

News from Jones Street

*Your legislative updates from Jackson Cozort,
RGEA Director of Government Relations*

May 30, 2025

It was a very quiet week on Jones Street as both the House and the Senate took the entire week off after the House passed its version of the budget on May 22nd. When they come back on Monday, we expect a full week of committee meetings where the House will start taking up some of the Senate bills and vice versa. We also expect both chambers to announce the conference committee members as they start to negotiate a final budget. It is going to be interesting to see if the House Speaker appoints any democrats to the conference committee considering 28 democrats voted for the budget. We continue to hear that Senate leadership is very unhappy with the house budget so this could just be the beginning of a very long final budget process that could take months.

May 23, 2025

On Thursday the House passed its budget which gave State Retirees a 1% (approx. \$60 million dollar appropriation) one-time bonus for 2025 and a 2% (approx. \$120 million dollars) one-time bonus for 2026. Keep in mind this is only for TSERS though. LGERS bonuses do not come from the State Budget, they usually only come from the LGERS board's recommendation based on the State's investment returns or the retiree's individual municipality or county.

I know it is not as much as everyone wanted, but in this political environment where both the House and Senate created their own D.O.G.E. committees to cut spending and government jobs, we are taking the House's budget as a huge win.

Our next and possibly most difficult task is to make sure this money remains in the final budget. Now the House and the Senate are going to take a week off before they start to conference to put together a final budget and I have already heard that it is off to a very rocky start. Even though they both have large republican majorities in both chambers, they have massive philosophical differences in how much to spend, and where to spend it. Hopefully they can iron something out by the end of the year because worst case scenario, they will do like they did in 2024 where they just did a continuing resolution to continue running the State off the old budget, and state employees, retirees, teachers.... are all at risk of receiving no extra money or raises at all.

One last thing to note, the House budget passed 93-20 on a strong bipartisan vote with 28 Democrats voting for the budget.

May 16, 2025

Although on the surface it seemed like a quiet week at the Legislature following a very hectic "Crossover" week, that was largely because the House Appropriation's Chairs were finalizing the House budget. Even though the House had a lot less revenue to work with this year, we remain hopeful that they included some sort of relief for our retirees to help with current and past inflation. The house released part of the budget on Thursday, and we expect to see it in its entirety on Monday.

May 9, 2025

It was a fantastic Wednesday down at the General Assembly as RGEA kicked off its 2025 Advocacy Day! Over 50 retirees were in attendance and were able to witness the NCGA at its busiest. Democrat and Republican legislators from both the House and the Senate took time to come by to speak to our members about pressing retiree issues as well as answer any and all questions from our retirees. RGEA could not be happier with the turnout and we want to thank everyone that traveled and took the time out of their day to be with us! We have already started receiving a lot of positive feedback from many of the members in attendance. One member specifically said “This event really galvanized me to get more involved with RGEA. I want to see how I can use my skills to plug in.” Many other members said that they would be encouraging their other retiree friends to join. We at RGEA cannot thank all those who attended enough and we cannot wait to continue to serve our members across this great state.

May 2, 2025

The legislature was in full swing this week as the “Crossover” deadline on May 8th quickly approaches. For those unfamiliar with this term, “Crossover” is a date set each year by the legislature where a bill must pass the chamber in which it was introduced to remain eligible for the rest of the session. We expect next week to be just as busy if not busier than this week. Our Advocacy Day is next Wednesday, May 7th and it is going to be a fantastic opportunity for our members to see the legislature when it is at its busiest and most productive! The House has started putting together its version of the budget in hopes of getting it out by the end of May.

A few bills of note passed the house this week. The first was HB 92: NC Digital Assets Investment Act. This bill known as “The Crypto Bill” passed the house on Wednesday mostly along party lines with a vote of 71-44. As of now we have heard whether the Senate plans to take this bill up this session but either way we still need to watch this closely because there is always a chance it could pop up in the final budget. The next bill was HB 506: 2025 State Investment Modernization Act. RGEA publicly endorsed this bill once the Treasurer agreed to take our certain language that dealt with investing pension funds in digital assets. The main purpose of this bill is to change the State’s investment model from a sole fiduciary model to an appointed advisory board. It passed the House on Wednesday with a strong bipartisan vote of 110-3.