Insights: Perspectives

North Carolina General Assembly Update | September 24, 2021

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Kilpatrick Townsend's Government Relations Team represents a variety of clients across many industries and in all levels of government, with a focus on the North Carolina General Assembly. Below is an update on the activity at the NC General Assembly this week. Please feel free to contact a member of the team with any questions or visit our website to learn more about our Government Relations practice.

Budget Timeline

The House and Senate had hoped to send a compromise budget to Governor Cooper this week, but there are still some outstanding differences between the two chambers. Based on comments from Senate President Pro Tempore Berger (R-Rockingham) earlier this week, the House and Senate Conference Chairs will bring the remaining budget items that have not been agreed upon to himself and House Speaker Moore. Negotiations between leadership on these outstanding issues will continue over the weekend. The goal is to have a House and Senate agreement by early next week. The legislature will then send the compromise to Governor Cooper confidentially. Leadership hopes including Governor Cooper in the conference negotiation process will help ensure “frank and candid negotiation” and allow the chambers to make changes. The goal is to have a budget finalized by mid-October.

Autonomous Delivery Vehicles

On Tuesday, the Senate Transportation Committee considered H814, Neighborhood Occupantless Vehicle. The bill would define a “neighborhood occupantless vehicle” as a specific type of fully autonomous vehicle that is low-speed and designed to transport cargo without an occupant. The vehicle would only be allowed on streets with speed limits of 45 mph or less, must stay in the right lane, and pull over to allow faster vehicles to pass on a two lane highway. The goal is to have regulations in place for driverless delivery in hopes the technology will be deployed in North Carolina sooner rather than later after it is ready. The bill received a favorable report from the Senate Transportation Committee and was referred to Senate Rules. It passed the House in May with a vote of 110-2.

Legislative Retirements

Four legislators have announced they will not seek reelection in 2022. The four members are Sen. Ben Clark (D-Hoke), Rep. Charles Graham (D-Robeson), Rep. Verla Insko (D-Orange), and Rep. Larry Pittman (R-Cabarrus). Rep. Graham announced his plan to run for Congress earlier this year. The members will continue to serve out their current term, which ends December 31, 2022. The impetus for some of the retirements may be the uncertainty of what the new legislative districts will look like. The General Assembly will be redrawing all of the state legislative and congressional districts in the upcoming redistricting process. The candidate filing deadline for 2021 is December 17, 2021.