

LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY
OF THE
2011 SESSION
OF THE
NORTH CAROLINA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

NELSON MULLINS RILEY & SCARBOROUGH, L.L.P.

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NORTH CAROLINA GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

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OVERVIEW

The North Carolina General Assembly met for 87 legislative days from January 26 to June 28, under Republican control for the first time in over 100 years. Much of the time during the session was devoted to the drafting and passing the State's \$19.3 billion balanced budget. That was no easy task when the budget writers had to deal with over a \$3 billion revenue shortfall when the process began. The legislative pace was hectic and in the end the legislative results were positive for the business community of North Carolina.

The General Assembly has reconvened in a special session in July to deal with redistricting legislation and is scheduled to meet again in September to handle legislation regarding constitutional amendments.

POLITICAL CLIMATE OF 2011

Before looking at the legislation enacted by the 2011 North Carolina General Assembly long session, it is important to understand the historical context within which the legislature was working.

The 2011 North Carolina General Assembly was controlled by the Republicans for the first time since 1898. Democrats lost their majorities in North Carolina House of Representatives and Senate following a national shift to the right that played out in the November 2010 elections. This anti-Democrat trend leading up to the 2010 elections was in large part due to widespread public discontent of incumbent policymakers following the economic downturn of 2008 which resulted in a persisting national unemployment rate of over nine percent. Democrats were in the majority in the federal and state legislative branches in 2010. The anti-incumbent sentiment of voters caused all chambers, but for the US Senate on the federal level, to change to a Republican majority.

In 2010 North Carolina legislative Democrats held a 68-52 majority in the 120 member House and a 30-20 majority in the 50 member Senate. In the November 2010 elections, Republicans dramatically shifted those numbers and gained majorities in both chambers for the first time in over 100 years. The 2011 North Carolina General Assembly was comprised of a 68-52 Republican majority in the House (with one conservative unaffiliated member) and a 31-19 Republican majority in the Senate. Democrat Governor Beverly Perdue was faced with an unprecedented situation in North Carolina. Since the executive branch received veto power in 1997, North Carolina's Governor has never faced a General Assembly controlled by a different party. Prior to 2011, the gubernatorial veto stamp had been used on only six measures sent from the legislature for final approval. This session, however, the Governor, "with a bucket of red paint," exercised her veto fifteen times.

Under North Carolina law, in order for the legislature to override a gubernatorial veto, each chamber must separately vote to do so by a three-fifths majority, as opposed to a "simple" fifty percent-plus-one majority required for all other legislation. With an assumption of party-line votes, Senate Republicans have a large enough caucus to gain the necessary three-fifths majority for a veto override. In perhaps one of the most interesting political variables for this legislature,

the Republicans in the House of Representatives did not hold a large enough majority necessary to override a veto on a strict party-line vote. At least four additional votes were required in addition to the House Republican Caucus to achieve a three-fifths majority. With the above-mentioned fifteen vetoes, the General Assembly got a lot of practice in overriding six vetoes (this includes an override of the Governor's veto of the budget bill). Prior to this session, only one of the six previous vetoes had been overridden.

The 2010 elections were particularly "high-stakes" because in every new decade the legislature is tasked with re-drawing district maps following the 2010 national census. According to the US Constitution, states must go through the "redistricting" process in order to ensure that the districts that officials are elected from are equal in representation as state's population changes and shifts. The North Carolina legislature is required to redraw the maps of the US House of Representatives, the North Carolina House of Representatives and the North Carolina Senate. The redistricting process is very complex, and once passed by the North Carolina General Assembly, is one of the very few pieces of legislation that is NOT subject to the governor's veto. Taking the majority in a year where the legislature is responsible for redrawing district maps is quite significant for Republicans, as districts can be strategically drawn to favor one party over the other despite strict legal considerations.

It's fair to say that the new majority of the North Carolina General Assembly saw 2011 as a year of opportunity. As one can imagine, these variables set an interesting stage for hyper-partisan dramatics as a legislature with a Republican majority convened on January 26, 2011.

LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY

Regardless of party affiliation, all agree that the new leadership in the General Assembly was extremely organized this session. Typically, upon convening in January, each legislative body votes on the leaders of each chamber and the new leader then moves forward with various administrative duties such as assigning committees, offices, staff members and rules. Until these administrative tasks are completed, which are known to take several weeks, the legislature is largely in a waiting period before they can get to work. This session, the Republican caucuses in each chamber met in the months prior to convening, and although unofficial, had chosen leaders, staff, and major committee and office assignments before session began. This enabled legislators to "hit the ground running" as soon as they officially convened, perpetuating their theme of government efficiency touted on the campaign trail.

