



# LEGISLATIVE *Update*

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## **General Assembly hopefully moving closer to budget**

### ***Budget conference committee met Wednesday; two chambers say deal on way***

Despite hopeful statements by lawmakers earlier in the session that a new spending plan would be in place by the end of the 2013-14 fiscal year and the session would be wrapped up by the Fourth of July holiday, there appears to still be at least a week to go.

The new fiscal year began Tuesday with no new spending plan in place, but because the budget approved each long session is a two-year plan and the short session exists simply to allow for adjustments, the state is continuing to operate.

What that means for now, though, is that state employees and retirees are not seeing the raises they have waited so long to receive, and which lawmakers in both chambers, as well as Gov. Pat McCrory, have said all year are among their top priorities.

The lack of results, however, is not for lack of activity this week as the two chambers passed the House's mini-budget – containing the proposed \$1,000 increase and five bonus days for state employees and 1.44 percent cost-of-living adjustment for retirees – back and forth with McCrory chiming in, asking the Senate to at least take a vote on it.

Finally, though, during a conference committee meeting Wednesday, the two sides agreed on a starting point for Medicaid spending, showed signs of compromise on lottery advertising and revenues, and came closer to actually beginning negotiations. However, Senate budget writers did tell those in the House that items such as pay raises and COLAs would have to be negotiated individually. To that end, House Speaker Thom Tillis said his chamber would not hold any regular floor sessions next week in order to allow budget conferees time to do their work, and that he hopes an agreement can be reached soon.

And while the General Assembly is off the July 4<sup>th</sup> holiday until next week, SEANC lobbyists are still speaking to House and Senate leaders, urging them to get the deal done, to pass a meaningful pay raise, to show that they value vital public services and the people who provide them, and to not use state employees and retirees as political pawns as they try to come to a compromise.

## Dueling pension bills

With the Fourth of July holiday shortening the legislative work week and the ongoing budget standoff taking up much of their time, lawmakers held few committee hearings this week. That meant that other bills important to state employees and retirees, such as those dealing with pension secrecy, were not heard this week.

SEANC lobbyists, though, are continuing to meeting with legislators to explain to them the need for transparency in the pension system and why extending secret deals past the statute of limitations would only serve to harm North Carolina taxpayers.

## Members! Make Your Action Plan Now!

Are you interested in securing a meaningful pay raise and a retiree COLA, as well as advocating for public services? Then make your voice heard by emailing or calling your legislators. Not sure who your legislators are? [Find out here.](#)

Please know if legislators do not hear directly from state employees and retirees, they will believe you are satisfied with whatever the current legislative proposal is regarding your pay raise and retiree COLA. This is a team effort!

Finally, if you hear that your job is in jeopardy due to potential legislative action, please contact [SEANC's Legislative Affairs team](#) as soon as possible. The earlier we know of potential concerns in your workplace, the quicker we can help you.

To follow what's happening in the General Assembly this year and what SEANC is doing to protect state employees and retirees and taxpayer dollars, [subscribe to the SEANC Scoop](#) and read our weekly [Legislative Update](#). [Also, be sure to sign up for our email alerts.](#)

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