

North Carolina Legislator Profile

Stephen Ross: House District 63 Alamance County

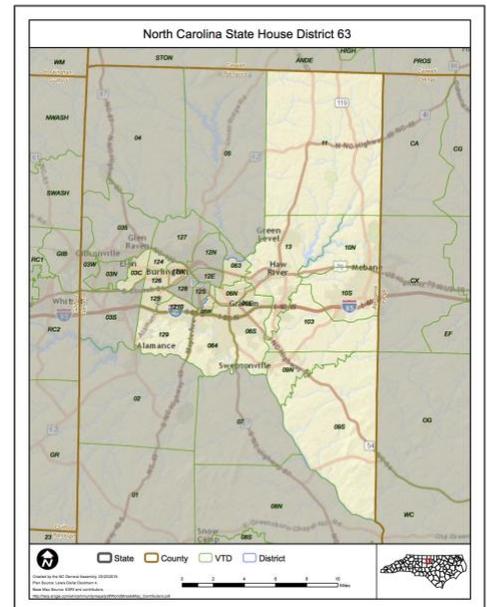
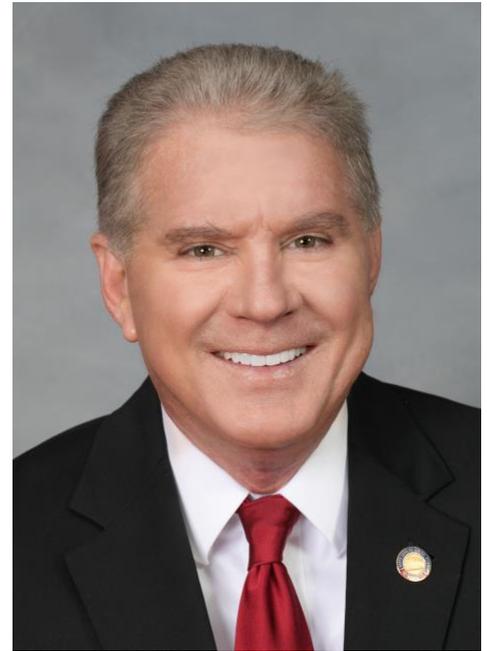
Stephen Ross was first elected to public office in the early 1990s, serving on the Burlington City Council for 16 years. He went on to serve as Burlington's mayor from 2003-2007, then won election to the NC House in 2012.

Ross has used his position in public office to help his employer, Wells Fargo, and the financial services industry while also voting against legislation that would aid working families. He looked out for big banks over working families, sponsoring a bill that would have prevented the public from seeing details about North Carolina's Wall Street transactions. He voted for predatory lending bills that helped companies sell high-interest rate consumer loans and enhanced the profits of consumer finance companies and against aid for working families, including ending the Earned Income Tax Credit and slashing unemployment benefits.

Ross has voted for multiple bills that damage North Carolina public schools. He voted for a bill that would have allowed organizations outside of colleges or universities to offer education preparation programs and supported legislation that cut taxes for the rich while failing to meaningfully raise teacher salaries.

Since winning election to the legislature, Ross has consistently supported bills that endanger the environment. These include repealing the OBX plastic bag ban, failing to fully fund GenX cleanup, limiting the compensation people can receive in lawsuits filed against corporate, foreign-owned agricultural operations for disturbances, allowing the aerosolization of "garbage juice," and deregulating environmental policies.

Ross has repeatedly voted with the Republicans in the NCGA to block Medicaid expansion in North Carolina, costing the state \$21 billion in federal funds from 2016 to 2020. Republicans blocked Medicaid expansion that covered 500,000 low-income North Carolinians and was fully funded by federal tax money for 3 years, and 90 percent of costs thereafter. They did it again in 2018, using a procedural vote to block an amendment that would have improved healthcare in rural North Carolina.



Summary

Ross works for Wells Fargo, the third largest bank in the country, and used his position in public office to help the financial services industry while voting against legislation that would aid N.C. families.

- Since 2012 Ross has received at least \$25,500 in PAC money from the financial services industry.
- Ross was the primary sponsor of a bill that would have prevented the public from seeing the details of North Carolina's Wall Street transactions for at least ten years.
- In 2013 Ross voted to enhance the profits of predatory consumer finance companies as they further trapped low-income people in debt.

Ross voted for multiple bills that damage North Carolina public schools by cutting teacher pay and per pupil spending.