Members elected two-term representative and previous House Minority Whip Thom Tillis as the Speaker of the House and six-term Senator Phil Berger, formerly the Senate Minority Leader, as the leader of the Senate. Speaker Tillis, a former IBM executive from Mecklenburg County, made clear his intentions to approach the office from a businesslike perspective. Likewise, Senator Berger, an attorney from Rockingham County, pledged the same.

As the leaders of each chamber typically do, Speaker Tillis and Senator Berger set forth a set of prescribed rules at the beginning of the session. These rules, voted on by members, set forth guidelines on how members shall conduct themselves during session. They generally range from dress code, to debate limits; however this year, the rules limited the amount of legislation that is

allowed to be introduced per member. This rule resulted in a significantly lower number of bills introduced than previous years, and thus a higher percentage of bills that became law.

Historical Comparison of Legislative Activity in the Long Session of the North Carolina General Assembly

	2001	2003	2005	2007	2009	
Date adjourned	Dec. 6	Jul. 20	Sept. 2	Aug. 2	Aug. 11	
House legislative days	179	102	125	113	114	
House bills introduced	1478	1028	1800	2072	1658	
Session Laws enacted	519	435	463	551	577	
Vetoes Overridden	0	0	0	1	0	
Simple resolutions adopted	10	16	26	7	8	
Percentage Measures passed	21%	19%	17%	17%	22%	

**The 2011 NCGA adjourned June 18. Both bodies reconvened July 13-28 and have plans to again reconvene on Sept. 13 to act on a limited number of measures.*

STATE BUDGET

As one of the primary functions of the legislature, balancing the state budget as mandated by the North Carolina constitution was a daunting task. No longer did the legislature have American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds, used to help fill the state budget gap in 2009 and 2010 following the economic downturn of 2008, a loss of \$1.6 billion. Temporary tax increases were set to expire on July 2, 2011, a loss of another \$1.3 billion. When combined with estimates on spending needs and expected revenue from the Legislative Fiscal Research Division in January 2011, the spending gap totaled \$3.7 billion. As the session progressed, Fiscal Research staff reduced their estimate of the gap because of increased revenue forecasts and other factors to \$2.6 billion. As one of their first tasks, the legislature attempted to chip away at part of this looming budget gap by passing Senate Bill 109 (Spending Cuts for the Current Fiscal Year) which directed the executive branch to revert over \$500 million from the current operating budget back into the General Fund. Meanwhile, in the first few months of session joint House and Senate Appropriations sub-committees met nearly every day in largely information-gathering meetings on current state spending. With the number of first-term legislators totaling nearly twenty percent, there was a focus on educating the freshmen on the intricacies of how the government spends money. State government entities were asked to show realistic scenarios of budget cuts at increments of 5, 10 and 15 percent.

In February, while the legislature was holding their budget committee meetings, the Governor released her recommended state budget for the legislature to consider. As a former teacher, Governor Perdue has consistently placed education and workforce development as her highest priority as a public official. With the state unemployment rate hovering around ten percent, job creation was more of a priority than ever before. Her proposed budget reflected her focus on maintaining education funding as well as creating jobs. Her recommendations included a reduction of the tax burden for North Carolina corporations and complete funding for all public school teachers and teacher's assistants. Although cuts were inevitable, they were made by streamlining services and eliminating duplicative administrative functions by state agencies. She made it clear that her priorities with this spending plan were to focus on economic recovery by putting North Carolinians back to work, ensuring the future workforce was career and college ready, resetting state government and maintaining fiscal responsibility and sustainability.

This budget was predictably received with much criticism from legislative leaders, who began releasing pieces of their spending plan the following month. As process mandated, the House was to pass the budget legislation and send it to the Senate for its approval. If the Senate changed any of the legislation passed to them, it must be sent back to the House for another procedural approval "up or down" vote. If voted down on the concurrence vote, both bodies normally appoint a "conference committee" to hammer out the differences. With a complex piece of legislation that is typically over 300 pages, even with majority parties in both chambers, this is typically the procedural course of budget negotiations. House and Senate leaders boasted a plan to quickly and cooperatively pass a spending plan that both chamber's majority party could agree upon without appointing a conference committee. This was another sign of its supposed "efficiency" which, some said, became more about meeting arbitrary deadlines at all costs than good legislating.

