



FROM THE CENTER OUT

August-September 1988

THE CENTER LOOKS AT POVERTY IN NORTH CAROLINA

The next theme issue of North Carolina Insight magazine, scheduled for release in January (you'll get a general issue within the next month!) will examine poverty in North Carolina. Special research attention will be given to workfare and other job training programs to determine whether these programs do a good job of training poor people for long-term employment. Another article in the magazine will look at the demographics of poverty in North Carolina. This article will examine whether poverty is the destiny of North Carolina's eastern and western thirds, where wages are low and economic development tends to lag behind the Piedmont. The Center's research will also focus on which state agencies have responsibility for policymaking in the poverty arena. Associate Editor Mike McLaughlin will ask some of North Carolina's poor to talk about their plight and how they would change government programs to provide for their immediate needs and to help lift them out of poverty.

"Few people realize that many of North Carolina's poor are working. Nearly 100 programs have been created to help those in poverty, but fewer than half of them are designed to lift the poor out of poverty," says Jack Betts, Editor of Insight.

Before the actual research began, the Center sent out 229 surveys to state officials, county social service directors, legislators, academicians, and to the 38 members of our Board of Directors. Survey participants were asked what should be included in the theme issue on poverty. The Center received 120 responses and developed a well-rounded prospectus of eight research articles, in addition to the usual feature columns.

In late January, the Center will again join with the University of North Carolina Center for Public Television to produce a one-hour television special based on the Center's research on poverty. The TV program -- the third in a continuing series -- is tentatively scheduled to air at 8 p.m. on January 25th, so mark your calendar now.

WE URGE YOU TO PARTICIPATE IN THE BOARD NOMINATION PROCESS

One of the benefits of membership in the Center is the opportunity to nominate persons who would make good additions to our governing Board of Directors. So once again, we ask you to submit names of persons who would be willing to work hard, attend quarterly meetings, and assist us with fundraising. The Center's Board is responsible for the overall policy and direction of the Center's work and also suggests ideas for topics to be examined in Insight and in research reports. Depending upon their backgrounds and areas of expertise, Board members are also asked to review drafts of articles and major reports for accuracy and clarity. The Board is balanced by race, sex, geographic location in North Carolina, and political party affiliation. If you would like to be considered, or if you want to nominate individuals who fit these qualifications and would be willing to serve a three-year term, please submit the name(s) and background information to the Nominating Committee Chair, c/o N.C. Center for Public Policy Research, P.O. Box 430, Raleigh, NC 27602. Nominations must be received by October 21, 1988.

TIS' ALMOST THE SEASON: Think Ahead!

'Tis almost the season to help your friends and family members to learn more about state government and current public policy issues with a gift membership to the North Carolina Center for Public Policy Research! Spend only \$24 for each gift membership, and your friends and family will receive issues of North Carolina Insight magazine, 6-8 newsletters, announcements of major Center research reports, and an invitation to policy seminars or TV show audience participation. A gift membership purchased for a friend or relative is a great way to do your holiday shopping without leaving your home or office. Call Vanessa Goodman at (919)832-2839 today or just send a check and the name and address of your chosen person(s).

CENTER'S RESEARCH GETS RESULTS AND NEWS ATTENTION

The June 1988 issue of Insight yielded policy results and made headlines. The Center recommended in Insight that the General Assembly adopt legislation to limit the rent-to-own industry's use of the criminal courts as collection agencies for rent-to-own dealers. News coverage of the research was swift and supportive. There was TV coverage on at least two large Piedmont stations (WRAL and WTVD), national coverage in State Policy Reports, and an Associated Press wire story published in newspapers across North Carolina. The News and Observer of Raleigh followed up its news story with an editorial entitled "Get tough on rent-to-own." The editorial supported the Center's call for legislation, saying, "The industry's arguments are for suckers, and lawmakers ought to see through them and stop the scandalous excesses of rent-to-own." On July 7th, 1988, HB 1240 was ratified into law. It created a new provision limiting criminal prosecution of rental contracts with purchase options. Rent-to-own dealers can still pursue recovery in civil courts, just as other businesses do.

Also in the June issue, the Center published an article which concluded that the General Assembly now has the computer capability to publish the votes of state lawmakers. With its new computer system, the legislature could make the voting records of all 170 legislators more accessible to the public, the Center said. The Fayetteville Observer, the Newton Observer-News Enterprise, the News and Observer and the Raleigh Times took up the Center's call for publication of legislators' votes. The Raleigh Times editorial said the N.C. General Assembly should "lift this information iron curtain." The News and Observer editorial said, "[T]here's no excuse for the legislature not to put technology to work....[I]t's time for the legislature to put away the bill books and vote books and go on-line with complete, comprehensible and quickly accessible information on how its members vote...."

