

NORTH CAROLINA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

SENATE SESSION

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1           PRESIDENT HUNT: The Senate will come  
2 to order. The sergeant-at-arms will close the  
3 doors, members will go to their seats, members  
4 and guests of the gallery will please silence  
5 all electronic devices.

6           Leading the Senate in prayer is Senator  
7 Julie Mayfield of Buncombe county. All members  
8 and guests in the gallery will please stand.

9           SENATOR MAYFIELD: Good morning. For  
10 those of you who were here five years ago, you  
11 don't need to worry that I'm going to read  
12 something similar to what I did then.

13           You all probably all know that a couple  
14 of weekends ago was the first anniversary of  
15 Helene. This is a poem written by a resident of  
16 Swannanoa, and I wanted to share it with you.  
17 It's about coming together just not after the  
18 storm but in a larger sense as well.

19           One year later, our scarred earth is  
20 blooming green. What if humanity did the same,  
21 rewilding the love that flooded our broken  
22 landscape after the hurricane.

23           What if it sprawled unruly across the  
24 whole aching world. God love poured tender from  
25 laboring hands.

1           What if the incentive was not to keep  
2 but to share what we have, to nourish one  
3 another and live inside that well spring of  
4 care.

5           What if people bound together like they  
6 did after the storm, with shovels and muscle and  
7 problem-solving and purposeful hearts, where  
8 heroes wore muck boots and went searching for  
9 need and gave freely to fill it no matter who or  
10 what it was. And after the many hard hours of  
11 work well spent, all of us sharing, cooking,  
12 serving and together breaking bread.

13           What if the tendrils of care, roots  
14 that we planted in her wake with our tears and  
15 our loved ones and our hopes that the storm  
16 stole away grew into the earth and knit together  
17 to mend this place into a world where we say  
18 neighbor's names like a prayer, where we  
19 outstretch our arms and welcome who isn't yet  
20 there, where no wind or water or rain could  
21 break what was born here, when we pulled our  
22 neighbors to safety and tended our collective  
23 grief.

24           Helene, who and what you took will  
25 never be forgot. We move through our days with

1 loss etched in our palms and a longing and a  
2 will for a world where it doesn't take disaster  
3 for love to bloom wild and overcome what it is  
4 that divides us. A love louder than thunder, a  
5 love that transcends our dollars and our  
6 politics and our headlines, love more powerful  
7 than a river, love more powerful than a  
8 hurricane, stronger than the biggest storm, love  
9 that honors who has gone and prepares us for  
10 what is to come.

11 May love carry our community as we  
12 forge ahead, and may it serve the people and the  
13 places that still most ache with need, and may  
14 we never forget what we learned from the storm.  
15 What we have is each other here in this wild  
16 world.

17 PRESIDENT HUNT: Senator Berger is  
18 recognized for a motion.

19 SENATOR BERGER: Thank you,  
20 Madam President.

21 The journal of October 20, 2025, has  
22 been examined and is found to be correct. I  
23 move that we dispense with the reading of the  
24 journal and that it stand approved as written.

25 PRESIDENT HUNT: Without objection, the

1 journal for October 20, 2025, stands approved as  
2 written.

3 Leaves of absence are requested and,  
4 without objection, are granted for Senators  
5 Burgin, Britt, Rabon, and Sawyer.

6 Introduction of bills, the clerk will  
7 read.

8 THE CLERK: Senate Bill 777 by  
9 Senator Daniel, a bill to be entitled An Act to  
10 Appoint Persons to Various Public Offices by the  
11 General Assembly upon the Recommendations of the  
12 President Pro Tempore of the Senate and the  
13 Speaker of the House of Representatives and To  
14 Make Corrections to Previous Appointments.

15 Senate Joint Resolution 778 by  
16 Senator Daniel, a Joint Resolution Further  
17 Amending Resolution 2025-8 as amended by  
18 Resolution 2025-11.

19 PRESIDENT HUNT: We'll now go to the  
20 calendar. Third reading roll call,  
21 Senate Bill 249.

22 SENATOR DANIEL: Madam President.

23 PRESIDENT HUNT: Excuse me.

24 Senator Daniel, for what purpose do you  
25 rise?

1 SENATOR DANIEL: Motions.

2 PRESIDENT HUNT: Proceed with your  
3 motions.

4 SENATOR DANIEL: Move that all messages  
5 from the Senate today be sent to the House by  
6 special message and that Senate Joint  
7 Resolution 777, General Assembly appointments  
8 that was filed yesterday and read in, move that  
9 it be referred to today's floor calendar.

10 PRESIDENT HUNT: Without objection, so  
11 ordered.

12 Senator Grafstein, for what purpose do  
13 you rise?

14 SENATOR GRAFSTEIN: Thank you,  
15 Madam President.

16 I ask to be recognized for an  
17 announcement out of order.

18 PRESIDENT HUNT: You are recognized for  
19 an announcement.

20 SENATOR GRAFSTEIN: Thank you,  
21 Madam President.

22 Members, as we've all heard from many  
23 of our constituents across the state, folks who  
24 are providers and beneficiaries of Medicaid are  
25 really suffering and concerned about the issues

1 around the lack of approval of additional  
2 funding for the rebase.