The legislative leaders praised their spending plan as a business-friendly and job creating budget, focusing on streamlining government functions and departments. One of the primary differences between the budget of the legislative and executive branches was the extension of the temporary one-cent sales tax, set to expire on July 1. The governor's budget only partially extended this tax, enabling the state to spend more on education and other core government functions at the estimated expense of less than \$12 per month to a North Carolina family of four. The legislative majority was adamant about letting the temporary tax completely sunset, as many members signed "no tax" pledges as a part of their campaign for office.

The politics that played out after the legislature sent its budget, House Bill 200 (Appropriations Act of 2011), to the Governor was perhaps more interesting than the debate itself. Governor Perdue vetoed the measure, saying it would "result in generational damage," and that it "tears at the very fibers that make North Carolina strong – not only our schools, but also our communities, our environment, our public safety system and our ability to care for those who need us most." The Senate easily overrode the veto in a party line vote, as the GOP had the three-fifths majority necessary to do so. With a straight party-line vote, House Republicans did not have the Senate's override-proof supermajority. At least five Democrats had to vote with the majority in order for the Republican caucus in the House to reach the three-fifths margin to override. With back-door deals and promises on other legislative matters, House leadership managed to sway five

conservative Democrats to defect and vote to pass the budget notwithstanding the Governor's objection. Thus, the legislature's spending plan became law.

TAX LAW AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT LEGISLATION

For years, members of both parties have expressed the need for comprehensive restructuring of North Carolina's tax code. Tax breaks in the form of non-taxable items, tax caps or tax credits for special interests and industries have accumulated over the years, which many can agree leaves a state tax code with many inconsistencies and therefore increasingly uncertain revenue stream. Several legislative committees have been appointed in the past to study what the best approach to comprehensive reform looks like. Countless presentations and recommendations have emerged on the topic by national and state experts with a common theme of "broaden the base and lower the rate." Republican leadership has expressed a keen interest in lowering the corporate tax rate, which experts say can be done without disrupting the revenue stream by expanding the base of taxable services, while giving the state more certainty and consistency on revenue estimates. This comprehensive reform, which eluded so many elected bodies before them, was again out of reach for the legislature in 2011. Leadership has indicated a willingness to tackle the issue in the 2012 short session.

One tax matter that did not elude them, however, was the repeal of a relatively recent law that allowed for municipalities to enact a tax on real estate sales following a vote of the constituents. Passed four years ago, the measure has been put on the ballot in over twenty instances across the state, and failed every time. With the passage of House Bill 92 (Repeal Land Transfer Tax) enacting a land transfer tax is no longer an option for municipalities.

Another tax measure enacted by the General Assembly in 2011 was one that would give the NC Secretary of Revenue the authority to investigate corporations that may not have accurately reported their net income on their taxes. House Bill 619 (Forced Combinations) allows the Secretary to request any information from the corporation(s) in question deemed necessary to make a determination. If it is determined after review that the income of the corporation lacks economic substance or is not at fair market value, the Secretary may require the corporation to file a combined return with all members of its affiliated group, regardless of whether the entities do business activity in the state. This bill provides much needed clarity for North Carolina corporations on how the Department of Revenue conducts forced combinations, thus giving both parties an increased measure of certainty.

FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS LEGISLATION

With the passage of Senate Bill 555 (Study Modernization of Bank Laws) in June, the General Assembly created the Joint Legislative Study Commission on the Modernization of North Carolina Banking Laws. This body is tasked with studying any issue related to the State's banking laws deemed appropriate, and will report its findings and recommendations in the 2012 legislative short session.

This study will be done under the watchful eye of Commissioner of Banks Joseph Smith who had his re-appointment confirmed by the General Assembly with the passage of Senate Bill 369

(Confirm Joseph A. Smith Commissioner of Banks). However, the commissioner will no longer oversee the Emergency Foreclosure Program as it was transferred to the Housing Finance Agency with the passage of House Bill 484 (Transfer Emergency Foreclosure Program to HFA).

