July 4 weekend. Although Dollar repaid the state for his expenses on the cruise, Beaty’s ads employ a Love Boat theme. Dollar blames the Democratic Party, which financed the ads.” (WRAL, 10/31/06)

While Nelson Dollar had a front-row seat to the ships, many people were waiting in line. “The outing generated controversy because many visitors to the festival stood in lines to see the ships. In addition, a smaller ferry was brought in to replace the Lupton’s regular route, and there were traffic delays as a result.” (News & Observer, 10/31/06)

The cruise cost taxpayers \$31,101. “Rep. Nelson Dollar, a Republican from Cary, is one of 14 state legislators known to have been on the cruise. All of the legislators have said they did not know the state was paying for the cruise, which cost \$31,101.” (News & Observer, 10/31/06)

The cruise included complementary gift bags, beer and wine, a “spread of seafood, wraps and other food,” and a performance from a steel drum band. “Records show that a steel drum band performed and a spread of seafood, wraps and other food was offered. Beer and wine was served, along with soda and water. A gift bag was offered to guests. There is no record of what Dollar did on the ship. He says he spent much of the time discussing ports authority issues with ports officials. He says he drank only water and ate potato chips; and he says he did not take the gift bag.” (News & Observer, 10/31/06)

Dollar sponsored a 2017 bill to pay himself more

Dollar sponsored a bill to pay himself more. “A bipartisan group of North Carolina state legislators want to pay themselves an extra \$60 a day while in session. The changes they proposed in a bill filed Wednesday could cost the state as much as several million dollars more in some years. They wouldn’t take affect until 2019, after the next elections. The bill originated in the House, where it was sponsored by Republican Reps. Pat Hurley of Asheboro, Nelson Dollar of Cary and Rena Turner of Iredell County, and Democratic Rep. Marvin Lucas of Spring Lake. State lawmakers receive a \$104 stipend for meals and lodging every day the legislature is in session. Wednesday’s bill would raise that to \$164 daily. The bill would also more than double the mileage reimbursements legislators can claim for driving to and from Raleigh, from 28 cents per mile to 57.5 cents per mile.” (News & Observer, 2/9/17)

While dramatically slashing education funding, Dollar used his influence to get payouts of over \$700,000 from campaign committees for his own business, and cut billions in taxes for big corporations.

Dollar's consulting firm, which he has operated since 1994, has received at least \$735,538 from NC campaign committees since Dollar joined the legislature.

Since 2004, Dollar's consulting firm has worked for 13 incumbent North Carolina state legislators. "J.N. Dollar & Associates, from 1996 through 2004, received at least \$347,488 in disbursements from registered North Carolina campaign committees. He only received disbursements from one incumbent state legislator – Representative Louis Pate – during this period. Since being elected to the state House in 2004 he has received at least \$735,538 in disbursements from registered North Carolina campaign committees, including disbursements from 13 state legislators while they were in the state legislature." (Based on Data from the State Board of Elections)

His firm experienced a jump in earnings after he joined the legislature, and in the 2014 election cycle, booked nearly \$150k of work for the NCGOP.

After Dollar joined the legislature his company's earnings from state legislators jumped from \$347,488 to \$735,538. "J.N. Dollar & Associates, from 1996 through 2004, received at least \$347,488 in disbursements from registered North Carolina campaign committees. He only received disbursements from one incumbent state legislator – Representative Louis Pate – during this period. Since being elected to the state House in 2004 he has received at least \$735,538 in disbursements from registered North Carolina campaign committees, including disbursements from 13 state legislators while they were in the state legislature." (Based on Data from the State Board of Elections)

His firm, J.N. Dollar & Associates, booked nearly \$150,000 of work for the N.C. Republican Party in the last election cycle, according to reports filed with the State Board of Elections. "He "is a longtime political and public relations consultant who helps coordinate campaigns for fellow House Republicans and other GOP candidates. His firm, J.N. Dollar & Associates, booked nearly \$150,000 of work for the N.C. Republican Party in the last election cycle, according to reports filed with the State Board of Elections." (The News & Observer, 08/25/15)

Instead of increasing per pupil spending, the 2017 Republican budget Dollar supported continued the trend of cutting taxes for big, out of state corporations.

