



**SENATOR JERRY TILLMAN  
SENATE MAJORITY WHIP**

# SENATE UPDATE

January 4, 2012



## **Happy New Year**

I wish each of you a happy and prosperous New Year. May your blessings outweigh your failures. We're all sure to have some of both. For those who look with interest at the political process, 2012 promises to be a year full of excitement. For my part, I will continue to work hard for my constituents, as well as all the citizens of our great state of North Carolina. Together we can make this a year of great progress and success for our state.

## **Education in 2012**

You will find below a summary of significant education policy changes implemented by the GOP Senate/House presented by Dr. Terry Stoops of the John Locke Foundation.

1. New standards and tests. Like most states, North Carolina has adopted the Common Core State Standards in English and Math. Both will be taught and assessed beginning in the 2012-13 school year. Science, social studies, health, arts, world languages, and career and technical education teachers will be required to use North Carolina's new Essential Standards and prepare students for new state tests. In addition, high school students will be required to take the ACT and PLAN tests. Career and technical education students will also take the WorkKeys test.
2. New charter schools. Last year, the NC General Assembly eliminated the 100-school cap on charters. The "fast track" application process will allow a handful of charter schools to open this year. I suspect that the state will receive a record number of applicants who seek state approval via the annual charter approval process, which begins later this year.
3. Larger charter schools and shorter wait lists. The General Assembly also authorized charter school enrollment to grow by up to 20 percent a year. Previously, the state capped charter school enrollment increases at 10 percent a year, which led to long wait lists and few open seats at many charter schools.
4. New charter school governance and accountability. North Carolina's charter schools will now be under the watchful eye of the NC Public Charter School Advisory Council.

In addition, the Office of Charter Schools at the NC Department of Public Instruction has a new leader. Both will ensure that North Carolina charter schools continue to maintain high academic and operational standards.

5. Special needs tax credit introduced. Families with children recently enrolled in a public school will now have the opportunity to claim a nonrefundable income tax credit. As long as their children meet specific eligibility requirements, parents can claim a credit of \$3,000 per semester (or \$6,000 per year) for special education and related services at a private or non-profit facility.

6. Changes to school boards and county commissions. Education politics is local (more or less). School board and county commission elections typically lead to significant personnel, funding, and policy changes for school districts. Nowhere is this more evident than in Wake County, which begins the year with a newly elected, Democratic-controlled school board and new board leadership.

7. Federal education initiatives. Education politics is national (more or less). Congress may overhaul No Child Left Behind this year. Not even those who carefully monitor federal education policy know for sure. Even if they don't, I believe that the Obama administration will unveil new competitive funding programs under Race to the Top and ask Congress to pass another teacher jobs bill.

8. A new Superintendent of Public Instruction? Apparently, June Atkinson has not made a decision about running for reelection this year. Regardless of her decision, Democrats Rick Glazier and Tricia Cotham are ready to run for the position. Several individuals -- including David Scholl, Richard Alexander, and possibly John Tedesco -- will compete for the Republican nomination.

9. Changes to the State Board of Education? The governor selects members to the State Board of Education, including the chair. Governor Perdue appointed Bill Harrison to the chairmanship, but one or both of them may decide that it is time for a change. If Pat McCrory beats Bev Perdue in November, he will make that decision for them. Republican victories in the lieutenant governor and treasurer races would bring new blood to the two ex officio seats on the State Board of Education.

10. State education budget adjustments and policy revisions. The General Assembly will make changes to the education budget this year, as well as consider bills that made the crossover deadline last year. Teacher jobs and school calendar issues will be two notable policy issues debated during the short session.

**Note:**

You may recall final cuts to Public Schools averaged 6.5%, not the 10%-15% cuts which were made in our Community Colleges and Universities. At the end of the day, few if any public school teacher or teacher assistant positions were cut due to budget reductions.

Keep in mind we were faced with a \$2.5 billion budget shortfall at the beginning of the budget year and had to make significant budget cuts to live within our means. We did this along with providing \$1.3 billion in tax cuts.

## **Iowa Caucus Results**

The following analysis provided by John Davis, and the John Davis Political Report, January 4th, 2011.

### **Romney Edges Santorum in Iowa Caucuses by 8 Votes; Anybody-but-Romney Wins 75%; Perry Suspends Campaign; Gingrich Vows Revenge at Saturday NH Debate after \$5 million Smack Down**

Romney: 30,015; Santorum: 30,007; Paul: 26,219; Gingrich: 16,251;  
Perry: 12,604; Bachmann: 6,073; Huntsman: 745

*A Win is a Win is a Win*

Former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney eked out an 8-vote win over former Pennsylvania Senator Rick Santorum in the Iowa Caucuses Tuesday, tallying 6 fewer votes than he won in his 2nd place finish to Mike Huckabee in Iowa in 2008. Santorum, left for dead the entire race by most seasoned political observers, is the come-from-behind new force to be reckoned with.

