



INTRODUCTION

The legislature continued its slow start with no committee hearings, only a few bills being introduced, and no action taken yet on any legislation. Despite the lack of legislative progress, the Senate did announce its confirmation process for Gov. Cooper's cabinet appointees.

Cabinet Confirmation Process

As a result of legislation passed during one of last year's special legislative sessions, the Senate has developed a confirmation process for the Governor's cabinet appointments. The process has three rounds. The appointees will first go to the policy committee for their content area (i.e. the Secretary of Health and Human Services will have a hearing with the Senate Health Care Committee). Then, the appointee will get a hearing in the Senate Nominations Committee, and finally a vote by the entire Senate.

The chairs of the Senate Nominations Committee, Senators Rabon and Tucker, have stated that the purpose of the hearings are to ensure there are no conflicts of interest, that the appointee is qualified, and that the he or she will follow the law.

Despite the new confirmation process, all of the Governor's cabinet members have already taken their oaths of office and begun working, and the Governor has filed a lawsuit to block the confirmation process claiming that it is unconstitutional.

If the confirmation process moves forward as planned, this will be the schedule:

- 2/8: Secretary Larry Hall, Department of Military and Veterans Affairs - Military and Veterans Affairs Committee;
- 2/14: Secretary Machel Sanders, Department of Administration - State and Local Government Committee;
- 2/16: Secretary Susi Hamilton, Department Natural and Cultural Resources - Agriculture, Environment and Natural Resources Committee;
- 2/21: Secretary Erik Hooks; Department of Public Safety - Senate Judiciary Committee;
- 2/23: Secretary Tony Copeland, Department of Commerce - Commerce and Insurance Committee;
- 3/1: Secretary Jim Trogdon, Department of Transportation - Transportation Committee;
- 3/8: Secretary Michael Regan, Department of Environmental Quality - Agriculture, Environment and Natural Resources Committee; and
- 3/16: Secretary Mandy Cohen, Department of Health and Human Services - Health Care Committee



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BILLS OF INTEREST

HOUSE BILL 27, Clarify Expiration of Vehicle Registration, would amend the statute which sets out the expiration of a vehicle's registration by means other than the expiration of the registration renewal sticker, to provide that the registration of a vehicle renewed by a new registration plate is valid through midnight February 15 of each year (current law provides that such registration expires at midnight on February 15 of each year). **Introduced by Representatives Clappitt, Grange, Strickland and White and referred to the House Committee on Transportation.**

HOUSE BILL 29, Record of Excusals From Jury Duty, would require the name and address of each person who requests to be excused from jury duty on the basis that he or she is not qualified to serve as a juror, along with the reason for that request, to be retained by the clerk of superior court for not less than two years from the date of excusal. The records retained by the clerk would not be a public record. If a person is excused from jury duty for any reason relating to qualifications under G.S. 163-55, the record of his or her name, address, reason for excusal, and the date of excusal would be a public record and provided by the clerk of superior court to the State Board of Elections. **Introduced by Representative Cleveland and referred to the House Judiciary III Committee.**

HOUSE BILL 35, Protect North Carolina Workers Act, would amend the definition of the term "employee" for purposes of the Verification of Work Authorization(E-Verify) statutes to: (1) remove the provision that excluded an individual whose term of employment is less than nine months in a calendar year; and (2) exclude a farm worker, an independent contractor, or an individual who provides domestic service in a private home that is sporadic, irregular, or intermittent. The bill also would increase the number of employers who are required to participate in the federal E-Verify program by decreasing from 25 to 5 the number of employees that a person, business entity, or other organization that transacts business in this State must employ for participation. **Introduced by Representatives Cleveland, Millis, Conrad, and Destin Hall and referred to the House Commerce and Job Development Committee.**

SENATE BILL 25, Repeal HB2, would:

- repeal Session Law 2016-3, Public Facilities Privacy and Security Act, otherwise referred to as House Bill 2 (also referred to as the Bathroom Bill); and
- provide that any local ordinance, resolution, regulation or policy enacted prior to March 23 2016 is not impacted and remains valid.

Introduced by Senators J. Jackson, Bryant and McKissick and referred to the Senate Committee on Rules and Operations.

SENATE BILL 27, \$5 Vehicle Tax for Greene Co. Economic Dev, would:

- allow Greene County to levy a tax of no more than five dollars per year upon any vehicle in the county; and
- provide that the proceeds of any such tax may only be used for economic development purposes.

Introduced by Senator D. Davis and referred to the Senate Committee on Finance.

SENATE BILL 28, Electronic Pawn & Metals Database, would:

- require the Office of Information Technology Services to contract with a third party to develop an electronic database to house information reported by pawnbrokers, currency converters, precious metal dealers and secondary metals recyclers;

- stipulate that the database must be accessible to law enforcement officers and agencies through the internet but is not a public record;
- provide that pawnbrokers, currency converters, precious metal dealers and secondary metal recyclers must enter every purchase or transaction into the database within 12 hours; and
- provide that no new information is required to be inputted into the database if the database is offline or inaccessible or if an entity lacks the technology needed to access the database.

Introduced by Senator Randleman and referred to the Senate Committee on Commerce and Insurance.

SENATE BILL 29, ALJ Review of DPS Civil Penalties, would:

- amend the statute which stipulates the civil penalties appeal process as assessed by the Department of Public Safety to provide that a person may contest liability for a penalty by filing a contested case with the Administrative Office of the Courts and seek judicial review (currently any appeal of a civil penalty is appealed to the Department); and
- provide conforming changes concerning penalties for failure to comply with vehicle registration or insurance requirements; and
- repeal the statute which exempted the Department of Public Safety from complying with contested case provisions for authorized hearings and appeals.

Introduced by Senator Randleman and referred to the Senate Committee on Rules and Operations.

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