- Ross voted in favor of Senate Bill 599, which would have allowed organizations outside of colleges or universities to offer educator preparation programs.
- Despite Ross's website saying he will work for better schools, he voted for budgets that let education in North Carolina fall further behind by cutting taxes for millionaires instead of raising teacher salaries to the national average.

Since winning election to the legislature, Ross has consistently supported bills that endanger the environment.

- Ross voted for H56 which tied the repeal of the Outer Banks plastic bag ban to inadequate GenX funding.
- Ross voted for H467 which limited the amount of compensation people could receive in lawsuits filed against large, foreign-owned agricultural operations for disturbances.
- Ross voted for S131 which overturned policies meant to protect stream beds, beaches, and air quality.

Ross has repeatedly voted to block Medicaid expansion in North Carolina, even when fully funded by the federal government.

- Ross and the Republicans blocked Medicaid expansion that covered 500,000 low-income North Carolinians.
- The expansion was fully funded by federal tax money for 3 years, and 90 percent of costs thereafter; failure to expand was estimated to cost the state \$21 billion in federal funds from 2016 to 2020.
- In 2018, Rep. Bobbie Richardson proposed an amendment that would expand Medicaid under the ACA to H998, but House Speaker Tim Moore ruled the amendment out of order and Ross and other House Republicans sustained the ruling, blocking Medicaid expansion.

Ross used his position in public office to help the financial services industry, receiving thousands of dollars of PAC money, while also voting against legislation that would aid working families.

Ross works for Wells Fargo, the third largest bank in the country, and has used his position in public office to help the financial services industry while voting against legislation that would aid working families.

Since 2012 Ross received at least \$25,500 in PAC money from the financial services industry. As a legislator, he has watched out for big banks over working families including sponsoring a bill that would have prevented the public from seeing details about North Carolina's Wall Street transactions. He voted for two predatory lending bills that helped companies sell high-interest rate consumer loans and enhanced the profits of consumer finance companies. While he was using his office to help the big banks, he cast votes against aid for working families, including ending the Earned Income Tax Credit and slashing unemployment benefits. (NC State Board of Elections, Retrieved [9/18/17](#))

Stephen Ross is the vice president and investment officer for Wells Fargo Advisors. (NC Leg, retrieved [1/2/18](#))

- **Wells Fargo is the third largest bank in the U.S. by assets.** (Bank Rate, [12/12/17](#))

Ross has over 35 years in the finance industry. (Wealth Minder, retrieved [1/9/18](#))

Ross was the primary sponsor of a bill that would have prevented the public from seeing the details of North Carolina's Wall Street transactions for at least ten years.

- **Ross was a primary sponsor on H1209.** (H1209, referred to House Committee on Appropriations [6/18/14](#), retrieved [1/2/18](#))

H1209 would have prevented the public from seeing the details of North Carolina's transactions with Wall Street for at least ten years. "And yet, as the demands for transparency grow louder, a potentially precedent-setting push for even more secrecy is emerging. Pando has learned that legislators in North Carolina -- whose \$86 billion public pension fund is the 7th largest in America - are proposing to statutorily bar the public from seeing details of the state's Wall Street transactions for at least a decade. That time frame is significant: according to experts, it would conceal the terms of the investment agreements for longer than the statute of limitations of various securities laws." (Pando, [6/13/14](#))

- **"That time frame is significant: according to experts, it would conceal the terms of the investment agreements for longer than the statute of limitations of various securities laws."** "And yet, as the demands for transparency grow louder, a potentially precedent-setting push for even more secrecy is emerging. Pando has learned that legislators in North Carolina -- whose \$86 billion public pension fund is the 7th largest in America - are proposing to statutorily bar the public from seeing details of the state's Wall Street transactions for at least a decade. That time frame is significant: according to experts, it would conceal the terms of the investment agreements for longer than the statute of limitations of various securities laws." (Pando, [6/13/14](#))

“Critics argue that the bill is a license for Wall Street malfeasance because its 10-year secrecy mandate appears to exceed the statute of limitations of many state and federal securities laws.” “Critics argue that the bill is a license for Wall Street malfeasance because its 10-year secrecy mandate appears to exceed the statute of limitations of many state and federal securities laws. For instance, the North Carolina Securities Act includes language outlining a three to five year statute of limitations. Similarly, a law firm specializing in securities work and a North Carolina insurance firm both point out that the statute of limitations in securities fraud is well shorter than the 10 year gag order being proposed by North Carolina legislators.” (Pando, [6/13/14](#))

