

North Carolina 2021 Long Session Begins

January 15, 2021



On Wednesday, January 13, 2021, the NC General Assembly (NCGA) returned to Raleigh for a ceremonial session to mark the beginning of this year's Long Session. With the continued political divide between the Executive and Legislative Branches, Senate Pro Tempore Phil Berger (R-Rockingham) gave a speech that highlighted the importance of finding common ground and indicated a shared commitment to passing a budget this year. He reminded his colleagues, "Success is possible only if we approach policy disagreements with the assumption of good faith on all sides. In that way we can bicker and barter back and forth, and at day's end still see one another as a colleague, not a foe." (*To read his opening day remarks, click [here](#).*) House Speaker Tim Moore (R-Cleveland) was re-elected as speaker on Wednesday. Leaders on both sides of the political aisle in the House spoke about working together and the need to sometimes agree to disagree.

Speaker Moore also announced House Committee Chairs, which can be found [here](#). The more than 40 House Committees this session suggests a different type of bill movement this year. It likely means a bill will have more stops to make before successfully reaching the full House floor for a vote, lengthening the process to pass legislation through the House. This will make it more difficult to meet the bill 'crossover' deadline, which indicates whether some bills will be eligible for session for the remainder of the biennium. In addition to having fewer bills pass the House, we're anticipating more 'Christmas Tree' bills that act as vehicles for various policy changes, and less controversial policy proposals.

To prepare for possible protests in the coming weeks, Legislative Services Officer Paul Coble has taken steps to protect the NCGA building, property inside, and personnel. In early December, gates were built on the front (pictured above) and back (pictured to the right) entrances of the Legislative Building. Legislative officers are diligently working to keep the area and people in it safe from potential threats.



Lawmakers are taking their usual two-week break following the ceremonial opening day of session, and will return to Raleigh on January 27th. Senator Berger expects mostly non-controversial issues to be on the agenda in the first few weeks, including state spending for the recent federal COVID relief package. Lawmakers are still waiting for guidance from the federal government to determine how they can allocate the money. Then, later this spring, they intend to tackle the state budget. Other priorities they plan to address this year involve education, economic development, and broadband internet.

Rules resolutions approved in the House and Senate on Wednesday outline the timeline for the 2021 session. Below are key dates and deadlines on this year's legislative schedule:

- Jan. 27: The legislature returns to start business after its traditional two-week January break
- March 11: Local bill filing deadline in the Senate
- March 25: Local bill filing deadline in the House
- April 6: Bill filing deadline in Senate for most bills that don't address constitutional amendments, appointments or election laws
- April 20: House filing deadline for non-budget, non-finance bills
- April 27: House filing deadline for budget and finance-related bills
- May 13: Crossover deadline for bills to have passed either the House or Senate for consideration during the remainder of session