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**HOW THIS LEGISLATURE IS DIFFERENT
AND HOW THAT AFFECTS STATE POLICY**

The 2013-2014 N.C. General Assembly differs from other recent legislatures in its record numbers of Republicans and African Americans, its high numbers of freshman and sophomore legislators, and its large numbers of proposed Constitutional amendments. Like legislatures before 2011, it has more legislators with local government experience and with business-related occupations. Surprisingly this year, these state legislators with local government experience are involving themselves in many local issues on which previous legislatures would have deferred to local officials. Finally, this year's legislature continues recent trends in having more legislators who first came to office by appointment to a vacancy, more retirees, and a rebound in the number of lawyers. All of these trends are highlighted today by the N.C. Center for Public Policy Research as it released the 19th edition of *Article II*, its citizens' guide to the legislature.

"This year's legislature is not just different because the Republicans have a super-majority," says Ran Coble, executive director of the Center. "It's different in its make-up and its interest in lots of constitutional amendments and state involvement in local issues. And, more than half of the legislators in both parties were not there just three years ago, so they feel less bound to decisions made by previous legislatures – Democrat or Republican," added Coble.

Record Numbers of Republicans

Republicans last controlled all three branches of state government in 1898. This year marks the highest number of Republicans in the legislature in more than a century, as Republicans hold 110 of the 170 legislative seats – 33 in the 50-member Senate and 77 in the 120-member House. This is called a "super-majority" because it is more than the three-fifths needed to override a Governor's veto and to submit amendments to the state Constitution to the voters for approval.

Large Number of State Constitutional Amendments Proposed

At least 18 different amendments to the state Constitution already have been proposed this year. These include proposals to prevent government from using its eminent domain powers to condemn property for economic development purposes, to add an anti-union "right to work" provision to the Constitution, and to restrict limitations that could be placed on those who hold "concealed carry" gun permits. Other proposed Constitutional amendments would limit legislative leaders to two 2-year terms, would have the Governor and Lieutenant Governor run as a team, would appoint instead of elect the Superintendent of Public Instruction, and would limit growth in the state budget to a formula based on inflation and population growth while requiring a supermajority vote to exceed the previous year's spending.

Record Numbers of African Americans Too

The 2013 N.C. General Assembly has 31 African American legislators, a record high. Though there are no African American Republican legislators in the N.C. General Assembly, and though African American and Republican legislators usually vote on different sides of most issues in the legislature, blacks' and Republicans' fates have been rising together the last 35 years.

In the early 1980s, a lawsuit named *Gingles v. Edmisten* (later *Thornburg v. Gingles*) forced the 1984 General Assembly to adopt single-member legislative districts where there were concentrations of black voters. In 1983, before the lawsuit, there were 12 black legislators and 24 Republican legislators. In 1985, with the new single-member districts in place, there were 16 black legislators and 50 Republicans.

In 1989, the two unlikely allies teamed up to pass legislation that eliminated many political party runoff primaries. Under old law, a candidate had to receive one vote over 50 percent to win a political party's nomination. Some African American candidates would lead the first primary but get eliminated by white voters who backed another candidate in the runoff. For example, this happened to Rep. Mickey Michaux (D-Durham) in a 1982 Democratic primary for a 2nd Congressional District seat. Michaux led the first primary but lost in a runoff. He then successfully sponsored the 1989 bill to lower the runoff primary vote threshold to 40 percent.

Near-Record Turnover in 2011 and 2013 Legislatures

After the Republicans won a legislative majority in the 2010 elections, turnover in the legislature increased with 42 freshmen serving in their first term in 2011. Gaining a majority gave Republicans the right to draw new legislative districts that will be used for the next 10 years. As a result, Republicans increased both their majority and legislative turnover in 2013, with 50 more freshmen (41 in the House, 9 in the Senate) now serving their first term ever.