Under this bill, if violations of securities laws were uncovered after the 10-years secrecy period, there might not be a way to seek legal recourse. “All of this means that if the secrecy bill passes, and if violations of existing securities laws are then uncovered only after the 10-years secrecy period, there may be no way for taxpayers and retirees to seek legal recourse. In short, Wall Street firms would potentially be able to bilk the pension fund knowing that the public would be statutorily barred from seeing what’s happening until it was too late to seek redress under state and federal law.” (Pando, [6/13/14](#))

Ross’s employer Wells Fargo does brokerage business with North Carolina. “According to the North Carolina House’s website, two of the lawmakers sponsoring the bill currently work in the financial industry - one is described as a “financial consultant,” the other is described on the website as “Vice President & Investment Officer - Wells Fargo Advisors.” The State Treasurer’s 2013 report notes that Wells Fargo does brokerage business with North Carolina’s pension system. Additionally, documents from the North Carolina Secretary of State’s office (embedded below) show at least 22 financial firms and securities industry trade associations have registered lobbyists in the state capitol.” (Pando, [6/13/14](#))

- **According to the North Carolina General Assembly website, Ross is the vice president and investment officer for Wells Fargo Advisors.** (NC Leg, retrieved [1/8/18](#))

Amid an uncertain economic recovery in 2013, Stephen Ross voted to enhance the profits of predatory consumer finance companies as they further trapped low-income people in debt.

- **Ross voted for S489.** (S489, signed by Gov. [6/19/13](#))

Senate Bill 489 raised the cap on consumer finance loans from \$10,000 to \$15,000.

“Consumer finance loans currently are capped at \$10,000, but the bill would raise the maximum to \$15,000. The bill also would lower the maximum interest rate from 36 percent to 30 percent, although critics carp that the current maximum applies to few loans because it’s limited to loans of no more than \$600.” (News & Observer, 5/30/13)

Senate Bill 489 called for a 30 percent interest on loans of \$4,000 or less “with the rate lowered to 24 percent for an additional \$4,000 and lowered again to 18 percent for the next \$2,000. So a \$10,000 loan would blend three rates.” “The amended bill calls for a 30 percent interest rate on loans of \$4,000 or less. For larger loans, 30 percent still applies to the first \$4,000, with the rate lowered to 24 percent for an additional \$4,000 and lowered again to 18 percent for the next \$2,000. So a \$10,000 loan would blend three rates. In addition, loans from \$10,001 to \$15,000 would carry a flat 18 percent rate for the entire amount.” (News & Observer, 5/30/13)

Al Ripley, Director of the N.C. Justice Center's Consumer and Housing Project, said "These rate and fee increases are going to cost consumers millions while making these loans harder to pay off, trapping even more people in debt."

"These rate and fee increases are going to cost consumers millions while making these loans harder to pay off, trapping even more people in debt," said Al Ripley of the Justice Center's Consumer & Housing Project. "These rate and fee increases are going to cost consumers millions while making these loans harder to pay off, trapping even more people in debt," said Al Ripley of the Justice Center's Consumer & Housing Project. "This bill moves North Carolina in the wrong direction. As a matter of public policy we should be addressing the predatory aspects of these loans rather than making them more expensive. (Citizen-Times, 5/2/13)

Consumer finance companies were "going to make so much money" on larger loans, said Al Ripley, Director of the N.C. Justice Center's Consumer and Housing Project. "Al Ripley, director of the N.C. Justice Center's consumer and housing project, said the consumer finance companies don't care about giving up the 36 percent rate on their smallest loans "because they are going to make so much money" on larger loans." (News & Observer, 4/15/13)

With estimates that Senate Bill 489 would cost North Carolina borrowers \$50 million to \$70 million more in interests costs, Chris Kukla, senior counsel for government affairs at the Center for Responsible Lending said, "Raising interest rates now, especially while whatever economic recovery we have isn't taking full hold, is just not a good policy decision." "There's a formidable number of people on the bill," said Chris Kukla, senior counsel for government affairs at the Center for Responsible Lending in Durham. "We hope that legislators will understand that raising interest rates now, especially while whatever economic recovery we have isn't taking full hold, is just not a good policy decision." Kukla estimates that the bill would cost North Carolina borrowers \$50 million to \$70 million more in annual interest costs if it becomes law. (News & Observer, 4/15/13)

"66 percent of the loans made by the industry in 2011 were to consumers in North Carolina who already had a consumer loan. That shows that many people can't really afford to pay off their loans and are caught in a cycle of borrowing." "Ripley added that, based on data from the state banking commissioner, 66 percent of the loans made by the industry in 2011 were to consumers in North Carolina who already had a consumer loan. That shows that many people can't really afford to pay off their loans and are caught in a cycle of borrowing, he said." (News & Observer, 4/15/13)