REAL ESTATE AND REGISTERS OF DEEDS LEGISLATION

Three measures were enacted in the 2011 General Assembly session that will significantly impact deeds of trust in North Carolina. The changes enacted by the passage of these three bills, House Bill 312 (Register of Deeds), House Bill 384 (Register of Deeds/Fees) and Senate Bill 679 (Deeds of Trust/Modernization Procedure), will become effective October 1, 2011. These new laws address many issues relating to deeds of trust, including methods for recording satisfaction of security instruments, electronically registering plats, releases, short sales, future advances, equity line liens, release of ancillary documents, and eliminating the trustee of a deed of trust as a party to certain transactions and litigation. Additionally, the new law simplifies the collection and remittance of fees by the register of deeds and does so in a revenue-neutral manner for both the State and the counties.

INSURANCE LEGISLATION

Property Casualty

Chief among the major bills affecting the Property and Casualty Insurance Industry was House Bill 709 (Protect and Put North Carolina Back to Work) which was introduced by Representative Dale Folwell (R-Forsyth) with a view toward the most significant reform of the Workers' Compensation Act since the early 1990s. Representative Folwell worked tirelessly for months with all stakeholders to ultimately craft a bill that was agreed to by all sides. The primary components of this major piece of legislation included:

- capping the duration of temporary disability compensation;
- a definition of "suitable employment" pertaining to an employee's return to work with restrictions or after reaching maximum medial improvement;
- making willful misrepresentations grounds for disqualification from receiving benefits;
- clarifying rights and responsibilities of employees and employers regarding medical examination treatment and access to medical information;
- repealing the Commission's full exemption from the Administrative Procedures Act;
- reducing the number of Industrial Commission members to six (6); and
- subjecting them to legislative conformation and holding them to the code of judicial standards and other miscellaneous reforms to the Act.

The other major bill for the Property and Casualty Insurance Industry was House Bill 542 (Tort Reform for Citizens and Business). This bill was introduced by Representative Jonathan Rhyne (R-Lincoln), Representative Danny McComas (R-New Hanover), Representative William Brisson (D-Bladen) and Representative Jim Crawford (D-Granville). This bi-partisan bill had significant support in both chambers but faced an all-out assault from the plaintiff's bar. After significant debate and committee work, the bill passed the House on June 1 by a vote of 85 to 32

and then passed the Senate by a vote of 42 to 8 two weeks later. After a conference committee made some changes to the bill, it went to the Governor who signed it into law on June 24.

The major reforms included in House Bill 542 are:

- Requiring that juries receive accurate information about the medical bills actually paid by a plaintiff or their insurer for medical care provided (actually paid versus billed);
- Clarifying that North Carolina landowners are not liable for harm to trespassers on their property;
- Deterring frivolous lawsuits by establishing requirements for expert witness testimony that will make North Carolina consistent with the requirements in federal courts and the majority of states (Daubert Rule); and
- Capping attorneys' fees in certain cases.

Another major piece of tort reform legislation that was enacted this session is Senate Bill 33 (Medical Malpractice Reform) was introduced by Senator Tom Apodaca (R-Henderson), Senator Bob Rucho (R-Mecklenburg) and Senator Harry Brown (R-Onslow). This bill passed the Senate very early in the session by a vote of 36 to 13 and went to the House where it was subjected to significant amendments by a fight led by several Republican trial lawyers. After the bill passed the House by a vote of 91 to 27, it went to conference committee where it saw more amendments. When the bill found its way to the Governor's desk, she executed one of her 15 vetoes on the bill. After considerable work by the business and medical community, that veto was overridden by the legislature on July 25, and the bill became law.

The major provisions of the enacted Senate Bill 33 are:

- Capping non-economic damages in medical malpractice actions;
- Requiring proof of greater negligence in cases involving emergency medical care; and
- Permitting alternatives for appeal bonds in medical malpractice actions.

Department of Insurance Legislation

There were several agency bills that were introduced at the request of the Department of Insurance that passed during this session. Among them were:

- House Bill 298 (Insurance Amendments) was introduced by Representative Jerry Dockham (R-Davidson). Representative Dockham, Chair of the Insurance Committee, introduced most of the insurance bills that were enacted this session. That legislation makes changes to the insurance laws to privatize online and administrative processes for license applicants, codify the existing seniors' health insurance information program, ensure accuracy in certificates of insurance, require prior approval of small group health insurance rates and encourage the sale of child-only health insurance policies, amend the risk-based capital law to maintain NAIC accreditation, provide an exemption for licensing of claims input employees for portable electronic devices, prohibit federal preemption of crop adjusters' regulation, and ease the regulatory burden on the North

Carolina Self-Insurance Security Association and the Association Aggregate Security System.

