



# North Carolina Retired School Personnel

Post Office Box 27347, 700 South Salisbury Street, Raleigh, NC 27611-7347

Phone: (919) 832-3000

Fax: (919) 829-1626

Web: [www.ncrsp.org](http://www.ncrsp.org)

Email: [ncrsp@ncrsp.org](mailto:ncrsp@ncrsp.org)

## MONTHLY REPORT, January 29, 2018

---

### NCRSP Prepares for State Convention in Winston-Salem

Everything from Tai Chi to Moravian cookies will be on offer when NCRSP holds its 2018 State Convention March 14 and 15 at the Marriott in Winston-Salem.

**Caroline Farmer**, Executive Director of the NC Commission on Volunteerism & Community Service, will deliver the keynote address on Wednesday. Ms. Farmer is a native of Raleigh. She received her undergraduate and law degrees from UNC. She worked for several years in Governor Hunt's administration as an Agency Liaison and Director of Highway Beautification. Prior to joining Attorney General Roy Cooper's staff in 2003, she was in private practice. At the Attorney General's office, she oversaw public education efforts statewide on topics such as identity theft, financial exploitation of older adults, Internet safety for children, etc. (Our members may recall that she has given several fraud prevention presentations at NCRSP events.) In 2017, Governor Cooper appointed Ms. Farmer as ED for the NC Commission on Volunteerism & Community Service. Ms. Farmer has two children, Cate and Brendan. Her father is retired Superior Court Judge Bob Farmer, former chair of the N.C. Ethics Commission. She currently serves on the state board of NC Wheels for Hope. Ms. Farmer will bring greetings from Gov. Roy Cooper, address the continuing importance of volunteer service and—perhaps—drop a few hints about fraud prevention for seniors.

The **CONVENTION SCHEDULE** is as follows:

#### **Wednesday, March 14**

9:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.	Registration
9:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.	Exhibits/Vendors
9:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.	Fundraiser (Silent Auction)
1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.	Representative Assembly
6:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.	Recognitions Banquet

#### **Thursday, March 15**

8:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.	Registration
8:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.	Fundraiser (Silent Auction)
8:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.	Mini-Sessions
11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.	Representative Assembly

To make **reservations**, call (800) 320-0934 and ask for the NCRSP Retired School Personnel Conference Group Rate. The cutoff date for group rate room reservations is midnight, **Feb. 18**. The room price is \$147.00/plus tax (single or double). Check-in time is 3:00 p.m.—although some rooms may be available earlier. Parking is directly across Cherry Street in the parking deck--\$12.00 per day. NCRSP Convention delegates, alternates, and Executive Board members are responsible for making their own hotel reservations by February 18 in order to receive the NCRSP convention rate.

**\*NOTE:** The only meal function included in the convention will be the Recognitions Banquet on Wednesday night. For reasons of cost, lunches and snack breaks are not included as part of the 2018 convention, so delegates may want to arrange their own lunches and bring their own snacks. The Marriott has a restaurant and numerous restaurants are located within easy walking distance.

## Your region could win a friendly competition...

The **community service event** for the 2018 NCRSP State Convention is a friendly competition between the ten regions to see which region can present the biggest check **payable to the North Carolina Foundation for Public School Children**. Checks will be received on March 14 at the Convention (Marriott Hotel, Winston-Salem) and the winning region will be announced at the Representative Assembly on Thursday, March 15.



One director from each region is asked to bring his or her region's check to Winston-Salem and present it—in an unopened envelope—to a member of the NCRSP staff or to President Joan Bass. As mentioned above, the winning region will be announced at the RA—along with the total sum received from all regions. So please announce this competition in your region, form a work team and get going! You have until March 14 to amass your donation and cut a check!

## Court decisions swirl over gerrymandering, judges and healthcare

Lawsuits addressing alleged gerrymandering of North Carolina's congressional and state legislative districts, its mode of electing state judges and its responsibilities to state retirees still swirl in the courts, and we'd need an electronic tickertape board to provide you with the latest news on each development.

