



Working to make North Carolina
the best place to be and raise a child.

2006 North Carolina Legislative Agenda

Health Insurance Coverage/Minimum Wage (H20)

Purpose: An act to provide a tax credit for small businesses to provide employee health insurance and to amend the wage and hour act to raise the state minimum wage to a livable wage. This act requires every employer to pay each employee at least \$6.00 per hour.

Importance: A fair day's work deserves fair pay. Congress has failed to increase the federal minimum wage since 1997 and as a result, minimum wage buys less today than the previous minimum of \$4.25 an hour did in 1995.

Bill Status: Approved by House on August 10, 2005 and referred to Senate Finance Committee on 8/11/2005.

Votes: H20 Passed 2nd House Reading 62 to 57

Related Bills: *Living Wage Act (H330)* H330 failed initially on 2nd Reading in the House after approval in House Commerce on June 1, 2005. This act proposes increasing the minimum wage to \$6.15 per hour. A wage increase has also been included in *2005 Economic Growth and Tax Relief Act (S344)*, which lowers the corporate tax rate while raising the minimum wage. S344 was re-referred to the Senate Finance Committee on 8/13/2005. *Raise Minimum Wage (H2174)*, a bill to raise NC's minimum wage by \$1 per hour passed the North Carolina House on 5/25/2006 by a vote of 68 to 39. The bill will be voted on for Third Reading in the House on 5/30/2006, when they return to full session. *Phase Out Tax Increases and Raise Minimum Wage (H1459)* was referred to the Senate Committee on Finance on 5/17/2006. This bill proposes increasing the minimum wage by 0.85 cents.

Schoolchildren's Health Act (H1502)

Purpose: This act requires schools to adopt policies that will limit children's exposure to toxic materials (such as mercury, arsenic-treated wood, diesel exhaust fumes, pesticides and mold and mildew) at school in order to provide a healthier learning situation for our children.

Importance: Since children spend a significant portion of their time at school, it is important that North Carolina state government address public health issues in the classroom and on school grounds in order to protect the health of school-aged children.

Bill Status: Referred To Senate Committee On Education/Higher Education on 5/25/2005.

Votes: Passed 2nd House Reading 115 to 0

Cell Phone Use by Drivers Under 18 Prohibited (S1289) (H2206)

Purpose: This act requires no person under the age of 18 years to operate a motor vehicle on a public street or highway while using a mobile telephone, hands-free mobile telephone technology, or any other additional technology associated with a mobile phone that would distract the driver while the vehicle is in motion.

Importance: An average of 174 child deaths by motor vehicle injuries occurred each year from 2000-2004. This act seeks to reduce fatalities among teen drivers by making the use of a mobile phone unlawful for drivers under age 18.

Bill Status: S1289 was referred to Senate Committee On Judiciary II on 05/11/2006. H2206 was referred to House Committee on Judiciary I on 5/18/2006.

Votes: None

Seat Belt Use Enhancements (S774)

Purpose: This act modifies the seat belt use statutes to enhance the use of seat belts, requiring each occupant of a motor vehicle to wear a seat belt at all times when the vehicle is in forward motion on a street or highway in this State.

Importance: North Carolina's current safety belt use rate is 86.7 percent. If North Carolina increases its seat belt usage to 90 percent, an additional 46 lives would be saved and a 100 percent safety belt usage would mean an additional 169 lives would be saved in North Carolina.

Bill Status: Re-referred to House Committee On Rules, Calendar, and Operations on 08/29/2005.

Votes: Passed 2nd Senate Reading 45 to 4

Expunge Nonviolent Felonies/Young Offenders (H1084)

Purpose: This act allows first-time offenders who are under 18 years of age at the time of the commission of a nonviolent felony to have their records expunged. The offender must pay restitution, have a clean record and perform community service. The most serious felonies (A-G) are not eligible.

Importance: This act affords young offenders a second chance so that one teenage mistake does not ruin the rest of his/her adult lives.

Bill Status: Referred To Senate Committee On Rules and Operations on 07/11/2005.

Votes: Passed 3rd House Reading 59 to 52

Appropriate Education for Suspended Students (H1747)

Purpose: This act ensures that schools provide an appropriate education to students who are suspended or expelled from public school in an alternative placement by appropriating \$40 million over 2 years to study and establish additional alternative programs.

Importance: The North Carolina Constitution guarantees that every child in North Carolina has the right to an opportunity for a sound basic education as reaffirmed in the Leandro court decision. Due to the social costs and negative social consequences as a result of school suspensions, a mandate to educate suspended children is necessary to ensure that basic rights of these children are protected.

Bill Status: Re-referred to House Committee On Education on 05/23/2005.

Votes: None