- Senate Bill 321 (Surplus Lines/Premium Tax) was also introduced by Senator Tom Apodaca (R-Henderson). That legislation conforms provisions of North Carolina surplus lines insurance laws to the federal Nonadmitted and Reinsurance Reform Act of 2010, to streamline applications for commercial purchasers, to prevent any loss of premium tax revenue to the state, and to conform the definition of risk retention group to federal law.

Other Insurance Bills of Interest

There were other insurance bills of interest that passed this session. Among them were:

- House Bill 373 (Insurance Change to Payments & Group Life) was introduced by Representative Dockham (R-Davidson). That bill authorizes the payment of insurance premiums using debit cards, to facilitate the payment of insurance premiums using credit and debit cards, and to permit the Commissioner of Insurance to approve nontraditional groups for group life insurance.
- House Bill 453 (Allow Salary Protection Insurance) was also introduced by Representative Dockham. That bill authorizes the placement and issuance of salary protection insurance under the Surplus Lines Act.
- House Bill 575 (Service Agreement/Allow Reserve Account) was also introduced by Representative Dockham. That bill provides that in lieu of contractual liability insurance, a service contract provider may maintain a funded reserve account for its obligations under service contracts issued and outstanding in this state.
- House Bill 617 (Portable Electronics Insurance Coverage) was also introduced by Representative Dockham. This legislation creates the authority to regulate portable electronics insurance.
- Senate Bill 323 (State Health Plan/Appropriations & Transfer) was introduced by Senator Apodaca (R-Henderson). This important bill transfers the State Health Plan for Teachers and State Employees to the Office of State Treasurer.

LITIGATION AND LEGAL PRACTICE LEGISLATION

As discussed in the Insurance Legislation Section above, there were three major pieces of legislation that dramatically effect litigation and the practice of law in North Carolina. Those bills are: House Bill 709 (Protect and Put NC Back to Work), House Bill 542 (Tort Reform for Citizens and Businesses) and Senate Bill 33 (Medical Liability Reforms).

Following a series of public input meetings across the state, the Legislative Committee on Regulatory Reform recommended legislation to make state agencies more efficient and affect their rulemaking process. The purpose behind the new committee and the legislation was to

identify existing rules that were unnecessary, unduly burdensome or duplicative in nature. The product of the months-long public input process was Senate Bill 781 (Regulatory Reform Act of 2011). Many stakeholder groups, including environmental groups and the business community, were brought to the table to negotiate the measure which passed the legislature with bi-partisan support, including a unanimous vote in the Senate. It came as no surprise that after Governor Perdue vetoed the measure, citing possible unconstitutionality regarding the removal of final decision-making authority of state agencies in certain circumstances, the legislature easily voted to override her objection.

ENVIRONMENTAL LEGISLATION

An effort to permit the construction of structures to prevent beach erosion on the North Carolina coast was successful in the 2011 session. Senate Bill 110 (Permit Terminal Groins) allows, with many stipulations, the construction of four "terminal groins," or perpendicular rock walls, to be built along the North Carolina coast. This effort was not successful in the past, even with bi-partisan legislative support from elected officials with coastal districts. The final measure that passed this session requires multiple pre-clearance processes including a third-party environmental impact statement, proof of need, plans for construction, maintenance, shoreline management, financial assurance and final review and approval by the Coastal Resources Commission prior to the construction of the structure.

A bill passed to amend various environmental and natural resources laws in North Carolina, House Bill 119 (Amend Environmental Laws 2011), was nearly twenty pages long and made largely technical and clarifying changes to the law. Included in these changes are provisions that align various state regulations with those already in place by the federal government, clarification of certain environmental exemptions and directing studies on a range of environmental topics.

ENTERTAINMENT AND ABC LAW LEGISLATION

A bill that passed the General Assembly this session and was signed by the Governor will allow businesses with brewery permits to sell their product on site. While most breweries are already able to obtain licenses to sell their beer on their premises, House Bill 98 (Breweries to Sell Malt Beverages on Premises) supersedes any local ordinance that may prohibit future breweries from doing so.

