



From The Center Out

The Newsletter of the North Carolina Center for Public Policy Research ... A voice for good government
July-August-September, 2001

N.C. Has Second Most Legislative Committees And Most Chairs In U.S., Says Center

The North Carolina legislature now has the second largest number of committees and the most committee chairs of any legislature in the country, said the N.C. Center for Public Policy Research with the release of our biennial citizens' guide to the legislature. *Article II: A Guide to the 2001-2002 N.C. Legislature* highlights legislative trends and provides basic information on each of 170 legislators. The Center says North Carolina is more a two-political party state now, and this has led legislative leaders to share power by creating more chairmanships.

“The large number of committees and chairs has advantages and disadvantages,” says Center director Ran Coble. “On the up side, when you increase the number of committees and chairmanships, you increase opportunities for more legislators to play important roles. But on the down side, having multiple chairs leads to ‘chair-shopping’ as legislators and lobbyists wait until their favorite chair is presiding to bring up their bills.”

The Center says the current system also confuses accountability since some Senate committees have both Senior Chairs and additional Co-Chairs, and some House committees have as many as four Co-Chairs. For example, the Senate Redistricting Committee has Senator Brad Miller (D-Wake) as Senior Chair and two additional Co-Chairs, while the House Appropriations Committee and House Finance Committee each has four Co-Chairs.

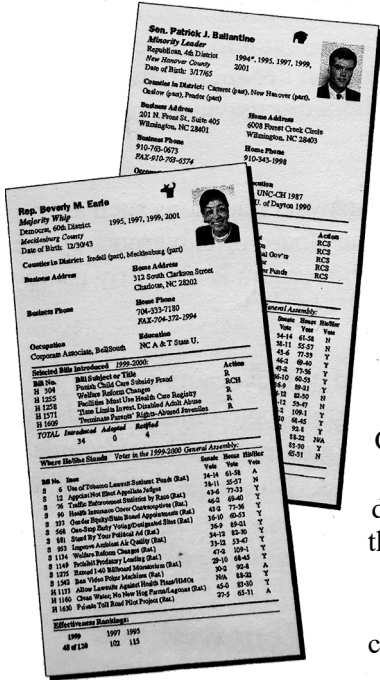
The Center’s research shows that the North Carolina legislature has a total of 73 committees on which its 170 legislators serve – 25 committees in the Senate and 48 in the House. According to the Center’s research and that of the National Conference of State Legislatures in Denver, Colorado, the New York legislature is first with 78 committees, North Carolina is second with 73, and Florida is third with 66. New York has a total of 211 legislators, and Florida has 160. Fourteen states have more legislators than North Carolina. Having bills go through multiple committees in the same chamber may also lengthen sessions, says the Center. See the chart below about session length as the 2001 session stretches into September.

Adjournment Dates

	Long Sessions	Short Sessions
1981	July 10	1980 June 25
1991	July 16	1990 July 28
1995	July 29	1996 June 21
1997	August 28	1998 October 29
1999	July 21	2000 July 13

The North Carolina legislature also leads the nation in the number of committee chairmanships with 113 Chairs and Co-Chairs -- 35 in the 50-member Senate and 78 in the 120-member House. The state’s nearest rivals in handing out gavels are New York, a distant second with 78 chairs, and Florida with 68 chairs. In most legislatures, there is one chair for each committee.

The Center says the fight for Speaker of the House last January fueled an increase in the number of committee chairs. In exchange for Republican Party support, Democratic Speaker Jim Black (D-Mecklenburg) agreed to appoint Republicans as Co-Chairs of 14 House Committees and to have party representation on committees generally reflect the make-up of the House, which has 62 Democrats and 58 Republicans. Black also agreed to appoint an equal number of Republicans and Democrats to the two House redistricting committees. Some African-American Democrats who offered to ally with Republicans and unseat Black lost their chance to become committee chairs. As a result, 10 of the 18 black House Democrats found themselves without a chair when the music stopped.



These and other legislative trends can be found in *Article II: A Guide to the 2001-2002 North Carolina Legislature*. This citizens' guide contains profiles on each of the 170 members of the General Assembly. Copies of *Article II* and the *Supplement* with committee assignments and schedules are available from the Center for \$25 a set. To order, write the Center at P.O. Box 430, Raleigh N.C. 27602, call (919) 832-2839, fax (919) 832-2847, or order through the Center's website at www.ncinsider.com/nccppr.

