

## **CARES-Act Recovery Appropriations for NC**

We have a duty and responsibility to serve the citizens of NC through the enactment of laws promoting public safety, commerce, and access to education, equal justice, and health care. My focus over the past 6 weeks has been dissecting and analyzing the federal appropriation of \$3.5 billion to NC for Coronavirus Recovery Funds and policy making that drives that disbursement throughout the state. Our Office has responded to dozens of constituents struggling with applying for unemployment insurance, accessing broadband and devices for homeschooling, ecommerce and telemedicine during the almost two months of social distancing, school and business closures, and Stay At Home orders created by COVID19 pandemic. We convened short session in the midst of an international crisis that demands that we prioritize people over politics. As such, the only comment that I have in response to HB1033 Extra Session/Statewide State of Emergency proposal submitted by my delegation colleague is that it appears to seek to preempt the powers of the executive. A proposed constitutional change to provide for convening of the legislature upon a gubernatorial executive order state of emergency is unnecessary as there already exists that provision through Article 2, Sec. 11.(2) convention by three-fifths of each chamber. I am a disciplined supporter of “trias politica” separation of powers, found in Article 1, Sec. 6 of the NC Constitution. Rather than propose amendments to the state constitution that appear to ‘overreach into’ or limit the powers of the executive branch, I would challenge all legislators to explore amendments that expand representative democracy and protections for all citizens beginning with constitutional protections for women and girls under NC Ratify the Equal Rights Amendment.

I voted in the affirmative on SB 704 COVID-19 Recovery Act that appropriates \$1.3 billion in funds response to the pandemic. While the bill passed unanimously, there is recognition that this is just a first step in fulfilling our constitutional duty to appropriate these funds per federal authorizations in providing for the public health and economic well-being of the citizens of our state. I am spending today analyzing HB 1043 which appropriates \$1.7 billion for the same purpose. In my initial analysis, I favor the House version as it secures critical education funding and flexibility, digital technology and broadband access for consumers and more funding and flexibility for local governments which are our critical partners in facilitating the recovery process. Our next wave of appropriations must do more for small businesses in NC.

## **Priorities for Short Session**

My three major priorities during the Short Session;

- (1) Budget Priorities for Senate District 3 left incomplete from the failure to pass a budget in the long session;
- (2) Advocating for policies and initiatives for addressing income and food insecurity, gender and race equity, healthcare access, sustainable agriculture, crisis response, and historical underfunding in underserved sectors and regions of the state;
- (3) Policy work around Reimagining Public Education, Labor and Commerce post COVID19.