



The North Carolina Center for Public Policy Research

Your voice for good government

Accomplishments in 2010

Improving Public Policy

This was the best year ever for the N.C. Center for Public Policy Research in having our research affect public policy and improve the lives of the people of North Carolina.

■ **Making Federal Loans Available to Students in All of N.C.'s Community Colleges** – Two years ago, we were shocked to find that only 21 of North Carolina's 58 community colleges made federal loan programs available to their students. In April 2010, we testified before the legislature's Joint Select Study Committee on State-Funded Student Financial Aid and recommended requiring all community colleges to participate. The 2010 legislature agreed and passed a law that requires all 58 community colleges to make federal loan programs available to their students. These loans are the cheapest and safest way to borrow money for college. As a result, 177,000 more North Carolinians will be able to obtain a community college education.

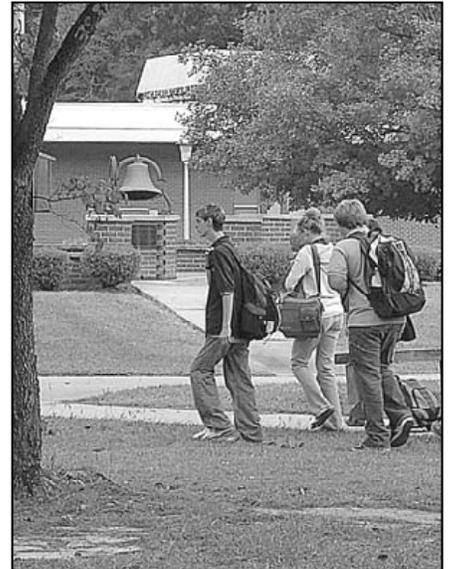
■ **Consolidating Student Financial Aid and Loan Forgiveness Programs and Helping Parents and Students** – We found 14 different state programs that use financial aid to address work force shortages in such fields as teaching and nursing. Students receiving aid under these programs have their loans forgiven if they work in the needed occupations in North Carolina. However, parents and students find it difficult and confusing to apply for 14 different programs, so the Center recommended consolidation of the programs. The 2010 legislature created a Working Group on the Consolidation and Simplification of State Student Financial Aid Programs. They recommended consolidating 12 of the 14 programs that we identified into one program. This will be easier to administer and much simpler for parents and students.

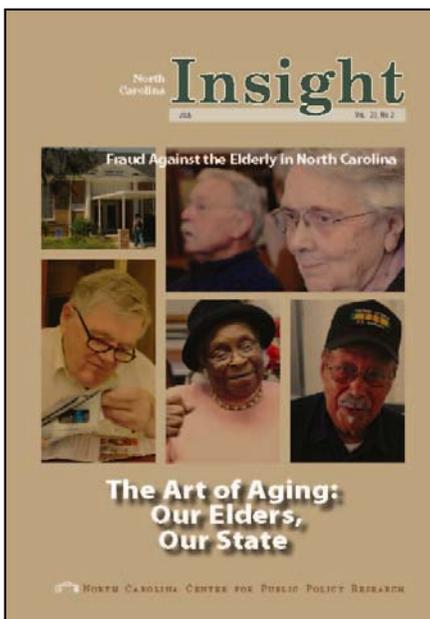
■ **Ending In-State Tuition for Out-of-State Athletes** – In our testimony before the legislature's Joint Select Study Committee on State-Funded Student Financial Aid, the Center recommended repealing the statute that gave in-state tuition to out-of-state athletes. The 2010 legislature agreed and repealed the law, saving the state \$15.5 million annually.

■ **Dedicating 25% of the Proceeds from Tuition Increases to Financial Aid** – For that same legislative committee, we testified that tuition had been increased at North Carolina's 16 public universities in 9 of the last 10 years, an increase of 144 percent. With another tuition increase authorized this year and student debt rising, the Center recommended that the legislature require that a high percentage of the proceeds from tuition increases be earmarked for student financial aid. The legislature agreed and required that at least 25 percent of the proceeds from tuition increases be earmarked for need-based student financial aid.

■ **Governor's Executive Order To Assess the State's Readiness for the Growing Aging Population** – Over the last year, the Center has published major research showing that the state's population aged 65 and over will almost double by 2030 and how that growth will affect the state budget and nearly all state agencies. On March 30, 2010, Governor Beverly Perdue responded by issuing Executive Order #54, ordering all agencies to "assess their readiness to serve our aging population." She then appointed 48 agency liaisons on aging issues.

■ **Governor's Executive Order Re-establishing the N.C. Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service** – In our research on the civic contributions of the elderly, the Center said that seniors' talents need to be tapped to help the state increase volunteerism, voter turnout, charitable contributions, and other forms of civic engagement. In 2010, Gov. Perdue re-established the N.C. Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service. In its plan for 2010-2013, the Commission specifically aims to engage aging Baby Boomers in service and volunteering.