3 Senate Bill 403, which was sent back to  
4 us in September by the House, has Medicaid  
5 rebase in an amount that we've already agreed on  
6 and approved in this body. It has some other  
7 provisions that we would want to address, but  
8 what we are going to do or what I'm going to be  
9 doing under Rule 47 is circulating a discharge  
10 petition so that we can bring that bill to the  
11 floor and we can get some action on Medicaid  
12 rebase for people who need that.

13 And so, Madam President, as you know  
14 under Rule 47 after ten days sitting in  
15 committee, a discharge petition can be filed to  
16 bring a bill to the floor. We're going to ask  
17 members to support that so that we can address  
18 the needs of our constituents and get that  
19 Medicaid rebase back before us. So I would ask  
20 that the clerk prepare the petition for  
21 circulation.

22 PRESIDENT HUNT: The clerk has the form  
23 for you to circulate.

24 All right. Senate Bill 249, the clerk  
25 will read.

1 THE CLERK: Senate Bill 249, Realign  
2 Congressional Districts 2025.

3 PRESIDENT HUNT: Senator Hise is  
4 recognized to explain the bill.

5 SENATOR HISE: Thank you,  
6 Madam President.

7 A few other things I want to mention  
8 following yesterday's spirited discussion of  
9 this bill.

10 We heard a lot of revisionist history  
11 yesterday about how, quote, unquote, Texas  
12 started this, and I just wanted to point that  
13 nothing could be further from the truth.

14 The history of these so-called  
15 gerrymander wars goes back way before Texas in  
16 the preceding decennial census cycle. States  
17 such as Illinois, California, Massachusetts, and  
18 New York employed partisan gerrymander to  
19 systematically deny Republican seats in the  
20 US Congress, despite each state having  
21 statistically significant proportion of  
22 Republican votes.

23 Illinois has only three of 17  
24 congressman seats held by Republican even though  
25 43.5 percent of the state vote went to



1 President Trump. And New York where more than  
2 40 percent of the electorate backed Trump and  
3 Democrat members hold 19 of the 26 congressional  
4 seats. New Mexico, Connecticut, and  
5 Massachusetts send only Democrats to congress,  
6 notwithstanding that Republican candidates  
7 received a considerable percentage of the vote  
8 in each state in both 2020 and 2024. In 2024,  
9 46 percent, 42 percent, 36 percent,  
10 notwithstanding the fact that one third of the  
11 overall population votes Republican in the last  
12 seven presidential elections.

13 Massachusetts has not sent a Republican  
14 to congress in 30 years. Even though roughly  
15 one third of California's voters supported  
16 Donald Trump in the two presidential,  
17 Republicans hold only 9 of the state's 52  
18 congressional votes.

19 Members, it is incumbent upon us to  
20 react to this environment, to respond to this  
21 environment and not let these tactics that have  
22 happened in blue states dominate the control of  
23 congress.

24 One other thing I wanted to address is  
25 there were comments on the floor yesterday

1 claiming specifically that I and we had lied  
2 about the use of racial data in the creation of  
3 the maps. I will again completely state that  
4 there was no racial data used in these maps and  
5 in fact that is a verifiable fact. The computer  
6 can produce what the dataset included, what it  
7 included since it's been uploaded as well as  
8 what was accessed and reported for those maps.  
9 And so that is all produced as part of the  
10 packet that we generally have to produce for  
11 court after this and will do so as soon as are  
12 at that point.

13 There's even been claims that I or  
14 others were offered some sort of endorsement or  
15 those type of things, a claim that is made  
16 completely without fact and made completely out  
17 of whole cloth. There is no one that has any  
18 evidence whatsoever that that occurred, and I  
19 will equivocally say I have been offered nothing  
20 for the purpose of doing this map or for drawing  
21 this map.

22 Members, we saw a lot come through  
23 yesterday, a few amendments and others that  
24 really emphasized what this entire conversation  
25 is about. It is about the balance of power.

1 There was an amendment offered yesterday to  
2 change the maps, to draw the maps to an outcome  
3 that was more favorable for the Democrats.

4 The proposal for the map for this  
5 committee to -- amendment for this body to  
6 consider wasn't to not draw or to others. It  
7 was simply to draw in a favorable more  
8 conditional to the Democrat outcome. And so  
9 this is where we're at this day.

10 The purpose of this map was to pick up  
11 a Republican seat. We've stated that over and  
12 over again. I think there's been a real attempt  
13 to try to say because that's the only legal  
14 strategy left to say that it was done for other  
15 reasons, it was done for racial or done for  
16 others, and that simply doesn't hold any water.

17 We designed these maps, we came up with  
18 these maps for the purpose of rebalancing this  
19 nation, rebalancing congress and making sure  
20 that North Carolina is as optimized as the other  
21 blue states were when they created their  
22 districts.

23 Thank you, Madam President. I'd be  
24 happy to answer any question.

25 PRESIDENT HUNT: Senator Mayfield, for

1       what purpose do you rise?

2               SENATOR MAYFIELD:   To speak on the  
3       bill.

4               PRESIDENT HUNT:   You have the floor to  
5       speak on the bill.

6               SENATOR MAYFIELD:   Thank you.

7               Senator Hise, I appreciate that  
8       recitation of statistics about the Democratic  
9       representation from other states.  Here's what I  
10      would say about that:  That's just regular old  
11      gerrymandering.  That's just regular old  
12      gerrymandering that is constitutional in our  
13      country because of a Republican-led US Supreme  
14      Court.

