



State Employees Association of North Carolina • www.seanc.org

# LEGISLATIVE *Update*

Sept. 25, 2015

## EMPAC Honors Dollar, Pendleton as Legislators of the Year

Action in the General Assembly is winding down, finally. The finish line is in sight, as the Senate passed an adjournment resolution on Thursday that sets Tuesday as the final day of this session. The House has yet to pass it, but is expected to do so soon. The legislature will return on April 25, 2016, according to the Senate resolution.

The General Assembly's Fiscal Research Division informed us this week that state employees would receive their \$750 bonuses in December in a separate check from normal payroll.

This is a good time to single out two legislators who worked hard this session to represent the needs of state employees. Rep. Nelson Dollar (R-Wake) and Rep. Gary Pendleton (R-Wake) were honored by EMPAC at SEANC's Annual Convention on Sept. 12 in Greensboro.

Dollar was presented the Lisa B. Mitchell Legislator of the Year award for the second time. The award is presented in honor of Lisa B. Mitchell, an outstanding and dedicated state employee and SEANC member from District 27 in Durham. She worked for North Carolina Central University and served EMPAC for several years. Lisa Mitchell passed away in 2008 after a courageous battle with breast cancer. She is remembered for her spirited support for SEANC, her love of EMPAC and her dedication to the cause of state employee and retiree rights.



Rep. Nelson Dollar (R-Wake) accepts his second Lisa B. Mitchell Legislator of the Year award at the 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual SEANC Convention on Aug. 12 in Greensboro.

Statewide EMPAC Chairman Tony Smith presented Dollar with the award, calling him a “watchdog for state employees.”

“(Dollar) has always been a friend to state employees,” Smith said. “When he sat in the back of the chamber as a member of the minority party, he was a supporter of state employees. And nothing changed when he took one of the most powerful gavels in the building as Appropriations Chair.”

Smith pointed out that Dollar's budget gave a 2-percent raise and five days of bonus leave to state employees and a 2-percent cost-of-living adjustment to retirees.

"This didn't make him too popular with the Senate, who put in nothing for a raise, or with groups who feel like spending money to help your employees keep up with the cost of living is "wasteful," Smith said. "None of that mattered to him. What matters to him is doing what's right."

Pendleton received a special award, the Lisa B. Mitchell Freshman Legislator of the Year award, for his willingness, even as a new member of the legislature, to stand up for state employees.

"As a freshman legislator it is hard to make a difference. You don't have the power' roles that come with experience," Smith told delegates. But occasionally a legislator comes along who is not afraid to speak out and express his or her opinion. And sometimes, that outspoken legislator is a friend to state employees."

Smith pointed out that after the House budget came out, Pendleton sent a letter to his counterparts in the Senate just so he could point out that no matter what they did in their budget, they needed to include a pay raise for state employees.

He stood with state employees when our State Human Resources Act was being attacked in House Bill 495. He made a point to stop and speak with SEANC members who came to lobby on Monday nights. And he was exceptional about asking SEANC lobbyists where the organization stood on various issues.

Pendleton has been a SEANC member dating back to its predecessor organizations in the early 1970s. Even with the budget decided, he continued his commitment to standing up for state employees this week. [During the debate over economic incentives](#), Pendleton asked, "We need to set priorities. Is it really a priority to do this and the other tax cuts we've done, and then state employees and teachers get nothing?"

SEANC looks forward to working with Dollar and Pendleton, as well as any other legislator regardless of party affiliation who values public services and the people who provide them, in the future.

### **Medicaid privatization bill passed on to governor**

Last week we told you about House Bill 372, a bill to privatize Medicaid. The House and Senate passed the bill this week, despite the fact that North Carolina's Medicaid system is nationally recognized and despite any hard evidence that managed care has saved money in any other state.

[The strongest condemnation of this type of rush to privatization without any evidence](#) it will save taxpayers money was from SEANC hero Rep. Nelson Dollar, who said, "We need reform in North Carolina that is based on caring for our citizens, not for a group of stockholders".



[Rep. Gary Pendleton \(R-Wake\) accepts the Lisa B. Mitchell Freshman Legislator of the Year award at the 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual SEANC Convention on Aug. 12 in Greensboro.](#)

It is very unclear at this time how many jobs in the Medicaid Division might be affected, though we do know that the Division of Medical Assistance is slated to be cut at some point down the road. SEANC will update our members as more details are available.

### **Contact your legislators**

Even when the legislature isn't in session, we still encourage members to [contact your lawmakers to make sure your voice is heard](#). Help your legislators put a face to state employees, SEANC and their constituents. Not sure who your legislators are? [Click here](#). Curious whether they were endorsed by EMPAC? [Click here](#). Want to make note of all of SEANC's legislative priorities before talking to them? [Click here](#).