

CCDP Weekly News Digest
February 27, 2023

Important Dates to Remember

Through March 11 – Annual Precinct Meetings. Info and Sign-Up Links at: <https://www.ccdpnc.org/precinct-meetings-2023>
March 20 – Chatham County Board of Commissioners Meeting
April 15 – Annual CCDP County Convention

For more upcoming events and details, visit: <https://www.ccdpnc.org/calendar-of-events>

###

News from the North Carolina Democratic Party

This week's news releases:

North Carolina House Republicans Refuse to Close Domestic Violence Gun Loophole

In the North Carolina House of Representatives, Republicans advanced House Bill 50 to eliminate North Carolina's pistol permitting process and weaken the background check process. At a time when gun violence is at all-time highs, we need to move forward in strengthening background checks — not backwards.

Republicans also rejected an amendment to fix North Carolina's "domestic violence gun loophole." Courts have ruled that North Carolina's current law on assault is insufficient to make an abuser convicted under these laws ineligible to purchase firearms under federal law. This means a person convicted of misdemeanor assault against their spouse or partner in North Carolina can still purchase firearms, unlike in other states.

"Convicted domestic abusers should not be allowed to purchase firearms," said North Carolina House Democratic Leader Robert Reives. "It is way past time for North Carolina to close this dangerous loophole. Just days after a legislative committee voted unanimously to close the loophole, Republicans refused to do so today. They had the opportunity to do the right thing, but instead bowed to pressure from far-right groups." House Bill 50 will now go to the State Senate for its consideration.

ICYMI: NC Columnist Blasts "Partisan Charade" Of State Supreme Court

"Since the motions to rehear were clothed in Republican Party marching orders, no member of the strictly partisan majority even considered opposing them."

"Welcome to what will quickly become the most partisan court in North Carolina history," columnist Gene Nicols writes not even two months after the members of the Republican-majority State Supreme Court took their oath and flipped control of the judicial branch. In the last 60 days, the new court has quickly proved that they will fail to serve as a check on Republican legislators in the General Assembly, who have been "pioneers" of "defying the demands of constitutional democracy."

By deciding to rehear two major voting rights cases earlier this month just because they didn't like the previous ruling, Republicans have made a "partisan charade" out of the independent judiciary, threatening the public's confidence in the courts and the very foundation of our democracy.

Read more:

[Charlotte Observer: Welcome to what will quickly become the most partisan court in NC history](#)

- Over the past decade, no legislature in the United States has proven itself more needful of the effective constraint of independent judicial review than the North Carolina General Assembly.
- Reviewing judges determined that our lawmakers enacted the most extensive and persistent "racial gerrymanders ever confronted by a federal court." The harms had been "inflicted again and again, putting legislators into office under a cloud of illegitimacy" and "denying a constitutionally adequate voice in the state legislature."
- In a recent opinion, N.C. Supreme Court Justice Phil Berger Jr. seemed to boast giddily while citing a news article which described "a lasting Republican grip on the Supreme Court." But that was nothing compared to what came next.
- In early February, the new high court issued what the New York Times called "an extraordinary pair of orders" to rehear two major voting rights cases it had decided only seven weeks earlier. The 5-2 Republican majority opinion could point to no changed circumstance to justify the exceedingly rare decision. The altered court membership was all that mattered.
- It's important to note what a departure this is from legitimate judicial decision-making. If the two reopened cases had not been triggered by Republican Party requests, no member of the N.C. Supreme Court would even have considered supporting them. Since the motions to rehear were clothed in Republican Party marching orders, no member of the strictly partisan majority even considered opposing them.
- Welcome to what will quickly become the most partisan court in North Carolina history.

This Week's Point/Counterpoint:

POINT: North Carolinians don't want gun reform.

COUNTERPOINT:

- Common-sense gun safety reforms are widely popular among North Carolina voters.
- According to a [2022 study](#), 78 percent of North Carolinians support red flag laws that keep guns out of the hands of those that demonstrate a violent threat to themselves or others and 89 percent of voters said they supported requiring background checks, including more than 8 in 10 Republicans.

###

News from North Carolina Governor Roy Cooper

Governor Cooper Announces \$462.9 Million in Clean Water and Wastewater Infrastructure Funding, Tours Water Treatment Facilities in Lexington and Cullowhee North Carolina, Investing Historic \$2.3 Billion in Water Infrastructure Over Two Years

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Governor Roy Cooper announced \$462.9 million in funding for 249 infrastructure projects in 80 communities statewide that will strengthen North Carolina's drinking water, wastewater and stormwater systems. As part of this announcement, Governor Cooper and NC Department of Environmental Quality (NCEQ) Secretary Elizabeth S. Biser toured water and wastewater treatment facilities in Davidson and Jackson counties.

