



**Representative W. David Guice**  
North Carolina House of Representatives  
District 113



Legislative Update Seven  
May 1, 2009

**Brevard, North Carolina** – Greetings from Raleigh! We continue to stay busy each day in the North Carolina General Assembly. Things are beginning to heat up with the budget in the House. The next few updates from Raleigh will primarily be about the budget. I feel like it is important to keep you all in the loop on our budget as we continue to face a worsening economic situation in North Carolina.

As you will recall the Senate sent us their version of the budget around two weeks ago. Earlier this week we had to send it back to the Senate for some corrections. I have the opportunity to be a member of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Justice and Public Safety and we continue to meet multiple times weekly. This portion of the budget covers the North Carolina Department of Justice, the North Carolina Department of Correction, the North Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, the North Carolina Department of Crime Control and Public Safety and the North Carolina Administrative Office of the Courts.

It is important for me to insert a key reminder at this point. The budget meetings that are taking place where all of the information is available only involve a few people. Those of us that are going to be asked to make a decision on a complete budget package are not given the entire picture until we are asked to vote on the budget on the floor. This is not the way to create a budget. As a former County Commissioner I understand the importance of having these budget discussions out in the open and having everyone at the table to help make these decisions.

We continue to see the amount of the budget shortfall grow. The numbers change daily but it is clear that we are facing a major deficit. It is imperative that we address the out of control spending that currently takes place in North Carolina. The budgets proposed by the Governor and by the Senate fail to address this out of control spending and further fail to make the necessary cuts needed to address the increasing shortfall we face. Until we address these issues we will never be able to have a stable budget and ultimately be able to expand many of the programs that do work.

Once again the leaders of our state government are trying to balance the budget on the backs of our state employees. Governor Perdue signed Executive Order Number Eleven this week which reduced by .5% the salary of all state employees, to include public school teachers. Additionally, this Executive Order established the guidelines for a state employee furlough program. Initially, Governor Perdue said that she would not reduce the salary of state employees and would not use a furlough program to help balance the budget. I believe that she has failed on her commitment to our state employees and we have started down a slippery slope on this specific issue.

As a retired state employee I do not support any efforts to balance the budget on the backs of our dedicated workers – those workers that educate our children, build our roads, operate our prisons and keep us safe. Our state employees are already seeing pay cuts in the form of less benefits, higher deductibles, higher premiums and higher co-payments in the revised State Employee Health Plan.

We must get back to basics in North Carolina if we are ever to achieve greatness for our children and grandchildren. I wholeheartedly support a zero-based budgeting approach that truly builds our budget from the ground up. We must closely look at each line item, scrutinizing every program to ensure we keep what works and end what does not work. It is only then, by truly examining the budget line by line, that we will be able to control spending and work for the best interest of all North Carolinians.

I am determined to continue to raise the level of public debate on these important issues. I am determined to continue fighting for the people of District 113 and indeed all people throughout North Carolina. I cannot do this alone – your feedback and your input are extremely important to me. I will continue to keep you updated on the happenings of the North Carolina House of Representatives. Please do not hesitate to contact my office with your questions and concerns.

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**Representative W. David Guice**  
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District 113



Legislative Update Eight  
May 8, 2009

**Brevard, North Carolina** – Greetings from Raleigh! Each day we continue we work hard on issues facing the people of North Carolina. Currently, we are meeting each day, extensively, about the budget. I want to update you on new budget figures we received last week and where we are headed from here. First, I would like to wish all of our mothers throughout District 113 a Happy Mother's Day. You all have played a key role in all of our lives. Thank you so very much.

On Tuesday, the Fiscal Research Division of the North Carolina General Assembly provided all members with updated numbers about the budget. I want share many of these updated figures with you, not to dwell on the negative, but to keep you aware of our state's fiscal situation. According to the Fiscal Research Division we currently face a \$3.2 billion shortfall for the Fiscal Year 2008-2009, which ends on June 30. In addition, the estimated shortfall between revenues and the continuation budget for Fiscal Year 2009-2010 is \$4.6 billion. As of April 15 final income tax payments were down by an unprecedented 40%, which creates a tremendous problem as a majority of our state's budget is funded through the income tax. Overall revenue collections are down by historical figures – 10.8% to be exact when compared to last year's collections.

Let me give you some historical data to compare with the current information. Based on the \$3.2 billion shortfall we face for this current fiscal year we are 15.2% under budget. During the last two recorded recessions in North Carolina history we were between 9% and 10% short. Additionally, as I stated earlier final tax payments are down by 40% this year. During the last two recorded recessions these tax payments were only down by 20% to 21%. The Fiscal Research Division has indicated, based on their research, that it will be 2013-2014 before revenue projections equal 2008-2009 levels. Clearly, my friends, we are facing a major budget crisis in North Carolina. It is time to think outside of the box and find a better way.

