

North Carolina Legislator Profile

Rep. Jon Hardister: (R-Guilford)
House District 59

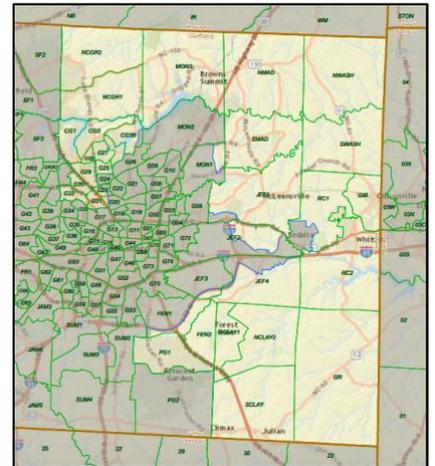
“I would love to double teacher salaries.” -Jon Hardister, before voting for a budget that failed to raise teacher pay but cut taxes for corporations

Jon Hardister, the House Majority Whip and close ally of Speaker Tim Moore, was elected to represent Guilford County in 2012.

Since his election to the General Assembly, Hardister supported Republican budgets that shortchange public education by failing to meaningfully raise teacher salaries or fund classrooms. In 2017, the Republican budget gave no raises to beginning teachers and a 0.6 percent raise to experienced teachers— the equivalent of “just a tank of gas.” He has also supported moves to end tenure while asserting that having an advanced degree “does not necessarily make a teacher more effective.” **Hardister called the 2017 budget “a commitment to public education.”** This “commitment to public education” did not include a stipend to aid teachers with out-of-pocket expenses. After voting to pass the 2013 budget—which similarly failed to adequately fund schools— Hardister said he came to regret his vote after “experiencing firsthand how hard the teachers work.”



Hardister voted to deny affordable insurance to thousands. In 2013, he and the Republicans voted to block a fully-funded Medicaid expansion that covered half a million North Carolinians. Studies said this failure to expand affordable healthcare would cost the state \$15 billion in new economic activity and 455 to 1,145 lives per year. Hardister later said it would be “unwise” to expand Medicaid and that we need to be “cautious about expanding the role of government in healthcare.” **In 2018, Hardister and House Republicans used a loophole on a non-controversial bill to attempt to dismantle coverage for pre-existing conditions.** By adding an amendment to an unrelated school psychologist licensure bill, Republicans tried to pass a statute that would discriminate against those with pre-existing health conditions, offer skimpy benefits, and come with few or no consumer protections.



Hardister likes to harp on redistricting reform as a talking point but chose to repeatedly support unconstitutional districts that suppress voters’ electoral power. He has sponsored three independent redistricting bills, but they all stalled in committee. To avoid “double-bunking” with incumbent Guilford representative John Faircloth, Hardister moved, even though he says he believes the “seats don’t belong to us, they belong to the people.” After both the 2011 and 2017 legislative maps were struck down by the courts, Hardister said he believed the maps were “in compliance with the law.” He also helped draw the 2016 congressional maps that were later thrown out in court. When Sen. Trudy Wade tried to pass a Greensboro City Council redistricting bill, Hardister said he would oppose the bill. **He “caved when it counted,” changing his vote at the last minute.**

Summary

Hardister supported Republican budgets that shortchange teachers by failing to raise teacher salaries to the national average, instead prioritizing tax cuts for corporations

- The 2017 Republican budget gave beginning teachers no raise and only a 0.6 percent raise to experienced teachers, equating to “just a tank of gas”
- Hardister called the 2017 budget a “commitment to public education.”
- This “commitment to education” did not include a stipend to help teachers with out-of-pocket expenses in the classroom.
- At a public forum, Hardister said he would love to “double teacher salaries,” but was ridiculed and heckled.
- After voting to pass the 2013 budget, Hardister saw firsthand how hard the teachers work and said he came to regret his vote.
- Hardister has supported moves that would end teacher tenure and believes advanced degrees should not factor into a teacher’s salary, saying it makes “more sense to pay and retain teachers based on their overall performance, rather than their education background.”

Hardister supports policies that hurt low and middle-income North Carolinians by failing to provide adequate health insurance.