The bill was opposed by the State Department of Justice because it would "further exacerbate debt problems among low-income people." "Those changes weren't enough for Laura Collins Britton, a law professor at the University of North Carolina specializing in consumer financial transactions. In practice, she said, desperate people look to installment loans to refinance another debt and get caught in a spiral because the new loan barely covers what they already owe and comes with additional insurance costs that dupe many consumers, she said. The state Justice Department also opposes the bill, arguing what remains of the industry is growing without new costs that could further exacerbate debt problems among low-income people." (Associated Press, 5/30/13)

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“According to an Associated Press report, the consumer-finance industry spent more than \$1.8 million to hire at least 20 lobbyists and push a flood of donations to political leaders.” “How did they get it? Easy. They bought it. According to an Associated Press report, the consumer-finance industry spent more than \$1.8 million to hire at least 20 lobbyists and push a flood of donations to political leaders. House Speaker Thom Tillis got \$30,000. Senate leader Phil Berger and Gov. Pat McCrory also enjoyed the group’s largesse.” (Fayetteville Observer, Editorial, [6/16/13](#))

“Anyone who doesn’t believe North Carolina government is for sale to the highest bidder should look at how the consumer-finance industry won the right to raise its already-astronomical interest rates.” “Anyone who doesn’t believe North Carolina government is for sale to the highest bidder should look at how the consumer-finance industry won the right to raise its already-astronomical interest rates. Despite the near-record-low cost of money and a barely there prime rate, lending companies that specialize in loans to low-income and credit-challenged customers may soon be able to charge 30 percent interest on the first \$4,000 borrowed and even more in fees and insurance charges. That’s not much less than Big Louie the Bone Snapper gets down on the street corner.” (Fayetteville Observer, Editorial, [6/16/13](#))

In 2013 Ross voted for H82, ending the Earned Income Tax Credit. 23 percent of Alamance County tax returns claimed the EITC in 2012.

- **In 2013 Ross voted for H82, which ended the Earned Income Tax Credit.** (H82, signed by Gov. 3/13/13, retrieved [8/24/17](#))
- **Ross voted against an amendment that would have extended the Earned Income Tax Credit until January 1, 2019.** (H82, signed by Gov. 3/13/13, retrieved [8/24/17](#))

Nearly one million North Carolina families claimed the state Earned Income Tax Credit each year. “Numbers show nearly one million North Carolina families claim the state Earned Income Tax Credit each year.” (WUNC, [3/15/14](#))

The EITC helped families working for low wages and reduced poverty. “As our recently updated backgrounder explains, these credits build on the benefits of the federal EITC and are easy to administer, with nearly every dollar spent on state credits going directly to the working families they were created to help. They not only help families working for low wages meet basic needs but also reduce poverty, especially among children. And the benefits can be long-lasting: low-income children in families that get additional income through programs like the EITC do better and go farther in school and, as a result, work more and earn more as adults.” (Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, [1/13/14](#))

In 2013 the poverty rate for North Carolina was 17.8 percent and the child poverty rate was 27.1 percent. (Budget and Tax Center, 2013 Poverty and Income Estimates, [12/2014](#))

In 2012 the total credit value of the Earned Income Tax Credit for Alamance County was \$1,759,085. (NC Department of Revenue, Preliminary Run of 2012 Individual Income Tax Extract, [2/2014](#))

In 2012, 23 percent of tax returns claimed the EITC in Alamance County. (NC Department of Revenue, Preliminary Run of 2012 Individual Income Tax Extract, [2/2014](#))

In 2013 Ross voted for H4, which slashed unemployment benefits for North Carolinians.