I am working each day to collect as much information as possible and work with leaders throughout the North Carolina House and many agencies to better grasp what can be cut and what cannot be cut. I have heard from many of you from throughout District 113, expressing your concerns for certain programs throughout the spectrum of state government. I do not believe that we can make wholesale cuts to agencies and prevent them from carrying out their core mission. I do; however, believe that we need to look in every corner of every department to find any waste and cut it. We must support those programs that work and eliminate those that do not work. Additionally, we must look at streamlining government operations and administration. It is imperative that we consider every option – in these times we cannot have any "sacred cows" – everything must be on the table.

There continue to be additional issues of importance being heard in committees throughout the House. For example, this past week I was able to successfully move one of my probation reform bills out of one committee and onto its' next committee. These reforms are important, but as with everything right now, must be viewed against the backdrop of our budget crisis. I was also able to, this week, work with Representative Justin Burr to ensure that another bill to further protect law enforcement officers moved successfully out of one committee and onto its' next committee.

I am determined to continue to raise the level of public debate on the issues that are important to District 113 and indeed all of North Carolina. As I said earlier, we must find a better way. The time has come to streamline state government operations, eliminate wasteful spending and support those programs that work and eliminate those that do not work. I cannot do this alone – your feedback and your input are extremely important to me. I will continue to keep you updated on the happenings of the North Carolina House of Representatives. Please do not hesitate to contact my office with your questions and concerns.

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Representative W. David Guice  
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District 113



Legislative Update Nine  
May 15, 2009

**Brevard, North Carolina** – Greetings from Raleigh! Things continue to remain hectic in the General Assembly these days. This week I want to update you about the budget, the crossover deadline and some legislation that moved through this House this week.

The crossover deadline was this past week. This deadline signifies the time that all bills, other than budget or finance related bills, must pass one body of the General Assembly to be considered by the other body of the General Assembly. Thousands of bills have been entered for consideration by the North Carolina House of Representatives. All of these bills have been assigned to one or more committees for consideration over the last few months. If they successfully get out of committee then they are heard by the entire House. This past week we worked long and hard each day to ensure that many of these bills were heard before the crossover deadline. Unfortunately, many bills never made out of committee and will have to wait until the next session of the General Assembly to be reintroduced and possibly see action.

There are two specific bills that are of particular interest to me that I would like to talk with you about this week. One is a statewide bill to allow local control over the school calendar and the other is a bill to amend conditions for probation.

House Bill 593 is legislation that seeks to allow local school districts to once again have control over the creation of their academic calendars. Additionally, the bill requires that all local school districts hold a public hearing on the issue of the school calendar to receive public input and hear from all aspects of the community impacted by the start and end dates of the school year. The initial language of this legislation stated that school can start anytime after the second Monday in August and go until June 10 if necessary. I have always supported legislation that returns control of the school calendar back to our local school districts. I do not believe that the North Carolina General Assembly had any business getting into this issue to begin with in 2004. I, along with others, had trouble with this bill extending the school ending date to June 10. I talked with the bill sponsors before the bill came to the floor for a vote and prepared an amendment that slightly changed the language in the legislation. Now it states that school year can begin after the second Monday in August and cannot go any longer than 42 weeks after the start date. This amendment received sweeping bi-partisan support and passed the House 109-3.

I believe this is a strong compromise for the educational and business communities of North Carolina. It is important to allow our local school districts the opportunity to control their own school calendars while recognizing the importance of the tourism industry throughout North Carolina. As a former county commissioner I understand the importance of local control on these issues and as a former business owner I understand the importance of the tourism industry. This amendment, and now this legislation, will allow for more local control and will protect the number of days within the summer for travel and extra employment opportunities.

House Bill 859 was also heard on the floor of the North Carolina House this week prior to the crossover deadline. This legislation seeks to amend the conditions of probation by making conditions that were previously considered special conditions now standard conditions of probation. For instance, individuals on probation will now be required to submit to warrantless searches, random drug tests and cannot be in possession of illegal substances or the presence of a known offender of illegal substances. This legislation has received bi-partisan support throughout its committee hearings and I am proud to report that it passed the entire House 116-0 this past week. House Bill 859 now heads to the North Carolina Senate for their consideration. I plan to follow this legislation closely and work my colleagues in the Senate to ensure that it passes.

We continue to work hard each day on the floor of the House and in our committees to address the serious budget issues that we currently face in North Carolina. While we continue to receive budget updates from the Fiscal Research Division we are still awaiting specific programmatic budget numbers so we can begin our budget planning. The bottom line, as I have said to you before, is that we face a serious problem and we cannot continue conducting business in North Carolina as we have in the past. It is time for us to find a better way.

I am determined to continue to raise the level of public debate on the issues that are important to District 113 and indeed all of North Carolina. I cannot do this alone – your feedback and your input are extremely important to me. I will continue to keep you updated on the happenings of the North Carolina House of Representatives. Please do not hesitate to contact my office with your questions and concerns.