Although Romney's "stuck at 25%" win in Iowa is even less than his 25.2% win in 2008, a win is a win is a win. Romney is now well-positioned to win in New Hampshire by a wide margin in next Tuesday's primary. He is not likely to win in socially conservative South Carolina in two weeks (Primary Election 1/21/2012), but he has established a winning campaign plan, team and fundraising prowess that will give him an advantage in all but the most conservative states.

*A Winning Nod by Forced Settlement is Not Enough to Defeat Obama*

The fact remains that 75% of Iowa Republicans did not vote for Romney, and all indicators show that he will never be anything other than the nominee for which most Republicans will be forced to settle. All national polls for months have shown Romney with no more than 25% of the GOP vote.

I am hard pressed to accept the notion that Santorum's Evangelical Christian voters or Ron Paul's anti-government libertarians are ever going to settle for Romney. If Michele Bachmann and Rick Perry step off the stage, which is now likely, their voters are more likely to join Santorum or the Ron Paul camp.

If Romney ultimately wins the Republican nomination, can he defeat President Obama without the enthusiastic support of the 75% of Republicans who have had years to consider him and who have opted to join the Anybody-but-Romney group? These folks vote with their hearts.

According to Real Clear Politics, President Obama's job approval is 47.2%; the remaining 47.8% disapprove. Those numbers look bad unless they are considered in the

context of the nation's historic economic crisis. They should be much worse. Remember, President Bush had 25% job approval in October of 2008.

*Gingrich Reduced to Amateurish Spoiler Sucking Sour Grapes; Vows Revenge*  
Newt Gingrich, after one of the most amateurish campaigns in the history of presidential politics, has reduced himself to a spoiler sucking sour grapes. In his concession speech to a crowd of 100, Gingrich vowed to exact revenge against Romney for the \$4.1 million negative advertising smack down during the final weeks of the Iowa campaign. Gingrich plans to exact his revenge at Saturday night's ABC News presidential debate in New Hampshire, and again on Sunday during the NBC News presidential debate on Meet the Press.

The pro-Romney Super PAC named Restore Our Future spent \$4,116,274 in Iowa in December alone ATTACKING NEWT GINGRICH. Gingrich counter-punched with \$866,950. Guess who won the shouting match?

According to The New York Times, Restore Our Future has already purchased nearly \$1 million in TV advertising time in South Carolina (Primary Election 1/21/2012) and Florida (Primary Election 1/31/2012). The ads target Gingrich in both states. Like it or not, the new under-world of American politics is dominated by Super PACs. They can spend an unlimited amount on independent advertising advocating for the election or defeat of a candidate. Gingrich should have accepted this new reality and used it to his advantage.

Newt Gingrich, of all national political leaders, should have known that politics is a shouting match (debates, TV, radio, mail, public appearances, Internet) and the winner is the one who shouts the loudest and the longest, accomplished by spending the most money. You win the war of words with money, you win the blame game with money, and you win the good guy/bad guy argument and the everyman with the common sense plan argument with money.

You also win the war of mobilization with money. The last GOP debate leading up to the Iowa Caucuses was December 15. Gingrich never changed from the debate mode. There was no organization for mobilization of voters; no counter-punches to combat the pro-Romney Super PACs.

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*Romney: What Goes Around Comes Around*

Romney will now face the brunt of negative attacks by all remaining challengers, beginning Saturday night in Manchester, New Hampshire at the ABC News Republican presidential debate. The debate will be moderated by ABC's Diane Sawyer and George Stephanopoulos.

As brutal as Gingrich is likely to be Saturday, and again on Sunday during the Meet the Press presidential debate, Romney's greater challenge is how to convince the 75% of Republicans throughout the United States who have known him for years and don't like him that he is worthy of their support in the race against President Obama.

*John Davis is a political analyst who has followed North Carolina politics for 25 years. He is one of the state's leading authorities on evaluating the strengths of candidates and predicting the outcome of political races. (Reprinted by Permission)*

## **Quotes**

“All great change in America begins at the dinner table.” Ronald Reagan

“If the past sits in judgment of the present, the future is lost.” Winston Churchill

“My father gave me the greatest gift anyone could give. He believed in me.” Jim Valvano

## **Senator Jerry Tillman can be reached on Facebook**

Are you on Facebook?

You can reach Senator Jerry Tillman by clicking this link.

<http://www.facebook.com/jerrytillman>

Once you get to Jerry’s page, just hit the like button at the top of the page and you’ll start getting updates during the week.

If you don't have a Facebook account, you can sign up for an account so you can start getting Jerry's updates.

Then tell your friends and neighbors who might want to know what Jerry is doing in Raleigh for the folks in Randolph and Montgomery counties.

Again, just click:

<http://www.facebook.com/jerrytillman>

To connect today.

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Go to <http://www.twitter.com/jerrytillman> and sign up to follow Senator Tillman.

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