15              We do it.  We are -- North Carolina.  I  
16      don't have to tell you all of this.  Your names  
17      have been on the lawsuits that have gone to the  
18      US Supreme Court.  We are ground zero for  
19      political gerrymandering in this country.

20              So it's legal here.  It's legal around  
21      the country.  So people are going to do it,  
22      right.  We do it.  Red states do it.  Blue  
23      states do it.  I think it's terrible.  I think  
24      it should all be banned.  I think it should  
25      be -- political gerrymandering should be

1 unconstitutional everywhere under the  
2 US Constitution, under every state constitution,  
3 but that is not where we are, and that's not  
4 where we are because of Republicans, not because  
5 of Democrats.

6 So this that we are doing today is  
7 fundamentally different than just regular old  
8 political gerrymandering. That is the order of  
9 the day, regular old political gerrymandering.

10 What is happening today is, as I said  
11 yesterday morning, a response to a call from a  
12 president who has demanded fealty from members  
13 of his party who control legislatures across  
14 this country. That is where this began.  
15 Nowhere else. Nowhere else. It began with our  
16 president who -- and I get that you don't --  
17 that he doesn't want to lose the ability to  
18 advance his agenda. That's totally politics.

19 What is different here is mid-decade  
20 redistricting at the request of an authoritarian  
21 president. And what is different here is that  
22 state legislatures run by Republicans across the  
23 country are bowing to that request. It is  
24 wrong, and you know it. You all know it.

25 So, again, I say to blame this on

1 California or Massachusetts or Illinois or  
2 anything else is a fiction, and everybody in  
3 here in this room knows it, and anybody who  
4 continues to say that it's the blue states that  
5 are responsible for what is happening here  
6 simply looks foolish. You know it's not true.

7 PRESIDENT HUNT: Senator Everitt, for  
8 what purpose do you rise?

9 SENATOR EVERITT: Speak on the bill.

10 PRESIDENT HUNT: You have the floor to  
11 speak on the bill.

12 SENATOR EVERITT: Thank you,  
13 Madam President.

14 Two quick things. The amendment  
15 yesterday to draw a different map was not more  
16 fair to the Democrats. It was more fair to the  
17 people of North Carolina. It was more  
18 representative of the people of North Carolina.  
19 That is who it was more fair to.

20 And the second issue is no one  
21 suggested yesterday that Senator Hise was being  
22 offered anything for these maps. No one made  
23 that suggestion. We know where the offer was  
24 made.

25 PRESIDENT HUNT: Senator Chaudhuri, for

1       what purpose do you rise?

2               SENATOR CHAUDHURI:   Speak on the bill.

3               PRESIDENT HUNT:   You have the floor to  
4       speak on the bill.

5               SENATOR CHAUDHURI:   I'll be very brief,  
6       Madam President.

7               I just want to use Massachusetts as an  
8       example that was cited by Senator Hise.   A  
9       couple of differences to point out in the  
10      process.   Number one is, yes, Senator Hise is  
11      correct that Democrats did approve the bill, but  
12      number one, the maps that were drawn in  
13      Massachusetts were not deemed partisan.

14              Number two, a majority of Republicans  
15      voted for that map.

16              And lastly, Madam President, it was a  
17      Republican governor that signed that  
18      congressional redistricting map into law.

19              PRESIDENT HUNT:   Senator Smith, for  
20      what purpose do you rise?

21              REPRESENTATIVE SMITH:   I would like to  
22      speak to the bill.

23              PRESIDENT HUNT:   You have the floor to  
24      speak to the bill.

25              REPRESENTATIVE SMITH:   Thank you so

1 much.

2 I first want to go back and repeat some  
3 things that I remember my peer  
4 Senator Applewhite saying because when we were  
5 in the elections committee, all we continued to  
6 hear was I drew the map, I drew the map, I drew  
7 the map. Now I'm hearing we drew the map, and I  
8 don't know who the we is because the Democrats  
9 were not included.

10 I'm looking at what we're talking about  
11 now and going off what other states are doing,  
12 and they set a precedent. Well, they also set a  
13 precedent to pass a budget that it doesn't look  
14 like we're willing to do.

15 We're spending so much time now wanting  
16 to follow our peers. Let's pass a budget. We  
17 have people who are hurting, and these people  
18 are people that you represent, unless you don't  
19 care.

20 When we go back to talking about we're  
21 not using anything racial, we're just going to  
22 move black people, but it's not racial. We're  
23 going to go to the Black Belt and make all of  
24 these suggestions to get a map. We could have  
25 made moves any other place, but we specifically



1 chose that section in eastern North Carolina.  
2 Oh, it just so happened to be that it was the  
3 Black Belt, but it's nothing racial.

4 So we can change words, we can talk  
5 around words, we can move them around and say  
6 all those things. People know the truth. They  
7 know what's happening right here. It is their  
8 job to elect us and not our job to feel like who  
9 we want to represent.

10 So I encourage all of us to make sure  
11 that we continue to vote no on this. I know  
12 some of you are feeling pressure because you're  
13 often put on the line about how you can vote.  
14 I'm glad I don't have anybody who has to tell me  
15 what I have to do. Thank you.