➤ **In 2013 Ross voted for H4.** (H4, signed by Gov. 2/19/13, retrieved [8/24/17](#))

H4 ended the federal emergency unemployment compensation, which caused 70,000 North Carolinians to lose access to this support. “On June 30, as a result of legislation that passed in the first two weeks of the legislative session, the federal emergency unemployment compensation (EUC) program will end in North Carolina and with it an estimated 70,000 North Carolinians who are out of work through no fault of their own will lose access to this modest support. An estimated additional 100,000 North Carolinians would not be able to access the federal program that will be available in every other state through the end of the year. In total, an estimated \$600 million in federal benefits will be lost to North Carolina’s economy with an estimated economic impact of \$1.2 billion.” (Special Data Request to NC Division of Employment Security Commission, June 1, 2013. Estimates provided by the US Department of labor for the total projected number of workers impacted and dollar value of federal Emergency Unemployment Compensation in North Carolina and revised downward based on the 22 percent reduction required by sequestration. Budget and Tax Center, retrieved [8/27/17](#))

H4 cost North Carolina an estimated \$600 million in federal benefits and had an estimated economic impact of \$1.2 billion. “On June 30, as a result of legislation that passed in the first two weeks of the legislative session, the federal emergency unemployment compensation (EUC) program will end in North Carolina and with it an estimated 70,000 North Carolinians who are out of work through no fault of their own will lose access to this modest support. An estimated additional 100,000 North Carolinians would not be able to access the federal program that will be available in every other state through the end of the year. In total, an estimated \$600 million in federal benefits will be lost to North Carolina’s economy with an estimated economic impact of \$1.2 billion.” (Special Data Request to NC Division of Employment Security Commission, June 1, 2013. Estimates provided by the US Department of labor for the total projected number of workers impacted and dollar value of federal Emergency Unemployment Compensation in North Carolina and revised downward based on the 22 percent reduction required by sequestration. Budget and Tax Center, retrieved [8/27/17](#))

H4 cut maximum weekly benefits by 35 percent, from \$535 to \$350. “In a debt-reducing effort, the Republican-controlled legislature voted to cut maximum weekly benefits to \$350 from \$535, a 35 percent drop; reduce the maximum number of weeks for collecting benefits to between 12 and 20 weeks from 26 weeks; and tighten requirements to qualify. The cuts would begin with new jobless claims on July 1.” (NY Times, [2/13/13](#))

H4 reduced the maximum number of weeks for collecting benefits from 26 weeks to between 12 and 20 weeks. “In a debt-reducing effort, the Republican-controlled legislature voted to cut maximum weekly benefits to \$350 from \$535, a 35 percent drop; reduce the maximum number of weeks for collecting benefits to between 12 and 20 weeks from 26 weeks; and tighten requirements to qualify. The cuts would begin with new jobless claims on July 1.” (NY Times, [2/13/13](#))

Ross and his fellow Republicans voted for H4 at a time when North Carolina had the fifth highest jobless rate in the nation. “North Carolina, which has the fifth-highest jobless rate in

the nation, at 8.8 percent, acted in an attempt to eliminate a debt to the federal government of more than \$2 billion, legislators said.” (NY Times, [7/1/13](#))

Due to H4, 1013 jobless workers in Alamance County lost the Emergency Unemployment Compensation. (Unemployment rates from NC Division of Employment Security, local Area Unemployment Statistics, April 2013 and Federal Emergency Unemployment Recipients as of June 1, 2013 from Special Data Request to NC Division of Employment Security, June 2013, Budget and Tax Center, retrieved [8/27/17](#))

Ross has voted for multiple bills that damage NC's public schools by cutting teacher pay and per pupil spending.

Despite Ross's website saying he will work for better schools, he voted for a budget that let education in North Carolina fall further behind.

- **Ross voted for S257, the conference report, and the veto override.** (S257, passed third reading in House [6/2/17](#), adopted conference report in House [6/22/17](#), House veto override [6/28/17](#))

Under the Republican budget, starting teachers will receive little to no raise. "Most public school teachers will receive a pay hike of 9.6 percent over the next two years, which is a significant jump. However, starting teachers and our most experienced teachers receive little or no raises. Total education spending came in about 30% less than Gov. Cooper's proposed spending. (\$755m to \$520m) and per pupil spending is still 6.7% below pre-Recession level. In the spring of 2016, Senator Phil Berger unveiled a plan to bring average teacher pay to \$54,224 in the 17-18 school year. This budget fails to meet Senator Berger's promise." (Stronger NC, 6/26/17)

Gov. Cooper's proposed budget would have increased education spending by \$755 million. "Cooper increased education spending in the coming year by \$755 million; the House and Senate weakly approved half that much." (News & Observer, Editorial, [6/3/17](#))

The Republican budget spent 30 percent less on education than the Governor's proposed budget. "Most public school teachers will receive a pay hike of 9.6 percent over the next two years, which is a significant jump. However, starting teachers and our most experienced teachers receive little or no raises. Total education spending came in about 30% less than Gov. Cooper's proposed spending. (\$755m to \$520m) and per pupil spending is still 6.7% below pre-Recession level. In the spring of 2016, Senator Phil Berger unveiled a plan to bring average teacher pay to \$54,224 in the 17-18 school year. This budget fails to meet Senator Berger's promise." (Stronger NC, 6/26/17)

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Since winning election to the legislature, Ross has consistently supported bills that endanger the environment.

