

End of Session Summary

Legislative Agenda for Children



Action for Children's legislative priorities affecting children in the areas of health, safety, early childhood education, K-12 education and economic security.

HEALTH

Agenda Item ~ Assure that ALL Children Have Access to Health Insurance

ACTION ~ Again this year, there was no cap placed on Health Choice enrollment. Children under 133 percent of the federal poverty level were shifted from Health Choice to Medicaid, per the Affordable Care Act. The final budget also included some additional cuts to Health Choice that mirrored changes made in Medicaid: provider rate freezes for some services, cuts to contracts, a shared savings plan, paying hospitals a smaller percentage of their outpatient costs, and a change in the way prescription drugs are invoiced. North Carolina policymakers voted against Medicaid expansion through the Affordable Care Act and declined to establish a state-based benefit exchange to implement the CA. By default, the federal government is establishing the required exchange for use by North Carolinians.



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JUVENILE JUSTICE

Agenda Item ~ Raise the Age of Juvenile Court Jurisdiction from 16 to 18 --for youth who commit misdemeanor offenses

ACTION ~ In 2013, HB725 Young Offenders Rehabilitation Act— would create a Juvenile Jurisdiction Advisory Committee to create a pilot civil citation process for juveniles and raise the age of juvenile court jurisdiction to include 16- and 17-year-olds convicted of misdemeanors. Amendments would provide gradual implementation through 2020 and then only if funds are available. HB 725 unanimously passed a House Judiciary Committee, Rules Committee and passed the 2nd reading on the House floor (61 to 37 margin). This marked the first year in the 7 year campaign (led by AFC) that a raise the age bill passed two committees and had a hearing on the House floor. The bill will require a 3rd reading to pass the House then will head to the Senate. The next legislative session begins May 14, 2014.

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Agenda Item ~ Adequately Fund the Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ)

ACTION ~ The final budget closed a total of four youth institutions across the state. Administrative cuts included three high-level, filled executive positions, and the Youth Development Center budget received a cut. Additional funding was allocated for a new Western Multipurpose Group Home, to respond to needs arising from the closure of the Buncombe Detention Center. In addition, \$1 million was provided to Juvenile Crime Prevention Councils to increase community programming for adjudicated youth, while \$316,000 was allocated for a new Center for Safer Schools.

EDUCATION

Agenda Item ~ Preserve and Expand Funding for ALL Early Childhood Programs

ACTION ~ The final budget added 2,500 pre-K slots, funded by \$12.5 million in lottery money. This is only half the slots the House had proposed but much better than the Senate plan to shift funds from pre-K to child care subsidies, effectively cutting 2,500 pre-K slots.

ECONOMIC SECURITY

Agenda Item ~ Preserve the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and other Tax Credits for working families

ACTION ~ H.B. 82 reduced the state EITC from 5 percent of the federal credit to 4.5 percent and kept in place the scheduled sunset of the bill at the end of the year (2013).

Final Budget for the 2013-2015 Biennium

The North Carolina General Assembly enacted a \$20.6 billion spending plan. The FY 2013-2015 budget represents a 2.5 percent increase over the current budget and included a recently-passed tax plan reducing personal and corporate income tax rates.

Visit Action for Children's *Policy and Budget Action* webpage for **line-by-line comparisons of child-focused sections of the Final, House, Senate and Governor proposed budgets** www.ncchild.org/policy-action.