16 PRESIDENT HUNT: Is there further  
17 discussion or debate?

18 Senator Garrett, for what purpose do  
19 you rise?

20 SENATOR GARRETT: To send forward an  
21 amendment.

22 PRESIDENT HUNT: Send forth your  
23 amendment. The clerk will read.

24 THE CLERK: Senator Garrett moves to  
25 amend the bill.

1           PRESIDENT HUNT: Senator Garrett is  
2 recognized to explain the amendment.

3           SENATOR GARRETT: Thank you,  
4 Madam President.

5           Colleagues, this is a pretty  
6 straightforward and simple amendment that would  
7 put before the voters a constitutional amendment  
8 to establish a nonpartisan redistricting  
9 commission, giving the people the voice and the  
10 ability to choose their elected representatives,  
11 not the other way around. I encourage your  
12 support.

13          PRESIDENT HUNT: Senator Hise, for what  
14 purpose do you rise?

15          SENATOR HISE: To move that Amendment 6  
16 do lie upon the table.

17          SENATOR DANIEL: Second.

18          PRESIDENT HUNT: Senator Hise moves  
19 that Amendment 6 do lay upon the table, seconded  
20 by Senator Daniel.

21               This is a non-debatable motion. The  
22 question before the body is the motion to lay  
23 Amendment Number 6 to Senate Bill 249 on the  
24 table.

25               All in favor will vote aye, all opposed

1 will vote no. Five seconds will be allowed for  
2 voting, and the clerk will record the vote.

3 Senator Chaudhuri, no.

4 26 having voted in the affirmative, 20  
5 in the negative, Amendment Number 6 will lay  
6 upon the table, and we are back on the bill.

7 Senator Garrett, for what purpose do  
8 you rise?

9 SENATOR GARRETT: To speak to the bill,  
10 Madam President.

11 PRESIDENT HUNT: You have the floor to  
12 speak to the bill.

13 SENATOR GARRETT: Thank you.

14 Madam President, members of this body,  
15 to the people of North Carolina, I stand before  
16 you today at a crossroads in American history,  
17 not the kind you read about later, sanitized in  
18 textbooks with neat conclusions, but the raw,  
19 uncertain kind, the kind where the choices we  
20 make in this chamber, on this day, will echo  
21 through generations yet unborn.

22 This past weekend something  
23 extraordinary happened across our country.  
24 While we prepare to debate redistricting behind  
25 these walls, millions of Americans, from

1 New York City to Bryson city right here in  
2 North Carolina, from major capitals to small  
3 towns with populations in the hundreds, took to  
4 the streets, more than 2,500 communities,  
5 possibly the largest single day protest in  
6 American history, millions of voices but one  
7 message that has thundered through American  
8 history since 1776: America has no kings.

9 They marched peacefully, grandmothers  
10 and college students, veterans and teachers,  
11 people who had never protested before standing  
12 shoulder to shoulder with those who have marched  
13 decades. They weren't there because they hate  
14 America. They were there because they love her.

15 Today, in this chamber and with this  
16 vote, we are being asked to betray them. Let me  
17 tell you where we stand in the eyes of history.

18 There are moments that define nations,  
19 moments when the soul of a country is tested,  
20 when everything that came before, every  
21 sacrifice, every principle, every promise hangs  
22 in the balance. This is one of those moments.  
23 Future historians will look back at 2025 and ask  
24 when democracy was openly under assault, when a  
25 president demanded states rig their elections,

1 when millions took to the streets begging their  
2 leaders to protect their rights, what did those  
3 in power do? Did they stand with the people, or  
4 did they stand with the powerful? Do they honor  
5 the sacrifices of those who came before, or did  
6 they auction off democracy to the highest  
7 bidder? Did they keep the promise, or did they  
8 break the faith with every generation that bled  
9 for this republic? We are living through a  
10 stress test of American democracy.

11 Madam President, I fear that we are  
12 failing it.

13 Let's go back to Philadelphia 1787.  
14 Our founders, imperfect men, yet visionaries,  
15 didn't write We the People, in order to form a  
16 perfect union. They couldn't. They knew they  
17 hadn't created perfection. They had just fought  
18 a war to escape a king, and here they were, some  
19 of them still holding human beings in bondage.  
20 They knew the contradiction, and they felt its  
21 weight, so they made a promise, not a guarantee,  
22 not a completed work, a promise to form a more  
23 perfect union, more perfect than yesterday, more  
24 perfect than the generation before, more  
25 democratic than the one we inherited.

1           That promise, that sacred covenant, is  
2           the thread that binds every generation of  
3           Americans to the next. That generational  
4           promise is what makes America America. It's not  
5           our geography. It's not our wealth. It's the  
6           solemn vow that each generation makes to the  
7           next. We will leave you an America closer to  
8           its ideals than the one we inherited.

9           My parents made that promise to me,  
10          their parents made it to them, and I made that  
11          promise to my children, that I would fight to  
12          give them a country where their voices matter,  
13          where their votes count, where democracy isn't  
14          just a word we teach in civics class but a  
15          living, breathing reality they experience every  
16          day, and that promise has been paid for in  
17          blood.

18          Think about Nathan Hale, just 21 years  
19          old, standing on the gallows with a noose around  
20          his neck. His last words echoing across  
21          history, and I quote, I only regret that I have  
22          one life to lose for my country. He died so  
23          that America could be born without a king.

24          Think about the thousands who froze and  
25          starved at Valley Forge, men who wrapped their

1     bleeding feet in rags, who ate bark from trees,  
2     who watched their friends die of disease and  
3     exposure. They could have gone home, they could  
4     have surrendered, but they stayed and they  
5     suffered. Many of them died because they  
6     believed in the promise.

