

# North Carolina Legislator Profile

## Donny Lambeth: (R-Forsyth) House District 75

*Donny Lambeth is a Republican legislator currently serving his third term representing HD75 in the North Carolina House. Before being elected to the General Assembly in 2012, Lambeth worked for Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center where he held 17 different job titles but most notably earned more than \$1 million in a single year as the president.*

***Remarkably, only two years after Lambeth earned \$1.2 million as a hospital executive, he voted against expanding basic health care access for low-income North Carolinians. Despite being considered “the legislature’s leading healthcare expert” he voted against expanding Medicaid coverage for some of North Carolina’s most vulnerable populations. This vote resulted in hundreds and possibly thousands of lives lost across the state due to a lack of affordable health care.***

*Along with working for a medical center, Lambeth served as the chairman of the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County School Board for over a decade and was a deeply controversial chairman. Parents and teachers complained that he “slept through meetings” and was “belligerent.” During his tenure, he criticized the state lawmakers for failing to fund public education.*

*However, since being elected to the House, he has fallen in line with the Republican trend of prioritizing tax cuts for corporations over paying teachers at the national average. Lambeth voted for multiple Republican budgets that fail to compensate hardworking teachers fairly and shortchange students by cutting education spending year after year.*

*Furthermore, Lambeth supported voter ID legislation, dubbed the “Monster” voter ID law, that was struck down in court for discriminating against African-American voters with “almost surgical precision.”*

*Read on for more about Rep. Lambeth.*



## Summary

**As a “belligerent” School Board chairman who sometimes fell asleep during meetings, Lambeth criticized lawmakers for failing to fund education; but he did the very same thing once he was elected to the General Assembly.**

- As chairman of the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Board of Education, Lambeth supposedly wanted state lawmakers to meet their “obligations” and fund education.
- Some parents and teachers claimed Lambeth was “belligerent” and “slept during school board meetings.”
- Once elected to the NCGA, Lambeth voted for multiple Republican budgets that prioritized tax cuts for corporations over salary raises for hardworking teachers.
- Lambeth supported budgets that decreased investment in students.

**Lambeth earned more than \$1 million in one year in his job as a hospital president and is supposedly the “legislature’s leading healthcare expert” yet he voted for legislation that puts basic health care out of reach for hundreds of thousands of vulnerable North Carolinians.**

- Lambeth earned \$1.2 million in his role as president of Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center.
- In 2013 and 2018 Lambeth voted against providing basic health care to roughly 500,000 of the state’s most vulnerable people.
- Blocking Medicaid cost anywhere from 455 to 1,145 lives per year.

**Lambeth supported a voter ID bill that was struck down in the courts for discriminating against African-American voters “with almost surgical precision.”**

- Lambeth voted for a 2013 bill deemed the worst voter suppression law in the country and later called the “Monster Voting Law.”
- The Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals struck down the 2013 law because it targeted African-American voters with “almost surgical precision.”

**On the School Board Lambeth criticized lawmakers for failing to fund education, but once elected to the House fell in line with the Republican trend of putting tax cuts for corporations over paying teachers.**

**As chairman of the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Board of Education, Lambeth wanted state lawmakers to meet their “obligations” and fund education.**

**Lambeth: “Get in touch with state lawmakers and county commissioners and urge them to support education.”** “I've served as chairman of the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Board of Education since 1994, and never before has our board faced budget challenges as in 2011. The state has a \$3.7 billion budget deficit as a result of low tax revenues and the end of federal stimulus and stabilization funding. That cascades down to our students in the form of tens of millions of dollars in budget cuts. Current estimates call for our district to cut about \$38 million or more from our budget. These figures add up to almost 10 percent of our operating budget. Unfortunately, this is not surprising. We've cut our budget three straight years even with the addition of federal stimulus and stabilization funds....We have an experienced school board that works well together and has experience balancing budgets in tough times. We have a staff that cares and understands how to serve students. We have a community that I believe is deeply committed to education. I ask that we come together and bring out our best ideas. Get in touch with state lawmakers and county commissioners and urge them to support education. This is the time to model the innovative thinking we want to see in our students. Our struggles mirror those of families who have dealt with shrinking incomes and job losses in the midst of this financial crisis. But I believe that emphasizing education is the best way to create a long-term solution for the problems of our time. If we don't value education, the consequences will be felt for years to come. Donny C. Lambeth is the chairman of Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Board of Education.” (Winston-Salem Journal, 2/10/11)

