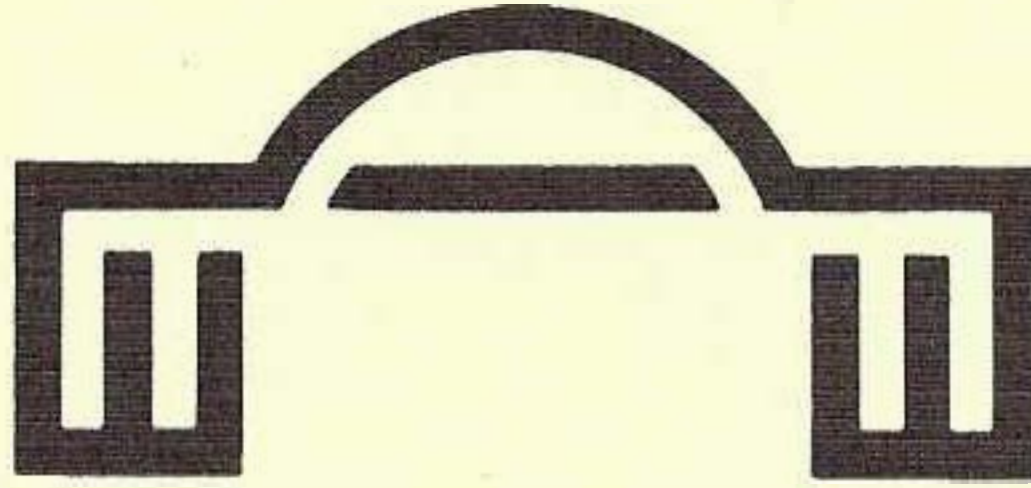




NORTH CAROLINA CENTER FOR
PUBLIC POLICY RESEARCH INC.

NEWS RELEASE

For Release: Thursday, June 5, 1986

N.C. CENTER RECOMMENDS ABOLITION OF 62 BOARDS, COMMISSIONS, AND COUNCILS

The N.C. General Assembly should abolish more than five dozen state boards, commissions, and councils because they duplicate other boards, perform useless work, or never meet, says the N.C. Center for Public Policy Research in the latest issue of its quarterly magazine, North Carolina Insight.

These boards are targeted for elimination in Senate Bill (SB) 726, which is pending before the state House when the legislature convenes today. The Senate approved the bill during the 1985 session, but the House held the bill over for consideration in the current short session. The legislature passed legislation in 1985 abolishing 5 boards but also created 12 new groups in that same session.

"More than half of these boards duplicate the work of other, existing boards," says Center director Ran Coble. "Thus, they are about as useful as silk spats on a wart hog -- and a lot more costly to the taxpayers."

The bill recommends abolishing 67 boards and commissions, but the N.C. Center, which has conducted an extensive, three-year study of the 320 boards in the executive branch, says that only 62 of them ought to be eliminated. State Sen. Anthony Rand (D-Cumberland), the bill sponsor, predicts a savings of \$2 million if SB 726 is passed.

The Center says executive branch boards normally enhance citizen participation in state government, but when the number of boards balloons to more than 300, their overall effectiveness is hampered. "There are too many inactive or ineffective boards, growing like kudzu over the process of state government," says Coble. "Eventually, this kudzu-like growth chokes off effective citizen participation in government policy-making and shuts out sunlight into the governmental process," he added.

The Insight article, written by Jim Bryan, principal author of the Center's 1985 book-length report on state boards, identifies four types of boards that ought to be abolished:

- boards that have met infrequently and are inactive;
- boards that duplicate the functions of other boards;
- boards that have a local and not a statewide emphasis;
- and boards that are unnecessary for the effective functioning of state programs and agencies.

Among the inactive boards the Center is recommending for abolition are, for example, the Art Museum Building Commission and the Wanchese Harbor Citizens

Advisory Council. Among the boards that duplicate other boards' functions are the Archaeological Advisory Committee and the Governor's Council on Physical Fitness and Health. Among the boards with a local instead of a statewide function proposed for abolition are the Lake Phelps Advisory Committee and the Executive Mansion Fine Arts Committee. Among those where a citizen advisory body is not considered necessary for the effective functioning of a state program are the Agricultural Hall of Fame Board of Directors and the Commission of Anatomy.

House Speaker Liston Ramsey (D-Madison) is a supporter of proposals for getting rid of excess state boards and commissions. He says in the article that the process ought to be a matter of simply "getting rid of a bunch of dead wood." But some of the boards have constituencies, and cries of protest last year slowed down action on SB 726 in the House. In the article, House Judiciary IV Chairman Paul Pulley (D-Durham) says he has promised "to give the bill a fair hearing," and House Minority Leader Betsy Cochrane (R-Davie) says the bill "is a bipartisan effort."

In the article, Speaker Ramsey says there are two tasks legislators ought to consider when they tackle Senate Bill 726. "First we ought to abolish unnecessary boards. Second, we ought to put a ceiling on the number," says Ramsey. Since 1969, the number of boards has grown from 160 to 320.

The Center's recommendations are similar to Ramsey's. The Center specifically recommends that:

- the 1986 legislature abolish 62 of the 67 boards in Senate Bill 726;
- the 1986 legislature consider amending Senate Bill 726 to create a mechanism like a statutory ceiling on the total number of boards in order to better control the growth of executive branch boards;
- the legislature amend current state law to require that any executive order creating a board be valid for no more than two years; and
- the legislature amend Senate Bill 726 to require better reporting by executive agencies of the costs of boards and commissions, including the time state employees spent staffing all 320 boards.

The North Carolina Center for Public Policy Research is an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit corporation created to examine state government policies and practices. The Center is supported in part by grants from the Z. Smith Reynolds and Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundations, both in Winston-Salem. Other funding comes from 87 corporate contributors and 600 individual and organizational members. In addition to publishing a quarterly magazine called North Carolina Insight, the Center also issues research reports. Past studies have been published on teacher certification, regulation of credit insurance, and research on the actual number of new jobs in N.C. vs. Department of Commerce announcements. The Center also recently released evaluations of the effectiveness of all 170 members of the N.C. General Assembly, as ranked by the legislators themselves, registered lobbyists, and capital news media.

For more information on boards, commissions and councils in the executive branch, call Jim Bryan, author of the article, or Ran Coble, executive director of the N.C. Center, at 832-2839. Copies of North Carolina Insight magazine (Volume 9, No. 1) containing the article on boards and commissions are available from the Center for \$6.00, plus \$1.00 postage if mailed. Copies of the Center's 1985 report on Boards, Commissions, and Councils in the Executive Branch of N.C. State Government are available for \$15.00 plus \$2.00 postage if mailed. Write the N.C. Center, P.O. Box 430, Raleigh, NC 27602.