7             Think about Susan B. Anthony, arrested  
8     and fined for daring to vote. Think about the  
9     suffragists who died before seeing the 19th  
10    Amendment passed, who kept fighting for a  
11    victory they would never see. The promise  
12    wasn't about them, it was about the next  
13    generation.

14            Think about Congressman John Lewis,  
15    good trouble John Lewis, beaten nearly to death  
16    on the Edmund Pettus Bridge. His skull  
17    fractured, blood pouring down his face, and  
18    still he got up, still he marched, still he  
19    fought for decades, until the very end because  
20    he understood something profound: Democracy is  
21    not a spectator sport. It requires sacrifice,  
22    it demands courage, and it never ever comes  
23    free.

24            Every single one of them kept that  
25    promise, even when it might have or did cost

1       them everything. And now we stand here in our  
2       comfortable suits, in our air conditioned  
3       chamber, and we're being asked will you honor  
4       that promise or will you spit on their graves?  
5       Because make no mistake, that is what today is  
6       about. This is about whether we believe in the  
7       principle that those millions of Americans stood  
8       for this past weekend, that in America the  
9       people choose their leaders, not the other way  
10      around.

11               Democracy isn't a gift that arrived  
12      complete and perfect in 1776. It's not a  
13      participation trophy we get for just being  
14      American. It's not a static thing frozen in  
15      time requiring only our passive acceptance.

16               Democracy is alive. It breathes. It  
17      bleeds. It can be wounded. It can be killed.  
18      And right now it is gasping for air.

19               Democracy only lives when duly elected  
20      representatives stand for the people, present  
21      their visions, make their arguments, and trust  
22      the voters to decide. It thrives when we  
23      compete for the privilege to serve, when we earn  
24      the people's trust through the quality of our  
25      ideas and the strength of our character, when we



1 fight in the arena of public opinion, not in the  
2 back rooms where maps get carved up.

3 Democracy dies when we politicians rig  
4 the game, when we draw lines to choose our  
5 voters instead of letting our voters choose us,  
6 when we admit -- and let's be honest, that's  
7 exactly what's happening here today -- when we  
8 admit that we can't win in fair competition so  
9 we'll just change the rules, when we're so  
10 afraid of the people's judgment, we rig the  
11 system to avoid it.

12 That's not democracy, folks. That's  
13 tyranny with a prettier name. That's  
14 authoritarianism in a suit and tie. And that's  
15 everything these soldiers, marchers, and freedom  
16 fighters died to prevent.

17 My colleagues on the other side of the  
18 aisle talk about protecting the president's  
19 agenda. Let me ask you something: Since when  
20 did America exist to support the president's  
21 agenda? I thought government was supposed to  
22 serve the people. I thought elected officials  
23 were supposed to represent their constituents,  
24 not take orders from Washington on how to rig  
25 maps. I thought we fought a revolution

1 specifically to establish that no one, not a  
2 king, not a president, not anyone is above the  
3 will of the people.

4 The president said he's entitled to  
5 more seats. Entitled? That word should chill  
6 every American to the bone. No elected official  
7 is entitled to anything, anything except the  
8 privilege of earning the people's trust. And if  
9 you can't earn it fairly, you don't deserve it  
10 at all.

11 We teach our children to compete  
12 fairly, to do their homework, to practice  
13 harder, to win or lose on merit, to shake hands  
14 after the game, win or lose, to respect their  
15 opponents and to honor the rules.

16 So what are we teaching them today? If  
17 the game isn't going your way, you just change  
18 the rules. Integrity is optional when power is  
19 on the line.

20 What do we say to the kids that marched  
21 with their parents this last weekend, the ones  
22 holding signs saying we bow to no king, the ones  
23 who believe -- and God bless them, they still  
24 believe -- that their voices matter, that  
25 democracy works, that America keeps its

1 promises.

2 Do we look them in the eye and say,  
3 sorry, kid, your vote doesn't matter as much as  
4 our political power.

5 This past weekend, millions of  
6 Americans in the streets were screaming to be  
7 heard. They were saying we see what you're  
8 doing. We understand that democracy is under  
9 attack. We know the difference between  
10 legitimate governance and authoritarian power  
11 grab. We remember what happened to countries  
12 that chose strong men over self-governance. We  
13 know how this story ends if we don't stop it,  
14 and we refuse -- we refuse to be silent while  
15 you steal the people's voice.

16 This body needs to listen. America is  
17 standing up not just members of one party but  
18 Americans from every walk of life, from every  
19 corner of this nation who understand that once  
20 you allow election rigging to become normalized,  
21 once you accept that might makes right and power  
22 justifies betrayal, you have crossed a line you  
23 can never uncross. You are breaking something  
24 that cannot easily be repaired.

25 Those marchers this past weekend,

1 they're the spiritual descendants of every  
2 American whoever refused to bow. They are  
3 keeping the promise, but will we? Will we honor  
4 the sacrifice of every American whoever fought  
5 for democracy, or will we slap them in the face  
6 by trading away the very thing they died to  
7 protect? When our grandchildren ask us what did  
8 you do when democracy was dying, will we have an  
9 answer that let's us sleep at night?

