

# North Carolina Legislator Profile

Rep. John Sauls: (R-Harnett & Lee)  
House District 51

Sauls supported the controversial co-speakership in 2003-04 that split the House and brought proceedings to a standstill, saying it was “the best arrangement the state could have ever had.” (Associated Press, 10/31/05)

Rep. John Sauls is a Republican preacher representing House District 51. He served two terms from 2003-2006 and then retired, claiming to expand his congregation. However Sauls then retired from leading his congregation, handing over the pulpit to his higher-energy son, only to run for the NC House again in 2016. Since 2016 Sauls has served without distinction, [sponsoring very few bills](#) and [missing many votes due to absences](#). He recently [published Facebook ads listing the wrong district number](#) and is known for being absent from floor votes and committee meetings. However, the votes he has been present for continue the Republican trend of prioritizing corporations and millionaires over the people in their districts.

**Sauls claims he is pro-education, but consistently undermines his position.** In the 2017 Republican budget, Sauls voted against increasing teacher salaries and prioritized tax cuts for corporations. Sauls also voted to cap class sizes without providing any additional funding for schools. This puts more stress on schools, possibly costing some teachers their jobs and threatening schools’ ability to offer classes like art, P.E., and foreign language.

**Sauls consistently voted for legislation that harms the environment.** He voted for bills that limit protections of water sources and air quality. Due to Sauls’ votes, it is now much easier for large corporations to pollute the environment at the expense of North Carolinians.

**Sauls voted against expanding health care access for North Carolinians. He struck down a bill measure supported by Democrats** that would expand access to lower-cost healthcare. North Carolina has some of the most expensive health care in the country and experts say expanding Medicaid would help lower costs for thousands of families.

**Sauls sided against a measure that would provide funding to process thousands of untested rape kits.** AG Josh Stein requested funding, only to have this request denied by Republicans. As a result of his vote, 15,000 rape kits will continue to remain untested, while the perpetrators roam free.

**Sauls’ choice to side with corrupt co-Speaker of the House Jim Black in 2003 put him at odds with his own party.** His willingness to cooperate with Jim Black was a point of contention among his fellow Republicans and though he claimed he left in 2006 to focus on his ministry, it seems more likely he left due to proximity to scandal.

Read on for more about Sauls’ record.



# Summary

## **Sauls claims to be pro-education but refuses to increase teacher salaries and prioritizes tax cuts for corporations over public education spending.**

- *The 2017 budget shortchanged teachers by failing to meaningfully raise teacher salaries.*
- *Sauls voted for H13, which capped K-3 class sizes at 22 to 24 students without providing additional funding to schools.*
- *The legislature imposed smaller class sizes without providing additional funding.*
- *Teachers worried they would be laid off to accommodate the smaller class sizes and schools will be forced to cut special classes (art, PE, etc.).*

## **Sauls has repeatedly voted for legislation that loosens environmental protections and makes it easier for large corporations to pollute North Carolina's air, water, and soil.**

- *Sauls voted for H56, a bill that repealed the Outer Banks plastic bag ban and was called the "junk drawer of environmental laws" because it limited protections of streams and reduced regulations of landfills.*
- *S131, supported by Sauls, deregulated policies that were meant to protect streams, beaches, and air quality.*
- *Sauls backed H576, which would have allowed the spraying of "garbage juice" without a permit.*
- *Sauls also voted for S16, a business regulatory reform bill that "imposes limitations on local governments' power over landfill permits."*

## **Sauls voted against an amendment that would expand access to health care and lower its costs across North Carolina.**

- *H998 was a largely noncontroversial measure that directed DHHS to study ways to improve health care in rural areas.*
- *Democrats attempted to amend the bill to expand Medicaid, arguing that this would also improve rural health, but Sauls and other Republicans used a procedural vote to block Medicaid expansion.*
- *Under Republicans' watch, North Carolina has become the third most expensive state for health care in the country*

## **Sauls sided against providing funding to process over 15,000 rape kits, delaying justice even longer for victims.**

- *AG Josh Stein requested funds to clear the rape kit backlog.*
- *Sauls denied the request for funding, delaying justice for victims.*

## **Sauls claimed his responsibilities as a pastor kept him from running in 2005, but his support of Richard Morgan and Jim Black put him at odds with the growing conservative wing of the NCGOP.**

- *Sauls supported the bipartisan co-speakership of Richard Morgan and Jim Black in 2003, a vote that lost him favor with more conservative members of his own party.*
- *A letter to the editor in the Sanford Herald attacked Sauls as "not even a registered Republican" who "switched his registration" rather than becoming involved in GOP to "make it better."*

**Sauls claims to be pro-education but refuses to increase teacher salaries and prioritizes tax cuts over public education funding.**

- **Sauls voted to override the Governor's veto of the 2017 Republican budget.** (S257 House Veto Overridden [6/28/17](#))
- **NOTE:** Sauls did not vote on the Conference Report because of an excused absence.