Aging and failing water systems are an obstacle for communities across North Carolina, preventing reliable access to clean drinking water and sewer services, and harming health, quality of life and economic development efforts. The state typically invests approximately \$200 million per year upgrading systems, but thanks to federal funds from the American Rescue Plan and Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, North Carolina is investing \$2.3 billion over two years supporting this critical infrastructure.

"Every single North Carolinian deserves clean drinking water, and aging water systems are a threat to the health and economies of too many of our communities," said Governor Roy Cooper. "Thanks to investments initiated by the Biden administration, we can make a once in a generation transformation in rebuilding water infrastructure for towns and counties throughout our state."

"Investing in water infrastructure provides communities with reliable, affordable access to clean water and the opportunity for future economic growth," NC Department of Environmental Quality Secretary Elizabeth S. Biser said. "The amount of funding requested highlights the extensive need for infrastructure investment across North Carolina."

Governor Cooper and Secretary Biser announced the new round of funding at the Lexington Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant. During the announcement, they highlighted \$27.9 million in funding the city will receive to create a new dewatering facility that will provide sewer lines all across Davidson County.

In Jackson County, Governor Cooper and Secretary Biser toured the Tuckasee Water and Sewer Authority in Cullowhee. The Tuckasee Water and Sewer Authority will receive \$4,130,000 for a drinking water treatment plant clearwell and a high service pump replacement. The Tuckasee Water & Sewer Authority was created in 1992 and serves Jackson County and the Towns of Dillsboro, Sylva and Webster.

"As the regional utility service provider, we are grateful for the State's support of our wastewater treatment facility," Tom Johnson, Lexington Water Resources Utility Director said. "These grant funds will allow us to enhance the efficiency and sustainability of our infrastructure, safeguard environmental health, and support continued economic development growth in the central part of North Carolina."

"Being able to move forward with the Clearwell and High Service Pump Replacement project makes our system much stronger and more resilient by adding much needed storage within our treatment process," Daniel Manning, Executive Director of Tuckasee Water & Sewer Authority said. "This in addition to the high service pumps, will allow us to manage and maintain our distribution system in a more effective manner. Our goal is to be able to serve our community without disruption regardless of the circumstances and this is a big step to ensure that level of quality that we are known for. Having support from the NC Department of Environmental Quality in this program, along with several other programs we have participated in, is much appreciated."

For this round of funding, Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) received 649 applications from 91 of North Carolina's 100 counties, and reconsidered applications from Spring 2022. In total, 734 applications were considered for funding, representing more than \$3.5 billion. The awards are funded by a portion of \$2.3 billion from the American Rescue Plan Act, State Revolving Funds (including Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funds), and Community Development Block Grant funding.

Notable construction projects include:

Drinking Water

- Gray's Creek Water and Sewer District in Cumberland County will receive \$15 M in extend waterlines to serve 1,028 residences and two elementary schools in a region contaminated by GenX/PFAS.
- McDowell County will receive \$2.8 M to install waterlines and approximately 107 new service connections to extend water service from the Nebo Public Water System to four residential communities of the Nebo East End Area served by community wells contaminated with coliforms.
- Town of Pittsboro in Chatham County will receive \$17.9 M for two drinking water projects to add new treatment processes to control emerging contaminants. The Town of Pittsboro will also receive \$10.5 M for a regionalization wastewater transmission system improvement project converting the wastewater treatment plant into an equalization pump station and force main to a lift station in Sanford.
- City of Hamlet in Richmond County will receive \$10.3 M for water system improvements, including improvements to a clearwell, chemical feed piping and pumps, and replacement of approximately 200 lead service connections.
- City of Oxford in Granville County will receive \$3.6 M for Oxford Water System expansion and enhancement, replacing water lines in order to modernize some lines that don't meet current state codes, are in poor condition, and can be between 50 to 100 years old.

Wastewater

- City of Lexington in Davidson County will receive \$27.9 M for wastewater treatment plant improvements, including a new dewatering facility and a new facility for thermal dryer equipment.
- Brunswick County will receive \$14.9 M to expand sewer service to a disadvantaged/underserved area, including up to 200 new connections.
- Town of Bath in Beaufort County will receive \$9.8 M for a proposed regionalization project for conveyance of wastewater from the Town of Bath to the City of Washington's wastewater treatment plant via a new lift station and force main, addressing long-term viability.
- City of Brevard in Transylvania County will receive \$2.28 M to extend sewer lines to resolve failing septic systems. The project includes installation of 6800 linear feet of sewer lines and a pump station.