- Hardister voted to block Medicaid expansion, preventing 500,000 eligible citizens from receiving healthcare, saying it would be “unwise.”
- Blocking Medicaid expansion would cost an estimated 455 to 1,145 lives per year and make it more difficult for employers to offer affordable private insurance.
- Hardister also 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.

Hardister likes to use redistricting as a talking point, but voted to support unconstitutional federal, state, and county legislative districts and judicial districts that diminish voters’ electoral power.

- Hardister said the 2011 and 2017 legislative maps that were both partially struck down by the courts were “in compliance with the law.”
- Hardister helped draw 2016 congressional maps that were also struck down by federal judges
- Hardister “caved when it counted” on Greensboro City Council districts, supporting them at the last minute after vocalizing opposition for months.
- Hardister voted for a judicial redistricting bill that redrew Superior Court, District Court, and prosecutorial districts in North Carolina while diminishing voters’ electoral power.

Hardister supported Republican budgets that shortchange teachers by failing to raise teacher salaries to the national average, instead prioritizing tax cuts 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)

The 2017 Republican budget gave beginning teachers no raise and only a 0.6 percent raise to experienced teachers, equating to “just a tank of gas,” Hardister called it a “commitment to public education.”

Starting teacher pay remains at \$35,000 under the Republican budget. “Under the teacher pay plan, teachers with 17 to 24 years of experience would see some of the biggest raises. Starting teacher pay would remain at \$35,000, but teachers at most experience levels would get a raise.” (News & Observer, [7/1/17](#), S257, Vetoed [6/27/17](#), Senate Veto Override [6/27/17](#), House Veto Override [6/28/17](#))

HEADLINE: Big pay raises? N.C. gives teachers just a tank of gas (Charlotte Observer, Op-Ed, [6/21/17](#))

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](#), S257, Vetoes [6/27/17](#), Senate Veto Override [6/27/17](#), House Veto Override [6/28/17](#))

Hardister called the 2017 Republican budget a “fiscally responsible budget” that continues “commitment to support public education, increase teacher pay.” “Meanwhile, initial reaction in the House to the proposed plan followed similar outlines as in the Senate. State Rep. Jon Hardister (R-Greensboro) said Tuesday that the proposal “is a fiscally responsible budget that will continue to move North Carolina in a positive direction. “We are continuing our commitment to support public education, increase teacher pay and fund the core services of government”” (Greensboro News & Record, [6/21/17](#))

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](#))

Hardister was “proud” of the 2016 House budget that used county supplements to increase teacher pay

Hardister was “proud” of the 2016 House budget that increased teacher pay for some, but not for starting teachers. “Rep. Jon Hardister (R-Guilford) agreed. “I’m proud of the budget that we are putting forward in the House,” Hardister said. “It increases compensation for teachers and other state employees while keeping state spending at a responsible level. There is still a long way to go in the process, but I believe we are off to a good start.” Under the House plan, the state’s teachers would get an average pay raise of 4.1 percent, but up to 5 percent for some. That would bring the average state teacher salary up to \$50,000 in the next two years. The raises are not across-the-board. Teachers with fewer than five years of experience would see no raise this year while those with 25 years of experience or more would see a 2 percent raise. Teachers with 20 to 24 years of experience would see a 3.2 percent raise; those with 15 to 19 years would see a 3.4 percent raise; and those with five to nine years would see a 4.1 percent raise. The largest raise - 5 percent - would go to teachers with 10 to 14 years experience.” (Greensboro News & Record, [5/19/16](#))

Hardister was laughed at during a forum in reaction to his claims that the General Assembly increased funding for public schools, said he would “love to double teacher salaries.”

Hardister was laughed at and talked over during a forum in reaction to his claims that the NCGA increased funding for public schools. “At several points during the forum, members of the audience laughed at Hardister, talked over him or shouted out rebuttals to his arguments. Most were in reaction to his claim that the General Assembly has dramatically increased funding for public schools in the last few years. While that is true in raw dollars, the General Assembly's allocation for public education has not kept pace with increasing costs due to swelling student populations and inflation.” (Greensboro News & Record, 10/1/14)

- **When asked about teacher pay, Hardister applauded the legislature’s 7 percent pay increase for teachers.** “North Carolina is 46th in teacher pay. What's the best way for North Carolina to improve teacher pay?: The legislature recently enacted an average 7 percent pay increase for teachers. This is the largest teacher pay increase in almost 10 years. This moves North Carolina from 46th to approximately 32nd in teacher pay, which is a positive step in the right direction.” (Greensboro News & Record, 9/17/14)