**The 2017 budget shortchanged teachers by failing to meaningfully raise teacher salaries.**

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

**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](#))

**Sauls voted “yes” to H13, which capped K-3 class sizes at 22 to 24 students without providing additional funding to schools.**

- **NOTE:** Sauls voted to pass H13. (House concurred on [4/27/2017](#).)

**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)

**The Legislature imposed smaller class sizes without providing additional funding.**

**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)

**Teachers were worried they would be laid off to accommodate the smaller class sizes and schools will be forced to cut special classes (art, PE, etc.).**

**Teachers were fearful they might be laid off.** “The changes are also fueling fears among some teachers that they may be laid off. ‘Our teachers are scared to death about their jobs and their livelihood,’ said James Daugherty, president of the N.C. Music Educators Association. ‘It’s unnerving.’” (News & Observer, 1/18/2017)

**The state mandate for smaller class sizes could cause schools to cut art programs, raise class sizes in other grades, or ask the counties to pay for the cost.** “State legislators reduced how large class sizes can be starting this fall in kindergarten through third grade. But school leaders say finding the money and teachers to staff the smaller classes will force them to consider options such as cutting the arts, raising class sizes in other grades and asking counties to pick up the tab.” (News & Observer, 1/18/2017)

**Sauls repeatedly voted for legislation that benefits corporate polluters in North Carolina.**

**Sauls voted for H56, a bill that repealed the Outer Banks plastic bag ban and was called the “junk drawer of environmental laws” because it limited protections of streams and reduced regulations of landfills.**

- **Sauls voted for H56 and voted to override Gov. Cooper’s veto.** (HB56, passed House third reading [06/27/17](#), House overrode veto [10/04/17](#).)

**House Bill 56 was called the “junk drawer of environmental laws” because it repealed the plastic bag ban in the Outer Banks, allowed law enforcement to cut back riparian buffers and lessened landfill regulations.** “And the GOP wanted to checkmate Democratic lawmakers and Gov. Cooper. They likely would otherwise vote against or veto the bill because of the bag, buffer and landfill sections, but now had to weigh how their vote would be used against them. One can envision the misleading campaign ads a year from now. Cue ominous music, cut to glass of muddy water: “X representative voted against clean water for Wilmington. X doesn’t care about your children’s health.” But as many lawmakers pointed out, the Cape Fear is [not the only contaminated river](#) in the state. The Haw is polluted with 1-4, dioxane, another emerging contaminant. It’s being discharged from industry upstream in Alamance and Guilford counties. Parts of the Catawba River are polluted with PCBs, also from industry. Runoff from industrialized hog farms contaminate segments of the Neuse River and the parts of the Pamlico Sound are routinely closed to shellfish harvesting because of fecal bacteria.” (NC Policy Watch, [09/01/17](#))

**Sauls voted for S131, which deregulated policies that were meant to protect streams, beaches, and air quality.**

- **Sauls voted for S131.** (S131, signed [5/4/17](#))

**S131 would ask 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.** ““It’s still a net loss for the environment,” she said. Some of the more contentious environmental provisions would: Ask the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to permit the state to double the amount of development near streams that can be displaced without requiring offsetting improvements elsewhere. Allow sand dredged from shoals offshore from the capes to be used in beach renourishment even if it doesn’t meet state requirements making sure it is compatible. The bill also deals with the regulation of general contractor’s licenses, eliminating some counties from vehicle emission standards because they have improved, and the disposal of dead reptiles.” (News & Observer, [4/5/17](#))

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

**Sauls voted for H576, which would have allowed the spraying of “garbage juice” without a permit.**

- **Sauls voted for H576.** (H576 passed third reading in the House, [4/25/17](#))