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)

While using taxpayer dollars to take lavish trips and fund his business, Dollar consistently voted against legislation that would aid his constituents and vulnerable communities in North Carolina.

Dollar supported Republican tax reform that eliminated tax breaks for working class citizens.

Dollar supported tax reform that eliminated tax breaks for working class citizens but preserved tax breaks for “Yachts, Jets, Alcohol and Country Clubs” “Republican Tax Reform Preserved Tax Breaks for Yachts, Jets, Alcohol, and Country Clubs While Eliminating Tax Breaks “that benefited working class taxpayers.” While the News & Observer reported, “But still on the books is a \$1,500 cap on the sales tax for a yacht or a jet, a provision that costs the state \$10 million a year in lost revenue. Beer, liquor and tobacco distributors would keep their rebates worth a combined \$12 million annually for collecting taxes from their customers on behalf of the state. Country clubs and other recreational nonprofits keep their exemption from the corporate income tax, a tax break worth a combined \$600,000 a year.” The Associated Press reported the Republican Tax Reform plan, “eliminates several exemptions and deductions that benefited working class taxpayers.” (News & Observer, 7/18/13; AP, 12/30/13; H998, adopted, 7/23/13)

Republican Tax Reform Eliminated Credits for: Child Care, Disability, Farm Machinery, Education Expenses, and Charitable Contributions. “Eliminates credits for child care, permanent and total disability, property taxes paid on farm machinery, education expenses and charitable contributions for those who do not itemize their deductions.” (WRAL, 7/18/13; H998, adopted, 7/23/13)

While chairing both the Health Committee and Healthcare Reform Committee, Dollar opposed policies that make healthcare affordable for low-income and other vulnerable communities.

Dollar, in 2013, defended not providing federally funded health care for 500,000 North Carolinians, claiming “that most of the people who would have been covered by Medicaid expansion are ‘relatively healthy’ and could always get care in emergency rooms.” “How easy it was for Gov. [Pat] McCrory and Republican leaders of the General Assembly to ignore the consequences of their decision to reject the federal government’s offer to expand Medicaid. Washington would have paid the entire cost, for three years, of adding 500,000 people to the federal/state health insurance program for the poor. And, the federal government would have covered 90 percent of the cost thereafter. The expansion was part of the... Affordable Care Act.” Nelson Dollar, in 2013, claimed “that most of the people who would have been covered by Medicaid expansion are ‘relatively healthy’ and could always get care in emergency rooms.” “His argument is ridiculous and disputed by healthcare professionals,” The News & Observer opined. (The News & Observer, 10/14/13)

Dollar, in 2015, opposed reinstating a tax deduction for all medical and dental expenses for senior citizens and “out-of-pocket expenses that add up to more than 10 percent of gross income” for those who are not senior citizens. “A medical-expense deduction that many seniors relied on disappeared when the North Carolina legislature passed a tax reform bill in 2013.” As a result of this bill, “beginning in the 2014 tax year, medical and dental expenses were no longer tax deductible. It wasn’t just seniors who were hit by losing the exemption. Under...the old regimen, people under 65...[could] deduct out-of-pocket expenses that add up to more than 10 percent of gross income.” In 2015 “Rep. Julia Howard (R-Mocksville)...offered an amendment during a meeting of the House Finance Committee to restore the tax break to people of all ages at...[a] cost of \$30.4 million.” “The majority’s chief budget writer, Rep. Nelson Dollar (R-Cary), told members of the finance committee to vote no on Howard’s amendment. ‘I think that certainly the heart is in the right place, and I think a lot of us would like to be able to do this,’ he said. ‘You’re moving major pieces of money around that you don’t have.’” (North Carolina Health News, 05/19/15)

In 2018 Dollar voted against expanding access to health care despite the fact that NC has the third most expensive health insurance in the country

Dollar voted to block Medicaid expansion using a procedural vote. “Rep. Bobbie Richardson, a Franklin County Democrat, argued that expanding Medicaid would improve health care in rural communities. But Moore ruled the amendment out of order because it would be “appropriating funds out of compliance with our rules,” and after Richardson appealed the ruling, the House sided with Moore in a 70-42 vote. The vote was largely along party lines with Rep. Ken Goodman, a Richmond County Democrat, joining all Republicans to block further action on the amendment.” (News & Observer, [6/12/18](#); H998 A4, motion to appeal ruling of the chair, [6/11/18](#))