Hardister: “I would love to double teacher salaries.” “‘I realize some teachers only got a small percent and that's the ones that have been their 20-30 years,’ said panel member and NC Representative Jon Hardister. ‘The teachers who got the largest pay increase are the ones 0-12 year. I would love to double teacher salaries.’ Hardister told the audience he did not support a county tax increase pointing out Guilford County taxes are already higher than Mecklenburg and Wake County.” (Greensboro News & Record, 10/1/14)

Hardister said he regretted his vote for the 2013 state budget because of its cuts to education and failure to raise teacher pay.

In 2014 Hardister said he regretted his vote for the 2013 state budget because of its cuts to schools, lack of raise for teachers. “State Rep. Jon Hardister says that he has come to regret the vote he cast for the state budget last year because of the cuts it made to public schools and the lack of a salary increase for teachers. Hardister, a Republican from Guilford County, told an audience at an education forum in Chapel Hill last week that he had second thoughts about his vote after “listening to parents and visiting classrooms and experiencing firsthand how hard the teachers work.” Putting aside the question of why Hardister didn't already realize how hard educators were working, his acknowledgment of his mistake illustrates the dilemma that Republican legislative leaders face in this summer's General Assembly session that begins in two weeks.” (Laurinburg Exchange, Editorial, 5/2/14)

- **Hardister experienced firsthand “how hard the teachers work” and came to regret his budget vote.** “State Rep. Jon Hardister says that he has come to regret the vote he cast for the state budget last year because of the cuts it made to public schools and the lack of a salary increase for teachers. Hardister, a Republican from Guilford County, told an audience at an education forum in Chapel Hill last week that he had second thoughts about his vote after “listening to parents and visiting classrooms and experiencing firsthand how hard the teachers work.” Putting aside the question of why Hardister didn't already realize how hard educators were working, his acknowledgment of his mistake illustrates the dilemma that Republican legislative leaders face in this summer's General Assembly session that begins in two weeks.” (Laurinburg Exchange, Editorial, 5/2/14)

Hardister supported moves that degraded the teaching profession, ended teacher tenure, and said having an advanced degree “does not necessarily make a teacher more effective.”

Hardister supported ending teacher tenure, but thought teachers who were already invested should be grandfathered in. “Legislators aren't backing down on eliminating teacher tenure, but they are rethinking a key requirement of the law -- awarding new contracts and bonuses to teachers who give up the extra job protection. For now, state law gives school leaders until June 30 to choose 25 percent of eligible teachers to offer new four-year contracts and compounding bonuses in exchange for their tenure. The state is eliminating tenure for all teachers by 2018. [...] Rep. Jon Hardister, R-Guilford, supports that but said he wants to grandfather-in vested teachers. "I think the state should honor that commitment," he said. Hardister said he doesn't think the law should tie teacher bonuses to the new contracts.” (Greensboro News & Record, 3/19/14)

Hardister said that having an advanced degree “does not necessarily make a teacher more effective,” so it would be better to pay and retain teachers based on performance, not background. “Recent policy decisions affecting public education have included a discussion on the impact of advanced degrees on classroom teaching. For example, in the days following the state budget being signed into law, state Rep. Jon Hardister, R-Guilford, included the following statement on his website: "The fact of the matter is that having a master's degree does not necessarily make a teacher more effective. Therefore, it would make more sense to pay and retain teachers based on their overall performance, rather than their education background.”” (Greensboro News & Record, Editorial, 9/15/13)

Hardister’s statement also claimed employers would find it more logical to pay employees based on performance on the job over their degrees. “Hardister went on to say: "For example, let's say you own and operate a business. Would you find it logical to pay your employees based on the types of degrees they have, or would you find it more logical to assess your employees based on their performance on the job? I would submit that it would make better sense to assess and compensate employees based on their ability to meet the bottom line and get the job done.”” (Greensboro News & Record, Editorial, 9/15/13)

Hardister supports policies that hurt low and middle-income North Carolinians by failing to provide adequate health insurance.

