



The Recap

The North Carolina General Assembly stands adjourned as of Thursday, November 30th, and while legislative action has mostly come to a halt, candidate filing for local, state, and national elections begins Monday, December 4th—setting the stage for long, competitive campaigns for some of the most coveted positions of power in our state and country.

The state legislature finalized redistricting at the end of October with new congressional and legislative maps, and the announcement triggered quick action from several sitting lawmakers. Some announcements received heightened attention in the state’s political circles. In denouncing the newly drawn maps by the GOP-controlled General Assembly, U.S. Rep. Jeff Jackson announced that he would run put his name in the hat for NC Attorney General instead of running for reelection in a congressional district that he’s been “drawn out of.” At the state legislative level, N.C. Sen. Lisa Grafstein officially moved to a different Senate district to overcome being “double-bunked” with another sitting legislator in her current district. These decisions and others will likely continue as candidates file to run for their desired offices.

The redistricting story would also not be complete without a lawsuit...or two. On Monday, November 20th, a pair of black voters in northeastern North Carolina sued to block the implementation of the newly drawn Senate district map on the grounds that it “cracks” the district to spread black voters across multiple districts in violation of Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act. The outcome of this case may also have significant legislative impacts, particularly if the maps are overturned. If this year follows the

pattern of similar N.C. redistricting battles over the decades, we can expect more lawsuits to come.

For now, the maps stand, and hopeful candidates will file to represent their districts as they are currently drawn. The recent lawsuit and any others, however, will loom as the 2024 election cycle gets underway—leaving the new maps in a limbo that has become all too familiar in North Carolina politics.

Sa'Metria Jones



Legislative Counsel

Governor Cooper Celebrates Rail Milestone; Rail Response Workgroup Report is Live

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) is celebrating [new highs](#) in passenger rail ridership. NC By Train, the state-supported passenger rail line that provides daily service between Raleigh and Charlotte and the Northeast, saw its highest ridership ever in 2022, and those numbers in 2023 are on pace to surpass that record. On November 17th, Governor Cooper joined state Department of Transportation Secretary Joey Hopkins and federal Amtrak staff to celebrate these record-breaking numbers.

That announcement comes as Rail Response, a project of the NC Metro Mayors Coalition with support from NCLM, has released [a report](#) detailing its examination of intercity passenger rail and how expansion can better serve the state. Earlier this year, a group of mayors convened the Rail Response workgroup to explore how local governments can support NCDOT in its effort to expand the intercity passenger rail service reality for North Carolinians and visitors from the mountains to the coast. The report can be accessed [here](#) and will be discussed in detail at the Metro Mayors Coalition's winter meeting next week.

Municipal Elections

Municipal elections around the state took place in early November, with many of the state's incumbent mayors coming through their races unscathed. A handful of

incumbents in some of the larger cities in the state – Bill Saffo in Wilmington, Jacques Gilbert in Apex, Sammy Phillips in Jacksonville, Brenda Bozeman in Leland and John Higdon in Matthews – won their races without opposition. Charlotte Mayor Vi Lyles, Fayetteville Mayor Mitch Colvin and Greenville Mayor PJ Connelly easily won their re-election bids. In two closely watched races, Durham Council Member Leo Williams defeated state Sen. Mike Woodard, 63 to 36 percent, to win that city’s mayoral race, and Chapel Hill Council Member Jess Anderson won 59 percent of the vote to defeat fellow Council Member Adam Searing in that town’s race for mayor. The Chapel Hill race largely turned on pro- and anti-development sentiment. While many races went as expected, that was not the case everywhere. Kings Mountain Mayor and Former NCLM President Scott Neisler lost his re-election bid by 36 votes, and Gaston County saw a wave of incumbent mayors defeated, with challengers winning races in Gastonia, Mount Holly and Dallas.

Other results included:

- In Carrboro, Town Alderman Barbara Foushee was elected as mayor after running unopposed.
- Cornelius Mayor Woody Washam, Fuquay-Varina Mayor Blake Massengill, Rocky Mount Mayor Sandy Roberson, and Wilson Mayor Carlton Stevens were all re-elected.
- In Goldsboro, Council Member Charles Gaylor was elected as mayor after incumbent David Ham did not seek re-election.
- In High Point, Council Member Cyril Jefferson was elected as mayor after incumbent Jay Wagner did not seek re-election.

You can find more results from municipal contests around the state at the State Board of Election site [here](#).

End-of-Session Bulletin

In case you missed our earlier mailing, just a reminder that you can find the 2023 End-of-Session Bulletin [here](#). This comprehensive document provides a detailed review of legislation affecting municipalities considered during the 2023 legislative session. It also includes a look at Legislative and Policy Goal Achievements and an examination of our defensive efforts to protect municipal authority. We hope that you find the information useful as a reference guide to legislation affecting your city or town, and policies affecting municipalities across the entire state.

Essentials of Municipal Government

The NC League of Municipalities is proud to partner with the UNC School of Government for the 2024 Essentials of Municipal Government, a biennial orientation of

newly elected local leaders. This course is specifically designed to help newly elected officials transition from campaigning to governing.

Participants will gain a deeper appreciation for the value of governing at the municipal level and for the importance of developing the skills and behaviors that lead to being an effective local elected official. Both newly elected officials and incumbents are encouraged to attend, as they will have the opportunity to complete the required ethics training and will also be able to contribute valuable insights and experiences to the program. Clerks should consider attending with their elected officials as well.

Greensboro: Jan. 11-12
Wilmington: Jan. 18-19
Rocky Mount: Jan. 25-26
Asheville: Feb. 15-16
Chapel Hill/Hybrid: Feb. 22-23

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