**Lambeth on state reductions in education funding: “The state needs to meet their obligations.”** “Both Martin and Donny Lambeth, the chairman of the school board, said that the school system would not ask for more money from Forsyth County commissioners to make up for state reductions. "I would not plan to go back to the county," Lambeth said. "They have been supportive of our schools, but these costs are the responsibility of the state and not the local county government. The state needs to meet their obligations.” (Winston-Salem Journal, 8/6/09)

**Some parents and teachers complained that Lambeth was “belligerent” and “slept during school board meetings.”**

**Some parents and teachers complained that Lambeth was “belligerent” to them, didn't listen to their side, and “slept during school board meetings.”** “Donny Lambeth, controversial Chairman of the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Board of Education, announced Friday that he would resign his seat effective Dec. 31, after 18 years of service on the Board. In a tenure that saw successes like joining in partnerships to support the School System with non-profits and corporate entities, Mr. Lambeth also saw his share of controversy, including his initial resistance to implementing a State law on school bullying that included LGBT students' rights. Some parents and others in the community have admired Mr. Lambeth's hard-right stands while other parents and teachers have complained that he has been belligerent to them, not listened to their side of issues, and slept during school board meetings.” (Camel City Dispatch, [12/7/12](#))

**Lambeth voted for the 2018 budget that Republicans crafted behind closed doors and did not meaningfully raise teacher salaries.**

**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 had 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](#))

**Cooper's pay plan is more generous for veteran teachers with 15 years on the job.** “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](#))

**Lambeth voted for the 2017 budget which gave teachers little to no raises; meanwhile, teachers spend on average \$500 to \$1,000 out of pocket on classroom supplies etc.**

- **NOTE:** Lambeth voted for S257, the conference report, and the veto override. (S257, veto overridden [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](#))

**Over half of all North Carolina teachers have a second job; the state ranks 41<sup>st</sup> in the country for average teacher pay.**

**According to date from the National Center for Education Statistics, over half of all North Carolina teachers have a second job.** “Phillips' story is not unusual. More than half of all North Carolina public school educators have a second job in the school year, either within the school system or outside employment.” (EdNC, [11/20/17](#))

**North Carolina ranks 41<sup>st</sup> in the country for average teacher pay according the National Educaiton Association.** [North Carolina ranks 41st in the country for average teacher pay, according to the latest numbers from the National Education Association.](#) North Carolina's average annual pay of \$47,941 lags nearly \$10,000 behind the national average. During the national recession in 2009, average teacher pay in the state fell faster than the national average. Increasing teacher pay has been a [legislative priority for several decades.](#)” (EdNC, [11/20/17](#))

**The 2017 Republican budget did not include a stipend to aid teachers with out-of-pocket expenses.**

**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)

**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)

**The 2017 budget allowed per pupil spending to remain 6.7 percent below the pre-recession level.**

**Under the Republican budget, per pupil spending is 6.7 percent below pre-recession level.** "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)

**Lambeth, as a former hospital CEO, is “the legislature’s leading health-care expert;” however, he voted for legislation that renders health care out of reach for hundreds of thousands of North Carolinians.**

**Lambeth had 17 different job titles during his tenure at Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center, retired as its president where he earned \$1.2 million.**

**Lambeth had 17 job titles and became president of the hospital in 2008.** “After 40 years, Donny Lambeth will retire from Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center June 30. Lambeth has had 17 job titles in his tenure, which began in 1972 as a cost accountant at North Carolina Baptist Hospital. He became president of the Hospital in 2008. A leader in the community, Lambeth has been chair of the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County School Board since 1994, having been elected to the Board five consecutive times. He is the Republican nominee for the North Carolina House of Representatives, District 75, and has no opposition in the November election. “This transition has been planned for some time,” Lambeth said. “I am honored to have served Wake Forest Baptist for 40 years. Now, I will spend time with my family and then gear up for a new opportunity of service, representing the people of Forsyth County in the General Assembly.” For the past year, Lambeth has been president of Lexington Medical Center and Davie Hospital, leading the integration of those hospitals into the Wake Forest Baptist system at the request of John D. McConnell, M.D., CEO.” (Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center, 2012)

**In the 2010-11 fiscal year Lambeth’s compensation package increased to \$1.2 million.** “Many of the medical center’s top executives saw compensation increases during the 2010-11 fiscal year, which ended June 30. Donny Lambeth, formerly the president of N.C. Baptist Hospital who now heads Davie Hospital and Lexington Medical Center, saw his package increase to \$1.2 million from \$849,521 the year before. Dr. Tom Sibert, president and chief operating officer for the medical center, saw his compensation rise from \$974,188 during the 2009-10 fiscal year to \$995,133 last fiscal year.” (Charlotte Business Journal, 5/15/12)

