
Coates' Canons Blog: It's Almost Time For The Short Session

By Aimee Wall

Article: <https://canons.sog.unc.edu/its-almost-time-for-the-short-session/>

This entry was posted on May 12, 2014 and is filed under General Local Government (Miscellaneous), Legislation

This post is co-authored with Christine Wunsche, the Director of the School of Government's Legislative Reporting Service.

The pace in Raleigh is about to pick up this week as the North Carolina General Assembly returns to town on Wednesday for the 2014 "short" session. Below is some information about the upcoming session to help you prepare for and get excited about the weeks and months to come. We've also highlighted some changes to our Legislative Reporting Service website for the coming year.

Why is this year's session referred to as "short"?

Following November elections in even years, the General Assembly meets for a two-year legislative session, or biennium. The first year of the session begins in January of the odd year (2013) and typically ends sometime between July and October. The second year of the session begins in May of the even year (2014) and, like the first session, typically ends sometime between July and October. Thus, this year's session is expected to be shorter in duration than last year's session.

We should note that the terms "long session" and "short session" are not technically or legally accurate because these periods are not two different sessions of the General Assembly. Technically speaking, the 2014 short session is simply a continuation of the 2013 regular legislative session that was convened in January 2013. See NC Constitution, Art. II, Sec. 11.

The session may also be referred to as "short" because the legislature is permitted to consider only certain types of legislation this year. In a "long" session, everything is on the table.

What types of legislation may be considered in the short session?

At the end of the long session, the legislature adopts an adjournment resolution outlining the types of bills that may be considered during the short session. The list for 2014, as described in the adjournment resolution (Res. 2013-23), is as follows:

- Any bill directly and primarily affecting the state budget, if filed by May 27, 2014;
- Bills amending the NC Constitution;
- Any bill or resolution introduced in 2013 that passed either the House or the Senate by the crossover deadline (a list of those bills is available here, beginning on page 9);
- Any bill or resolution implementing recommendations of certain study committees and commissions, if filed by May 21, 2014;
- Any noncontroversial local bill, if it is filed by May 28, 2014. The bill must be accompanied by a certificate signed by the sponsor stating that (1) no public hearing will be required or requested by a member on the bill; (2) the bill is noncontroversial; and (3) the bill is approved for introduction by each legislator whose district includes the area to which the bill applies;
- Selection, appointment, or confirmation of state board and commission members;
- Any bill affecting state or local pension or retirement systems, if filed by May 28, 2014;
- A resolution, if introduced as authorized by House or Senate rules;
- Certain bills related to redistricting;
- Any bill vetoed by the Governor, but only for the purpose of considering overriding the veto;
- Any bill relating to election laws;

-
- Any bill to disapprove rules adopted pursuant to the Administrative Procedure Act; and
 - A joint resolution adjourning the 2013 regular session. (i.e., the biennium).

In addition to the types of bills described above, a bill on any topic may be introduced if both the Senate and the House agree, by a two-thirds majority, to allow it.

There are also some creative strategies for bringing *other* ideas before the legislature in the short session. For example, imagine that a bill on workers' compensation is introduced in the House during the long session and is approved by the House in time to make the crossover deadline. That bill is then viable in the short session. Now imagine that the Senate refers the bill to committee, and the committee adds another section to the bill that addresses an entirely new idea related to something other than workers' compensation. That bill is still viable and may be considered and passed in the short session.

Did any interim study committees or commissions consider issues of interest to local governments and draft legislation?

Many of the study committees and commissions post materials on the General Assembly's website. There are several final reports posted here and others may be found on individual committees' websites. The list of Non-Standing, Interim, and Study Committees is available here.

A few of the local government issues we noticed in these reports include draft legislation that would:

- Regulate the use of unmanned aircraft systems. See Committee Report here.
- Make several changes related to economic development, including the creation of eight new "Collaboration for Prosperity" zones. See Committee Report here.
- Require a local government that issues a residential building permit for land-disturbing activity without all plan requirements necessary to protect the dwelling from physical damage having been completed, or without a performance guarantee of same, to complete such plan requirements itself. See Committee Report here.

As mentioned above, legislation implementing the recommendations of a study committee may be considered in the short session so all of these bills (and many more) are likely to be in play.

How can I stay on top of legislation being considered during the short session?

The short session moves at a rapid pace so if you are interested in staying on top of any legislation this year, you should consider subscribing to the School of Government's Legislative Reporting Service. We launched this dynamic new website last year in order to provide a better, more useful way for subscribers to access the School's short, neutral summaries of bills, amendments, and committee substitutes. The new site also allows subscribers to search for and track bills that are of interest to them, establish "monitors" to save complex searches, and view The Daily Bulletin, which contains all of the legislative day's bills and activities in one document. Visit Irs.sog.unc.edu for information on how to subscribe. State and local government officials may subscribe for free and nonprofits are eligible for a significantly discounted rate. Contact the SOG's Bookstore Manager for more information about the discounts. Please note that if you subscribed for the long session last year (rather than the full biennium), you will need to renew your subscription for this year's short session.

Links

- www.sog.unc.edu/about/faculty-and-staff/christine-wunsche
- www.ncleg.net/Legislation/constitution/article2.html
- www.ncleg.net/Sessions/2013/Bills/House/PDF/H1023v2.pdf
- [www.ncleg.net/documentsites/legislativepublications/Research Division/Eligible Bills/Bills Eligible for Consideration for 2014 Session.pdf](http://www.ncleg.net/documentsites/legislativepublications/Research%20Division/Eligible%20Bills/Bills%20Eligible%20for%20Consideration%20for%202014%20Session.pdf)



-
- [www.ncleg.net/gascripts/DocumentSites/browseDocSite.asp?nID=1&sFolderName=\Study%20Reports%20to%20the%20NCGA%20\(available%20online\)\2014](http://www.ncleg.net/gascripts/DocumentSites/browseDocSite.asp?nID=1&sFolderName=\Study%20Reports%20to%20the%20NCGA%20(available%20online)\2014)
 - www.ncleg.net/gascripts/Committees/Committees.asp?sAction=ViewCommitteeType&sActionDetails=Non-Standing
 - [www.ncleg.net/documentsites/committees/lrc/2014 Committee Reports to LRC/Committee on Unmanned Aircraft Systems.pdf](http://www.ncleg.net/documentsites/committees/lrc/2014%20Committee%20Reports%20to%20LRC/Committee%20on%20Unmanned%20Aircraft%20Systems.pdf)
 - ncleg.net/Library/studies/2014/st12102.pdf
 - [www.ncleg.net/documentsites/committees/lrc/2014 Committee Reports to LRC/Committee on Land Development.pdf](http://www.ncleg.net/documentsites/committees/lrc/2014%20Committee%20Reports%20to%20LRC/Committee%20on%20Land%20Development.pdf)
 - lrs.sog.unc.edu/
 - lrs.sog.unc.edu/lrs/contact-us