In addition to these 50 freshmen, the 2013 legislature also has three members (Senator Tamara Barringer and Representatives Ted Davis and Allen McNeill) who were appointed late in 2012 to vacancies created by resignations. These three could be considered freshmen in 2013 since they had not previously served while the legislature was in session.

And, the 2013 legislature has five more members who moved from service in the House in 2011-2012 to Senate seats this year (Senators Angela Bryant, Bill Cook, Earline Parmon, Shirley Randleman, and Norman Sanderson). "The 50-member Senate can be a very different experience for legislators who are used to a 120-member House," said Coble. Finally, three legislators (Senator Don Davis and Representatives Robert Brawley and Joe Sam Queen) returned in 2013 after being out of the legislature for gaps ranging from three to 15 years. Overall, a total of 95 current legislators in 2013, or 56%, were not in the legislature just three years ago.

Reverting to the Norm: Local Government Service Once Again a Path to the Legislature

Traditionally, service on local city councils, boards of county commissioners, and local school boards was a common path to election to the legislature. A key distinction, however, is that county commissioners run on a partisan basis, while most city council races are nonpartisan on the ballot. But, even with the large freshman class of 42 in the 2011 legislature, only 14 of those freshmen had local government experience. But in 2013, that number increased sharply, with 24 freshmen having experience as elected officials in local government.

"I do think that it is very useful to have local government experience, and not just county commissioners, but also mayors and city councilmen. It gives you an experienced perspective when you get up here," says Rep. Rick Catlin (R-New Hanover) in an interview in *County Lines*, a publication of the N.C. Association of County Commissioners. Catlin is a 2013 freshman who previously served on the New Hanover County Board of Commissioners.

The jump from the local to state level is “a tremendous adjustment,” says Rep. Nathan Ramsey (R-Buncombe) in *County Lines*. “I went into this process thinking from a policy area that I had a fairly good understanding of mental health and the community colleges and even the university system. But what I found is that this has been a much greater learning process than I anticipated just because the structure is entirely different,” added Ramsey, a new legislator in 2013 and former Chairman of the Buncombe County Board of Commissioners.

Paul Meyer, Director of Governmental Affairs for the N.C. League of Municipalities, says local government service is a “super training ground” for service in the legislature. David Thompson, executive director of the N.C. Association of County Commissioners, says that 213 bills in the 2013 legislature “could impact county government or our services.” This is about 20% of the 1,075 bills introduced as of early April. He says that number is not surprising since “counties are direct partners with the state” in delivering services in education, social services, health, and mental health.

But, the 2013 Legislature Is Involved in Many Issues Traditionally Left to Local Governments

Surprisingly, the 2013 legislature is involving itself in many issues traditionally left to local governments. State lawmakers have introduced bills to have county commissioners take over many decisions that now are made by local school boards, to change the terms and district boundaries for Wake and Guilford county school boards, to ease local government restrictions on homebuilders, and to limit when cities can set standards for home designs. State legislators also have introduced bills to transfer the Asheville water system and the Charlotte airport to regional authorities.

The legislature is also moving to cancel a contract with the city of Raleigh that would convert the Dorothea Dix Hospital property into a city park, and they are considering a constitutional amendment to restrict the ability of cities to annex property. Still other legislators seek to end local governments’ ability to levy a business franchise tax on utilities, which constitutes about 4% of municipalities’ total tax revenues.

Traditionally, local issues would be decided in consultation between local government officials and the local delegation of all legislators representing the county. This year, state legislators are involving themselves in local issues outside of the counties they represent.

Pattern of Legislators’ Occupations Reverts to the Norm

In past years, the legislature was dominated by people whose occupations were business-related. That had changed by 2009 when only 54 legislators listed business-related occupations. But, that downward trend reverted to the norm this year, as 73 legislators list occupations in banking, business and sales, construction, insurance, manufacturing, and real estate.