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**In 2013, Lambeth, who had previously earned \$1.2 million working for a hospital, voted against providing basic health care to roughly 500,000 of the state’s most vulnerable people; he later voted to block expansion in 2018.**

- **NOTE:** Lambeth voted for S4 and for the conference report. (S4, signed by Gov. [3/6/13](#))
- **NOTE:** Lambeth voted against an amendment to accept Medicaid expansion so long as it was fully funded by the federal government. (S4, ratified, [3/6/13](#); [Amendment 2, 2/13/13](#))
- **NOTE:** In 2018 Lambeth joined Republicans in using a procedural vote to block Medicaid expansion. H998 A4, motion to appeal ruling of the chair, [6/11/18](#))

**Medicaid provides insurance coverage to the state’s most vulnerable populations.** “Medicaid provides health coverage to the state’s poorest women and children as well as the disabled. Health-care reform called for Medicaid to be expanded to 138 percent of the federal poverty level, but states could choose to opt out of that expansion. North Carolina weighed the impact of the Affordable Care

Act, but decided against expanding the program. Roughly 500,000 low-income people in North Carolina were expected to gain coverage through Medicaid expansion.” (Charlotte Business Journal, [6/3/13](#))

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**Medicaid expansion would have narrowed the health outcomes gap between North Carolinians of color and white North Carolinians.** “Latinos, American Indians, and African Americans in North Carolina report much higher uninsured rates than whites. This translates to worse health outcomes for people of color in the state. The Medicaid expansion will drastically close this gap and ensure access to health services for all people.” (NC Justice Center, [2013](#))

**S4 rejected “federal money for Medicaid expansion in NC to 500,000 individuals and working families.”** “On March 6, 2013 NC Governor Pat McCrory signed into law the bill (SB4) rejecting federal money for Medicaid expansion in NC to 500,000 individuals and working families. In the NC General Assembly the week before, every NC Republican Senator and Representative voted to reject the federal Medicaid expansion while every NC Democratic Senator and Representative voted to accept the federal Medicaid expansion.” (NC Justice Center, [2013](#))

**S4 prevented any department, agency, or institution of North Carolina from attempting to expand the Medicaid eligibility standards unless directed to do so by the General Assembly.** “SECTION 3. The State will not expand the State's Medicaid eligibility under the Medicaid expansion provided in the Affordable Care Act, P.L. 111-148, as amended, for which the enforcement was ruled unconstitutional by the U.S. Supreme Court in National Federation of Independent Business, et al. v. Sebelius, Secretary of Health and Human Services, et al., 132 S. Ct. 2566 (2012). No department, agency, or institution of this State shall attempt to expand the Medicaid eligibility standards provided in S.L. 2011-145, as amended, or elsewhere in State law, unless directed to do so by the General Assembly.” (S4 bill text, [3/6/13](#))

<b>Blocking Medicaid cost anywhere from 455 to 1,145 lives per year and rose the cost of healthcare for employers.</b>
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**Blocking Medicaid expansion cost 455 to 1,145 lives per year and resulted in higher costs for employers.** “Two studies out this month say turning down the federal Medicaid expansion could cost North Carolina the lives of hundreds of low-income uninsured people per year and leave businesses on the hook for tens of millions of dollars annually in tax penalties, beginning in 2015. [An analysis released by tax preparation firm Jackson Hewitt](#) urges policymakers debating Medicaid expansion to include “the very real costs of the shared responsibility tax penalties to employers” in calculating the net costs of expansion to the state... [Another new analysis by health policy experts from Harvard University and City University of New York](#) finds that opting out of Medicaid expansion will cost between 455 and 1,145 lives a year in North Carolina.” (WRAL, [1/31/14](#); S4, ratified, [3/6/13](#))

- **Jackson Hewitt study found failure to expand Medicaid resulted in higher penalties for employers.** “In the 25 states that have opted out of Medicaid expansion, low-income workers between 100 and 138 percent of the poverty level who would have been eligible for free coverage will now have to buy their own insurance. Each of those workers can also claim the tax credit to offset his or her premium, triggering an additional \$2,000 penalty for his or her

employer. Those employers would not have owed a tax penalty if the workers had enrolled in Medicaid.” (WRAL, [1/31/14](#); S4, ratified, [3/6/13](#))

