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WOMEN IN LEGISLATURE: A RECORD NUMBER AND MORE POWERFUL

Record numbers of women and retirees are serving in the legislature this year. Female legislators now chair or co-chair four of the six most powerful committees in the House and two of the six most powerful committees in the Senate, says the N.C. Center for Public Policy Research. The 2007 legislature also is on a record pace for the number of bills introduced. And, the legislature has seen an unusual number of deaths and resignations since last November. These are just a few of the latest trends in the legislature highlighted in the Center's new citizens' guide to the legislature released today.

A Record Number of Women...

Forty-three women are serving in the 2007 N.C. General Assembly, up from 39 last session. Lillian Exum Clement of Buncombe County was the first woman elected to the legislature in 1920, but even as late as 1971, only two legislators were women.

According to the Center for American Women and Politics at Rutgers University, North Carolina is now 18th highest among the 50 states in the percentage of women in its legislature, with 25 percent (43 out of 170 legislators). Nationally, the average is 24.5 percent women legislators, with Vermont the highest at 37.8 percent. South Carolina is lowest, with women comprising only 8.8 percent of its 170 legislators. North Carolina now leads the South in the percentage of legislators who are women.

...And the Women in the Legislature Hold Powerful Posts

Female legislators in North Carolina are not only more numerous, they also are more powerful. Every other year, the Center surveys all legislators, registered lobbyists, and capital news media and asks them to rank, among other things, the most powerful legislative committees. This year, women serve as chairs or co-chairs of four of the six most powerful committees in the state House of Representatives and two of the six most powerful committees in the Senate. In the House, three females are among the co-chairs of the powerful Appropriations Committee, which puts together the state budget – Representatives Alma Adams (D-Guilford), Martha Alexander (D-Mecklenburg), and Maggie Jeffus (D-Guilford). Additionally, six of the seven House Appropriations Subcommittees have women as co-chairs. Women also chair or co-chair other powerful House committees, including the Finance Committee, the Judiciary I Committee, and the Commerce, Small Business and Entrepreneurship Committee.

Rep. Melanie Wade Goodwin (D-Richmond) says, “Rep. Deborah Ross is chairing Judiciary I, traditionally a lawyers’ committee handling high-profile policy matters. Rep. Lucy Allen is chairing Environment, a committee that often entertains bills relating to industry’s interactions with the environment. Rep. Margaret Dickson is chairing Commerce, Small Business and Entrepreneurship, where bills affecting more

than 90 percent of our state's business entities are debated. And Rep. Jennifer Weiss is co-chairing Finance, which sets tax policy for our entire state. Women clearly have a major role in shaping state policy this session."

In the Senate, two of the three co-chairs of the powerful Appropriations/Basic Budget Committee are women – Senators Linda Garrou (D-Forsyth) and Kay Hagan (D-Guilford). The other Senate committee ranked among the six most powerful with a female leader is the Education/Higher Education Committee, co-chaired by Sen. Julia Boseman (D-New Hanover).

Women also serve as key party leaders. In both the House and Senate, women serve as half of the majority or minority whips for their political parties. Party whips count votes and line up support on issues on which the Democratic or Republican parties have taken a position.

Women Legislators Also Affect the Policy Agenda

The record number of women in the legislature also is having an impact on the legislature's policy agenda. Sam Watts, policy analyst at the Center for Public Policy Research and author of the legislative guide, says, "Over the last two sessions, we have seen the most progress ever in legislation addressing domestic violence. The leaders of this effort have been the female chairs and members of a legislative study commission on domestic violence."

Rep. Carolyn Justice (R-Pender) says, "The roles that women play in real life come into play in their agendas in the General Assembly. Women are often the primary force in taking care of children or aging parents. Because of this, women are leaders on child care, education, and health issues in the legislature."

A Record Number of Retirees and Deaths

The 2007 legislature also has a record number of retirees among its 170 members – 51, or 30 percent. Watts says this is mainly due to the length of legislative sessions that now routinely last from January to August in odd-numbered years and from May to August in even-numbered years. Legislators also serve on study commissions between sessions.

This year, the legislature also has experienced an unusual number of deaths or resignations. Since November 2006 alone, four legislators have died, and one has resigned. Former Speaker of the House Jim Black resigned, and Senators Robert Holloman and Jeanne Lucas and Representatives Bernard Allen and Howard Hunter passed away.

Other Trends in the Legislature

The Center notes these additional trends in the legislature:

- *The number of legislators who are self-employed is the fastest rising occupation. Twenty-three legislators are self-employed – for example, as political consultants, strategic planning consultants, or financial advisors – compared to five self-employed legislators just 10 years ago.

- *The number of legislators who are lawyers has rebounded. In 1971, 68 of 170 legislators were lawyers. This number declined to 32 in 1995 but is back up to 40 lawyers this session.

- *The numbers of legislators who are in business and sales (35), education (23), and real estate (19) also are high.

- *The legislature is on a record pace for the number of bills introduced in a session. As of May 7, 3,507 bills had been introduced. The previous high was in 1987, when a total of 3,723 were introduced. However, based on the number of bills being prepared for introduction, the 2007 number will set a new record by the end of this session. The Center's Sam Watts says this session is likely to last well into August due to this record number of bills and due to the election of a new Speaker of the House, which delayed appointment of House committees until late February.

