

# NCCA Lobbyist Report

Submitted by Laura DeVivo & Angel Sams

February 13, 2020

The General Assembly convened for a one-day session on January 14 for a session that Senate leadership had suggested could include an override vote for the governor's veto of the budget. However, Senate Democrats stood firmly with Governor Cooper. After taking votes and failing to override the governor's veto on the teacher pay increase mini-budget bill and regulatory reform bill, the vetoed budget bill was pulled from the calendar and sent to Rules Committee to sit in wait of another opportunity.

The legislature adjourned after only passing a funding bill for scholarships for children of veterans. They now stand adjourned until the start of short session on April 28.

Senator Berger held a press conference before adjournment on January 14, where he predicted that the short session will be very short and that the legislature might not even attempt to pass a budget adjustment bill since they have been unable to put a biennial budget in place.

There is uncertainty about the upcoming short session. Governor Cooper and legislative Democrats are still pushing hard for Medicaid expansion to be considered and voted on. They continue to insist that they will not consider a budget that doesn't include funding for expansion. While the House leadership has indicated that they might be willing to consider a Republican-crafted version of Medicaid expansion, Senate Republicans have refused to even discuss it saying that they do not and will not have the votes to pass any form of expansion.

Because the main purpose of the short session is to enact a budget adjustment bill, and there is no budget to adjust, it's unknown how long the session will last. We have heard predictions between four and eight weeks. While there hasn't been much talk of issues that are sure to come up during session, we expect to hear a lot about Medicaid expansion and Medicaid transformation, which was suspended at the end of 2019 as a result of not having enough funding to proceed. That funding had been included in the vetoed budget.

Only new bills that impact the budget can be introduced during short session. Other bills that can be considered are bills that passed at least one chamber by the crossover deadline during last year's long session. Because of this, the NCCA will not be allowed to introduce any new legislation. However, bills that are still alive are sometimes amended or completely gutted and have entirely new and different language added in order to get around the restrictions. We will stay informed of any potential opportunities to advance chiropractic issues during the session, including any potential avenues for chiropractic to help with the opioid epidemic. We will also stay informed to make sure there is no language that pops up that would be harmful to the profession. It is important for members of the NCCA to continue to build relationships with legislators during this time.