The latest rankings of "most influential" lobbyists were released on July 19th, and lawyers and former legislators continued to hold the top four positions. But public-interest lobbyists and female lobbyists moved up on the biennial list as well. This was the fourth time the Center has released such rankings, which are based on surveys of all 170 legislators, registered lobbyists in the 1987 session, and capital news correspondents. So far, there have been 30 articles in 28 newspapers about the latest rankings. A Salisbury Post editorial said, "These are the best rankings public-interest lobbyists have ever received...How refreshing. Here's evidence of a willingness on legislators' part to listen to grassroots organizations, representing the public at large."

PRODUCTION OF SECOND EDITION OF N.C. FOCUS NOW UNDERWAY

The second edition of North Carolina Focus, an anthology on state government and current public policy issues, is in progress. Focus is often used in high school and college courses on state and local government. A draft table of contents has been prepared and is available to anyone who is interested. Local college professors and public school teachers are currently being interviewed for comments on the draft articles selected for the second edition. The A. J. Fletcher Foundation of Raleigh has contributed \$8600 to help fund the second edition of Focus. To obtain a copy of the draft table of contents, call Sharon Moore at (919)832-2839.

PUBLICATIONS OF NOTE

New Pretrial Release Policy Suggested -- A recent study published by an Institute of Government researcher, Stevens Clarke, suggests several ways to speed up criminal case processing and improve pretrial release policies. According to Clarke, the new pretrial release policy could reduce jail crowding. For a copy, contact Clarke at the Institute of Government at (919)966-4399 or write him at the Institute of Government, UNC-CH, Knapp Building 059A, Raleigh Road, Chapel Hill, NC 27514.

State Insurance Regulation Agencies Under Fire -- States need to beef up their insurance regulation departments, according to a joint study issued by the Consumer Insurance Interest Group and the National Association of Professional Insurance Agents. Insurance departments are charged with protecting businesses, municipalities, and consumers against fraud and unfair insurance practices by insurance companies, but the study found that more than half of the states have inadequate programs. To obtain a free copy, call the National Insurance Consumer Organization at (703)549-8050.

REPUBLICANS TO LOSE LEGISLATIVE SEATS?

The elections in November might mean the end of a long trend of increased competition for legislative seats in the General Assembly. Surprisingly, the Republican Party had trouble recruiting people to run for the legislature this year -- which seems unusual in a year with an incumbent Republican governor at the head of the ticket. Instead, the party seemed to emphasize recruitment efforts for the Council of State offices. Fewer legislative seats will be contested this year than in 1986, ending a long trend of increasing competition:

*In 1982, 92 of 170 seats were contested by both parties.

*In 1986, 129 seats were contested, the high point.

*In 1988, only 107 seats will be contested.

This means that Democrats have already won 51, or about 30 percent of the 170 seats (36 House, 15 Senate). Republicans are assured of winning only 12 seats (9 House, 3 Senate).

There are 15 incumbents who won't be back and 10 former legislators trying to return. There is also a husband-wife team running in the 25th House District -- Republicans "Woody" and Peggy Wilson. Two Tom Sawyers -- but no Huckleberry Finn -- ran in the primaries -- and both lost. One lobbyist (John Hicks of Duke Power) ran for a Charlotte House seat but lost in the primary. Perhaps Wendell Murphy of Duplin County had the worst luck in filing. He's running for Harold Hardison's old Senate seat, but in an odd quirk of fate, the Republican who filed against him is named -- Jim Martin!

A WARM WELCOME TO THESE NEW CENTER MEMBERS!

Mar D. Baker

T. Frank Bennett

Tom Bridgers

Campus Y, UNC-CH

Mil Duncan

Vagn K. Hansen

Helen Huffman

Lela McBride

N.C. Dept. of Commerce

The Urban Institute, UNC-CH

Pam Valente

FOUNDATION GRANTS APPRECIATED

The Center wishes to acknowledge three new foundation grants for Center efforts. The N.Y. Times Company Foundation made a grant of \$4000 for general operating support. The John Wesley and Anna Hodgin Hanes Foundation of Winston-Salem committed to a \$2500 grant in support of the Center's efforts to develop a State Environmental Index. And The John William Pope Foundation of Raleigh contributed \$1000 toward general operating support. The N.Y. Times and Pope Foundation grants represent a continuation of support. We gratefully acknowledge and thank all three foundations.