**H576 would allow landfill operators to “dispose” of landfill fluids 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. House Bill 576 sponsor Rep. Jimmy Dixon, R-Duplin, told the House Environment Committee on Thursday that no one is opposed to the bill, but both the state Department of Environmental Quality and environmental groups say that's not the case. According to Dixon, DEQ under former Gov. Pat McCrory's administration approved a permit for an aerosolization project at the Foothills Regional Landfill in 2013.” (WRAL, [4/20/17](#))

**Sauls voted for S16, a business regulatory reform bill that “imposes limitations on local governments’ power over landfill permits”.**

- **Sauls voted for S16 and voted to override the Governor’s veto of the bill.** (S16, House adopted conference report [8/3/17](#), House veto override [10/5/17](#))

**S16 “loosens water quality rules and imposes limitations on local governments’ power over landfill permits, changes that the Democratic governor called dangerous in his veto message.”** “SB 16, titled “Business Regulatory Reform Act of 2017,” is a 16-page grab bag of deregulation provisions. It loosens water quality rules and imposes limitations on local governments power over landfill permits, changes that the Democratic governor called dangerous in his veto message.” (News & Observer, [9/29/17](#))

**Sauls voted against an amendment that would expand access to health care and lower costs across North Carolina.**

**Democrats attempted to amend H998 to expand Medicaid, arguing that this would also improve rural health, but Republicans used a procedural vote to block Medicaid expansion.**

- **Sauls voted against an amendment to H998 that would expand Medicaid.** (HB 998, proposed amendment [6/7/18](#))

**Republicans 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](#))

**Under Republicans’ watch, North Carolina has become the third most expensive state for health care in the country**

**North Carolina is the third most expensive state in the country for health care according to a 2017 study.** North Carolina was ranked ahead of Wyoming, New York, Vermont and Alaska (tied) for highest average monthly premium. (Wallethub, 8/7/17)

**North Carolina is ranked 47<sup>th</sup> in the nation across metrics of cost, accessibility, and outcome.** (Wallethub, 8/7/17)

**Citing the Wallethub study, Blue Cross Blue Shield NC said N.C.’s lawmakers made two crucial decisions that caused health care costs to rise.** “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. 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.” (BCBSNC, 8/21/17)

**The decision not to expand Medicaid meant people who would have been covered had to buy insurance through the marketplace instead, causing everyone’s premiums to rise.** “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.” (BCBSNC, 8/21/17)

**Sauls sided against providing funding to process over 15,000 rape kits, delaying justice even longer for victims.**

- **NOTE:** *The legislature later passed a measure to create a tracking system to determine which rape kits would need to be tested. (WRAL, [6/12/18](#); H945/S727, signed by Gov. [6/25/18](#))*

**There are over 15,000 untested rape kits in North Carolina according to the 2017 Sexual Assault Evidence Collection Kit Law Enforcement Inventory Report.** (NC Department of Justice, Published [3/1/18](#))

**AG Josh Stein requested funds to clear the rape kit backlog.**

**In February 2018, Attorney General Josh Stein sought \$2 million from the NC General Assembly to begin testing rape kits.** “In February, Stein announced that a [statewide inventory revealed 15,160 untested rape kits](#). That backlog prompted him to seek \$2 million from lawmakers this year to begin the outsourcing of testing of 2,800 of those kits containing DNA samples and other evidence collected during medical procedures conducted after attacks.” (News & Observer, [5/30/18](#))

**Gov. Cooper’s budget allocated over \$2 million to the Department of Justice for testing sexual assault kits.** “A spokesman for Cooper responded that the Democratic governor's spending proposal included money for reducing the backlog, unlike lawmakers' budget. "In contrast to the legislature which allocated no funding for this important effort, the Governor directed more than \$2 million to the Department of Justice for testing sexual assault kits, including a way to track progress and determine criteria order for testing kits. Republican legislators are making misleading attacks to distract from the fact that their budget contained no funding for testing sexual assault kits," the spokesman, Ford Porter, said.” (News & Observer, [5/30/18](#))