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**Representative W. David Guice**  
North Carolina House of Representatives  
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Legislative Update Ten  
May 22, 2009

**Brevard, North Carolina** – Greetings from Raleigh! We continue to work very hard to try and manage the serious budget crisis that we currently face in North Carolina. It is my belief that the next couple of weeks I will be updating you primarily on the happenings with the budget in the North Carolina House of Representatives.

I would first like to wish everyone a happy Memorial Day. This is an opportunity for us to take a moment and reflect on those that have given the ultimate sacrifice for our country and our freedoms. Our country is built by those that are willing to sacrifice their all on the altar of freedom. It is important that we take time to remember that sacrifice and remember those that have come before us. In addition, we must focus on the work at hand to ensure that our freedoms remain intact. I had the opportunity to participate in our local Memorial Day Service this past Saturday while I was home in Brevard. It was a great time together as neighbors to remember those who have sacrificed and why they did so.

We continue to receive updated numbers and budget targets for the next two fiscal years. Let me share with you my friends - it is certainly a bleak situation. Our overall budget targets for the next fiscal year are around \$16.8 billion and around \$16.9 billion for the following fiscal year. These targets represent an approximately \$5 billion reduction in state spending. I believe that we can all agree that these targets will require tremendous cuts. Below are the target numbers as provided to me last week by the Fiscal Research Division.

	<b>2009-2010 Target</b>	<b>2010-2011 Target</b>
Education	10,501,119,650	10,346,180,503
General Government	410,195,342	404,401,094
Health and Human Services	3,554,649,899	3,917,282,304
Justice and Public Safety	1,956,466,473	1,928,227,699
Natural and Economic Resources	379,600,676	374,591,735
Total	16,802,032,040	16,970,683,335

As we consider what to cut and what to save it is important that we have as much information as possible. Along the road to trimming these agency budgets, we cannot neglect the core mission of each state agency. For instance, we must maintain the tools necessary for those involved with the justice and public safety systems throughout North Carolina to their jobs – keeping all of us safe. Additionally, we must not cut so much that we send our educational system back ten, even twenty years. It is imperative that we truly examine each program, cutting those that do not work and supporting those that have a proven track record of working.

Over the last few weeks many of you from home have contacted me and expressed your concerns about the overall size of our state government. I agree with your concerns. We must have the most efficient and effective government possible. This is going to require us to honestly look at the way we conduct business in Raleigh and to find ways to streamline government operations. We can do this and we should do this prior to program and personnel elimination. Our government must work for the people of North Carolina.

We must find a better way to conduct business throughout our state government. I plan to talk about these issues as loud as possible in committee meetings and on the House floor. I cannot do it alone. I need your help. Your feedback is extremely important to me. Please contact my office with your questions, input and concerns. I will keep you updated through these updates as well as press releases as we move through these next few, very critical, weeks.

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**Representative W. David Guice**  
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Legislative Update Eleven  
May 29, 2009

**Brevard, North Carolina** – Greetings from Raleigh! I am going to spend our time together this week talking about the current budget discussions going on in the North Carolina House of Representatives.

I am humbled and proud to represent all people throughout District 113 – in Polk County, in Henderson County and in Transylvania County. I have seen many great things and some disappointments in my short time in the North Carolina House. So far, my biggest disappointment has been the manner in which the budget discussions have been conducted.

Most of these meetings are held behind closed doors and only take place with a select few members of the House. A majority of Republicans and Democrats are left out of the discussions and we are only asked to vote on the final product. As a former County Commissioner I am used to sitting down over the course of several meetings and going through the budget line by line to see what needs to be eliminated and what needs to be supported. This is simply not the case in Raleigh.

For the past several weeks I have talked about how we must find a better way to conduct business in Raleigh. For me, this has taken on a new meaning. Not only do we need to find a better way to manage taxpayer's dollars, but we also need to find a better way to govern in Raleigh. Everything that we do as members of the North Carolina General Assembly should be in the open. Nothing should be hidden from fellow Legislators and nothing should be hidden from the people of North Carolina. We must create an environment of inclusion, not exclusion.

We face an historic budget crisis in our state and for House leaders to present budget proposals one week and expect members to vote the next is irresponsible. These cuts, and there will be cuts, will impact programs and services for years to come in North Carolina. I believe that it is important to have as many people at the table with as many ideas as possible throughout these discussions.

I am more committed than ever to find that better way to conduct business in Raleigh – to continue to lift up the voices of the people. There are many of us in Raleigh that are frustrated with the manner in which budget discussions continue to be conducted in the General Assembly. My goal is to work with others that share my concerns, to continue to fight for those programs and services that work, to continue to advocate for sensible and controlled government spending and to protect our state employees. I cannot do it alone! I need your help.

Over the last few weeks many of you have expressed your concerns about the potential cuts in programs and services. Please keep the emails, phone calls and letters coming. Trust me when I say that I share your thoughts and concerns each time I get the opportunity. It is only by working together that we will be able to find that better way.

I will keep you posted as I continue to gather additional information about the budget.

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