A Preview: Our Next Research Report on Higher Education Governance

The third in our series of four Center reports on higher education is nearing completion and is scheduled for publication late this year. This report begins with a brief history of the UNC Board of Governors and then looks at the selection of Board members. Currently, the 32 voting Board members are elected by the General Assembly to serve four-year terms with a three-term limit. North Carolina law requires that two of the 16 Board members elected every two years must be women, two must be of a minority race, and two must be of the minority political party. As with all our reports, the authors discuss advantages and disadvantages of North Carolina's approach and of alternative approaches to our system.

The second section of this report outlines the powers of the UNC Board of Governors and answers questions such as: (1) What are the primary powers of the Board of Governors? (2) Are there any powers granted to the Board of Governors by the General Assembly that the Board is not currently utilizing? (3) Are there any powers the Board of Governors is currently using that the legislature has not actually extended to the Board?

The third section of the report looks closely at the balance of powers between the UNC Board of Governors and the 16 campus Boards of Trustees. North Carolina and Utah are the only states with statutes that give their central governing boards the power to delegate duties to local campus boards. This section discusses the duties of the local boards and how the local boards and Chancellors feel about the balance of power between the Board of Governors and the local Trustees. The final chapter of the report will state the Center's conclusions and may make recommendations flowing from the research.

Welcome To New Members; Thanks To Supporting Members Who Renewed (February 1, 2001 – August 29, 2001)

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How Stands the East? Look to *Insight* for Answers

Birthplace of aviation, pork barbecue with vinegar and pepper sauce, and arguably, the dance step known as the shag, Eastern North Carolina is far more than a flat place in the landscape on the way to the coast. Indeed, the 41 counties defined roughly as those east of or intersected by Interstate 95 are home to most of the state's tobacco crop, much of its pork industry, and nearly all of North Carolina's military establishments. Small towns from Bear Grass to Burgaw support a rural lifestyle where time ticks by at a slightly slower pace. Four public universities and a number of private colleges call the region home, as do 27 campuses of the state Community College System. And then there is the coastline itself – a great tourist attraction and a magnet for visitors and retirees alike.

But despite the many blessings of this proud region, it also faces many challenges. The East trails the other two regions of the state on a broad range of indicators – per capita income, poverty, and percentage of residents who are college graduates. Falling commodity prices have battered the farm sector, the region's manufacturing base continues to erode, and the East is still recovering from a hurricane that claimed 52 lives and destroyed thousands of homes. Given all these challenges, the Center thought the time was right for an in-depth look at issues facing Eastern North Carolina.

Thus, the next edition of *North Carolina Insight* will focus exclusively on the East. What are its infrastructure needs? How does it stack up in terms of human resources? What is the future of agriculture? Is the region's huge military presence a blessing or a curse? How has Hurricane Floyd improved disaster preparation? And finally, does the East need a broad regional approach, a sort of Marshall Plan, to help it close the gap with the rest of the state in terms of economic and human development? Look to the next *Insight* for a thorough discussion of these questions.

Become A New Individual Donor to the Center

Most of you receiving this newsletter are paying \$36 a year as individual Center members. We have purposefully kept our membership dues low in order to make our magazine (*North Carolina Insight*) and newsletter ("From the Center Out") accessible to citizens across the state at all income levels. But membership dues and year-end gifts from members combined generate only 9.4% of our annual budget of \$642,322. Our staff has remained small (six people).

Most of the Center's budget comes from foundation grants (43%), corporate contributions (24%), interest from our Sustaining Fund (14%), and sales of publications (3%). Yet, 88% of the money given to nonprofits in the United States comes from individuals. The Center's individual members like you thus are an untapped resource and the key to our ability to remain independent from any financial interests that might try to influence our research findings.

As we approach our 25th Anniversary in 2002, we hope to have 50 Center members step forward and **become Charter Donors in our new Major Donors Program**. Twelve members already have done so. To become a Charter Donor, you would pledge to give \$500 to \$5,000 a year for 3 years, beginning in 2001. Additionally, please consider **putting us in your will or making a bequest**. Call Ran Coble or Laurita Ray at (919) 832-2839 to discuss becoming a Charter Donor.

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