



The North Carolina Center for Public Policy Research

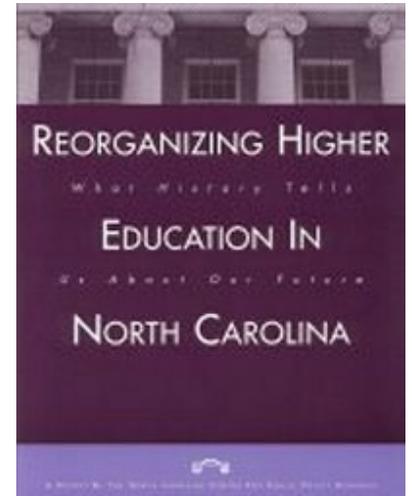
A voice for good government

1999 Accomplishments

Educating the Public

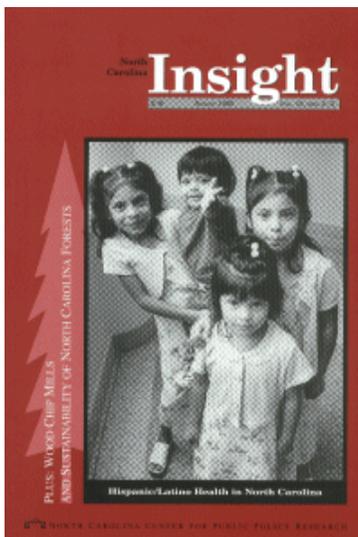
Higher Education in North Carolina –

In June, the Center released *Reorganizing Higher Education in North Carolina: What History Tells Us About Our Future*, the first report in an extensive four-part study of key issues in the governance of higher education. This first report shows that North Carolina's public university system faces many of the same issues today that it did when it was founded in 1971. These issues include how to handle booming student enrollment, provide equity in funding among the 16 campuses, improve access to higher education for minorities, prevent independent lobbying by single campuses, and keep tuition affordable. The report was touted as a valuable resource during 1999 legislative debates over a proposed bond package for the university system.



I think [the report] is a fine piece of writing based on extensive in-depth research. I am confident the publication will always be an important resource document for researchers, historians and others... The research, writing, and publication of this report is timely and appropriate.

-- Robert W. Scott, N.C. Governor, 1969-1973



Hispanic/Latino Health in North Carolina – In August, the Center's *North Carolina Insight* magazine highlighted one of the largest demographic changes in the state this century with a study of Hispanics/Latinos in North Carolina. In our role as a think tank looking toward the future, the Center produced research which showed that the Hispanic/Latino population is growing much faster than that of the state as a whole, having doubled since the 1990 Census to about 2 percent (200,000) of the population. One place where the population shift is being felt is in the delivery of services at local health departments.

This report is essential reading for anyone who wants to have a better understanding of the health problems facing our state's changing population.

-- A. Dennis McBride, M.D., State Health Director

Our surveys of health departments found that the most significant obstacles to adequate health care for Hispanics are the language barrier, lack of health insurance, and lack of transportation. By gender and age, the primary health issues are prenatal care for women, on-the-job injuries for men, and low immunization rates for children. The study received statewide news coverage in 20 newspapers and on the 90-station N.C. Radio News Network, as well as a half-hour television program on WRAL-TV and a two-hour "OpenNet" program by the N.C. Agency for Public Telecommunications. The Center presented its findings and recommendations to the Governor's Advisory Council on Hispanic/Latino Affairs, which endorsed them and forwarded them to the Governor for action.

Media Coverage – More citizens now benefit from our research because the Center’s work enjoys outstanding media coverage. In 1999, our work appeared in more than 300 newspaper articles, editorials, and radio and television reports. Over the last two years, we increased our presence in the broadcast media with a monthly radio show on WPTF-AM, half-hour public affairs TV programs with WRAL and WTVD, collaborations with Time Warner Cable and the N.C. Cable Telecommunications Association, and continuing partnerships with the N.C. Radio News Network, WUNC-FM, and the public radio network. For example, in February, WUNC-FM produced an outstanding six-part series based on our research on children with special needs.

Affecting Policy

Legislative Study Commission on Children with Special Needs

– In December 1998, the Center published a theme issue of *North Carolina Insight* magazine on policy issues affecting children with special needs. This included a major study of funding levels and numbers of children served in 15 residential institutions compared to numerous community-based programs. Finding higher levels of funding for state institutions with declining populations, the Center recommended that the legislature establish a study commission to look at the issues raised by the Center’s study. The 1999 General Assembly responded by establishing a study commission which will make an interim report to the 2000 short session and a final report to the 2001 General Assembly.

The research [on special needs children] is thorough and thought-provoking.... The center’s research offers no simple answers. But it gives the state, parents and communities the information they’ll need to progress beyond animosity to resolution.