**Republicans denied the request for funding, delaying justice for victims.**

**The legislature did not include funding to begin testing the kits so “the backlog will grow, and justice for sexual assault victims will be delayed.”** “In response, Attorney General Josh Stein asked the Legislature for \$2 million to start testing the kits. It would cost \$10.6 million to test all 15,000, but Stein’s request was a start. He also asked the Legislature to create and fund a system to track the untested kits, and to create a committee that would recommend which kits to test first and how to test all kits going forward. In the budget being passed this week, the Legislature included zero. It also didn't fund the tracking system and legislation to create the committee is pending. So the backlog will grow, and justice for sexual assault victims will be delayed. “Every one of us should be focused on trying to bring justice to more people who suffered a heinous crime,” Stein told the Observer editorial board.” (Charlotte Observer Editorial, [5/31/18](#))

**Sauls claimed his responsibilities as a pastor kept him from running in 2005, but his support of Richard Morgan and Jim Black put him at odds with the growing conservative wing of the NCGOP.**

**Sauls chose not to run in 2005 due to “increased responsibilities” as a pastor.** “Rep. John Sauls, R-Lee, won't run for a third term next year, citing his increased responsibilities as the pastor of a growing church. ‘The choice was either the political arena or my ministry,’ Sauls said. ‘I can't do both. And my ministry is my first priority.’” (Associated Press, 10/31/05)

**Sauls supported the bipartisan co-speakership of Richard Morgan and Jim Black in 2003, a vote that lost him favor with more conservative members of his own party.**

**Sauls supported the controversial co-speakership in 2003-04, saying it was “the best arrangement the state could have ever had.”** “Sauls, who formerly served on the Lee County board of commissioners, was elected to the Legislature in 2002, defeating incumbent Leslie Cox. Sauls supported the 2003-04 co-speakership that split the House GO, calling it ‘the best arrangement the state could have ever had.’ This year, he was a vice chairman of the House Education Committee.” (Associated Press, 10/31/05)

**The co-speakership pitted more conservative Republicans against Morgan’s supporters.** “At the center of the tempest is Richard Morgan, a seven-term Republican legislator who in 2003 cut a power-sharing deal with Democrats to win the influential job of co-speaker of the House, which is split 60-60. Morgan wasn't his Republican colleagues' first or even second choice for speaker, so his rise to power

and his truce with Democrats have stirred up a nasty squall within his own party, roiling the GOP's only sphere of influence in state government." (Stateline, [5/26/05](#))

**The Carolina Journal noted that Sauls' reelection campaign in 2004 was presumably more competitive because of tensions over the speakership vote.** "This year, lingering tensions from fights over House leadership and the state budget may hurt Sauls a little bit with Republican activists. Cox is actually running to Sauls' right by criticizing his vote for a budget containing tax increases in 2003 – though Cox voted for tax-increase budgets in 2001 and 2002. This district is competitive on the numbers and the outcome uncertain." (Carolina Journal, [10/27/04](#))

**A letter to the editor in the Sanford Herald attacked Sauls as "not even a registered Republican" who "switched his registration" rather than becoming involved in GOP to "make it better."**

**A letter to the editor in the Sanford Herald attacked Sauls as "not even a registered Republican" who "switched his registration" rather than becoming involved in GOP to "make it better."** "The recent letter by former Rep. John Sauls is very interesting. Sauls is supporting Herb Hincks for chairman of the GOP in spite of the fact that Sauls is not even a registered Republican. In fact, after voting for the most corrupt leadership in N.C. history, Sauls went on to vote for huge budget increases, increased taxes and even supported in-state tuition for illegal immigrants, something denied to legal residents from other states. Then rather than get involved in the party to make it better, he simply switched his registration." (Sanford Herald, 1/5/08)

**The letter also cited Sauls' support of "huge budget increases, increased taxes and...in-state tuition for illegal immigrants."** "The recent letter by former Rep. John Sauls is very interesting. Sauls is supporting Herb Hincks for chairman of the GOP in spite of the fact that Sauls is not even a registered Republican. In fact, after voting for the most corrupt leadership in N.C. history, Sauls went on to vote for huge budget increases, increased taxes and even supported in-state tuition for illegal immigrants, something denied to legal residents from other states. Then rather than get involved in the party to make it better, he simply switched his registration." (Sanford Herald, 1/5/08)

**According to Sauls' voting record, Sauls was either registered as a Democratic or Unaffiliated voter and voted in the Democratic primary on 5/9/2008.**

Election	Voted Method	Voted County	Voted Party
05/06/2008 PRIMARY	IN-PERSON	LEE	DEMOCRATIC

(NCSBE, Retrieved [6/5/18](#))

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