■ **Serving as a Resource for Policy Roundtables on Aging Issues –**

The Center produced a video (see it at www.youtube.com/nccppr) summarizing our research that was featured at the start of each of the Governor’s six policy roundtables on key issues affecting the aging. These were held in Wilmington, Greenville, Greensboro, Charlotte, Asheville, and Boone. They focused on health and aging, the economics of aging, access and choice in services, lifelong engagement in civic contributions, homes and neighborhoods, and safe communities. Participants’ recommendations were forwarded to the Governor’s Conference on Aging, where Center staff gave the keynote address.

■ **Campaign To Ferret Out Medicaid Fraud –**

In the Center’s research on Medicaid and the aging, we found that 21 percent of all Medicaid dollars are spent on the elderly, with almost half of this for nursing home care. We also highlighted the Attorney General’s Medicaid Investigations Unit, which had recovered \$52 million from those convicted of defrauding the Medicaid program. In March 2010, the Governor kicked off a campaign to crack down on Medicaid fraud by partnering with IBM Corporation to track Medicaid records and uncover abuses by patients or health care providers. The new budget passed by the legislature estimated a savings of \$40 million.

■ **Reducing Fraud Committed Against the Elderly –**

The Center found that fraud committed against the elderly is on the rise and concluded that North Carolina needs to do more to protect its seniors. The Center made four recommendations to prevent and reduce fraud against the elderly and testified before the Legislative Study Commission on Aging in December.

“Your work has already significantly increased attention among policymakers, the media, and other major stakeholders to the challenges and opportunities that our aging population presents for our workforce, health care system, and State and local budgets. I know that the Division will continue to use your work for years to come, including helping us prepare for the next State Aging Plan....”

Dennis W. Streets, Director, N.C. Division of Aging and Adult Services

Persistence Over the Years in Obtaining Results from Prior Studies

■ **New Floodplains Maps To Mitigate Flood Damage (from our 2001 study) –** After disastrous hurricanes struck the state in 1999-2001, the Center found that flood damage had been compounded because most floodplain maps were badly out-of-date and homeowners couldn’t obtain flood insurance based on old maps. We recommended new floodplain maps to more accurately predict flood hazards. Now, 99 of 100 counties have new floodplain maps in place.

■ **Progress in Eliminating Disparities in Health Outcomes by Race (from our 2004 study) –** Since our study, the legislature has appropriated \$2-3 million a year to eliminate racial disparities in health outcomes and published report cards on progress. The latest report finds decreases in teen pregnancies among Asians, adult obesity and homicides among Latinos, unintentional motor vehicle crashes among African Americans, and breast cancer deaths and HIV diagnoses among Native Americans.

■ **Training in Domestic Violence Cases for Judges (from our 2005 study) –** For the sixth year in a row, the legislature enacted another of our recommendations to address domestic violence, this time requesting that the N.C. Supreme Court establish minimum standards of education and training for all district court judges in handling civil and criminal domestic violence cases.

■ **Preventing and Reducing High School Dropouts (from our 2007 study) –** For the fourth consecutive year, the legislature appropriated funds for dropout prevention grants, this year allocating \$13 million (in addition to funding in each of the last three years). As the Center recommended, the legislature *evaluated* the results of the previous years’ grants. Most importantly, the statewide dropout rate has declined for three years in a row, and the graduation rate has increased four years in a row.

■ **Helping Community Colleges Address Key Challenges (from our 2008 study) –** For the third consecutive year, the legislature appropriated funds in 2010 in response to specific Center findings and recommendations, including: (a) \$12 million to address equipment shortages that had forced community colleges to cancel 98 job training programs in an economy where job retraining is critical; (b) \$900,000 to provide mentoring for minority males in community colleges after their graduation numbers declined three years in a row; and (c) \$6.2 million for high-demand, high-cost training to address work force shortages in health-related fields, such as the need for 9,000 more nurses by 2015.



Educating the Public

A New Center Website: As part of the Center’s Strategic Plan, we began a Technology Initiative to make all 34 years of the Center’s research and expertise available to citizens 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. In April, we launched our new Website at www.nccppr.org. Center members, citizens, nonprofits, the media, donors, and policymakers now have online access to all of our policy research whenever they need it. We also feature information on how the policy process works and ways for citizens to be more effective in voicing their ideas or concerns about state policies. And, our Website has PowerPoint presentations and videos based on our research. Recently, we added a Facebook page, a LinkedIn group, a Twitter account, and a YouTube channel to take advantage of these social media outlets to spread the word about the Center.

Center Wins National Awards

in 22 states. GRA organizations promote transparency in state budgets and provide information to citizens about the performance of government programs. The Center won the top award for **Most Effective Education of the Public** for our work on issues affecting the aging. We also won an award for **Outstanding Policy Achievement** which goes to the group whose research leads to “tangible improvements in public policy.” This recognized the Center’s results in getting the legislature to address key issues facing NC’s community colleges.