10 This is the moment, this chamber, this  
11 day. History doesn't send an engraved  
12 invitation letting you know when something  
13 important is happening. You don't get a warning  
14 label that says democracy's fate hangs in the  
15 balance today. You don't get a second chance to  
16 make the right choice. You just get moments  
17 like this where regular people in regular places  
18 make choices that ripple through time.

19 We are living in one of those moments  
20 right now. Historians will write about this  
21 vote. Future students will wonder how could  
22 they not see what they were doing? How could  
23 they not understand what they were throwing  
24 away?

25 I'm here to tell you what we're doing

1 is wrong. It's a desecration on every grave at  
2 Arlington, every memorial at Gettysburg, every  
3 name on the Vietnam wall, every star in the Gold  
4 Star mother's window, but we can still stop.  
5 And let me tell you what gives me hope because  
6 I'm going to end on hope. Getting close to the  
7 end. You're welcome.

8 Even now, even today, I'm hopeful. And  
9 I'm not naive about today's vote. I know how  
10 this will end. I know democracy is going to  
11 take another bullet in this chamber this  
12 morning. The voice of the people will be  
13 silenced once again by a pen stroke of  
14 politicians who fear them.

15 But here's what keeps me going, what  
16 lets me sleep at night, what gets me out of bed  
17 in the morning to come back into this chamber  
18 and fight again because the promise is bigger  
19 than any one vote. The covenant is stronger  
20 than any one betrayal. The American spirit  
21 cannot be killed by a gerrymandered map.

22 Those revolutionaries at Valley Forge  
23 lost battles. They froze, they starved, they  
24 buried their friends in shallow graves in the  
25 snow, but they won the war.

1           John Lewis had his skull fractured on  
2           that bridge, but he got up, he marched again.  
3           He ran for congress. He served for 33 years.  
4           He fought until his last breath, and he won the  
5           war.

6           But here's what authoritarians and  
7           would-be kings never understand. You cannot  
8           kill an idea whose time has come. Yes,  
9           democracy may bleed today. Yes, this body may  
10          succeed in rigging these maps. Yes, the party  
11          in control might steal a few more seats, and  
12          they might hold on to power for a few more  
13          years.

14          You can rig the map, but you can't rig  
15          the people's determination. You cannot silence  
16          our votes, but -- you can silence our votes, but  
17          you cannot silence our voices. You can try to  
18          break our democracy, but it will not break our  
19          will to restore it. The fight doesn't end  
20          today. It doesn't end with this vote. It  
21          doesn't end until we restore the promise, until  
22          we repair what's been broken, until we leave our  
23          children an America worthy of the sacrifices  
24          that built it.

25          So I will keep fighting because the

1 promise is worth keeping. The covenant is worth  
2 honoring. Democracy is worth defending. And  
3 America, this magnificent, flawed, frustrating,  
4 beautiful experiment in self-governance, America  
5 is worth fighting for. Even today, especially  
6 today as democracy takes another bullet, I will  
7 keep that promise.

8 Thank you, Madam President. Thank you  
9 to the people of North Carolina, and may God  
10 give us the strength to be worthy of our time  
11 and the promise that we're entrusted to keep.

12 PRESIDENT HUNT: Senator Chitlik, for  
13 what purpose do you rise?

14 SENATOR CHITLIK: I would like to ask  
15 Senator Hise a question, please.

16 PRESIDENT HUNT: Senator Hise, do you  
17 yield?

18 SENATOR HISE: I yield.

19 PRESIDENT HUNT: He yields.

20 SENATOR CHITLIK: Thank you,  
21 Senator Hise. Thank you, Madam President.

22 So one of the public reasons that  
23 you've given about why this bill is so important  
24 is saying that North Carolina voted for Donald  
25 Trump and this is what the people want, they

1 want to implement President Trump's agenda. And  
2 I agree with you, the people voted for Donald  
3 Trump. I'm not here to dispute elections.

4 But if that is in fact true, why -- can  
5 you help me understand why is this not an  
6 independent redistricting bill if this is the  
7 will of the people?

8 SENATOR HISE: Thank you, Madam  
9 Chairman -- Madam President, and for the  
10 question.

11 Independent districting has never been  
12 part of the history of the state of  
13 North Carolina. The power given to the state  
14 legislature to draw districts and, conversely,  
15 congress as well is given by the  
16 US Constitution. I believe it is the  
17 requirement of the state legislature to do so.  
18 And we have never abdicated that power to any  
19 type of independent commission which is, as I've  
20 said before many times, I think is a fairly tale  
21 anyway. And California probably proves that.  
22 They create one until they want to do something  
23 else and then they go back to their legislature.  
24 So we don't have it and never have.

25 PRESIDENT HUNT: Senator Chitlik, for



1       what purpose do you rise?

2               SENATOR CHITLIK: I have a follow-up  
3       question for Senator Hise, please.

4               PRESIDENT HUNT: Do you yield,  
5       Senator Hise?

6               SENATOR HISE: I yield.

7               PRESIDENT HUNT: He yields.

8               SENATOR CHITLIK: Thank you,  
9       Senator Hise.

10              I understand that that might be without  
11       historical precedent. So let's -- I have a  
12       follow-up question to this.

13              Help me understand, if North Carolina  
14       voted for, say -- about 53 percent for  
15       President Trump, maybe -- we can be generous,  
16       maybe it was 54 on a really good day. So help  
17       me understand why if 54 percent of  
18       North Carolinians voted for President Trump why  
19       this body believes -- or excuse me -- why you  
20       because I know you are the person who drew the  
21       map, so why you think that that is a mandate  
22       that 79 percent of our seats should go to  
23       Republicans? Help me understand that part.

