



## 100 Words from Jeff

We're just about at the halfway mark for this year's legislative session and I wanted to give you a quick update on some of the things I'm working on. It's not an exhaustive list - and there's more to come - but it's a decent summary.

I also wanted to give a glimpse into some of the bipartisan work that doesn't often make headlines. Almost every bill I have introduced or co-sponsored has at least some bipartisan support, despite how polarized things have become. The bipartisan bills tend to be smaller and less consequential, but it's important to show that common ground can still be found, even if it's in the smaller corners of our public policy debate.

Best,

## Here's What I'm Working On

- Provide funding that allows for full enrollment of our at-risk four-year-olds in Pre-K. Currently there is a waiting

list of roughly 10,000 kids due to lack of funding. This is also one of Gov. Cooper's top education priorities, and last year Republicans did support a small step in this direction, so this is an area where real progress is possible.

- Reform our outdated criminal sentences for opioids that treat having a bottle of pills as roughly equivalent to robbing a bank. This bill just passed its first committee in the senate. I learned about our antiquated and draconian laws for opioids as a criminal prosecutor and I'm pleasantly surprised at how quickly bipartisan support is building to modernize our approach.
- Move to independent redistricting and end gerrymandering. There is bipartisan support for this as well, but there is strong resistance from the leadership of the majority party. Unfortunately, the odds for this getting a vote this session are zero. I'm going to keep pushing this because it goes to the root of why our state politics has become so divisive.
- Close a loophole in our criminal law dealing with our habitual DWI offenders. This passed the senate last week.
- Raise the arbitrary cap on how much beer a craft brewery is allowed to produce. A lot of politics here between the big beer producers and the craft breweries. Ultimately, we need to let the craft breweries compete in a fair market. Some bipartisan support exists, but it's unclear if leadership will allow a vote.
- Create a high school elective for introducing teaching as a profession for students who are interested in becoming teachers. Good bipartisan support.

- Allow small farms to provide food to local schools.
- Combat food deserts by assisting small food retailers (i.e., gas stations) with stocking local produce.
- Reform our expunction laws to allow non-violent, low-level offenders to clean up their record. There is great bipartisan support for this and I'm hopeful we can finally get this done.
- Expand Medicaid. A number of Republicans now publicly support some version of Medicaid expansion, but it doesn't look like Republican leadership is going to allow this to come to a vote. This is a major missed opportunity every year it remains undone - it would mean health care for hundreds of thousands and jobs for tens of thousands.
- A number of bills assisting those who serve in the National Guard, for instance, by providing tuition assistance for service members who are seeking a professional certification. Strong bipartisan support; many of these should pass.
- Assist early childcare educators by easing the ability to transfer credits from community college to a university. Bipartisan support; good chance of passing.
- Increase crisis de-escalation training for law enforcement. Clearly a pressing issue.
- Reform the use of citizen's warrants to reduce the number of frivolous arrests. This is a major problem with our criminal justice system that most people don't even know exists. We've got bipartisan support to fix it.

- Extend the prohibition against lobbying by former legislators from six months to one year. This is unlikely to pass, for reasons you can guess.
- Allow a jury to consider the history of domestic violence in the prosecution of a domestic violence homicide for the purpose of establishing premeditation (also known as Britny's law). Strong bipartisan support.
- In addition to legislation, I'm also co-chairing the Early Childhood Education Caucus, which is a bipartisan group of legislators from both chambers who are dedicated to advancing the cause of early childhood.
- Please note: Most of these are non-budgetary items. Budget-making season has just begun and will involve more debate over our state's big-ticket items like salaries for state employees and teachers, community college and university funding, and financial support for our judicial system.



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