

Newsletter - March 3, 2023

There's much to cover this week in governmental affairs. For starters we hope to see you in [Raleigh March 27-29 for our annual Legislative Meetings](#). If you are planning to come you can download our [app here](#). More info from NCR's The Advocate: "The legislative reception is Tuesday, March 28, 2023 at the NC Museum of History from 6:00 – 7:30 pm. Buses will provide transportation to and from the museum and you must register to attend. The Legislative Rally will be March 29 from 8:30-10:30 am at the Sheraton Hotel. Your Rally and legislative visit participation will be rewarded with special NC REALTOR® scarves and neckties."

Big news last week: The House and Senate in North Carolina have reached [an agreement to expand Medicaid](#). In a statement responding to the news, North Carolina's Department of Health and Human Services said that an expansion would bring "8 billion annually to North Carolina with no additional cost to the state, along with \$1.8 billion which can support behavioral health, public safety support, rural health care, and other needs." In other words, this is a big deal.

[The North Carolina Senate voted to legalize medical marijuana last week, 36-10](#). The time of the vote? 4:20 PM (a coincidence but an appropriate one). The bill now goes to the State House.

The last name Hunt is famous in North Carolina politics. [Now state Senator Rachel Hunt, the daughter of that former four-term governor, Jim Hunt, has announced her candidacy for Lieutenant Governor in 2024](#).

They just keep coming. ["An estimated 15.7 million people traveled along the Blue Ridge Parkway last year, once again making the scenic highway one of the nation's most-visited national parks."](#) According to The Roanoke Times: "Of the country's 464 national park sites, only three had more than 10 million visitors last year – the Blue Ridge Parkway (15.7 million), the Golden Gate National Recreation Area (15.6 million) and the Great Smoky Mountains National Park (12.9 million)." *As you probably noticed, two of those are largely here in Western North Carolina. That means people like what we have to offer.*

[NC House Speaker Tim Moore told WRAL News that a bill further restricting abortion access could be filed in the coming days](#). According to WRAL: "State law currently bans

abortions after 20 weeks, unless needed later on to save the mother's life." New restrictions could move that to 12 weeks.

[From McDowell news: "Ruby, the 78-foot-tall red spruce that served as the U.S. Capitol Christmas tree last year, has come back to the mountains of western North Carolina from whence it came. ... The tall trunk will be repurposed into musical instruments that will help bring joy to underserved North Carolina communities."](#)

Other NGCA items: [A bill filed to make school board elections in Mitchell and McDowell counties partisan.](#) Also filed:

- [HB 231](#) (Greene) YANCEY COUNTY OCCUPANCY TAX INCREASE
- [HB 232](#) (Greene) MITCHELL COUNTY OCCUPANCY TAX INCREASE
- [HB 233](#) (Greene) AVERY COUNTY OCCUPANCY TAX MODIFICATION
- [HB 66](#) (Adams) CATAWBA/NEWTON-CONOVER/HICKORY BD OF ED ELECT
- [HB 57](#) (Balkcom) CITY OF HENDERSONVILLE/PARKING METER PROCEEDS
- [HB 220](#) (Pickett) LANSING AND JEFFERSON OCC. TAX AUTHORIZATION
- [HB 83](#) (Clampitt) CHILD ADVOCACY CENTER IN SWAIN COUNTY An Act to Appropriate Funds to Establish a Child Advocacy Center in Swain County to Assist Abused Children

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