In 2010, the Center won two more prestigious national awards for high-quality policy research from the national Governmental Research Association (GRA), a nonpartisan group of 33 public policy nonprofits

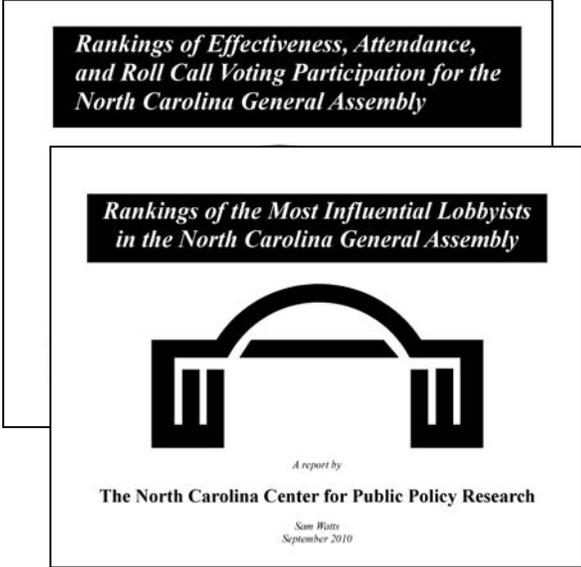
Enhancing Government Accountability

accountability and educate voters by publishing the 17th edition of rankings of effectiveness of all 170 members of the N.C. General Assembly. We have added rankings of legislators based on their attendance and their participation in roll call votes. The attendance and voting participation rankings tell citizens and voters how often their legislator was there to represent them. The effectiveness rankings tell them how effective their legislator was when he or she was there. Both help them assess their legislators’ performance.

Rankings of Legislators’ Effectiveness, Attendance, and Roll Call Voting Participation –

In April, the Center continued to enhance government

Rankings of the Most Influential Lobbyists – In September, we released the 15th edition of this resource to help citizens understand which key interests and organizations have clout with legislators. They also shed light on what is often an invisible process and show changes and trends in the lobbying profession.



“The effectiveness of legislators ebbs and rises from day to day. No rating system is perfect. But the Center’s rankings, which have been a part of North Carolina political life for 30 years, are a valuable service – especially for legislators, who have to remember that their work is being graded systematically. And, that report cards are going to be sent home.”
D. G. Martin, Columnist in 35 N.C. Newspapers

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2011: Conducting Nonpartisan Research on Key Public Policy Issues Facing North Carolina

19 percent was cut in the mental health budget in 2010. The state has implemented three major policy shifts in three years. The Center will evaluate what has worked and what has not. We will continue to examine mental health reform, including comparing North Carolina's reform efforts with those in six other states – three where it has worked well and three where it has failed.

Financial Aid for Students in Colleges and Universities – Now that we have improved financial aid policy in our 58 community colleges, we will begin to examine policies on financial aid for students in North Carolina's 16 public universities and 42 private colleges and universities in 2011. This will be the first independent analysis of these policies at a time when financial aid is critical in improving our college-going rate, our college completion rate, and the state's future economic competitiveness.

More on Issues Affecting the Aging – The Center will continue to examine key issues facing the aging in 2011 when the huge Baby Boom generation begins turning 65. We'll focus on how to address shortages in nursing and other health care professions, examine the policy options in providing long-term care, and look at the impact of the growth in the aging population on the state budget. This new work will be designed to shape the state's new Aging Policy Plan for the future.

State Water Policy – As our state's population grows at an unprecedented rate, so does our demand for water. Since June 2008, all 100 counties have been under some level of drought classification. And, South Carolina sued North Carolina in the U.S. Supreme Court on the issue of inter-basin water transfers. The Center's study of state water policy will assess the capacity of all reservoirs, what state and local governments are doing to deal with water supply and demand, and how to move from crisis management in times of drought to a long-term state water policy.

Citizens' Guide to the Legislature – In 2011, we'll publish the 18th edition of *Article II: A Guide to the 2011-2012 N.C. Legislature*, the most comprehensive legislative guide available. It contains biographical and voting information for each of the 170 legislators, as well as their committee assignments and counties in their districts. For legislators who served in the previous session, the guide will list five bills they introduced in 2009-2010, their votes on 12 bills of statewide interest, and rankings of attendance and roll call participation, as well as a history of their effectiveness rankings. And, for the first time, we'll make this available online so you can download it on your favorite handheld device.

What's on YOUR mind?

We welcome your suggestions for topics on which the Center's independent, nonpartisan research could make a difference. Send ideas to **P.O. Box 430, Raleigh, NC 27602**, call us at **(919) 832-2839**, fax to **(919) 832-2847**, or visit our new website at **www.nccppr.org**. Thank you for caring about improving public policy and enhancing the quality of life in North Carolina.

Our Mission

The North Carolina Center for Public Policy Research is an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to the goals of a better-informed public and a more effective, accountable, and responsive government. The Center identifies public policy issues facing North Carolina and enriches the dialogue among citizens, the media, and policymakers. Based on our research, the Center makes recommendations for improving the way government serves the people of this state.