Rep. Bobbie Richardson proposed an amendment that would expand Medicaid under the ACA to H998, a bill meant to improve health care for rural North Carolinians. “Rep. Bobbie Richardson, a Franklin County Democrat, argued that expanding Medicaid would improve health care in rural communities. But Moore ruled the amendment out of order because it would be “appropriating funds out of compliance with our rules,” and after Richardson appealed the ruling, the House sided with Moore in a 70-42 vote. The vote was largely along party lines with Rep. Ken Goodman, a Richmond County Democrat, joining all Republicans to block further action on the amendment.” (News & Observer, [6/12/18](#); H998 A4, motion to appeal ruling of the chair, [6/11/18](#))

North Carolina was ranked 47th for health care in a 2018 study across metrics of cost, accessibility, and outcome. (Wallethub, [8/6/2018](#))

Blue Cross Blue Shield identified state government decisions around expanding access to healthcare as one reason why NC pays more for health care. “In the last few years, North Carolina’s lawmakers made two crucial decisions that caused healthcare costs to rise. First, the state decided not to expand Medicaid coverage. So there are a lot of people in North Carolina’s individual insurance market who might have been covered under Medicaid, but instead, have to purchase insurance through the ACA’s federal marketplace. These folks tend to have more expensive chronic health problems, and the cost of their medical care has [caused insurance premiums for ACA customers](#) in our state to rise. North Carolina was also one of 22 states that decided to allow consumers to remain on grandfathered and transitional insurance policies instead of being required to purchase ACA-compliant plans. People with grandfathered and transitional plans chose to stick with those plans because initially, they were cheaper (there are a number of reasons for this, but the short answer is that grandfathered/transitional customers use less health care and those plans include fewer benefits). With an ACA pool weighted toward sicker people, premiums for ACA plans rise. Blue Cross NC recently announced that [ACA grandfathered plans](#) will not be offered starting in 2018, as the shrinking grandfathered pool has made it difficult to provide coverage affordably.” (Blue Cross Blue Shield, [8/21/17](#))

Dollar voted for the 2017 Republican budget, which continued to reduce accessibility of healthcare by eliminating health insurance eligibility for state employees hired after 2021 after they retire.

Under the 2017 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, Vetoes 6/27/17, Senate Veto Override 6/27/17, House Veto Override 6/28/17)

Dollar voted for the tax cap constitutional amendment that would bring the maximum income tax rate from 10 percent to 7 percent.

The amendment locks in income tax rates that largely benefit the wealthy, such as Dollar's friends and clients.

Republican tax reform increased taxes on low-income taxpayers, but decreased taxes "by around \$15,000 per year for millionaires." "According to the Budget and Tax Center's Cedric Johnson, "First and foremost on this list is the fact that tax changes passed since 2013 have not only significantly reduced revenue available for public investments, but also shifted the tax load to low- and middle-income taxpayers and away from the wealthy and profitable corporations. Once all changes are fully implemented, for instance, the tax load on low income taxpayers will have increased by an average of around \$30 per year while it will have decreased by around \$15,000 per year for millionaires." (Jefferson Post, Cedric Johnson Op-Ed, 5/14/16)

Dollar has consistently supported reducing child care subsidies.

Dollar defended cutting child care subsidies in 2011. "In 2011 "lawmakers decided to let a temporary \$0.01 sales tax implemented in 2009 expire. While the cut saves taxpayers an average of \$90 per year, it...[cut] an estimated \$1 billion in state revenue. As a result, more money had to be taken from government programs – such as \$9.7 million from the DHHS budget for child care subsidy – to help fill the state's \$2.5 billion budget deficit from the previous fiscal year. Wake County Republican Rep. Nelson Dollar, who chaired the budget committee that cut child care subsidy, says taxes are not the answer to the state's budget problems. 'I think that's the wrong way to look at it,' Dollar said. 'When you look at the totality of the budget, raising almost \$1.5 billion in taxes on the backs of working families in N.C. was a bad idea.'" (NBC – 17 WNCN, 11/03/11)

The 2017 Republican House and Senate budgets did not provide a child care tax credit.
(Governor's Office Press Release, 6/1/17)

###