During his 2012 campaign, Stephen Ross supported a veto override to move forward with hydraulic fracturing in North Carolina. “The General Assembly voted, over a veto by Gov. Perdue, to move forward with hydraulic fracturing to tap natural gas reserves in North Carolina. Did you agree with the vote and why? I agree with the vote to override the veto of the Governor. Experts indicate that there is an abundance of natural gas underneath NC and offshore. This could go a long way toward reducing our dependence on foreign oil which is a major national security concern. The Clear Energy and Economic Security Act does not guarantee drilling until all stakeholders have an opportunity to fully explore the process for safety and economic feasibility. Only then will the General Assembly vote to move forward. Natural gas exploration has the potential to create thousands of badly needed jobs for our citizens and provide millions to our broken economy.” (The [Burlington] Times-News, [10/16/12](#))

Ross voted for a bill that tied the repeal of the OBX plastic bag ban to inadequate funding to handle the GenX crisis.

- **NOTE:** H56, House adopted conference report [8/31/17](#), House overrode Gov.’s veto [10/4/17](#), retrieved [11/20/17](#)

Republican legislators tied funding to monitor GenX to a repeal of the coastal ban on plastic bags. “Republican legislators tied new funding Wednesday to monitor GenX in the Cape Fear River to a long-discussed repeal of North Carolina’s coastal ban on plastic bags. The two issues got sewn together in legislation that emerged in the early evening. 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. The bill includes \$435,000 in new funding to monitor and study GenX, an unregulated chemical used to make Teflon and other products that has been found in the Cape Fear River. The chemical, which the Chemours plant said it stopped discharging in June, is not fully understood but is part of a family of toxic chemicals.” (WRAL, [8/31/17](#); H56, veto overridden, [10/14/17](#))

Lawmakers repealed an eight-year ban on plastic bags in the Outer Banks despite opposition from Outer Banks Chamber of Commerce. “North Carolina lawmakers repealed an 8-year-old ban on plastic bags on the Outer Banks. House Bill 56 was ratified Thursday, led by Republicans and presented to Democratic Gov. Roy Cooper to sign, according to the General Assembly website. Lawmakers put the ban in place in 2009 with the support of Marc Basnight, a Democrat who was the former leader of the state Senate. The Outer Banks Chamber of Commerce and many local governments supported the ban on plastic bags and opposed the repeal. The chamber surveyed its 1,100 members earlier this year and all but two of about 500 responses opposed the repeal.” (Virginian-Pilot, [9/1/17](#); H56, veto overridden, [10/14/17](#))

After requesting \$2.6 million for DEQ and DHHS to handle, monitor, and study GenX, Gov. Cooper vetoed H56 which appropriated just \$435K. “Lawmakers approved \$435,000 to be split between the Wilmington-area water utility and UNC Wilmington for studies. Cooper had requested \$2.6 million for the N.C. Department of Environmental Quality and Department of Health and Human Services to monitor GenX and study the health effects of long-term exposure. ‘Clean water is critical for our health and our economy and this legislation fails to

appropriate any needed funds to the departments in state government charged with setting standards and enforcing laws to prevent illegal chemical discharges into rivers used for drinking water,' Cooper said in a statement announcing the veto. 'It gives the impression of action while allowing the long-term problem to fester. And it unnecessarily rolls back other environmental protections for landfills, river basins, and our beaches,' Cooper said. 'Instead this legislation diverts needed resources to the local utility and UNC-Wilmington and eliminates a local plastic bag ban supported by local governments and businesses that was passed to protect the environment in the Outer Banks,' according to Cooper." (Outer Banks Voice, [9/21/17](#); H56, veto overridden, [10/14/17](#))

Ross voted for H467 which limited the amount of compensation people could receive in lawsuits filed against agricultural operations for disturbances.