24              SENATOR HISE: As I have said on  
25       multiple occasions and again earlier today, when

1 other states across the country are maximizing  
2 and increasing their map proportions for  
3 Democrats, it is incumbent upon us not to stand  
4 still and allow them to be successful, but we  
5 must also maximize our maps in the state of  
6 North Carolina to make sure we preserve the  
7 balance of power for congress.

8 PRESIDENT HUNT: Senator Chitlik, for  
9 what purpose do you rise?

10 SENATOR CHITLIK: I would like a moment  
11 of personal privilege to speak to the bill for  
12 the young people in the audience.

13 PRESIDENT HUNT: All right. You may  
14 speak to the bill.

15 SENATOR CHITLIK: Thank you.

16 I've noticed that while we were  
17 debating this bill we have this wonderful group  
18 of it looks like high school students come in,  
19 and so welcome. Thank you. You've chosen  
20 -- middle school. Wow. Okay. Y'all look  
21 fabulous.

22 So I just want to -- you know, I just  
23 want to contextualize for you what is happening.  
24 I'm sure your incredible teachers have had an  
25 opportunity to brief you on the redistricting

1 that's happening today.

2 What you're seeing is not democracy,  
3 it's a fallacy of democracy. We're all actors,  
4 right, in this game around being able to talk  
5 about the power that's happening.

6 SENATOR BERGER: Madam President.

7 PRESIDENT HUNT: Senator Berger, for  
8 what purpose do you rise?

9 SENATOR BERGER: I believe  
10 Senator Chitlik under our rules has the floor to  
11 debate the bill, not to speak to an audience.

12 PRESIDENT HUNT: Yes. That's correct.  
13 Senator Chitlik, please --

14 SENATOR CHITLIK: Sure. I'll debate  
15 the merits of the bill. I just want to do a  
16 quick summary of where we are.

17 So we had debate yesterday. We had  
18 debate today.

19 SENATOR BERGER: Madam President.

20 PRESIDENT HUNT: Yes, Senator Berger.

21 SENATOR BERGER: Again, it is pursuant  
22 to the rules appropriate to debate the bill. It  
23 is not appropriate to speak to an audience.

24 PRESIDENT HUNT: Yes.

25 Senator Chitlik, please only debate the

1 bill. Don't speak to the audience.

2 SENATOR CHITLIK: Okay. I don't think  
3 I need to debate the bill. I think that was all  
4 they needed to learn. Thank you.

5 PRESIDENT HUNT: Thank you.

6 Senator Grafstein, for what purpose do  
7 you rise?

8 SENATOR GRAFSTEIN: Madam President,  
9 just to ask that the words of senator Garrett  
10 that were --

11 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Objection.

12 SENATOR GRAFSTEIN: Sorry. I don't  
13 know who said that.

14 I'm just asking that the words of  
15 Senator Garrett be spread upon the journal.

16 PRESIDENT HUNT: Senator Newton, for  
17 what purpose do you rise?

18 SENATOR NEWTON: I object to the  
19 senator's request.

20 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Point of order,  
21 Madam President. That's amazing. That's  
22 amazing.

23 PRESIDENT HUNT: All right. At this  
24 time we're going to vote on the motion to spread  
25 the words upon the journal of Senator Garrett.

1 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Madam President,  
2 is that a debatable motion?

3 PRESIDENT HUNT: Yes.

4 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Thank you. Just  
5 briefly, then, Madam President.

6 What an outrage. You know, they say  
7 that the truth only hurts if it should.  
8 Senator Garrett spoke the truth. Those true  
9 words should be spread upon the journal. I urge  
10 you all, regardless of party, to show some  
11 respect for your colleagues, to show some  
12 respect for our state, for our country, for the  
13 freedom of speech. Show some respect. Let's  
14 spread these words on the journal.

15 PRESIDENT HUNT: All right. So the  
16 motion is to spread the words of senator Garrett  
17 on the journal.

18 All in favor of that vote yes, all  
19 against it vote no. You have five seconds. The  
20 clerk will record the vote.

21 20 having voted in the affirmative, 26  
22 in the negative, the motion does not pass.

23 Is there further discussion or debate?

24 Hearing none, the question before the  
25 Senate is the passage of Senate Bill 249 on its

1 third reading.

2 All in favor will vote aye, all opposed  
3 will vote no. Five seconds will be allowed for  
4 voting, and the clerk will record the vote.

5 Senator Meyer. Senator Meyer.  
6 Senator Meyer.

7 25 having voted in the affirmative --  
8 Senator Lee, for what purpose do you rise?

9 SENATOR LEE: Thank you,  
10 Madam President. I was thinking about the  
11 previous motion and not this bill. I change my  
12 vote no to aye, please.

