



North Carolina Spirits Association

Legislative Report
July 21, 2023

The North Carolina General Assembly is delaying formal work for at least another week while budget negotiations and summer travel delay actions that Republicans want to accomplish before this year's chief legislative session ends. Aides to House Speaker Tim Moore and Senate President Pro Tem Phil Berger confirmed this week that their respective chambers will not take votes or hold committee meetings this week or next week. The fate of five bills vetoed by Governor Roy Cooper earlier this month remain pending. The House has scheduled to take override votes on the House floor on August 7. Both chambers will most likely need all Republican members present to successfully override the Governor's vetoes.

Both chambers already took a break during the week that included July 4. Lawmakers had aimed to get a two-year state budget enacted by July 1, but negotiations over tax reductions and reserves have led to delays. It appears that mid to late August is the earliest the budget could be finalized and approved. State law sets no limits on when annual sessions must end.

North Carolina could open up to four new casinos, three of them on nontribal lands, under a proposal that House and Senate Republican lawmakers are discussing. The discussion has included authorizing up to three new casinos to be located in Anson, Nash and Rockingham counties. A fourth casino could be authorized for the Lumbee Indian tribe to operate in Eastern North Carolina. The proposal, which would allow the casinos to be built as part of so-called entertainment districts that would include hotels and other commercial developments, would likely also give the green light to state-licensed video gambling machines, Speaker Moore said this week.

The effort by Republican lawmakers to reach an agreement on new gambling legislation before the end of this year's session comes as more casinos open across the state line in Virginia. In particular, Republican lawmakers have cited the new Caesars casino resort opening next year in Danville, just an hour-and-a-half northwest of Raleigh, as a reason to consider allowing casinos in North Carolina, where the only casinos currently allowed to operate are on tribal lands in the western part of the state.

Former North Carolina legislator Andy Wells announced Thursday he will seek the Republican nomination for governor next year, saying he will focus on buttressing state government's financial and administrative positions against debt and inflation pressures if elected. Wells, a real estate developer and manager from Hickory who now sits on the state Board of Transportation, will join a Republican primary that includes Lt. Gov. Robinson, State Treasurer Dale Folwell, and former U.S. Representative Mark Walker. Wells served in the House for two years before joining the Senate in 2015.

The House and Senate adjourned on Thursday and will reconvene on Monday July 24 for a non-voting session.

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