Stormwater

- City of Wilson in Wilson County will receive \$3.2 M to construct two bioretention/wetlands stormwater control measures to address both stormwater quality and quantity concerns, and one underground detention system at the Headquarters Fire Station on Hines Street to address stormwater quantity issues.
- Town of Morehead City in Carteret County will receive \$5 M for Calico Creek Stormwater Improvements, constructing nature-based stormwater control measures along neighborhood streets to improve water quality in the impaired Calico Creek.
- Town of Nags Head in Dare County will receive \$2.9 M for stormwater infrastructure improvements, constructing an innovative stormwater quantity project to reduce the frequency, depth, and duration of flooding, as indicated in the town's vulnerability and adaptation planning document.
- Town of Black Mountain in Buncombe County will receive \$5 M for the Black Mountain North Bank Swannanoa River Floodbench Project, constructing 3,000 linear feet of flood bench and four one-acre areas of constructed wetlands and in-river rock veins to address stormwater quantity issues for the Swannanoa River.

A list of all projects funded statewide by town or county is available on the [NCDEQ website](#). An expanded summary of the projects with more detail on funding sources and types will be available here next week.

###

News from Democracy NC

There's still time to sign up for tonight's Legislative 101 training if you haven't already done so!

Get informed and engaged during one of our Legislative 101 trainings this week, co-hosted with Common Cause North Carolina and North Carolina Black Alliance. You'll learn how the legislature works and about the bills moving quickly through the People's House.

You'll have two options for the online training:

- **Legislative 101 (Tonight!):** Monday, February 27th, 7 -8 p.m.
- **Legislative 101:** Thursday, March 2nd, 12 – 1 p.m.

[Register for Legislative 101 \(Tonight!\)](#)
[Register for Legislative 101 \(March 2\)](#)

"Please Note" This 101 training is designed for people who are brand new to advocating at the North Carolina General Assembly. If you are more experienced, please consider signing up for our upcoming 201 trainings (more info coming soon!)

Together, we can make lawmakers strengthen our democracy, helping us turn public sentiment into public policy.

Hope to see you there!

###

News from Chatham Voices for Justice

The Southern Coalition for Social Justice, Blueprint NC, and Common Cause NC invite you to attend a lunch and learn community event next week on Combating Wrongful Voter Purges.

Join us on **noon, Tuesday, February 28**, to learn about voter list maintenance, best practices for North Carolina, and how to spot and take action against wrongful voter purges. We will also share brand new data and strategies for those engaged in GOTV and community advocacy who want to ensure eligible voters in North Carolina can become – and remain – registered.

When a state or county conducts a program to systematically remove people from its list of registered voters, this is called "voter list maintenance." This can be done properly, but it can also lead politicians and political operatives to aggressively remove voters as a strategy to suppress the vote.

The challenge to combating wrongful purges is that many residents do not find out they were purged from the voter rolls until they are trying to cast their ballot. At that point, it can be too late to fix the problem.

Don't let it get that far! Please join us for this important community event.

[Register here to attend in person.](#)

[Register here to attend virtually.](#)

There is an in-person and virtual option for the event, with Spanish interpretation available for both. Join us in person at the South Meeting Room at South Regional Library, [4505 S. Alston Avenue, Durham, NC 27713](#). Lunch will be provided for in-person attendees.

Have questions? Email melissa@scsj.org.

Onward,
Roz and Jon

###

News from Attorney General Josh Stein's Office

CONSUMER ALERT

Harris Jewelry Should File for Refunds

Current and former North Carolina servicemembers and people living in and around military bases in North Carolina should apply for refunds if they made a purchase from Harris Jewelry since 2014. Harris Jewelry was a national jewelry retailer that operated retail stores in and on military bases, including in Fayetteville near Fort Bragg and Jacksonville near Camp Lejeune.

Attorney General Josh Stein won a \$34.2 million multistate settlement with Harris Jewelry in 2022, and many former customers are still eligible for some or total refunds, but they may not know it.

