



FROM THE CENTER OUT

The Newsletter of the North Carolina Center for Public Policy Research

September 1991

Center's batting average in the 1991 General Assembly reflects clout of research with legislators

In baseball the pennant races are warming up, but in the N.C. General Assembly, the Center's work was red hot. The '91 assembly took action in seven key areas where the Center has done research or made recommendations in recent years. In addition, the legislature also used Center publications as resources in major policy debates -- including veto power for the governor, four-year terms for legislators, merit selection of judges, and whether to appoint or elect the State Superintendent of Public Instruction.

The list of Center accomplishments is as varied as it is lengthy. For instance, in 1984, 1985, and in the 1989 edition of *North Carolina Focus*, the Center examined disparities in school finance, and in 1990, Center Executive Director Ran Coble testified before a legislative study commission and recommended that the state set up a school equalization fund. In the '91 session, the legislature appropriated \$10 million for small and poor county school systems. The Public School Forum, the Atlantic Center for Research in Education, and the N.C. Chapter of the ACLU also deserve credit for moving this issue.

In the environmental arena, the legislature also took key action, repealing the nearly 20-year-old Hardison Amendments that restricted the state's abilities to regulate the environment. The March 1988 issue of *Insight* examined the record of the Hardison Amendments, which prohibited the state from adopting environmental regulations stiffer than federal rules. That article found that the amendments had hampered the state's ability to cope with environmental problems and recommended that the legislature dump the amendments. In the 1989 session, legislation to do that passed the Senate easily, but became mired in the House. In 1991, however, business and environmental lobbyists agreed on a key provision that the state consider the economic impact of a regulation before it could be adopted. That paved the way for repeal of the Hardison amendments.

On another important environmental issue, the legislature set up a study commission to consider the need for land-use planning to preserve North Carolina's mountains. In the December 1990 *Insight*, Associate Editor Mike McLaughlin unveiled results of original research the Center undertook on how much planning and zoning the state's 100 counties were doing. The survey found that the mountain counties were doing far less land-use planning than were counties in the east and Piedmont, and recommended that the legislature adopt one of several approaches to protect western North Carolina's unique mountain resources. Gov. Jim Martin embraced the proposal in his 1991 State of the State address, but the proposal ran into some opposition. The study commission allows the issue to remain alive, to assess further the need for mountain area planning, and to develop political consensus.

In other areas, the legislature also:

-- enacted two pieces of legislation to improve state services to homeless persons and reauthorized a study commission to examine what else can be done. The Center examined the homeless issue and recommended the study commission in the June 1990 *Insight*;

Key stat: Center products set agenda in education, environment, election laws, homelessness, and corrections policy

Inside:

*New foundation support
New contributors
Kudos for the
Center*

How helpful is Center work? When the House Appropriations Committee chairman uses Insight to explain the state budget, you know the Center is hitting the long ball.

"It's the best thing I've seen on the state budget and the mess we're in."

-- Rep. David Diamont, D-Surry, chairman of the House Appropriations Committee

Rave reviews of Center work keep rolling in:

-- "valuable"

-- "credible"

-- "sensible and workable"

-- extended the life of the state Fund for Public Financing of State Political Campaigns. The Center issued two major reports on public financing of political campaigns in 1990, and recommended extending the life of the Fund; and

-- approved legislation requiring a fiscal note -- an estimate of the costs to the state budget -- of any new legislation that would cause a net increase in the incarceration rate. Such legislation was recommended in the August 1989 issue of **Insight**.

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It's enough to make our ears burn, but we don't mind a little warmth around the earlobe when it comes to accolades about the Center's work. Here's a sample of what they've been saying about the Center in general:

"The Center is a particularly valuable asset for North Carolina legislators. Their publications frame difficult issues for public debate and provide thorough research to define those issues." -- Speaker Dan Blue, N.C. House of Representatives

"The Center is credible enough that if they analyze an issue, they can put it on the state's political agenda, or put it out there so advocacy groups can put it on the agenda. When the Center does a report, it is actually read by decision makers, and editorials and news stories are written about it." -- Bill Holman, lobbyist for The Sierra Club and the Conservation Council of North Carolina

And about the voting and elections reform article: "The Center's suggestions are sensible and workable. The legislature ought to implement them." -- **The Charlotte Observer**

"All of [the recommendations] would help North Carolina get out of the basement in terms of its participation in democracy." -- **The Fayetteville Observer**

"The latest issue of North Carolina Insight ... offers a pile of elections statistics ... and some suggestions for improving North Carolina's [voting] rate by the turn of the century. Sensible and sound, they aim to make it easier to vote.... Its recommendations ... deserve immediate attention in Raleigh." -- **Greensboro News & Record**

"Others ... ought to read the report, too -- namely state legislators and candidates for governor." -- Ferrel Guillory, government affairs editor, **The News & Observer**

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A warm welcome to these new members:

Lori Bastian
Joyce Bragg
Kathryn Brubaker
Robert J. Burford
John D. Carter
Steven W. and Louise W. Coggins *
Cynthia Cox
Jamie B. Factor
Gaston H. Gage
Mr. & Mrs. James B. Gaskill
Jan Gruber
Lori Ann Harris
Sen. Fletcher L. Hartsell
Dexter Hayes
Chris Heagarty
Richard H. Jenrette

Rep. Bob Hensley
Thomas Hyde
Tim M. Kinskey
Charles Kuralt
Douglas G. Lewis
William R. Perkins
Library
Marge Livsey
Elaine F. Marshall *
Richard A. Mathews
Mayland Community College
Christine McNamee
Charles C. Meeker
N.C. Institute of Political Leadership
New Hanover Department of Social Services