Also of note, legislative attempts to expand the hours for the sale of alcohol in North Carolina were not successful this session. A last minute attempt by the Senate to insert the expansion language into a house bill was shut down when the House voted unanimously not to concur with the Senate's changes. House Bill 796 would have allowed the lawful sale of alcohol for consumption off-premise to begin at 5:00 a.m. Monday through Saturday and would have allowed the purchase of alcohol for on and off premise consumption to begin on Sundays at 11 a.m.

Additionally, legislative attempts to make changes to nuisance abatement laws were unsuccessful. Two identical bills, Senate Bill 170 (Clarify Nuisance Abatement Laws) and

House Bill 433 (Nuisance Abatement Changes) would have dramatically changed the grounds for establishing a "public nuisance" so that "more than one occurrence during a one-year period" would subject an establishment (canteens or clubs which disperse alcoholic beverages) to harsh penalties such as padlocking or forfeiture of real property. After considerable floor debate, the House determined that the legislation should not move further, and the bill (House Bill 433) was sent back to committee.

EDUCATION LEGISLATION

As evidenced by the low bill number, Senate Bill 8 (No Cap on Number of Charter Schools) was one of the first pieces of legislation introduced in 2011. Charter schools are K-12 public schools where parents can choose to enroll their children provided there are openings. Achievement standards are higher in charter schools than in regular public schools, however, many qualifications must be met to start a charter school, including evidence that the current school is low-performing and approval by various governmental entities. The final legislation allows for responsible expansion of the system, by removing the arbitrary limit while ensuring funds are not taken away from general K-12 public schools. The legislation also enacts stricter performance guidelines and reporting requirements for charter schools.

GENERAL BUSINESS LEGISLATION

While the business community does not generally support legislative measures that increase regulations on employers, they have long been supportive of legislation requiring employers to verify the legal citizenship of new employees as a way to ensure equitable regulation. House Bill 36 (Employers and Local Government Must Use E-Verify) now requires employers with 25 or more employees, as well as all local governmental entities, to use the federal E-Verify system to authorize that new employees are legal U.S. citizens. The new law additionally sets a tiered enforcement system and tiered effective dates dependant upon number of employees.

ELECTION LAW LEGISLATION

In a special session of the 2011 General Assembly in July, the legislature addressed the hot political topic of redistricting. In party-line votes, the General Assembly adopted legislation that redrew the state and federal districts that many predict will pass legal scrutiny and will lead to larger Republican majorities in the House, Senate and U.S. Congress.

The legislation that established the district map was:

- Senate Bill 453 (Rucho-Lewis Congress 3) - An Act to Realign United State Congressional Districts Following the Return of the 2010 Federal Decennial Census;
- House Bill 937 (Lewis Dollar Dockham 3) – An Act to Realign North Carolina House of Representatives Districts Following the Return of the 2010 Federal Decennial Census; and

- Senate Bill 455 (Rucho Senate 2) – An Act to Realign North Carolina Senatorial Districts Following the Return of the 2010 Federal Decennial Census.

MISCELLANEOUS AND LOCAL LEGISLATION

Legislation that changes the way North Carolina's municipalities can involuntarily annex surrounding areas into the city or town limits was passed after a long-standing debate between municipalities and various landowners in the state. House Bill 56 (Local Annexation Subject to 60% Petition) allows property owners to petition the involuntary annexation by municipalities. If over 60 percent of property owners in the area to be annexed sign the petition, the municipality must not only terminate the annexation, but cannot consider doing so for a time period of at least 36 months following the successful petition.

The legislature passed a measure that allows for the use of a firearm in self defense upon an intruder in the home, workplace or car without criminal or civil liability. House Bill 650 (Amend Various Gun Laws / Castle Doctrine) received bipartisan approval after a last-minute amendment was passed to remove a section that mandated businesses not prohibit weapons in cars on the business property.

STUDIES ACT AND OTHER LEGISLATION

Because of disagreement between the House and Senate, this year the General Assembly did not pass a studies bill. House Bill 773 (Studies Bill of 2011) was introduced and passed the House. The Senate amended the bill, and the House failed to concur, so the bill is currently in a conference committee. The House and Senate have both indicated that each will appoint interim studies of their choosing to tackle many of the topics contained in the studies bill.

The appointments bill (Senate Bill 686) was approved by the General Assembly and contains a number of appointments to state boards and commissions upon the recommendation of the Speaker of the House and the President Pro Tempore of the Senate. Also, the General Assembly adopted various technical corrections bills that will be referenced in the index at the back of this report.