OUR THANKS TO OUR CORPORATE CONTRIBUTORS

The Center wishes to thank and welcome these new corporate contributors (above \$100) and corporate members (\$100):

Vulcan Materials Company	\$1000	McDonald's Corporation	\$250
Boddie-Noell Enterprises	\$800	Broadway & Seymour	\$200
(in-kind use of Rose Hill		Lat Purser & Associates	\$100
conference facility)		Rhone Poulenc Ag Company	\$100
Liggett Group, Inc.	\$250	Ralph Simpson & Associates	\$100

And the Center's continuing thanks goes to these corporations which recently renewed their support for the Center:

Glaxo, Inc.	\$2000	Southern National Bank	\$500
R.J. Reynolds Tobacco USA	1500	American Television &	400
Lowe's Charitable & Educational	1000	Communications Corp.	
Foundation		Epley Associates	250
Royal Insurance	1000	N.C. Restaurant Association	200
Bank of Granite	500	(for full-service membership)	
Kroger Company Foundation	500	Barclays American Corporation	150
N.C. Farm Bureau Mutual	500	Adams Outdoor Advertising	100
Insurance Co.		First National Bank of	100
Raleigh Federal Savings Bank	500	Randolph County	
Sara Lee Corporation	500	Spectator Publications	100

CENTER BOARD MEMBERS RECEIVE SPECIAL THANKS

The Center wishes to express its appreciation to Center Board Members Beverly Blount and Helen Laughery for their recent donations. Beverly Blount arranged for IBM Corporation to donate an IBM Personal System 2, Model 30 computer and ProPrinter II with software to the Center. Helen Laughery donated the luncheon served at our June 25th Board meeting at Rose Hill near Rocky Mount, NC. We thank both Beverly and Helen.

INS AND OUTS IN STATE GOVERNMENT AND ELSEWHERE

Ins: Stephanie Bass as communications director for Tony Rand's campaign for Lieutenant Governor...Bonnie Cramer as deputy director of the Division of Aging in the Dept. of Human Resources...Liz Crowley as acting director of the N.C. Center for Crime & Punishment...Robert L. Jones as chairman of the University of North Carolina Board of Governors...Dr. Murali M. Rao Jonnalagadda as deputy director for medical services for the Division of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services in the Dept. of Human Resources, replacing Dr. R. J. Blackley...Albert B. Lanier Jr. as vice chancellor of university relations at N.C. State University...Page McCullough as associate director of the N.C. Center for Literacy Development...Dr. Samuel N. Merritt as director of the state laboratory in the Division of Health Services in the Dept. of Human Resources...Linda Nance as president of the North Carolina Coalition on Adolescent Pregnancy...Samuel H. Poole as vice chairman of the UNC Board of Governors...Dr. Patricia B. Porter, as deputy director for mental retardation services in the Division of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services...James O. Roberson as president of the Research Triangle Foundation...Dr. Darryl Roberts as interim director of the Atlantic Center for Research in Education...Dennis Schatzman as executive director of the North Carolina branches of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)...Asa T. Spaulding Jr. as secretary of the University of North Carolina Board of Governors...Chrystal Harris Stowe as director of public information for the N.C. Low-Level Radioactive Waste Management Authority...John M. Syria as director of the Division of Aging in the Dept. of Human Resources...Nancy H. Temple as assistant secretary for parks and community development in the Dept. of Natural Resources and Community Development, replacing John C. Stuart...Juliann Tenney as director of the Economic and Corporate Development Division of the N.C. Biotechnology Center...Larry W. Tombaugh as dean of NCSU's College of Forest Resources, replacing Eric L. Ellwood.

Outs: Ben D. Barker announced his resignation as dean of the School of Dentistry at UNC-CH, effective 8/31/89...E. K. Fretwell Jr. to retire as chancellor of the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, effective 6/30/89...Tom Minton resigned as political director for the state Republican Party to run for the N.C. House...Russell Norburn resigned as office coordinator of the Conservation Council of North Carolina...Jon Veigel resigned as president of the N.C. Alternative Energy Corporation.

STRATEGIC PLAN SURVEY RESULTS

The Center wishes to thank all of you who have responded to the Strategic Plan Survey enclosed in the June-July issue of the newsletter. The responses have been perceptive and really helpful. We value and appreciate the time, thought, and careful consideration that went into your answers. We really hope more of you will send in your responses soon. Call Vanessa Goodman at (919)832-2839 if you need a copy of the survey. Your input is important and will help us better serve you and the citizens of North Carolina in the future.

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