Hardister 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:** Hardister 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](#))

Hardister voted to block Medicaid expansion, preventing 500,000 eligible citizens from receiving healthcare, saying it would be “unwise.”

➤ **NOTE:** *Hardister voted for S4 (S4, ratified, [3/6/13](#))*

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](#))

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](#))

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](#))

Hardister said NC should not expand Medicaid, be “cautious” about the role of government in healthcare.

“Should North Carolina expand Medicaid coverage? Why or why not?: Not at this time. We need to continue the work that has been done to improve the efficiency of our Medicaid system. We should also be cautious about expanding the role of government in health care.” (Greensboro News & Record, 10/2/16)

Hardister said it would be unwise to expand Medicaid.

“Should North Carolina expand Medicaid coverage? Why or why not?: It would be unwise to expand bureaucracy and put our taxpayers at risk of exorbitant costs. Instead, we should work to make our current Medicaid system as efficient and cost-effective as possible. (Greensboro News & Record, 9/17/14)

Hardister likes to use redistricting as a talking point, but voted to support unconstitutional federal, state, and county legislative districts and judicial districts that diminish voters' electoral power.

Hardister has sponsored three independent redistricting bills during his time in the General Assembly, but all have stalled in committee, which does not seem to have upset him.

Hardister on independent redistricting: "I've thought this was the right thing to do for a long time." "State Rep. Jon Hardister of Greensboro joined a bipartisan group of legislators Tuesday afternoon in touting their new redistricting bill that they acknowledged would not end all problems with the highly political process. But they said in a Raleigh press conference Tuesday afternoon that it would make things a lot better. 'I think this is the right thing to do,' Hardister said. 'I've thought it was the right thing to do for a long time.' The three-term Republican legislator from Greensboro, lead sponsor state Rep. Chuck McGrady (R-Hendersonville) and several colleagues introduced the proposal for a 'Nonpartisan Redistricting Commission' to supervise legislative staff as they design new districts for the state's 13 congressional districts as well as those for both houses of the General Assembly." (Greensboro News & Record, 3/1/17)

Hardister's 2015 nonpartisan redistricting bill did not make the crossover deadline, he said "I don't expect the bill to go anywhere." "This bill was rolled out with much fanfare in February, with Democrats and Republicans, liberals and conservatives signing on their support. It has 63 sponsors -- a plurality of House members. But it didn't even get a hearing. 'I don't expect the bill to go anywhere,' said Hardister, a primary sponsor. 'There is obviously disagreement within the Republican Party related to redistricting reform. The reality is the effort remains where it has been for decades.'" (Greensboro News & Record, 5/3/15)

Hardister, who moved because 2017 maps "double-bunked" him with another incumbent Republican, said "the seats don't belong to us, they belong to the people."

Hardister: "the seats don't belong to us, they belong to the people." "He says he's willing to avoid double-bunking incumbents, but I see no reason that should be part of the equation. Rep. Jon Hardister, R-Guilford, said it best when I asked him about the maps that pair him with an incumbent Democrat. "I would prefer for us to not have to run against each other," he told me. "But the seats don't belong to us, they belong to the people, and we have to respect the process.'" (Salisbury Post, Editorial, 9/20/17)

Hardister said he would move to the new district 59 to avoid being double-bunked with Faircloth. "Meanwhile, though jettisoning parts of northern Greensboro, the new District 59 still would retain much of eastern Guilford that Hardister already represents. New District 59 would replace the current one's Greensboro precincts with Pleasant Garden and other parts of southern Guilford. 'I would say that about two-thirds of my current constituents would be in the new District 59,' Hardister said. No current member of the state House lives in proposed District 59, so Hardister would not threaten any other House incumbents. Hardister added that he also can make a move relatively quickly with his background in real estate. He works in marketing and real estate investing as vice president for marketing at First Carolina Mortgage, a family-owned venture. Faircloth, 78, has represented District 61 for four terms. He is High Point's former police chief and later served on the City Council, including a stint as mayor pro tem. Faircloth said the proposed District 61 keeps more areas that he has represented over the years, just as the new District 59 does for Hardister." (Greensboro News & Record, 8/30/17)

- **Hardister: "I'm young, single" so moving would be easy.** "Faircloth represents the current District 61 and plans to run for re-election in 2018. 'Moving for me is not a problem. It eliminates the conflict with Rep. Faircloth, and we both wanted to run again,' Hardister said Tuesday. 'I'm

young, single and have no children, so moving really isn't a problem.' Hardister, 34, is in his third term representing current House District 59, but the Forest Valley area where he now lives would become part of District 61 under the new GOP-crafted redesign." (Greensboro News & Record, 8/30/17)

Hardister said the 2011 and 2017 legislative maps that were both partially struck down by the courts were "in compliance with the law." He helped draw 2016 congressional maps that were also struck down by federal judges.

