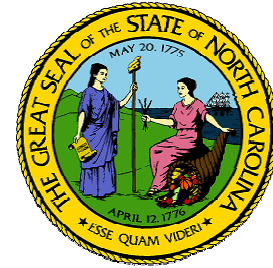




Senator Harris Blake
Senate District 22

Senate Update



2009 Legislative Session
April 16, 2009

Week eleven of the North Carolina General Assembly's 2009-2010 session started Monday night with the passage of a joint [resolution](#) honoring former North Carolina State University Women's Basketball Coach Kay Yow, who lost a hard-fought battle with breast cancer earlier this year. Coach Yow led the Lady Wolfpack to win more than 700 games and four Atlantic Coast Conference tournament championships and coached the U.S. Olympic team to a gold medal in 1988. But for many people, Kay Yow is best remembered for her unwavering courage and resolve while fighting cancer. She raised public awareness and money for research and remained devoted to her team through the most difficult times in fighting the disease. Coach Yow is truly an inspiration to all North Carolinians.

On Tuesday morning, Senate and House Republicans hosted a news conference to call for reform of the broken budgeting process in order to balance the budget and control future growth of government spending. They urged passage of [Senate Bill 1052](#), "Limit General Fund Expenditures." The bill, introduced by Senate Republican Leader Phil Berger (R-Rockingham), would cap General Fund spending at the amount of revenues collected in the preceding calendar year and require that any surplus funds go to savings, capital improvements, repayment of state debt or taxpayer refunds.

"Reckless spending and taxing must stop," said Berger. "Irresponsible budgets adopted by state Democrats are directly to blame for North Carolina's current fiscal problems and our state's dismal unemployment rate. If adopted, this bill will make it unlikely that our state will face another fiscal mess like the one we have now."

On Wednesday evening, Sen. Berger spoke at a "Tea Party" in Raleigh. Among other things, Berger expressed his disappointment that family budgets are being stretched while politicians at the state and national level continue to spend tax dollars as if there is a bottomless pit of money available. He highlighted Senate Democrats' [\\$20.9 billion budget](#) which increases government spending by nearly \$1.5 billion and raises taxes by over \$1 billion without providing any details. Berger argued that during these difficult economic times, the state should implement spending cuts rather than more spending and tax increases which hurt the economy and cost jobs.

The Greensboro News & Record published an **editorial** agreeing with Berger saying: “It's preposterous to approve a \$20 billion spending plan without accounting for all the tax revenue needed to support it. Where the money comes from is important. Not all taxes are equal, nor do they affect all taxpayers alike... Senators can reject any tax package that's eventually presented to them by their leaders, but that would require starting over on the budget. It would have been much smarter to deal with revenues and expenditures together in the first place, which is how budgets are usually crafted...”

While Phil Berger was at the state capital speaking to a large and enthusiastic crowd that had gathered under the banner of the Tea Party, I enjoyed seeing many of my friends in Southern Pines at a similar event. It was America at its best. We were exercising our right of freedom to assemble and express freely our concerns; and we, as a free people, *should* be concerned at the ever-increasing size of our government.

In other news, the House Democrats passed a **bill** on Tuesday to bail out the bankrupt government-run State Health Plan. The legislation will cost taxpayers roughly \$710 million, raise premiums 10 percent per year for dependents of state employees and increase co-pays and deductibles. The bill, which was opposed by House Republicans, will now be considered by a conference committee.

On Tuesday evening, students at UNC-Chapel Hill violently disrupted and ended a speech by former Congressman Tom Tancredo (R-Colorado). Tancredo was attempting to speak about his opposition to in-state tuition for illegal immigrants. Earlier this month, a small contingent of students at several North Carolina community colleges and universities protested **legislation** introduced by Sen. Berger that would prohibit illegal immigrants from attending North Carolina community colleges.

Finally, a “crossover deadline” for bills to pass either the House or Senate is quickly approaching. All bills must pass one of the chambers by May 14th or they will not be eligible for further consideration this session.

The legislature’s bill **drafting** and clerk’s office were busy this week with **many proposed bills**; some bills of interest follow:

SB 723-*No Credit for Obscene Films*

Sponsor: P. Berger

An act to eliminate the tax credit for obscene film production

SB 1036-*Assault on Law Enforcement & EM Worker/Felony*

Sponsor: Brock

An act to increase the penalty for assault on a law enforcement official or emergency worker

SB 264-*Disabled Veterans Free at State Parks*

Sponsor: Preston

An act to allow disabled Veterans free admission in to State Parks

SB 398-*Security and Immigration Compliance*

Sponsor: Clary

An act to provide for regulation of illegal immigrants in North Carolina

To unsubscribe, please reply to this e-mail with “unsubscribe” in the subject line.

Senator Harris Blake

Raleigh Office: (919)733-4809

Pinehurst Office: (910)295-3613

harrisblake@earthlink.net

harrisblake.com