Other leading occupational backgrounds for legislators this year are law (36) and education (15). Forty-one, or almost one-fourth, of the current 170 legislators are retired, compared to 32 retirees 20 years ago.

Continuing a Trend: Many Legislators Are First Appointed, Not Elected to Office

Twenty-five (15%) of the current 170 legislators first came to the General Assembly by appointment instead of election. Twelve of these 25 appointments were just in the last five years. This compares to 23 appointed legislators in 2001 and 20 in 1991. A high number of deaths and resignations has helped spike this trend in recent years. Senators Don East, James Forrester, and Ed Jones, as well as Representatives Larry Brown and William Wainwright all died before their terms in the 2011-2012 legislature ended.

About the Center's Guide to the Legislature

These and other legislative trends are outlined in *Article II: A Citizen's Guide to the 2013-2014 North Carolina Legislature*. The Center has published a guide to the legislature since 1977.

Authored by Center attorney Mebane Rash, this citizens' guide contains profiles and photos of each of the 170 members of the General Assembly; 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 2011-2012 session, the guide lists five bills they introduced in that session and their votes on 12 bills of statewide interest. It also includes past rankings of each returning legislator's 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 2012.

Article II also contains important information for citizens, lobbyists, and reporters, including each legislator's political party affiliation, home county, current legislative office address and telephone number, e-mail address at the General Assembly, legislative seat number, and all committee assignments. The guide shows seating charts in the House and Senate, committee meeting schedules, and deadlines for introducing various kinds of bills and resolutions. The guide also includes demographic and occupational trends for the General Assembly since 1993. Finally, the new guide also includes rankings of the most influential lobbyists in the legislature, the latest of which were released in July 2012.

About the Center

The N.C. Center for Public Policy Research is an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit research organization created in 1977 to evaluate state government programs and to study public policy issues facing North Carolina. The Center is supported in part by grants from 10 private foundations, 100 corporate contributors, and about 400 individual and organizational members.

In addition to publishing the citizens' guide to the legislature, the Center also publishes *North Carolina Insight* journal, which recently has included in-depth studies evaluating the state's effort in mental health reform, issues affecting the rapidly growing aging population in North Carolina, and key issues facing the state's community colleges, including lack of availability of federal student loan programs on 26 campuses. The Center's upcoming studies include further research on issues affecting the aging, comparing our state's mental health reform efforts with those of other states, and financial aid and college completion rates for students in the state's public and private colleges and universities.

Article II: A Citizen's Guide to the 2013-2014 N.C. Legislature is available in print as a 247-page book with a 66-page supplement with committee assignments for all legislators. The combined book and supplement are also available in digital format. The printed guide, including the supplement, is available for \$25. To order the print edition or view the digital edition, visit the Center's Website at www.nccppr.org. If you have any questions about ordering, contact Tammy Bromley at (919) 832-2839 or tbromley@nccppr.org.

For more information about the new citizens' guide to the 2013-2014 legislature, contact Ran Coble of the N.C. Center for Public Policy Research at (919) 832-2839 or rancoble@nccppr.org.