- **NOTE:** H467 passed third reading in the House [4/10/17](#), House overrode Gov.'s veto [5/10/17](#), retrieved [12/18/17](#)

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, 4/9/17)

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, [4/5/17](#))

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, [4/5/17](#); H467, Senate overrode the veto on [5/11/17](#))

H467 would limit the damages that could be awarded to a property owner to no more than the actual market value of the property. "Under House Bill 467, the damages that a court could award to a property owner who claims nuisance damage by a nearby agricultural or forestry operation to no more than the actual market value of that property." (WRAL, [5/5/17](#); H467, Senate overrode the veto on [5/11/17](#))

Under H467, North Carolina property owners would receive significantly lower payouts than those in other states. “The legislation would not affect those lawsuits, but would curtail financial payouts in any similar lawsuits filed in the future. In other states, jurors have awarded residents hundreds of thousands of dollars in similar cases. North Carolina’s legislation would limit the financial payments to several thousand dollars per household, according to some estimates.” (News & Observer, [5/5/17](#); H467, Senate overrode the veto on [5/11/17](#))

Ross voted for S131 which changed policies meant to protect stream beds, beaches, and air quality.

- **NOTE:** S131 House passed third reading [4/6/17](#); House adopted conference report [4/25/17](#); 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.” (Greensboro News & Record, [4/5/17](#), SB 131; passed its second reading in the Senate on [4/11/17](#))

Senate Bill 131 would allow incompatible sand to be used for beach renourishment. “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.” (Greensboro News & Record, [4/5/17](#); SB 131, passed its second reading in the Senate on [4/11/17](#))

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.” (Greensboro News & Record, [4/5/17](#); SB 131, passed its second reading in the Senate on [4/11/17](#))

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, [3/31/17](#); SB 131, passed its second reading in the Senate on [4/11/17](#))

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, [3/15/17](#); SB 131, passed its second reading in the Senate on [4/11/17](#))

Ross voted for H576, which would have allowed the spraying of “garbage juices” without a permit.

Ross voted for H576, which would have allowed the aerosolization of leachate. (NC Leg, passed third reading in the House [4/25/17](#), retrieved [12/18/17](#))

- **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](#); HB576, 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](#))
- **Former lobbyist and Republican campaign donor Kelly Houston invented leachate aerosolization.** “The technology is known as leachate aerosolization, invented by Kelly Houston of Cornelius, a former lobbyist and a Republican campaign donor. The theory behind the system is that the contaminants in the mist will fall to the ground, ostensibly on top of the landfill, allegedly leaving uncontaminated tiny particles to drift away.” (NC Policy Watch, [5/2/17](#))
- **The aeration of leachate drives the harmful chemicals into the air, creating a hazard for workers at the landfill and citizens downwind.** “A scientist at USEPA responded to our request for comment with several studies showing that landfill leachates and wastewater treatment plant effluents contain large amounts of volatile perfluoroalkyl sulfonic acids (PFAs), and other harmful chemicals. The aeration of these liquid streams drives the volatiles into the air, which then presents an exposure hazard to workers at these plants and citizens downwind. The scientist stated ‘I wouldn’t want to

be anywhere near a leachate aeration basin. The downwind emissions would very likely contain a very wide range of toxic materials.” (Southern Environmental Law Center, Retrieved [5/5/17](#))

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- **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 [5/5/17](#))
- **Communities where over half the residents are people of color are 2.8 times 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, [07/09/07](#))

Ross has repeatedly voted with the Republicans in the NCGA to block expansion of Medicaid in North Carolina, costing the state \$21 billion in federal funds from 2016 to 2020.

- **Republicans voted against an amendment to accept Medicaid expansion as long as it was fully funded by the federal government.** (S4, ratified, [3/6/13](#); [Amendment 2, 2/13/13](#))

HEADLINE: “NC legislators want Medicaid reform before expansion” (*Asheville Citizen-Times*, [7/6/15](#))

Legislature argued state’s Medicaid structure “inefficient” and reforms were necessary before adding more people to the system. “Legislative leaders argue that the state’s Medicaid structure is inefficient and say reforms are needed before more people can be added to system. Competing proposals in the House and Senate budgets set aside up to \$800 million over the next two years to pay for increased enrollment and higher health care costs but offer very different ideas for how to overhaul the system. Senate Leader Phil Berger, R-Rockingham, said the ruling had not changed how Medicaid is distributed in North Carolina. ‘We still have a broken system in North Carolina,’ Berger said. ‘We cannot contemplate adding more people to the Medicaid rolls at a time when we are having difficulties sustaining the Medicaid system that we currently have.’” (*Citizen-Times*, [7/6/15](#))

Republicans blocked Medicaid expansion that covered 500,000 low-income North Carolinians and was fully funded by federal tax money for 3 years, and 90 percent of costs thereafter. “The Medicaid expansion would cover about 500,000 low-income adults in North Carolina, providing them the insurance coverage required when the Affordable Care Act is fully implemented next year. The federal government would pick up the full cost of the expansion for the first three years and the bulk of the costs for several years after that.” (WRAL, [2/14/13](#); S4, ratified, [3/6/13](#))

Failure to expand cost the state \$21 billion in federal funds from 2016 to 2020.

