NORTH CAROLINA

SENATE

2027

Senator Jim Burgin

October 30, 2026

"Where there is no vision, the people perish…"

PROVERBS 29:18

Assuming we maintain the majority in the Senate, we need to be thinking about the next session. The North Carolina Senate has had a tremendous legacy over the past 16 years, but the 2027 legislative session should be about more than passing legislation. It should be about making the North Carolina Senate a **stronger, more effective, more transparent, and more conservative** institution.

We should enter 2027 with a clear understanding of what we want to accomplish, how we will conduct business, and how we will remain accountable to the people who elected us.

01 Strengthen the Legislative Process

Improving how legislation moves through the Senate must be a priority.

- Committee chairs should determine which bills deserve hearings and committee consideration. Legislation should move through the appropriate committee, then Rules and caucus, before reaching the Senate floor.
- Committee hearings should provide members an opportunity to ask questions, debate legislation, and vote.
- Legislation should be publicly available for **at least 48 hours** before a committee vote so members and the public have adequate time to review it.

02 Strengthen the Republican Caucus

Issues affecting the entire caucus should be discussed and decided by the caucus before legislation is written. Proposals that have not been identified as public caucus priorities should first be presented to the caucus for consideration. Legislation without sufficient caucus support should not advance as caucus legislation.

There should be greater transparency regarding caucus political activities and funding. A budget and financial statements should be provided. Members should also receive caucus-funded training in effective public speaking and media communications.

03 Promote Conservative Principles

The Senate should be focused on Christian, conservative principles: limited government, individual responsibility, fiscal discipline, strong families, safe communities, economic opportunity, and protecting individual freedoms.

We should also have another serious conversation about how to decrease the number of abortions in North Carolina.

04 Address Healthcare Costs

Healthcare costs continue to place a significant burden on North Carolina families, employers, and taxpayers.

The General Assembly should advance policies that drive down costs and pursue practical solutions that increase competition, transparency, affordability, and access.

Multiple policies need in-depth review and changes to help improve the cost of healthcare, including:

- Scope of practice
- Certificate of need
- Facility fees and not-for-profit status of hospitals
- Insurance reform
- State Health Plan – allow members to choose the coverage that best fits their needs

05 Review Tax Policy and Spending Growth

North Carolina should continue reviewing its tax policy, including the sales tax structure.

We will rein in property taxes. We should examine reasonable impact fees associated with growth, particularly for school construction and infrastructure. As communities grow, those benefiting from development should appropriately share in the costs of the infrastructure needed to support that growth.

The General Assembly should also hold hearings on implementing zero-based budgeting, requiring one-third of agencies and programs to justify their funding on a six-year rotation rather than assuming prior-year spending should continue. This would help identify outdated programs, eliminate unnecessary spending, and ensure taxpayer dollars are directed toward the state's highest priorities.

06 Privatize ABC to Invest in Education

North Carolina should modernize its ABC system. **Senate Bill 938** would transition from government-operated ABC stores to privately owned package stores while maintaining state regulation of liquor.

Privatization could generate **up to $2 billion for education** while modernizing an outdated system.

07 Establish a Statewide Data Center, AI, and IT Policy

North Carolina needs a statewide policy for data centers addressing taxation, infrastructure, electricity, water, economic development, and local impacts, while preserving appropriate county authority.

The state should also establish a responsible AI policy covering government use, privacy, cybersecurity, education, and economic development while encouraging innovation. We cannot wait on federal legislation; we should move forward with a state policy that states that a human should always be notified when interacting with AI.

This committee should already be meeting.

North Carolina should modernize and consolidate state IT contracts and services where practical, reducing duplication, lowering costs, strengthening cybersecurity, and improving accountability through statewide purchasing and shared technology platforms. DHHS alone reported that they paid **$426 million** last year to the top 10 IT contractors.

Our goal should be to make North Carolina a national leader in technology and AI while protecting citizens and giving communities an appropriate voice in development.

08 Improve Communication

House and Senate leadership should meet weekly to discuss legislative priorities and challenges. Meeting over a meal usually proves to be productive.

Legislative leadership should meet with the Governor's office at least monthly. Regular communication will not eliminate disagreements, but it can improve coordination and prevent unnecessary problems.

We must work to build consensus amongst all members and between the two chambers in order to speed up the legislative and budgeting process. State governments need a solid mix of everyday civility and real statesmanship.

09 Modernize the Legislative Branch

North Carolina needs an honest discussion about legislative pay, terms of office, term limits, staffing, and the length and structure of legislative sessions.

This issue has been unresolved for decades, and now is the time.

The Senate and House should create an independent, bipartisan commission outside the General Assembly to recommend changes to modernize the legislative branch. Its work should address legislative compensation, staffing, leadership term limits, member terms, and the session calendar.

Senate Bill 856 provides a starting point for this discussion and should be part of the conversation.

I do not believe these changes will actually be unpopular with the public, but they will surely be used in attacks. Members who support modernization will have appropriate political and institutional support when they face attacks for supporting these reforms.

THE GOAL FOR 2027

A Senate That Works

The goal for 2027 should be simple: **a Senate that works.** To be clear, that is different from a Senate that waits Democrats out.

We should improve the legislative process, give members a stronger voice, increase transparency, modernize the institution, address difficult issues, and remain committed to conservative principles.

We were elected to represent our constituents, solve problems, protect individual freedoms, and leave North Carolina better than we found it.

Senator Jim Burgin
North Carolina Senate