



# Senator Tony Foriest

Representing the 24th Senate  
District of North Carolina  
Alamance and Caswell Counties



If you need assistance in any state government-related matter, please contact us:

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## Standing Committees

Appropriations on Education/Higher Education  
**Co-Chairman**

Appropriations/Base Budget

Commerce

Education/Higher Education  
**Co-Chairman**

Finance

Health Care  
**Vice-Chairman**

Pensions & Retirement & Aging  
**Chairman**

## Legislative Update October 2010

# Greetings from Raleigh!

As fall approaches, we've gotten some encouraging news on the state of North Carolina's economy.

Recently, the General Assembly's Fiscal Research Economist, Dr. Barry Boardman, issued a report on North Carolina's Financial Outlook. In it, Dr. Boardman stated that the worst of the economic downturn is behind us. However, he emphasized that "there is a long way to go before we return to pre-recession levels". Additionally, the unemployment rate went down in Alamance and Caswell Counties and across the state as a whole. Just last week, the United States Department of Labor reported that North Carolina leads the nation in job creation. As Dr. Boardman stated, we have a long way to go. We cannot be satisfied until every North Carolinian who wants a job has one. To view the entire report, go to [www.ncleg.net/fiscalresearch](http://www.ncleg.net/fiscalresearch) and click on the September General Fund Revenue Update.

I'll share more information about this news below.

As always, thank you for your continued support.

## Unemployment on Steady Decline

According to the North Carolina Employment Security Commission, the unemployment rate in our State has decreased for the sixth straight month. Employment Security Commission Chairman Lynn R. Holmes said that local education accounts for most of the job growth, but that there was also an increase of 4,800 jobs in the private sector. Professional and business services and manufacturing sectors also showed improvement. Overall, North Carolina saw an increase of 18,600 jobs in August. According to the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, this was the highest increase in the nation for the month. Since last year, non-farm employment has increased by 36,700 jobs. This places North Carolina fourth in the nation for employment gains.

The same sources report a decrease in unemployment in Alamance and Caswell. In Alamance, the ESC reported a decrease from 12.1% to 10.8%. In Caswell, the rate went from 12.5% to 11.5%. Certainly, unemployment remains a serious issue, both in District 24, and the rest of the state. We continue to face enormous challenges in turning around North Carolina's economy. However, my colleagues in the Senate and I have faced these challenges head on, and we are beginning to see results. During this year's legislative session, we enacted a refundable tax credit for 125,000+ small businesses that employ 500,000+ people.

Creating jobs remains a top priority, and I look forward to seeing our state make even more economical gains.



## Interim Committees

### Education Oversight Co-Chairman

Joining our  
Businesses and  
Schools  
(J.O.B.S)

Joint Legislative  
Oversight  
Committee on  
Information  
Technology

Interim House and  
Senate Finance  
Committee

State Health  
Coordinating Council  
**Long-Term  
Behavioral Health  
Committee**

Joint Select  
Committee on State  
Funded Student  
Financial Aid

Joint Legislative  
Commission on  
Governmental  
Operations  
**Education/Health  
and Human  
Services  
Subcommittee**

Commission to  
Study the  
Governance and  
Adequacy of the  
Investment Authority  
of Various State-  
Owned Funds for  
the Purposes of  
Enhancing the  
Return of  
Investments

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# North Carolina's Economic Outlook

We have all felt the impact of what has come to be known as the "Great Recession". However, North Carolina is in better shape than most other states. North Carolina still has a AAA bond rating, indicating a fiscally responsible reputation nationally.

My colleagues and I recognize the importance of being particularly frugal with taxpayer's money in these tough times. Per capita spending is at its lowest level in 14 years. Over the last two years the state budget has been cut by 12%, or \$3 billion. The decisions we had to make were not easy ones, but these changes have allowed us to

focus on core services, to prioritize, and to cut things that we can live without during this economic downturn.

However, improving our State's economy is not only about making cuts, but also about being receptive to new businesses. North Carolina's state tax burden for individuals rated 28<sup>th</sup> nationally, near the middle, by the nonpartisan Tax Foundation. Additionally, according to Ernst & Young, North Carolina has one of the lowest tax burdens on small businesses and continues to be ranked one of the best places in America to do business.

I am proud of North Carolina's reputation. I am hopeful and confident that brighter days are ahead and that North Carolina will continue to lead the nation in recovery.

## Alamance Family Justice Center

On September 13, I visited the Alamance County Family Justice Center in Burlington, at 1950 Martin Street, with members of the General Assembly's Joint Legislative Committee on Domestic Violence. The center opened in July and houses domestic-abuse related services under one roof. Since its opening, about 200 people have used its services— nearly four times the number of people that used the old facility in the same time frame last year. The building that houses the center in Burlington was

vacant for 14 years. It is inspiring to see this space put to such a vital use. Before the creation of the Family Justice Center, victims of domestic abuse would have to visit several locations to get help. Having resources in one location shortens the waiting time for assistance, and makes victims less vulnerable to further assaults. Several members of the Committee praised the Center and said that they would be looking for ways to create similar plans in other parts of North Carolina. For more information on the Center or its services, call 336-570-6399.

## Contact us!

As always, please do not hesitate to let me know your thoughts on these initiatives or any other issue you feel is important. If you have received this newsletter by mistake or want to unsubscribe, visit <http://lists.tonyforiest.com/listinfo.cgi/legislative.update-tonyforiest.com/>.