Kenneth P. Nicollerat
Sen. J. Clark Plexico
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H.D. Reaves
Robert Richmond
William L. Rikard, Jr.
Allen B. Sanders
Robert Saunders
Barbara Hadley Smith
Lanty & Margaret Smith *
Stephanie Spence
C. Jean Spratt
Samuel L. Stone III
Paul Vick
Thomas G. Wicker
Kimberley Williams
Marcus Williams
Robert A. Wiltshire
Ed Yoder

*=with our thanks for your individual supporting memberships

We'd like to thank supporting members who renewed with special contributions and individual donations. These include:

Linda Ashendorf
Wade Barber
Ronnie Capps
Ann Duncan
Charles Evans

Joyce Gallimore
Karen Gottovi
Gerry Hancock
Jim Harrington
Hawk Johnson
Bertha Holt

W. Burns Jones Jr.
William Joslin
Mr. & Mrs. Robert E. Merritt
Cliff Oxford
Carol Shaw
Ed Williams

We'd like to welcome the renewals of these full-service members:

Capitol Broadcasting Company
N.C. Institute of Minority
Economic Development

Sen. George Daniel
N.C. Restaurant Association

Wake County Government
Frances Walker

We'd like to especially thank three North Carolina foundations for their generous support:

The A.J. Fletcher Foundation of Raleigh, which made a grant of \$20,000 in support of our research on state health care policy.

The Kathleen Price and Joseph M. Bryan Family Foundation of Greensboro, which made a grant of \$10,000 in support of our research on state health care policy.

The Broyhill Family Foundation of Lenoir, which made a grant of \$2,000 in support of our study of how the public universities identify and reward good teaching.

We welcome these new corporate contributors and members:

Glaxo, Inc. \$4,000
Commercial Credit 1,000
PepsiCo, Inc. 1,000
Thomas Built Buses, Inc. 500

Eastman Chemical Co. \$ 250
Moore & Van Allen 250
Rosenberg & Associates Advertising, Inc. 250

United Transportation Union \$ 250
C&D Industrial Tools & Supplies Inc. 200
Kelly-Springfield Tire Co. 200

And we're delighted to report the following corporate renewals:

Charlotte Observer \$2,000
Josephus Daniels Charitable Foundation, funded by The News & Observer 2,000
Phillip Morris USA 2,000
R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company 2,000
Data General Corp. 1,000
Ecusta 1,000
Lorillard Inc. 1,000
Nationwide Insurance 1,000
N.C. Natural Gas Corp. 1,000
Public Service Co. of N.C. 1,000
Rhone-Poulenc Ag Co. 1,000
Texasgulf Inc. 1,000
Winston-Salem Journal 1,000
Summit Cable Services 600
Bank of Granite 500

Burlington Industries Foundation \$ 500
First Citizens Bank 500
Integon Foundation 500
Kaiser Foundation Health Plan of N.C. 500
N.C. Farm Bureau Mutual Insurance Co. 500
N.C. Health Care Facilities Association 500
N.C. Power Company 500
Nucor Corporation 500
Volvo GM Heavy Truck Corporation 500
Vulcan Materials Co. 500
Liggett Group, Inc. 350
WSOC-TV 350
Raleigh Federal Savings Bank 300
Golden Corral Corp. 250

K.R. Edwards Leaf Tobacco Co. Inc. \$ 250
Asheville Citizen-Times Publishing Co. 200
Caroon Corporation 200
Durham Herald-Sun Newspapers 200
Florida Atlantic University Foundation 200
Lee Iron & Metal Company 200
New York Times Company Foundation 200
Peoples Security Life Insurance Company 200
Southern National Bank 200
Spanco Industries 200
Transylvania Times 200
Trion Charitable Fdn. 200

Readers read - and tell us what they like about North Carolina Insight

-- 56% of readers have graduate degree

-- 94% have at least one college degree

-- Newspapers are more popular than TV as a news source

Coming: Insight Theme issue and N.C. Public TV Special on health care

If you think The New Yorker has an upscale readership, take a gander at Insight's latest readership survey -- it's an eye-opener. A handful of demographics: Among Insight readers, more than half -- 56 percent -- have graduate degrees, another third have college degrees or some graduate work. Democrats outnumber Republicans 3-1; men outnumber women by more than 2 1/2-1; about 58 percent are between 35 and 55 years old; 12 percent are under 35; and about 30 percent are over 55.

Readers said they get most of their news from newspapers and personal contacts; television, radio and magazine news trailed far behind. Newspapers of choice: The News & Observer (Raleigh), the Greensboro News & Record, the Wall Street Journal, The Charlotte Observer, the Winston-Salem Journal, The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Independent, and The Herald-Sun (Durham).

Newspapers were 2 1/2 times more popular than television news. Time and Newsweek were the most popular newsmagazines. More respondents said they got their news from personal contacts than from television, radio, or magazines, but a majority of respondents said they regularly watched a television news program. Does this say something about the quality or depth of TV news? We'll have to ask, in the next Insight Reader Survey.

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Meanwhile, the staff is hip-deep into research on the next theme issue: Health Care Policy in North Carolina. Set for publication in November in conjunction with a documentary to be aired on N.C. Public Television, the issue will be another barn-burner.

Center Interns Ellen Breslin (Duke public policy grad school) and Paul Barringer (UNC law school) are doing a lot of the legwork, while Anna Tefft (Duke public policy grad school) is assisting Center policy analyst Kim Kebschull with research on the higher education study.

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