

North Carolina Legislator Profile

Holly Grange: (R-New Hanover) House District 20

Rep. Holly Grange is a rising star in the Republican Party and was quickly made Deputy Conference Leader by her Republican cohorts. Grange's stardom is not surprising, she has been a reliable vote for leadership's agenda since being appointed by McCrory.

Grange is also a reliable vote for laws that benefit out of state corporations. She prioritized tax breaks for corporations over raising teacher pay to the national average. Meanwhile, classroom spending remains below pre-recession levels with teachers spending thousands out of pocket on necessary supplies not covered by state budgets. More than half of those same teachers are forced to work a second job to make ends meet as teacher pay remains nearly \$10,000 below the national average.

Grange's votes aren't just harmful in our classrooms. She voted to dismantle health care coverage for people with pre-existing conditions while North Carolinians face some of the most expensive health care in the nation.

While dismantling health care and cutting funding for public schools, Grange gave Chemours lobbyists pet provisions in the 2018 budget even after chairing the committee tasked with handling the GenX crisis and protecting rivers from future problems. Instead of helping the people of New Hanover county clean up GenX, Grange sided with corporations while people's water bills increased.



Summary

Grange let New Hanover residents pay more for water and failed to clean up GenX, instead giving Chemours lobbyists pet provisions in the 2018 budget.

- *GenX, a chemical compound discharged into the Cape Fear River with unknown health risks, showed high levels in Wilmington after a study by an NC State professor.*
- *Grange voted to cut funding for DEQ just days after news of the GenX spill broke and later voted to tie minimal funding for the crisis to other environmental protection rollbacks.*
- *Grange allowed Chemours lobbyists to write key 2018 budget provisions dealing with GenX and other contaminants.*
- *Rates have gone up for CFPUA customers.*

Grange voted to dismantle coverage for pre-existing conditions through a loophole in a bill.

- *Grange voted for the Senate version of H933 that critics warned would open the door for health insurance that would discriminate against those with pre-existing health conditions, offer skimpy benefits, and come with few or no consumer protections.*
- *North Carolina has the third most expensive health care in the US, according to a 2017 study.*

Grange voted to keep classroom spending below pre-recession levels, instead prioritizing tax breaks for big corporations.

- *The 2017 Republican Budget prioritized tax cuts for corporations over increasing per pupil spending.*
- *North Carolina is ranked 39th in the nation for per pupil spending, 6.7 percent below pre-recession levels.*

Since taking office, Grange voted for Republican budgets that fail to meaningfully raise teacher salaries.

- *Grange voted for a 2018 budget that was crafted behind closed doors and did not meaningfully raise teacher salaries.*
- *Grange voted for the 2017 budget which gave teachers little to no raises; meanwhile, teachers spend an average of \$500 to \$1,000 out of pocket on classroom supplies.*
- *Over half of all North Carolina teachers have a second job; the state ranks 41st in the country for average teacher pay.*
- *The 2017 Republican budget did not include a stipend to aid teachers with out-of-pocket expenses.*

Grange let New Hanover residents pay more for water and failed to clean up GenX, instead giving Chemours lobbyists pet provisions in the 2018 budget.

GenX, a chemical compound discharged into the Cape Fear River with unknown health risks, showed high levels in Wilmington after a study by an NC State professor.

GenX replaced older manufacturing chemicals seen as unsafe but was largely understudied and had no health recommendations. “GenX is the trade name of perfluoro-2-propoxypropanoic acid, used to make Teflon, Gore-Tex, fast food wrappers and other products. It was meant to replace older chemicals also in the “perfluorinated” family used in manufacturing. Although the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has established health advisories for these older chemicals, such as PFOA, which has been known to cause cancer in animal tests, the agency has no such recommendations for the largely unstudied GenX. Despite the focus on GenX since June 2017, the compound has a long history in Wilmington-area water, where it has been discharged for years by the chemical company DuPont – and its spin-off Chemours – out of the Fayetteville Works facility.” (WRAL, [8/17/17](#))

The state began testing for GenX in June 2017 and Chemours stopped dumping the chemical. “State environmental officials began testing locations along the Cape Fear River for concentrations of GenX on June 19, 2017, and have continued to sample the water to track the contaminant. After the chemical company Chemours agreed to stop dumping GenX into the river June 20, concentrations dropped drastically, in most cases below the 140 parts per trillion public health standard set by the Department of Health and Human Services.” (WRAL, [8/31/17](#))

Grange serves as co-chair of the House Special Select Committee on River Water Quality. Reps. Holly Grange and Frank Iler serve as co-chairmen. Members include Reps. Bill Brisson, Jimmy Dixon, Elmer Floyd, Pricey Harrison, Larry D. Hall, Pat McElraft, Chuck McGrady, Bob Muller, Bob Steinburg, Scott Stone, and Larry Yarborough. (NCGA, Retrieved [12/6/17](#))

Grange voted to cut funding for DEQ just days after news of the GenX spill broke and later voted to tie minimal funding for the crisis to other environmental protection rollbacks.