Trends in Legislative Demographics

Category	Year and Number of Members per Category										
	1993	1995	1997	1999	2001	2003	2005	2007	2009	2011	2013
African Americans											
Senate	7	7	7	7	7	6	7	8	9	7	9
House	18	17	17	17	18	18	19	20	21	18	22
Total	25	24	24	24	25	24	26	28	30	25	31
percent	15%	14%	14%	14%	15%	14%	15%	16%	18%	15%	18%
Women											
Senate	7	6	6	7	5	7	7	7	6	6	8
House	24	22	23	24	27	28	32	36	37	32	31
Total	31	28	29	31	32	35	39	43	43	38	39
percent	18%	17%	17%	18%	19%	21%	23%	25%	25%	22%	23%
Native Americans											
Senate	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
House	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Total	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
percent	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%
Latino											
Senate	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1
House	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0
Total	0	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	1
percent	0%	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%	1.2%	1.2%	1.2%	1.2%	1.2%	0.6%
Democrats											
Senate	39	26	30	35	35	28	29	31	30	19	17
House	78	52	59	66	62	60	63	68	68	52	43
Total	117	78	89	101	97	88	92	99	98	71	60
percent	69%	46%	52%	59%	57%	52%	54%	58%	58%	42%	35%
Republicans											
Senate	11	24	20	15	15	22	21	19	20	31	33
House	42	68	61	54	58	60	57	52	52	68	77
Total	53	92	81	69	73	82	78	71	72	98	110
percent	31%	54%	48%	41%	43%	48%	46%	42%	42%	58%	65%
Turnover Ratio*											
Senate	10	15	11	7	5	15	12	4	5	17	16
percent	20%	30%	22%	14%	10%	30%	24%	8%	10%	34%	32%
House	42	39	22	16	15	35	21	19	18	34	45
percent	35%	33%	18%	13%	13%	29%	18%	16%	14%	28%	38%

Note: This research was drawn largely from editions of the *North Carolina Manual*, information obtained from the House and Senate Principal Clerks, and previous editions of *Article II*.

* Turnover is different from being a new member to that chamber. If a member served in the legislature during the immediate past session, he or she usually is not considered a new member — unless he or she was appointed very late or after the 2012 session had adjourned. Therefore, Senator Tamara Barringer and Representatives Ted Davis and Allen McNeill are considered new members in 2013, while Representatives Tim Pittman and Jason Saine are not. If a member served in either chamber during sessions prior to the immediate past session, however, he or she is sometimes considered a new member. In these tabulations, Senator Don Davis and Representatives Robert Brawley and Joe Sam Queen are not new to the legislature, but those seats did turn over, albeit to legislators with previous experience and are counted here.

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Trends in Legislators' Occupations

Occupation	Year and Number of Members per Category										
Senate	1993	1995	1997	1999	2001	2003	2005	2007	2009	2011	2013
Bank/Financial	2	1	1	0	6	5	3	2	1	0	0
Business/Sales*	12	15	14	15	13	12	15	10	13	8	12
Construction	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	0	1	0
Education	7	5	3	2	4	4	4	4	7	3	5
Farming	7	6	7	8	8	3	4	4	3	4	2
Health Care	3	3	4	3	4	4	2	2	3	7	6
Homemaker	1	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Insurance	2	2	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Law	18	16	19	19	21	15	18	17	14	15	15
Manufacturing	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Minister	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0
Real Estate	4	6	7	4	3	6	5	4	3	5	3
Retired	8	7	8	10	9	11	14	17	17	10	10
Self-employed**	0	0	0	3	1	5	9	10	10	5	4

House	1993	1995	1997	1999	2001	2003	2005	2007	2009	2011	2013
Bank/Financial	4	2	3	2	7	8	5	4	1	3	4
Business/Sales*	34	31	39	39	40	41	41	25	19	28	32
Construction	2	5	5	4	5	4	4	4	3	3	4
Education	14	14	8	8	19	21	16	19	15	20	10
Farming	12	10	8	8	8	5	3	3	4	6	6
Health Care	10	5	3	1	3	2	8	4	4	7	9
Homemaker	2	1	1	1	4	4	3	3	3	2	1
Insurance	9	10	8	9	9	6	5	4	4	2	4
Law	21	16	17	18	17	17	21	23	26	24	21
Legislator	2	4	3	3	5	4	5	7	7	6	3
Manufacturing	0	2	2	2	0	1	2	0	0	0	1
Minister	2	2	2	1	1	3	3	2	2	3	3
Real Estate	17	13	18	18	9	9	10	15	10	16	13
Retired	24	30	23	28	37	33	34	34	30	30	31
Self-employed**	3	1	5	4	10	8	10	13	12	13	9

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 some self-employed.

** Self-employed also includes some consultants.