Legislature’s refusal to expand Medicaid will cost NC \$21 billion in federal funds between 2016 and 2020. “North Carolina’s Republican-dominated legislature has so far refused to expand Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act. It’s already been noted by the North Carolina Institute of Medicine that not expanding Medicaid is costing around 500,000 state residents coverage. Now a new report from the Center for Health Policy Research at George Washington University commissioned by the Cone Health Foundation finds the refusal to expand Medicaid would cost North Carolina \$21 billion in federal matching funds between 2016 and 2020 and tens of thousands of jobs. The analysis looks at the costs to the state on a county-by-county basis.” (WCQS, [10/19/15](#))

- **Medicaid Expansion Would Mean \$15 Billion in New Economic Activity and 25,000 Jobs for North Carolina by 2016.** “The cost would be fully funded by the federal government for the first three years. For five years following that, the federal government would pay 90 percent of the cost, and the state would pay 10 percent. That’s a much more favorable cost share than regular Medicaid, for which the state pays one-third of the cost. If lawmakers approve the expansion, it would bring a projected \$15 billion into the state’s economy, creating an estimated 25,000 jobs in health care and related sectors by 2016.” (WRAL, [2/11/13](#); S4, ratified, [3/6/13](#))

In 2018, Ross and the Republicans of the NCGA voted to block Medicaid expansion again using a procedural vote.

In 2018, Ross and the Republicans of the NCGA 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](#))

House Speaker Tim Moore ruled the amendment out of order, Democrats attempted to appeal his ruling, but Republicans helped him sustain it, blocking Medicaid expansion. “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](#))

H998 was amended to study how Medicaid expansion might help improve rural health outcomes, though the term Medicaid expansion was not explicitly used.

H998 was amended to include study how Medicaid expansion might help improve rural health outcomes. “The amendment to House Bill 998 from House Democratic Leader Darren Jackson of Wake County avoids using the term "Medicaid expansion" but would order the Department of Health and Human Services to study "whether there are changes to the Medicaid Program that will increase preventative health services, improve health outcomes, and lower the overall costs of care" and include the total cost of any recommended changes. A legislative oversight committee would receive the department's report by Oct. 1. Jackson stressed that the proposal was "only a study" of "what the costs would be of expanding it," and the amendment wasn't debated further before it was added to HB 998 in a 69-43 vote. About 25 Republicans joined all Democrats in supporting the amendment.” (News & Observer, [6/12/18](#); H998 A5, adopted [6/11/18](#))

The amendment was "only a study" of "what the costs would be of expanding it" and was added to the bill in a 69-43 vote with 25 Republicans joining Democrats to support the

amendment. “A state agency could study the costs and benefits of expanding Medicaid under an amendment added to a House rural healthcare bill Monday night. he amendment to House Bill 998 from House Democratic Leader Darren Jackson of Wake County avoids using the term "Medicaid expansion" but would order the Department of Health and Human Services to study "whether there are changes to the Medicaid Program that will increase preventative health services, improve health outcomes, and lower the overall costs of care" and include the total cost of any recommended changes. A legislative oversight committee would receive the department's report by Oct. 1. Jackson stressed that the proposal was "only a study" of "what the costs would be of expanding it," and the amendment wasn't debated further before it was added to HB 998 in a 69-43 vote. About 25 Republicans joined all Democrats in supporting the amendment.” (News & Observer, [6/12/18](#))

The amendment did not actually include the term “Medicaid expansion,” but instead referred to “changes to the Medicaid Program.” “The amendment to House Bill 998 from House Democratic Leader Darren Jackson of Wake County avoids using the term "Medicaid expansion" but would order the Department of Health and Human Services to study "whether there are changes to the Medicaid Program that will increase preventative health services, improve health outcomes, and lower the overall costs of care" and include the total cost of any recommended changes. A legislative oversight committee would receive the department's report by Oct. 1. Jackson stressed that the proposal was "only a study" of "what the costs would be of expanding it," and the amendment wasn't debated further before it was added to HB 998 in a 69-43 vote. About 25 Republicans joined all Democrats in supporting the amendment.” (News & Observer, [6/12/18](#); H998 A5, adopted [6/11/18](#))

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