

Legislative Report October 2021

The budget has been the main focus of the General Assembly for the past month. After the Senate and then the House passed their own versions of the budget, the bill was sent to conference for a compromise to be ironed out. Appropriations Committee/Subcommittee chairs met for weeks behind closed doors. They then sent the issues they couldn't come to an agreement on to Senate President Phil Berger and House Speaker Tim Moore last week. The two of them spent the week finding a compromise on those issues, and announced the compromise budget was finished at the end of last week.

Instead of taking the compromise to the House and Senate floors to vote on now, as is the usual process, leadership has decided to send it to Governor Cooper instead in an effort to "pre-negotiate" with him and hopefully avoid a veto. It's expected that negotiations with the governor will take a week or two, but legislative leadership and the governor are optimistic that they can come to an agreement and a budget bill can be passed and signed into law for the first time since the 2017-2018 biennium.

The other big issue at the legislature at the moment is redistricting. Redistricting committee members spent September traveling around the state for public meetings twice a week. They now plan to spend the month of October drawing new voting maps.

HB683, which is to include the language on providing information on alternative care for pain along with opioid prescriptions, is still sitting with all the other House bills waiting to be heard in the Senate. While the budget and redistricting meetings have been taking precedence lately, most committees, including Senate Health, haven't been meeting much, if at all. It looks most likely that the bill won't be considered by the Senate until next year's short session.