



North Carolina Spirits Association

Legislative Report
September 15, 2023

Stalemate Over Casinos Threatens North Carolina Budget and Medicaid Expansion

Republican House Speaker Tim Moore and Democratic Governor Roy Cooper are both willing to proceed with the state budget without including casinos. However, the Senate is pushing to include casinos in the budget, which is causing a deadlock. Moore mentioned that 30 House Republicans will not support a budget that includes casino legalization, making it near impossible for the budget to pass with gaming provisions. Moore and Cooper emphasized the need to move forward without the casino issue, as the delayed budget is impacting essential investments and raises for state employees. Medicaid expansion is also contingent on budget approval. Cooper suggested that the casino matter should be addressed separately, possibly through standalone legislation, similar to the approach taken with sports betting earlier in the year. Moore anticipates that a budget will not be finalized immediately. However, the delay in the budget approval means that Medicaid expansion is unlikely to happen before 2024 due to the ongoing disruptions in the process.

Former North Carolina Supreme Court Justice Michael Morgan Announces Candidacy for Governor in 2024

Former North Carolina Supreme Court Justice Michael Morgan has announced his candidacy for the Democratic primary for governor in 2024, challenging the previously uncontested candidate, Attorney General Josh Stein. Morgan, with 44 years of service in state government and 34 years on the bench, believes his unique blend of experience makes him the most qualified candidate. However, Stein has already gathered significant donations and endorsements, including one from Democratic Governor Roy Cooper. Morgan criticizes early party backing of Stein, arguing it stifles competition.

If he secures the nomination, Morgan may face Republican Lt. Gov. Mark Robinson, and both candidates are African American, potentially leading to the state's first African American governor. Morgan emphasizes the need to move North Carolina forward, tackling issues like education funding, affordable healthcare, gun violence, economic stability, and criminal justice reform. He pledges to create a more progressive and inclusive state.

The North Carolina primary election is scheduled for March 5, 2024.

This Week at the General Assembly

This week at the General Assembly turned out to be an unusual and abridged one, with the primary objective being the passage of the State Budget scheduled for Wednesday and Thursday. However, those plans hit a snag on Tuesday, prompting the Speaker to make an unexpected

move - all bills were swiftly removed from the calendar, and House members were dismissed for the remainder of the week.

The sticking point that remains unresolved is the inclusion of casinos within the budget. The Speaker currently lacks the necessary Republican votes to ensure the budget's passage with casinos included. Nevertheless, negotiations persisted on Wednesday between Senator Berger and Speaker Moore. We remain optimistic that a resolution on the budget will be reached; it's likely a matter of when, rather than if.

BILL STATUS

Senate Bill 527, ABC Omnibus Bill, was approved by the House Finance Committee on Tuesday, and was referred to the House Rules Committee for further consideration.

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