Grange voted for the 2017 budget, which ordered DEQ to cut \$1.8 million over the next two years, “just days” after the GenX spill came to light. “Just days after North Carolina environmental regulators began looking into a potentially hazardous pollutant in one of the state’s biggest rivers, state lawmakers cut their funding. In the new budget they passed June 22, legislators ordered the N.C. Department of Environmental Quality to cut \$1.8 million over the next two years. It was just the latest in a decade of cuts to state regulators. While exact budget comparisons are difficult because of shifting agency responsibilities, money directed to environmental regulation has dropped by millions of dollars over the last decade, even as the state budget has grown significantly. Dozens of environmental protection jobs have disappeared, in specialties ranging from the coast to rivers and air pollution. And a months-long backlog of paperwork mean more companies are able to operate under outdated permits, without recent oversight.” (News & Observer, [9/22/17](#))

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](#))

The bill split \$435K between UNCW and the Cape Fear Public Utility Authority to monitor and study GenX. “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. The bill directs \$185,000 to the Cape Fear Public Utility Authority to monitor drinking water and to try to remove the chemical from the water. Another \$250,000 is earmarked for the University of North Carolina at Wilmington to measure the concentration of the chemical in river sediments and to otherwise study the chemical.” (WRAL, [8/31/17](#); H56, veto overridden, [10/14/17](#))

H56 appropriated just \$435K after DEQ and DHHS requested \$2.6 million to monitor, study, and clean up GenX. “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](#)) .

Grange allowed Chemours lobbyists to write key 2018 budget provisions dealing with GenX and other contaminants.

North Carolina will no longer test drinking water supplies for pharmaceuticals and emerging contaminants. “A lobbying group that includes GenX manufacturer Chemours asked for three changes to legislation targeting the company's chemical emissions, and it got all three during a complex back-and-forth that saw the bill morph significantly between rollout and inclusion in the new state budget. Among the changes: No longer would North Carolina test drinking water supplies for pharmaceuticals and an array of chemicals called emerging contaminants as part of a wide-ranging search for what's in the water. The focus is narrower under legislation about to pass this General Assembly, keying on GenX and related chemicals that have captured most of the public attention since their presence was revealed in Wilmington's drinking water one year ago.” (WRAL, [5/31/18](#); S99, Senate veto override [6/7/18](#), House veto override [6/12/18](#))

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CFPUA customers will see a rise in their water and sewer rates in 2019, GenX was a factor in the hike. "Cape Fear Public Utility Authority customers will see a rise in their water and sewer rates in 2019. The CFPUA board approved the 2019 budget at its meeting Wednesday. That budget includes a 2.16 percent increase in residential customers' yearly combined water and sewer bills, totaling about \$16.44. The budget also includes \$650,000 to deal with GenX and other compounds in the water. According to CFPUA Board Chairman Mike Brown, money for GenX did factor into the water and sewer rate hike. The \$650,000 will go toward legal fees in litigation with Chemours, and testing and sampling costs for GenX. CFPUA has spent almost \$2 million on GenX in the past year." (WECT, [6/13/18](#))

Grange voted to dismantle coverage for pre-existing conditions through a loophole in a bill.

- **NOTE:** H933 passed the House unanimously on 2nd reading on [5/17/18](#), Referred to Senate Rules on [5/21/18](#), Senate amended [6/13/18](#), House failed to concur [6/14/18](#)
- **NOTE:** Grange voted to concur with the Senate's version of H933 that included provisions to allow insurers to avoid providing coverage for people with pre-existing conditions.