Hardister defended the 2011 maps as "fair and reasonable." "Some Republicans both defend the 2011 maps and acknowledge that there has to be a better way of divvying up the political landscape to avoid costly courthouse donnybrooks. "I believe the current maps are fair and reasonable. But having said that, I am a supporter of redistricting reform and have been for a long time," said state Rep. Jon Hardister (R-Greensboro), an appointee to the new redistricting committee. "It's typical for redistricting to get caught up in court. It's happened many times." Hardister said that some type of independent commission might "result in less litigation, which is good because it would save the taxpayer money." Hardister has bipartisan support for that concept from a former state senator, Don Vaughan, the Greensboro Democrat who is a plaintiff in another lawsuit against the 2011 redistricting only now moving from state court into federal litigation." (Greensboro News & Record, 2/14/16)

Hardister said he was "confident" the 2011 legislative districts are "in compliance with the law." "State Rep. Jon Hardister (R-Guilford) said he doubts the Supreme Court ordering a review of the 2011 redistricting will make much difference. But he said he would like to see the partisanship taken out of re-districting entirely. 'The current legislative and congressional districts are in compliance with the law,' he said last week. 'I am confident that they will continue to be upheld within our court system. Having said that, I would contend that there is a better way to draw these districts, which is why I support redistricting reform.' Hardister is a primary sponsor of House Bill 92, which would turn the process of redistricting over to nonpartisan legislative staff members starting in 2020." (Greensboro News & Record, 4/26/15)

Hardister said the 2016 Congressional maps "are solid," blamed Democrats for 12th District gerrymander "ridiculed" "across the country." "State Rep. Jon Hardister (R-Guilford) disagreed. "I think the maps are solid," Hardister said. "It was a fast and difficult process, but I think we did the best we could under the circumstances. (We) adopted criteria. We discussed it, we debated it, we voted on it. And I think the maps we have now look a lot better than what we had." Hardister points to the 12th District, which under the old map snaked along the Interstate 85 corridor between Charlotte and Greensboro in a manner some called a brazen example of political gerrymandering by North Carolina Democrats. "That district has been ridiculed not just in North Carolina but across the country," Hardister said." (Greensboro News & Record, 2/19/16)

- **Hardister helped draw the 2016 NC Congressional maps.** "The new districts only split 13 counties, not 36 as the previous districts did, said state Rep. Jon Hardister (R-Greensboro). Republican members of the redistricting committee, which includes Hardister, presented a proposed map Wednesday that the committee approved along party lines. 'The 12th Congressional District, which has been described as 'serpentine,' is gone,' he said." (Greensboro News & Record, 2/17/16)

Hardister "caved when it counted" on Greensboro City Council districts, supporting them at the last minute after vocalizing opposition for months. The districts were later thrown out by a federal judge.

After strongly opposing Sen Trudy Wade's Greensboro City Council redistricting bill unless it included a referendum, Hardister changed his vote at the last minute, providing cover for others

to shift their vote. "State Rep. Jon Hardister (R-Greensboro) also could claim to have opposed Greensboro redistricting, because he voted both for and against versions of the bill at different times. But it was his vote for House Bill 263 - a bill for Trinity redistricting that was amended to include a plan for Greensboro redistricting - that turned the tide after it emerged from a joint House-Senate committee. Since Hardister had lobbied many of his fellow legislators to vote against the bill, his shift in support allowed them to shift as well. Hardister's support gave legislators eager to curry favor with powerful supporters of the bill cover to switch sides and overcome the opposition. Once enough representatives had switched sides to support the bill, Hardister cast his final vote against the bill when it no longer made a difference. But he still can say he voted against the bill." (Greensboro News & Record, 7/19/15)