These and other legislative trends are outlined in *Article II: A Guide to the 2007-2008 North Carolina Legislature*. This edition marks the 16th legislative session the Center has published a legislative guide. Authored by Center policy analyst Sam Watts, this citizens' guide contains profiles and photos of each of the 170 members of the General Assembly, including business and home addresses; telephone and fax numbers; counties in their districts; the number of terms they have served in the legislature; and their educational and occupational backgrounds. For members who served in the previous session, the guide lists five bills they introduced in the 2005-2006 session, their votes on 12 bills of statewide interest, and their past rankings of attendance, roll call voting participation, and effectiveness. The effectiveness rankings are based on surveys of all legislators, registered lobbyists based in North Carolina, and the capital news media. The latest set of legislative effectiveness rankings was released in April 2006. The guide also includes demographic and occupational trends for the General Assembly since 1987 and rankings of the 50 most influential lobbyists in the legislature.

A pocket-sized *Supplement to Article II* contains important information for citizens, lobbyists, and reporters, including all committee assignments and each legislator's political party affiliation, home county, legislative office address and telephone number, e-mail address at the General Assembly, and legislative seat number. The supplement also contains seating charts, committee meeting schedules, and deadlines for introducing various kinds of bills and resolutions.

The N.C. Center for Public Policy Research is an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit research corporation created in 1977 to evaluate state government programs and to study public policy issues facing North Carolina. The Center is supported in part by a grant from the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation in Winston-Salem, with additional support from nine other private foundations, 150 corporate contributors, and about 600 individual and organizational members. In addition to publishing *Article II: A Guide to the N.C. Legislature*, the Center also publishes *North Carolina Insight* and in-depth research reports. The Center recently has conducted in-depth studies on governance of North Carolina's public universities, the shortage of public school teachers in North Carolina, domestic violence, economic development in Eastern North Carolina, and the pros and cons of state lotteries. The Center also publishes a textbook for teachers of state and local government.

Copies of *Article II: A Guide to the 2007-2008 N.C. Legislature* and the *Supplement* with committee assignments are available for \$25 a set, which includes tax, postage, and handling. To order, write the Center at P.O. Box 430, Raleigh, NC 27602, call (919) 832-2839, fax (919) 832-2847, or email tbromley@nccppr.org.

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For more information, contact Sam Watts, policy analyst, or Ran Coble, executive director, at the N.C. Center for Public Policy Research at (919) 832-2839.

Trends in Legislative Demographics

Category	Year and Number of Members per Category										
	1987	1989	1991	1993	1995	1997	1999	2001	2003	2005	2007
African Americans											
Senate	3	4	5	7	7	7	7	7	6	7	8
House	13	13	14	18	17	17	17	18	18	19	20
Total	16	17	19	25	24	24	24	25	24	26	28
percent	9%	10%	11%	15%	14%	14%	14%	15%	14%	15%	16%
Women											
Senate	4	4	5	7	6	6	7	5	7	7	7
House	20	21	20	24	22	23	24	27	28	32	36
Total	24	25	25	31	28	29	31	32	35	39	43
percent	14%	15%	15%	18%	17%	17%	18%	19%	21%	23%	25%
Native Americans											
Senate	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
House	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Total	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
percent	0%	0%	.6%	.6%	.6%	.6%	.6%	.6%	.6%	.6%	.6%
Hispanics											
Senate	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
House	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Total	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	2	2	2
percent	0%	0%	0%	0%	.6%	.6%	.6%	.6%	1.2%	1.2%	1.2%
Democrats											
Senate	40	37	36	39	26	30	35	35	28	29	31
House	84	74	81	78	52	59	66	62	60	63	68
Total	124	111	117	117	78	89	101	97	88	92	99
percent	73%	65%	69%	69%	46%	52%	59%	57%	52%	54%	58%
Republicans											
Senate	10	13	14	11	24	20	15	15	22	21	19
House	36	46	39	42	68	61	54	58	60	57	52
Total	46	59	53	53	92	81	69	73	82	78	71
percent	27%	35%	31%	31%	54%	48%	41%	43%	48%	46%	42%
Turnover Ratio*											
Senate	6	5	8	10	15	11	7	5	15	12	4
percent	12%	10%	16%	20%	30%	22%	14%	10%	30%	24%	8%
House	25	25	21	42	39	22	16	15	35	21	19
percent	21%	21%	18%	35%	33%	18%	13%	13%	29%	18%	16%

* If a member served in the legislature during the immediate past session, he or she is not considered a new member. If a member served in either chamber during sessions prior to the immediate past session, however, he or she is considered a new member.

This research was drawn largely from editions of the North Carolina Manual and from information obtained from the House and Senate Principal Clerks, and does not reflect members who first reached the General Assembly by appointment to legislative vacancies caused by death or resignation.

