

***News from the Friends Committee on North Carolina
Legislation (FCNCL)
June, 2023***



Learning by Doing:
***How to Lobby Your
Legislators on Education***

What: Join FCNCL for a virtual workshop and lobby visit practice session focused on supporting equitable access to education in NC.

When: June 19th from 7:00 - 8:30 PM

Where: Zoom

Register now:
tinyurl.com/4cuas8kp

Presented by Friends Committee on North Carolina Legislation

You are invited to a workshop on lobbying the General Assembly on Monday, June 19. The workshop is titled "Learning by Doing: How to Lobby Your Legislators on Education" and will focus on supporting equitable access to education in NC. We will discuss the state of public education in NC and the legislation that is being put forward that shifts funding towards charter schools, as well as build lobbying skills through a demonstration and group practice.

This is an important time to contact our legislators prior to the end of the legislative session! While we are expecting to focus on education, the lobby and

storytelling skills learned in this workshop relate to all Friends advocacy issues, many of which are also on the horizon. You can register for the workshop [HERE](#).

Action Alert on School Vouchers in North Carolina

FCNCL recently released an Action Alert asking participants to contact their legislators to ask them to oppose the new “Opportunity Scholarships” bill. Specifically we asked them to reject expansion of the Opportunity Scholarships Program, or school voucher program, as this is the primary means by which the legislature is weakening funding for public education in NC. You can read the alert [HERE](#). You can read the related Fact Sheet [HERE](#).

If you would like to sign up to receive Action Alerts, you can do so [HERE](#).

What has the policy committee been up to this legislative session?

During this start of the 2023-2024 legislative session the NC General Assembly has been very prolific in generating bills that generally are not aligned with FCNCL’s priorities. In part this has been made possible by Republicans who currently have a veto-proof majority and know their bills have a good possibility of passing into law. It is unclear how many of the bills that are particularly misaligned with our priorities – those imposing limits on LGBTQ+ rights (HB43 and SB49), abortion restrictions (SB20), and education vouchers for all (SB406) – will ultimately be passed, or survive the governor’s veto.

During the past few months we have been studying and considering bills that have been filed, and have been engaged in detailed and nuanced discussions about them. Some of the bills present complicated issues that require a deep dive into medical conditions and medical practice. We are not all on the same page in terms of our knowledge and understanding, and so have taken this time to educate ourselves about them. In the case of reproductive freedom, which is an FCNCL legislative priority, we have been able to “piggyback” on statements from meetings which were prepared for FCNCL; thus we feel we are on firm ground on that issue (see piece on abortion in this newsletter). However, we are less clear about where our meetings stand in relation to issues on LGBTQ+ rights, and want to tread carefully before advocating a position on HB43 and SB49.. In fact,

we want to encourage meetings to address this issue in a manner similar to that of reproductive freedoms.

For bills that are aligned with our legislative priorities, we have prepared fact sheets on the poultry concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs) (HB722), which is unlikely to pass this session but was filed to start a conversation; and updates on Heirs Property bills (HB588 and SB548). The bills on Heirs Property have been refiled this session, but recently it appears that a study commission has been formed to look at this more closely, so we don't expect to see movement on this until early in 2024. Bills on commuting death penalty sentences for people on Death Row (S109) have also generated some important discussion and education.

Our First Lobby Day Was a Success!



Medicaid Expansion passed, but we must continue to ask our legislators to ensure that it remains in the budget.

Reflections on FCNCL Lobby Day by Tim Lindeman, FCNCL Clerk

Friends gathered together from across the state on Wednesday, March 22 for our first Lobby Day at the North Carolina Legislature in Raleigh. We had folks from as far away as Kings Mountain and students from Carolina Friends School. We were there to meet our personal legislators as well as to lobby for the passage of the long-overdue Medicaid Expansion bill.

I personally felt, as did everyone to whom I spoke, that the day was extremely successful and helped in establishing long-term connections with our legislators. FCNCL was recognized at the House meeting (as were a myriad of other groups) during the afternoon, in which the second reading of the Medicaid Expansion bill was passed. The third reading passed a day later and was signed into law by Governor Cooper the next week.

We should feel good about our first Lobby Day and our ability to join with other organizations to finally see this historic bill pass the NC legislature. The Medicaid Expansion will provide more than 500,000 people access to health care; a large percentage of those folks are people of color, which especially aligns with our striving to become an Anti-Racist organization.

We still have many things to turn our attention to in the coming months and years. But we should also celebrate this victory. Again, great thanks to all who helped make this eventful day happen!

My Experience at FCNCL Lobby Day by Catherine Griffith, Pastor, Jamestown Friends Meeting

I am a newbie – new to North Carolina, to FCNCL, to the Strategic Advancement and Engagement Committee, and to lobbying. On March 22, I set my alarm to get ready (business casual attire and walking shoes) to meet the van at New Garden Friends at 7:00 a.m. The van filled with chatter on the way to Raleigh.

Once there, we walked to the North Carolina Museum of History and found the Long Leaf Room, for orientation, along with coffee and a bite of breakfast. Senator Sydney Batch (D), one of the invited speakers, explained that Medicare Expansion (to be known as North Carolina Health Works) would pass and that its final approval would be tied to the budget along with some “terrible legislation.”

We stopped by the office of the other invited speaker, Representative Jon Hardister (R), who hadn’t shown up. He explained that he had been on his way when another group flagged him down. He gave his talk and only afterward realized his mistake.

Because the senate was not going to be in session that day, my senator, Michael Garrett, was not in his office, so we slid some FCNCL materials under his door. We squeezed into the office of my representative, Amos Quick III, who listened and took notes as one of us told about the hardships that lack of insurance options caused for her short-term employees. Representative John Faircloth made time for us between other visitors.

We asked each of the legislators we met with about the possibility of separating Medicaid Expansion from the budget – not happening. We also asked about what was being done to fund the enrollment process. Among other things, we learned that North Carolina would not enforce the cut-off for folks who had been enrolled in Medicaid during the COVID epidemic, to allow for the shift to NC Health Works.

I enjoyed chatting in the lunch line with people from another organization about their lobbying efforts. Over lunch, I got to explain the diversity of Quakers to someone who asked.

In the afternoon, we found seats in the gallery to watch the House session. Championship women’s basketball and volleyball teams from Elizabeth City State University were honored guests. When representatives welcomed various groups in the gallery, Representative Quick acknowledged the delegation from FCNCL. Then we watched as the House passed the second reading of the bill to expand Medicare.