The Senate Health Care Committee amended H933 to include insurance provisions. “Senate Republicans unveiled the new portions of House Bill 933 at a committee meeting Thursday morning, potentially clearing surprise provisions aimed purportedly at lowering the threshold for small employers to offer self-funded health plans and, perhaps most importantly, clearing less-regulated association health plans for membership organizations like the [N.C. Farm Bureau](#).” (Progressive Pulse, [6/7/18](#); H933, House failed to concur [6/14/18](#))

The legislation would allow nonprofits to offer “health benefit plans” exempt of state and federal regulation. “Legislation poised for passage in the N.C. Senate would allow nonprofits to offer “health benefit plans” that would be exempt from nearly all state and federal regulations that govern health insurance. Supporters say the measure would allow nonprofits to offer health benefit plans that would be similar to health insurance, but could be cheaper than health insurance purchased on the Affordable Care Act exchange as well as other forms of insurance. But critics worry the legislation would open the door for products that would discriminate against those with pre-existing health conditions, offer skimpy benefits, and come with few or no consumer protections. The plans would be similar to those offered in Tennessee, where premiums on the ACA exchanges have climbed precipitously, in part because of the impact of these unregulated plans.” (North Carolina Health News, [6/14/18](#); H933, House failed to concur [6/14/18](#))

Critics warned that the provisions would open the door for products that would discriminate against those with pre-existing health conditions, offer skimpy benefits, and come with few or no consumer protections. “Legislation poised for passage in the N.C. Senate would allow nonprofits to offer “health benefit plans” that would be exempt from nearly all state and federal regulations that govern health insurance. Supporters say the measure would allow nonprofits to offer health benefit plans that would be similar to health insurance, but could be cheaper than health insurance purchased on the Affordable Care Act exchange as well as other forms of insurance. But critics worry the legislation would open the door for products that would discriminate against those with pre-existing health conditions, offer skimpy benefits, and come with few or no consumer protections. The plans would be similar to those offered in Tennessee, where premiums on the ACA exchanges have climbed precipitously, in part because of the impact of these unregulated plans.” (North Carolina Health News, [6/14/18](#))

North Carolina has the third most expensive health care in the US, according to a 2017 study.

North Carolina ranked 47th across metrics of cost, accessibility, and outcomes in a Wallethub study. (Wallethub, [8/6/18](#))

Blue Cross Blue Shield referenced the study and blamed state government decisions as one reason for the high cost. “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.” (Blue Cross Blue Shield, [8/1/17](#))

Grange voted to keep classroom spending below pre-recession levels, instead prioritizing tax breaks for corporations.

The 2017 Republican Budget prioritized tax cuts for corporations over increasing per pupil spending.

The Republican budget continues the trend of cutting taxes for corporations rather than raising per pupil spending. “This budget will cut individual income tax rates to 5.25 percent from 5.499 percent and the corporate rate to 2.5 percent from 3 percent in the second year, costing the state \$900 million annually when fully implemented. This means that the legislature will eventually have cut \$3.5 billion annually in all its tax cuts –money that could have gone for services. North Carolina, for example, ranks 41st nationally in per pupil spending for public education. Here is a question for lawmakers: Which is most likely hindering industrial recruitment and economic development in small-town North Carolina –high taxes or poor schools?” (News & Observer Editorial, [6/24/17](#), S257, Vetoed [6/27/17](#), Senate Veto Override [6/27/17](#), House Veto Override [6/28/17](#))

In 2016, families spent an average of \$650 on school supplies for elementary-age students and about \$1,000 for middle schoolers—the same as an average monthly mortgage. “This year the supply list for an elementary school student costs about \$650, up from an inflation-adjusted \$375 in 2006, according to the annual Huntington Bank's Backpack Index, which tracks the change in a representative basket of goods over time. A middle-school student might run \$1,000; up from \$525. And sending a fully equipped high-schooler off to class can cost nearly \$1,500 — compared to \$800 just 10 years ago. All together that's an average of about \$1,000 — nearly the same as the average U.S. monthly mortgage payment.” (NBC, 8/31/17)

North Carolina is ranked 39th in the nation for per pupil spending, 6.7 percent below pre-recession levels.

Under the 2017 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)

North Carolina failed to improve in per pupil spending between 2017 and 2018, remaining 39th in the nation and over \$2,400 below the national average. (NEA Rankings & Estimates, 2016-2017; 2017-18)

Since taking office, Grange voted for Republican budgets that fail to meaningfully raise teacher salaries.

Grange voted for a 2018 budget that was crafted behind closed doors and did not meaningfully raise teacher salaries.

- **NOTE:** Grange voted for S99 conference report but was absent for the veto override. (S99 conf report adopted [6/1/18](#), veto overridden [6/12/18](#))

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](#))

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

- **NOTE:** Grange 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 41st in the country for average teacher pay.

According to data 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 41st in the country for average teacher pay according to the National Education 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)

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