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Trends in Legislators' Occupations

Occupation	Year and Number of Members per Category											
Senate	1987	1989	1991	1993	1995	1997	1999	2001	2003	2005	2007	
Bank/Financial	1	1	1	2	1	1	0	6	5	3	2	
Business/Sales*	19	15	16	12	15	14	15	13	12	15	10	
Construction	1	4	3	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	
Education	3	3	4	7	5	3	2	4	4	4	4	
Farming	6	5	6	7	6	7	8	8	3	4	4	
Health Care	0	0	2	3	3	4	3	4	4	2	2	
Homemaker	0	1	0	1	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	
Insurance	4	2	1	2	2	2	1	1	0	0	0	
Law	21	20	17	18	16	19	19	21	15	18	17	
Manufacturing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	
Minister	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	
Real Estate	6	6	6	4	6	7	4	3	6	5	4	
Retired	4	6	6	8	7	8	10	9	11	14	17	
Self-employed**	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	5	9	10	

House of Representatives

Bank/Financial	0	0	0	4	2	3	2	7	8	5	4
Business/Sales*	43	37	33	34	31	39	39	40	41	41	25
Construction	2	3	2	2	5	5	4	5	4	4	4
Education	12	7	15	14	14	8	8	19	21	16	19
Farming	12	8	11	12	10	8	8	8	5	3	3
Health Care	4	4	7	10	5	3	1	3	2	8	4
Homemaker	4	4	3	2	1	1	1	4	4	3	3
Insurance	10	8	12	9	10	8	9	9	6	5	4
Law	23	25	18	21	16	17	18	17	17	21	23
Legislator	0	0	0	2	4	3	3	5	4	5	7
Manufacturing	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	0	1	2	0
Minister	4	4	2	2	2	2	1	1	3	3	2
Real Estate	15	17	20	17	13	18	18	9	9	10	15
Retired	17	22	28	24	30	23	28	37	33	34	34
Self-employed**	0	0	0	3	1	5	4	10	8	10	13

Note: Some legislators list more than one occupation; thus, the total number of occupations may be higher than the actual number of members.

* Business/Sales includes Principal Clerk's listings of business, small business, consultants, and self-employed.

** Also includes consultants

Six "Most Powerful" Senate Committees

1. Appropriations/Base Budget
2. Finance
3. Rules and Operations of the Senate
4. Judiciary I
5. Commerce
6. Education/Higher Education

Six "Most Powerful" House Committees

1. Appropriations
2. Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House
3. Finance
4. Judiciary I
5. Education
6. Commerce

N.C. Senate

President: Lt. Governor Beverly Eaves Perdue

President Pro Tempore: Marc Basnight

Deputy President Pro Tempore: Charlie S. Dannelly

Majority Leader: Tony Rand

Majority Whip: Katie G. Dorsett

Republican Leader: Philip E. Berger

Deputy Republican Leader: Tom Apodaca

Republican Whip: Jerry W. Tillman

Number of Senators: 50

Length of Term: 2 years

Demographics:

Democrats: 31 (62%)

Republicans: 19 (38%)

Men: 43 (86%)

Women: 7 (14%)

Caucasian: 42 (84%)

African American: 8 (16%)

Native American: 0 (0%)

Hispanics: 1 (2%) (Apodaca)

Total New Members: 5

New Members Serving

First Term Ever: 3 (6%) (Foriest. Goss.
McKissick, Jr.)

Returning After Hiatus of

One or More Terms: 1 (Queen)

Members Appointed to Fill

Vacancy in Prior Session

and Elected in 2006 to First

Full Term in Senate in 2007:

1 (Brunstetter)

Served in House in

2005–2006 Session:

2 (Ed Jones, Preston)

Most Terms in Senate:

16 (R. C. Soles, Jr.)

N.C. House of Representatives

Speaker: Joe Hackney

Speaker Pro Tempore: William L. Wainwright

Assistant to the Speaker: W. Pete Cunningham

Majority Leader: L. Hugh Holliman

Majority Whips: Larry M. Bell, Jean Farmer-Butterfield,
Larry D. Hall, Deborah K. Ross

Minority Leader: Paul (Skip) Stam

Minority Whip: William (Bill) C. McGee, Jr.

Deputy Minority Whip: Carolyn H. Justice

Number of Representatives: 120

Length of Term: 2 years

Demographics:

Democrats:	68	(57%)
Republicans:	52	(43%)
Men:	84	(70%)
Women:	36	(30%)
Caucasian:	98	(81.7%)
African American:	20	(16.7%)
Native American:	1	(.8%) (Sutton)
Hispanic:	1	(.8%) (McComas)
Total New Members:	21	(18%)
New Members Serving First Term Ever:	17	(14%: Avila, Boylan, Braxton, Brisson, Bryant, Cotham, T. Harrell, Hurley, Killian, McElraft, Mobley, Neumann, Samuelson, Tarleton, Thomas, Tillis, R. Warren)
Returning After Hiatus of One or More Terms:	2	(Blue, Love)
Members Appointed to Fill Vacancy in Prior Session and Elected in 2006 to First Full Term in House in 2007:	2	(Hall, Spear)
Served in Senate in 2005–2006 Session:	0	
Most Terms in the House:	15	(Brubaker, Holmes)