-- Fayetteville Observer-Times



Purchase of the N.C. Railroad – The state now has concluded its purchase of the N.C. Railroad. In 1983 and 1995, we published research informing citizens that they owned three-fourths of the N.C. Railroad, which runs 317 miles from Morehead City to Charlotte. After documenting the history of conflicts between the railroad’s public and private shareholders, the Center recommended in *Insight* magazine that the state buy out the private shareholders to foster economic development in the eastern part of the state and to open the way for using the railroad right-of-way for future mass transit between Charlotte and Raleigh. The 1997 legislature authorized funds for the purchase, and the state completed the purchase in 1998. The final agreement between the state and freight-hauler Norfolk Southern Corporation was signed on August 12, 1999 to govern state control of the right-of-way, rental fees to be paid by the company, and upgrades to the tracks.

Stricter Criteria for Use of Tax Incentives To Attract Industry – In 1982, the Center recommended that the state do more targeting of desirable industries – as measured by economic, environmental, and health standards – in its industrial recruitment. In 1997, we followed up with an analysis of tax incentives offered to new and expanding industries. These studies were premised on the idea that if the state is going to offer tax incentives to attract industries, those industries ought to improve North Carolina. N.C. Department of Commerce officials and Center staff worked together to address these concerns in amendments to the William S. Lee Quality Jobs and Business Expansion Act. The 1999 General Assembly then enacted legislation stating that future tax incentives for new and expanding businesses will be authorized only if a business (a) provides health insurance to its employees; (b) is environmentally clean with no significant violations of environmental laws or regulations within the last five years; and (c) has a good record on worker safety and health, has no outstanding citations under the Occupational Safety and Health Act, and has no serious violations within the last three years.

These legislative accomplishments demonstrate how the Center pursues its policy recommendations through a combination of solid research, extensive news coverage educating the public and putting pressure on policymakers, and working with policymakers to put our recommendations into practice or law. Since the recommendations above date back to 1998, 1995, and 1982 respectively, they also show how the Center sustains its efforts over time.

Enhancing Government Accountability

the practice of hiding changes in state laws in the state budget. The Center has continued to document the number of special provisions in follow-up reports in 1987, 1994, and 1999. Thus, we are extremely pleased that the state budget enacted by the 1999 General Assembly contains the fewest special provisions in any budget since 1994. This was due in large part to a Center report released in February criticizing the practice and recommending that legislative budget leaders curb it. Extensive statewide news coverage (71 articles in 50 newspapers) put pressure on the legislative leaders, and a bill was filed to prohibit the practice. Though the bill did not pass, the Speaker of the House, Senate President Pro Tempore, and Appropriations Committee Chairs in both chambers took actions to improve the budget process. As a result, the budget contained fewer special provisions amending laws unrelated to the budget, and those that remained were much less substantive in nature compared to previous sessions.

Citizens' Guide to the Legislature – In March, we published the 12th edition of *Article II: A Guide to the 1999-2000 N.C. Legislature*. *Article II* is the most comprehensive legislative guide available and contains biographical and voting information for each of the 170 legislators, as well as their committee assignments, counties in the districts they serve, bills introduced, and other pertinent information. For members who served in the previous session, the guide lists five bills they introduced in 1997-98, votes on 15 bills of statewide interest during the 1997-98 session, and a history of rankings of each legislator's effectiveness since 1981.

North Carolina's decision-makers are far better off today because of the Center, and may its next 20 years be even more successful in a time when calm, reasonable, objective material and rhetoric is needed more than ever.

-- Phil Kirk, President, N.C. Citizens for Business and Industry

New Research Evaluating Government Performance

research on hot policy issues, the Center produced an in-depth evaluation of wood chip mills and state forestry policy. Chip mills typically employ a small number of people who oversee the placement of whole logs into machines that strip off the bark and then reduce the logs to little chunks of wood. Satellite chip mills have an average capacity of 250,000 tons per year and can consume up to 2,600 acres of hardwood and softwood annually. The number of satellite chip mills operating in North Carolina has increased from two to 18 since 1980, with four in the mountains, 10 in the Piedmont, and four in the east. The Center's research shows North Carolina lags behind other states in its forest management practices and recommends that the state adopt a goal of replenishing trees as fast as they are cut.

At long last an independent agency has weighed in on the chip mill controversy and is recommending measures for the N.C. General Assembly to consider. The N.C. Center for Public Policy Research is influenced by neither loggers nor environmentalists. The group spent months investigating charges and counter-charges made by both sides and issued realistic measures to help protect forest interests. ... The General Assembly should take a close look at their study and be ready to act on it by the next business session.

- The Daily Courier, Forest City, N.C.

Governance of Public Universities – We almost have completed the second report in the Center's four-part study of issues in governance of public universities. *Governance of Public Universities in All 50 States*, compares the types of governing and coordinating bodies overseeing public university systems across the country. The report describes the three types of higher education systems in the 50 states, highlights their strengths and weaknesses and compares them to the UNC Board of Governors, which governs North Carolina's 16-university system.