Hardister reversed the position he held on the bill for months, only to change it when the bill failed. "The reconstructed HB 263 passed Thursday largely because state Rep. Jon Hardister (R-Greensboro) turned his back on his constituents. After saying flatly for months that he wouldn't support the bill without a referendum, he reversed his position to support the bill, taking many other votes with him. When this bill failed, 53-50, the Republican leadership called a recess to strong-arm more votes, providing a large enough margin of supporters that allowed Hardister to vote against the bill when it was meaningless to do so. Let's be clear about this: Hardister said he wouldn't support the bill without a voter referendum, and he broke his word. He supported HB 263 when it mattered the most and only switched his vote when it wouldn't change the outcome. Hardister said he switched his vote the final time because he felt the process was moving too fast. The time to do that would have been the first vote of the day, because the rest of the House had been given less than 24 hours to review the new eight-district map and other provisions of the bill." (Greensboro News & Record, Editorial, 7/8/15)

In 2017 a federal judge permanently blocked Greensboro City Council Districts drawn by the NCGA in 2015. "U.S. District Judge Catherine Eagles blocked permanently the enforcement of a 2015 law approved by the General Assembly that directed how council members in North Carolina's third-largest city would be elected and laid out new district lines. Some local citizens sued, and the city later joined in the lawsuit to challenge another provision preventing changes to Greensboro city government through local referenda." (AP, [4/3/17](#))

Hardister voted for H717 that redrew the Superior Court, District Court, and prosecutorial districts in the state.

House Republicans undertook state judicial redistricting without a mandate. "Unlike a federal court's mandate to approve House and Senate districts before a Sept. 1 deadline, Republicans in the chamber aren't being forced to perform redistricting on the boundaries for Superior Court and District Court judgeships and for district attorneys. In fact, a judicial expert from the UNC School of Government told representatives at the first meeting of the House judicial redistricting committee that wholesale changes to judicial maps haven't been completed since the advent of the state's modern court system in 1955. (Associated Press, 9/12/17, *Ref to Com On Rules and Operations of the Senate* [10/9/17](#))

Rep. Justin Burr, the sponsor of the Bill, cited the need to correct uneven district representation and voter disfranchisement. "All of the judicial branch witnesses — and some Democrat members of the committee — implored Burr to slow the process, engage all of the stakeholders, and conduct a meticulous review, even if that means pushing a vote on a reform bill into the next legislative session. "This is serious business. This is even more important than drawing our [legislative] district lines," said Rep. Rodney Moore, D-Mecklenburg. Burr was unswayed. He cited a pressing need to modernize and clean up judicial districts. Many have serious disparities, which were created by incremental changes in the 60 years since they were last drawn." (Carolina Journal, [9/20/17](#), *Ref to Com On Rules and Operations of the Senate* [10/9/17](#))

Burr stated that the General Assembly redrew district maps “for the benefit of the people of this state.” “If the separation-of-powers undertones in the judicial redistricting process weren’t already obvious, state Rep. Justin Burr, R-Stanly, left no doubt Tuesday. The General Assembly is exercising its authority to redraw district and Superior Court maps “not for the benefit of lawyers, but for the benefit of the people of this state,” Burr said after presiding over a meeting of the House Select Committee on Redistricting he chairs. Several lawyers and judges agreed during the 2 ½ meeting it’s a good idea to update and reconfigure the judicial districts. (Carolina Journal, [9/20/17](#), *Ref to Com On Rules and Operations of the Senate* [10/9/17](#))

H717 divided urban districts like Guilford into smaller districts to diminish voters’ electoral power; Hardister thought they were created in a “fair, open” process.