- **Harvard and CUNY study found NC failure to expand Medicaid meant between 455 and 1,145 lives would be lost per year due to preventable causes.** “[Another new analysis by health policy experts from Harvard University and City University of New York](#) finds that opting out of Medicaid expansion will cost between 455 and 1,145 lives a year in North Carolina. The study's authors looked primarily at preventive screenings and chronic disease management in states across the country. Medicaid expansion would extend those services to currently uninsured low-income workers making between 100 and 138 percent of the poverty level a year. The difference in North Carolina, the authors say, is somewhere between 455 and 1,145 preventable deaths per year that might have been avoided by expanding coverage.” (WRAL, [1/31/14](#); S4, ratified, [3/6/13](#))

**In 2018, Lambeth joined Republicans in using a procedural vote to block Medicaid expansion 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](#))

**Lambeth voted for legislation federal judges struck down as unconstitutional voter suppression for targeting African-American voters “with almost surgical precision.”**

**Lambeth voted for a 2013 voter ID bill deemed the worst voter suppression law in the country and later called the “Monster Voting Law.”**

➤ **NOTE:** Lambeth voted for H589, Signed by Gov [8/12/13](#).

**Democracy NC noted that the bill was deemed the worst voter suppression law in the country at the time.** “From Democracy NC: “In August 2013, N.C. lawmakers enacted House Bill 589, deemed the worst voter suppression law in the country. Dubbed the “Monster Voting Law,” H589 was a strict voter ID law requiring certain identification to vote shown to be less frequently held by voters of color, and excluding identification disproportionately held by African-Americans. The law also shortened the state’s popular early voting period by a full week, eliminated same-day registration, prevented out-of-precinct ballots from being counted, and ended a successful pre-registration program for 16- and 17-year olds. All provisions were shown to disproportionately impact voters of color, students, low-income voters, the elderly, people with disabilities, and rural residents.” (Progressive Pulse, [6/7/18](#))

**The bill cut a week of voting and required voters to show certain types of ID.** “Months later, the North Carolina legislature passed a law that cut a week of early voting, eliminated out-of-precinct voting and required voters to show specific types of photo ID — restrictions that election board data demonstrated would disproportionately affect African Americans and other minorities. Critics dubbed it the “monster” law — a sprawling measure that stitched together various voting restrictions being tested in other states. As civil rights groups have sued to block the North Carolina law and others like it around the country, several thousand pages of documents have been produced under court order, revealing the details of how Republicans crafted these measures.” (Washington Post, [9/2/16](#))

**The Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals struck down the 2013 law because it targeted African-American voters with “almost surgical precision.”**

**The appeals court said the 2013 law was intentionally designed to discriminate.** “In its ruling, [the appeals court said](#) the law was intentionally designed to discriminate against black people. North Carolina legislators had requested data on voting patterns by race and, with that data in hand, drafted a law that would “target African-Americans with almost surgical precision,” the court said. The state appealed to the Supreme Court, which [refused to reinstate the law](#) in time for elections.” (NPR, [5/15/17](#))

**Republican lawmakers have been “stung” by court rulings, so they sought other ways of grabbing power for themselves.** “Republicans with a firm grip on the North Carolina legislature — and, until January, the governor’s seat — enacted a conservative agenda in recent years, only to have a steady stream of laws affecting voting and legislative power rejected by the courts. Now lawmakers have seized on a solution: change the makeup of the courts. Judges in state courts as of this year must identify their party affiliation on ballots, making North Carolina the first state in nearly a century to adopt partisan court elections. The General Assembly in Raleigh reduced the size of the state Court of Appeals, depriving Gov. Roy Cooper, a Democrat, of naming replacements for retiring Republicans.” (New York Times, [10/18/17](#))

**The Supreme Court refused to reinstate the voter ID requirement, which allowed people to vote without “expansive restrictions by racist politicians or racist policies.”** “In August, the U.S. Supreme Court refused to reinstate the voter identification requirement or restrict early, in-person voting to 10 days. The decision was a victory for the state NAACP and U.S. Justice Department. It meant voters would not have to show one of several qualifying photo IDs when casting ballots Nov. 8. Also, the early-voting period was increased to 17 days. State NAACP president Rev. William Barber said the

ruling was "another major victory for justice" that allows people to vote without "expansive restrictions by racist politicians or racist policies." (Winston-Salem Journal, 12/29/16)

**The Supreme Court refused to review a lower court decision that struck down HB589, also called the “monster law” that would have disenfranchised thousands of citizens.** “On Monday morning, the country’s most discriminatory voter-suppression law died with a whimper. With no noted dissents, the Supreme Court refused to review a lower court decision striking down North Carolina’s [HB 589](#), the “[monster law](#)” that would have disenfranchised thousands of citizens. The justices’ inaction ensures that HB 589 will stay dead—and that the most emphatic ruling against the Republican assault on minority suffrage will remain on the books.” (Slate, [5/15/17](#))

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