Special Provisions in Budget Bills – In 1986, the Center published its first report criticizing

Rep. James (Jim) B. Black

Speaker of the House

1999-2000

Democrat, 36th District

Mecklenburg County

Date of Birth: 3/25/35

Counties in Mecklenburg (part)

District:

Business Address

114 S. Tryon Street

Charlotte, NC 28202

Business Phone

704-377-5935

FAX: 375-4003

Occupation

Optometrist

Home Address

417 Lyndell Lane

Matthews, NC 28105

Home Phone

704-847-9958

Education

A.B. Lenoir-Rhyne College 1958

B.S. South Coll. of Optometry

1960

O.D. South Coll. of Optometry

1962

Selected Bills Introduced 1997-1998:

Bill No.	Bill Subject or Title	Action
H 1042	Publication of Appellate Decisions	PPH
H 1154	Safe School Plans/Accountability	PPH
H 1218	Adult/Student Ratio Reductions	PPH
H 1676	Teacher Compensation/Extra Work Days	PPH
H 5003	State Children's Health Insurance Program-1	RPAB

TOTAL: Introduced Adopted Ratified

Where He/She Stands Votes in the 1997-98 General Assembly:

Bill No.	Issue	Senate Vote	House Vote	His/Her Vote
H 248	Graduated Drivers Licenses (Rat.)	44-0	64-50	Y
H 511	Evolution Not To Be Taught As Fact	N/A	73-43	Y
H 515	Clean Water/Hog Moratorium Act (Rat.)	46-1	95-19	Y
H 536	Abortion/Right To Know	N/A	77-42	Y
H 1097	Fisheries Reform Act-2 (Rat.)	49-0	59-49	N
H 1231	Local Transit Revenue Options (Rat.)	37-7	79-30	Y
S 1	Caravan Finance Disclosure Act (Rat.)	39-0	85-5	Y
S 5	Appoint, Not Elect, Supt. of Public Instruct.	46-2	68-44	A
S 272	Excellent Schools Act (Rat.)	46-4	110-11	Y
S 297	Amend Charter Schools Act (Rat.)	37-11	91-8	Y
S 389	Baseball Park Districts (Rat.)	35-14	74-39	Y
S 918	Notice of Hazardous Discharge	2-46	100-11	Y
S 993	Medical Service Corporation Charters (Rat.)	42-1	78-27	Y
S 1260	Juvenile Justice Reform Act-2 (Rat.)	47-0	101-0	Y
S 1569	Economic Opportunity Act of 1998 (Rat.)	46-2	94-21	Y

Effectiveness Rankings:

1997	1995	1993	1991	1989	1987	1985	1983	1981
10 of 120	14	14	65 (65)	N/A	N/A	N/A	55	72

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Looking Ahead

An Evening with Four Journalists – On February 23, 2000 in Greensboro, the Center will host an event entitled “An Evening with Four Journalists.” Co-sponsored with the N.C. Cable Telecommunications Association and Time Warner Cable, this event will feature four of our finest state and national journalists in a discussion of the status of journalism in North Carolina today, what makes North Carolina unique, and what’s ahead for our state in the 21st century.

Education Reform in North Carolina – Our next edition of *North Carolina Insight* magazine will feature an evaluation of the state’s ability to sustain its efforts in various public school reforms in North Carolina. This includes the Basic Education Plan, a longer school year, outcome-based education, the charter school movement, and the ABC (Accountability, Basics, and Control) Program. The Center will examine various school reform efforts in North Carolina over the last decade, whether they have been fully funded, and whether they have been tried long enough to determine whether they work.

Legislative and Lobbyists Rankings – In the spring, we will continue our emphasis on enhancing government accountability and educating voters by publishing the 12th edition of *Effectiveness Rankings for Members of the N.C. General Assembly* and the 10th edition of *The 50 Most Influential Lobbyists in the General Assembly*.

State Lottery in North Carolina – Next April, the Center will publish a short report on lottery proposals in North Carolina. In 1985, the Center published an article in *Insight* discussing the pros and cons of state lotteries. Seventeen states had lotteries at the time. Now, 37 states and the District of Columbia have lotteries, and the winning candidates in the South Carolina and Alabama governors’ races both owe their victories to backing a lottery. However, Alabama voters recently rejected a lottery in a referendum, and a South Carolina court decision has slowed lottery and video poker development. The Center’s Board has identified 13 different research questions for us to answer in examining the experience with other state lotteries and their pros and cons.



The Center’s Mission

The North Carolina Center for Public Policy Research is an independent, nonprofit organization dedicated to the goals of a better-informed public and more effective, accountable, and responsive government.

We welcome your suggestions for topics that would benefit from the Center’s independent, nonpartisan research. To make a suggestion, comment, or order any Center publication, please write us at P. O. Box 430, Raleigh, N.C., 27602, call us at (919) 832-2839, send us a fax at (919) 832-2847, or visit our web site at www.ncinsider.com/nccppr.

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