Here's what you should do if you've bought anything from Harris Jewelry since 2014:

- Apply for a refund at www.harrisjewelry.com before **April 15, 2023**.
- Stop paying any debts to Harris or Consumer Adjustment Corp. (CAUSA). Your account balance is now \$0 and you don't have to make any more payments.
- Check your credit report to make sure all negative consumer reports have been eliminated. If you still have a negative consumer report or judgment because of Harris or CAUSA, email our office at harrissettlement@ncdoj.gov.

If you have questions, contact our office by emailing harrissettlement@ncdoj.gov or call 1-877-5-NO-SCAM.

###

News from Neighbors on Call

Dear friends,

Thanks to the nearly 600 of you who joined us last night for "How NCDP Will Do It!"

Wow - what an exciting evening! We are certainly energized and hope you are too. Thank you SO much to our new NCDP leaders for their time and enthusiasm. We are looking forward to working together to elect many more Democrats!

Kudos to Janice Robinson for leading the discussion and big thanks to NC Sen. Jay Chaudhuri for welcoming the new team.

To follow up:



WATCH and SHARE the video recording of "How NCDP Will Do It."

Our previous event, "**How Michigan Did It**" with MDP Chair Lavora Barnes, is on the same page.



CONTRIBUTE to NCDP here.
(FYI, you contributed \$6,944 last night. Whoa!)

And, sign up for the "**Good News About Democrats**" email (2x/month). Contact Melvin Williams (NCDP Secretary) melvin535@gmail.com.

In response to questions from the ZOOM CHAT:

- You can find the **Precinct Packet HERE**.
- NCDP Officers' **office hours**: Tues @ 6pm and Sun @ 4pm through 3/11, and weekly afterwards (schedule TBD). Join at <https://bit.ly/ncdp-board-office-hours>.
- The NCDP team will respond individually to some questions, and will send us answers to the general questions. We'll forward those when we get them!

ATTEND your annual precinct meeting:
Look up your precinct: <https://vt.ncsb.e.gov/pnkup/>
Find out when and where your precinct is meeting on your county party's website OR contact your county chair (ncdp.org/county-parties)

SIGN UP for the Neighbors on Call weekly email HERE.

RECEIVE emails from our co-sponsors:

Work for Democracy

Helps elect Democrats in the most critical and competitive NCGA districts through fundraising and volunteering.

Carolina Forward

Communicates a positive, progressive vision for NC powered by research and analysis grounded in our state's shared values.

All In for NC

Primarily out-of-state volunteers working with partner organizations to elect NC Democrats in competitive elections up and down the ballot.

With much gratitude for all of you,
The NoC team

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Selected News and Opinion Stories of Note

[Carolina Public Press: Final Plan to Manage Pisgah, Natchala National Forest Unveiled](#)

[Chapelboro: North Carolina Senate Oks Gun Bill With Pistol Permit Repeal](#)

[Chapelboro: North Carolina Could Expand Medicaid for as Many as 600,000](#)

[Chapelboro: Forecast: North Carolina Expects \\$3B-Plus Surplus This Year](#)

[Yes Magazine: How Black History Paves the Way for a Just Black Future](#)

[The Assembly NC: A Prescription for Rural Hospitals](#)

[NC Health News: Disabilities – "Nobody Cares If We're Shuttled Off Somewhere"](#)

[NPR: How Grown-Ups Can Help Kids Transition to 'Post-Pandemic' School Life](#)

[Fox 8: Should North Carolina Offer Fewer Days for Early In-Person Voting? State House Bill Proposes 1-Week Limit](#)

[NC Policy Watch: Plastics, Natural Gas, and Substation Attacks: Environmental Bills to Watch This Week](#)

[NC Policy Watch: In Lawsuit Against the EPA, North Carolina Environmental, Public Health Groups Get Their Day in Court Over PFAS Dispute](#)

[Washington Post: Many Lawmakers Trump Endorsed Last Year Aren't Returning the Favor](#)

[WUNC: Democratic Governors Form Alliance on Abortion Rights](#)

[Chatham News + Record: County Seeks Emergency Housing Coordinator](#)

[Chatham News + Record: Group to Unveil Mural Depicting Town's Black History](#)

[Chatham News + Record: Phase 2 of Plan Moncure Underway, Community Input Needed](#)

[Chatham News + Record: Since 1990, CORA Has Helped Chatham's Hungry](#)

[Chapelboro: Medical Marijuana Advances Again at North Carolina Senate](#)

[Chapelboro: One on One: Can a 25-Year-Old Be a Great Political Party Chair?](#)

[Carolina Public Press: Looming Cuts to Emergency SNAP Benefits Threaten Food Security in Rural America](#)