

Senate President Says 95 Percent Of Budget Passed...General Assembly Adjourns

By Donna Martinez

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The North Carolina General Assembly has passed funding that totals 98.5% of the original \$24.0065 billion it passed in June. With nearly all state priorities fully funded, the Senate session has concluded.

The following items are fully funded in the enacted state budget, which comprises multiple "mini budget" bills as well as the base budget the legislature voted to pass yesterday:

- Correctional facility employee raises;
- State employee raises;
- State highway patrol raises;
- SBI/ALE employee raises;
- Rape kit backlog;
- School safety funding;

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- Prison safety funding;
- Raise the Age funding;
- Community colleges budget;
- Information Technology budget;
- Disaster recovery for Hurricane Dorian;
- Teacher pay raises;
- Funding to combat absentee ballot fraud;
- Technical state agency budget needs.

The total general fund appropriations for the combined enacted budget is \$23.62 billion (excluding approximately \$700 million in debt service).

Senate Leader Phil Berger (R-Rockingham) said, **"It took a little longer than usual,**

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but the Senate's business has concluded. The final enacted budget, which includes the 'mini budget' bills, totals 98.5% of the original budget.

Senator Berger continued, **"l'd like to commend the Senate for a largely bipartisan consensus on some of the major issues this session, including nearly all of the 'mini budgets,' the Combat Absentee Ballot Fraud Act, and criminal justice reform."**

Below are just a few examples of major initiatives the Senate addressed in a bipartisan fashion:

- Historic criminal justice reform;
- Legislation intended to ensure the absentee ballot fraud that took place in North Carolina's 9th Congressional District can never happen again;

Association Health Plans that will benefit up to 110,000 North Carolinians.