--Democrats are suing the state over the General Assembly's plan to abolish primary elections for state judgeships. The courts will have to decide whether the "no primary" system proposed by the Republican-controlled General Assembly deprives the Democratic Party and the voters of fair representation.

--As next November's general election draws nearer, it's still not clear whether challenges to redrawn legislative and congressional districts will prevail. These cases hinge on charges of racial bias and even on the question of whether partisan political advantage is a legitimate justification for gerrymandered districts.

--The ultimate outcome of a lawsuit over whether retirees of a certain vintage were unlawfully charged for state health insurance benefits is still pending. Months ago, a panel of Federal judges ruled in favor of the retirees, but the state—given voice by House Speaker Tim Moore—has vowed to appeal the decision, and it may be years before a settlement—if any—is made.

## Friendly Reminder: “Recruiting Strategies 2017” on the web site

Are you stumped for good member recruitment ideas? Be stumped no longer! In the course of the NCRSP Leadership Conferences, held in May and June of last year, *Treasurer* Vera Taylor labored to capture dozens of good recruiting ideas suggested during group discussions with local and regional leaders. Thanks to Vera, that treasure trove is available to you on the NCRSP web site ([www.ncrsp.org](http://www.ncrsp.org)) in the Members Only section under the Membership Committee tab, then “Resources.” Help yourself!

## Cut through the fog: Ask state candidates 7 objective questions

Fake news, partisan cant, ideological bias, right wing spin, left wing spin—haven’t we heard it all? How is a person supposed to cut through all the fog and make good decisions about our state’s political candidates—especially candidates for the NC General Assembly? Virtually all candidates for public office will insist that they support retiree security and the public schools, but for many of them, it’s just lip service. The devil is in the details. The list of seven questions that appears below is an attempt to help NCRSP members and all citizens get a sensible picture of where candidates stand. No list of questions can eliminate deceit or just plain blather, but if you put these specific, factual questions to candidates and demand specific, factual answers—that should give you some strong clues as to those who deserve your vote—and those who don’t.

1. Do you support bringing North Carolina’s teacher pay up to the national average?

*[The answer should be “YES.” North Carolina is the 12th largest state by population, but our teacher pay is 45th in the nation. Even Alabama is 35th! –source Walletub.]*

2. Do you support bringing North Carolina’s per capita expenditures on public education up to the national average?

*[In 2017 the national per capita average was almost \$12,000, but North Carolina spends an average of only \$8,940 per student--that’s 43<sup>rd</sup> in the nation—source NEA.]*

3. Will you support tax increases on corporations and high-income earners to get our state to the national averages mentioned above?

*[The correct answer is “YES.” Our General Assembly cut the corporate tax rate from 6.9% in 2013 to 3% today, and majority party lawmakers want to cut it again to 2.5% in 2019. Meanwhile, our public schools lack books, adequate staff and must choose between smaller class sizes and things like art classes, music education and PE.]*

4. Do you support transferring public school funds to create and support voucher schools (also known as “school choice”)?

*[The correct answer is “NO.” Voucher schools—which lack full public accountability and have not proven to be more effective than public schools—are draining millions of dollars from the public schools. Beware any candidate who calls for “school choice!”]*

5. Do you support restoring health insurance benefits for state employee retirees who will be hired on or after January 1, 2020?

*[The correct answer is “YES.” This will require new legislation because last year the majority party in the General Assembly voted to take retiree health insurance coverage away from state employees hired beginning on Jan. 1, 2020.]*

6. Do you support sustaining North Carolina’s current retirement system as a defined benefit plan?

*[The correct answer is “YES.” Beware of any candidate who supports a change to a “defined contribution plan,” to 401Ks or to “portable” self-funded plans.]*

7. Do you support Cost of Living Raises (COLAs) for state retirees that match increases in the Cost of Living Index?

*[The correct answer is “YES.” State retirees are losing earning power because COLAs aren’t keeping pace with increases in consumer prices. Last year—after a great deal of struggle, NCRSP and allied agencies won a 1% COLA. Retirees should not have to struggle each year to win small increases.]*