H717 contains major changes to urban districts. “Most of the counties in the district and superior court maps are whole districts but urban counties are split into multiple districts. “Wake, Durham, Guilford, Forsyth and Buncombe counties would no longer vote county-wide in district court judicial elections.” (Progressive Pulse, [9/29/17](#), *Ref to Com On Rules and Operations of the Senate* [10/9/17](#))

H717 divides larger urban counties into smaller districts. They divide many of the larger urban areas such as Mecklenburg, Wake, Guilford, Forsyth and Buncombe counties into districts where judicial candidates no longer will run in countywide races. Burr’s maps would cut the number of judicial divisions from eight to five and put some judges in the position of having to travel more and farther outside their home county — distances that might necessitate overnight stays. (News & Observer, [9/29/17](#), *Ref to Com On Rules and Operations of the Senate* [10/9/17](#))

Hardister told a Fair Courts town hall via letter that he supported changes to judicial districts, said the process had been “open, transparent, and deliberative.” “None of the Republican lawmakers who represent parts of Guilford County attended or signed a pledge “to oppose partisan attacks on the judicial system,” so event backers reserved empty chairs for them – state Reps. John Blust of Greensboro, John Faircloth of High Point and Jon Hardister of Whitsett, and state Sen. Trudy Wade of Greensboro, and Senate Leader Phil Berger of Eden. Hardister sent the groups a page-and-a-half explanation of his support for court changes, including the redistricting plan that he said would fix Guilford's problem with Superior Court districts that have wildly varying population levels. Guilford also would get a much needed additional district judge, he said. “Given the fact that Guilford County's judicial districts have not been updated in 16 years, it is time to take action,” Hardister said. “This process has been open, transparent and deliberative. It is unproductive to assume that these efforts are being driven by partisan politics.”” (Greensboro News & Record, 12/1/17)

- **Hardister proposed changes to Guilford County in the Judicial Redistricting plan.** “Last week, Republican Rep. Jon Hardister of Greensboro announced a proposal to split Guilford County into five District Court portions, increase the allotment of judges to 15, and elect three judges from each district. This would make running for election easier, relieve voters of the confusion of facing so many candidates, increase competition and improve accountability, he contended.” (Greensboro News & Record, 9/27/17)

H717 reflected increasing focus on the courts by the NCGA; Hardister also voted to make elections partisan and eliminate judicial seats.

H717 follows a Republican-led effort to make judicial elections partisan. Republican lawmakers who’ve tried to move the state sharply to the political right have seen the state and federal courts strike down key provisions of their agenda. This year, the lawmakers made all judicial elections, from the district courts that handle traffic infractions and family-court matters, to the state’s highest court, partisan again. They were nonpartisan from the 1990s until this year when the Republican-led General Assembly changed the law, saying that a judge’s party affiliation was information that would help voters

make a more informed decision on their ballot. Critics said the change would unduly politicize courts that were established to be checks and balances on the legislative branch." (News & Observer, [9/12/17](#), *Ref to Com On Rules and Operations of the Senate* [10/9/17](#))

Hardister voted to make District and Superior Court judicial races partisan. "John's words were not heeded by the majority. Voting largely along party lines, the House approved the bill by a 65-51 margin. A handful of Republicans, including Rep. John Faircloth of High Point, joined nearly all Democrats in voting no. Even many Republicans in Democratic counties, such as Reps. John Blust and Jon Hardister of Greensboro, voted yes. In doing so, they would make it hard for a Republican to ever be elected to the bench in Guilford County, which votes reliably Democratic." (Greensboro News & Record, 2/24/17)

Hardister voted in favor of retention elections in NC Supreme Court and Court of Appeals races. "The bill would allow an elected Supreme Court justice seeking another term to stand for a retention election if he or she chooses. [...] Court elections are troubling. Judges should be impartial, nonpartisan arbiters of legal disputes, not politicians. Elections force them to raise money, run TV ads and campaign at events attended by candidates for the legislature, or sheriff or governor. Voters want to know how they feel about gun control or the death penalty or abortion -- but they can't say because an answer would prejudice their judgment in a case that might come before them. Everyone who appears in court deserves to have her case heard by an open-minded judge. The North Carolina Bar Association supports the change to retention elections, its president, Raleigh attorney Catharine Arrowood, said Monday. Although the bill doesn't offer a comprehensive reform, it would let voters experience retention elections and promote statewide dialogue about possible further changes. The House bill covered the seven-member Supreme Court and the 15-judge Court of Appeals. The Senate removed the Court of Appeals. It's not certain the House will accept that deletion. It approved the bill by a narrow margin in the first place, with Republicans and Democrats on both sides of the question. Guilford House members John Blust, Pricey Harrison and Jon Hardister voted yes; John Faircloth, Ralph Johnson and Cecil Brockman voted no." (Greensboro News & Record, Editorial, 6/3/15)

###