13 PRESIDENT HUNT: To an aye to the  
14 previous motion or of this bill?

15 SENATOR LEE: Aye on this bill.

16 PRESIDENT HUNT: Aye on this bill.  
17 Okay.

18 SENATOR MEYER: Madam President --

19 PRESIDENT HUNT: Senator Meyer.

20 SENATOR MEYER: -- may I be recorded as  
21 voting no.

22 PRESIDENT HUNT: You're a no.

23 SENATOR MEYER: Thank you.

24 PRESIDENT HUNT: Okay. 26 having voted  
25 in the affirmative, 20 in the negative,

1 Senate Bill 249 passes its third reading and  
2 will be sent to the House.

3 Senate Bill 777, the clerk will read.

4 THE CLERK: Senate Bill 777, General  
5 Assembly Appointments.

6 PRESIDENT HUNT: Senator Daniel is  
7 recognized to explain the bill.

8 SENATOR DANIEL: Thank you,  
9 Madam President.

10 Senate Bill 777 contains appointments  
11 for the president pro tem and the speaker of the  
12 house. Specifically, it fills two vacancies on  
13 the college of the Albemarle Board of Trustees  
14 and one on the North Carolina Acupuncture  
15 Licensing Board. It makes an appointment to the  
16 eastern North Carolina School for the Deaf Board  
17 of Trustees, and there was one technical  
18 correction regarding the prior appointments  
19 bill. I ask for your support.

20 PRESIDENT HUNT: Is there further  
21 discussion or debate?

22 Senator Batch, for what purpose do you  
23 rise?

24 SENATOR BATCH: To ask Senator Daniel a  
25 question.

1 PRESIDENT HUNT: Senator Daniel, do you  
2 yield?

3 SENATOR DANIEL: Yes.

4 PRESIDENT HUNT: He yields.

5 SENATOR BATCH: It appears that there  
6 are three appointments that are previously made  
7 that are now being removed. Can you tell us why  
8 three individuals that we've already appointed  
9 are being removed from those boards.

10 SENATOR DANIEL: No, not without doing  
11 further research.

12 SENATOR BATCH: If we could take a  
13 moment, Madam President.

14 PRESIDENT HUNT: I'm sorry. What was  
15 your question?

16 SENATOR BATCH: If we could take a  
17 recess so that Senator Daniel can research my  
18 question.

19 PRESIDENT HUNT: Senator Daniel, can  
20 you do that in a matter of few minutes or --

21 SENATOR DANIEL: Probably five minutes.

22 PRESIDENT HUNT: Five minutes. We'll  
23 take five minutes.

24 (At ease.)

25 PRESIDENT HUNT: The senate will come



1 back to order.

2 Senator Daniel, for what purpose do you  
3 rise?

4 SENATOR DANIEL: To answer  
5 Senator Batch's question.

6 So the section that Senator Batch was  
7 asking about are three House appointees. My  
8 understanding is -- after discussion with staff  
9 and talking to Senator Batch is that those  
10 appointees don't need to be appointed by  
11 statute, just by letter of the speaker, and the  
12 House requested this be removed from our prior  
13 appointments bill.

14 PRESIDENT HUNT: Is there further  
15 discussion or debate?

16 Hearing none, the question before the  
17 Senate is the passage of Senate Bill 777 on its  
18 second reading.

19 All in favor will vote aye, all opposed  
20 will vote no. Five seconds will be allowed for  
21 voting, and the clerk will record the vote.

22 Senator Jones, aye.

23 Senator Lowe. Senator Lowe. Aye.

24 Senator Newton, aye.

25 45 having voted in the affirmative, one

1 in the negative, Senate Bill 777 passes its  
2 second reading and, without objection, will be  
3 read a third time.

4 THE CLERK: The General Assembly of  
5 North Carolina enacts.

6 PRESIDENT HUNT: Is there further  
7 discussion or debate?

8 Hearing none, all in favor of the  
9 passage of Senate Bill 777 on its third reading  
10 will say aye.

11 SENATE MEMBERS: Aye.

12 PRESIDENT HUNT: Opposed no.

13 The ayes have it. Senate Bill 777  
14 passes its third reading and will be sent to the  
15 House.

16 Are there any notices and  
17 announcements?

18 Senator Galey, for what purpose do you  
19 rise?

20 SENATOR GALEY: A moment of personal  
21 privilege.

22 PRESIDENT HUNT: You have the floor for  
23 a moment of personal privilege.

24 SENATOR GALEY: Thank you,  
25 Madam President.

1 I just -- I received on my desk a  
2 firearm lock, lock it up, keep it safe. It  
3 doesn't have the name of anybody on it. Rule  
4 17J says that if a senator puts an item on  
5 another senator's desk, then they should display  
6 the name of the senator placing the item.  
7 Because I don't know who to thank for  
8 this and --

9 PRESIDENT HUNT: Senator Lowe, are you  
10 trying to answer Senator Galey?

11 SENATOR LOWE: I am trying to answer  
12 you. I was coming back around there, and I was  
13 accosted by someone and didn't get around there  
14 fast enough to talk to you personally.

15 SENATOR GALEY: Well, thank you,  
16 Senator Lowe, for the gift. I appreciate that,  
17 and I will -- I will route it to the person in  
18 my family who will be most interested in it.  
19 Thank you.

20 PRESIDENT HUNT: Senator Berger, for  
21 what purpose do you rise?

22 SENATOR BERGER: Thank you,  
23 Madam President.

24 We have a conference report that's  
25 being worked on that is not prepared as of yet.

1 I would ask that the Senate stand in recess  
2 until 12:00 noon.

3 PRESIDENT HUNT: The senate will stand  
4 at recess until 12:00 noon.

5 (Recess.)

6 PRESIDENT HUNT: Senator Berger, for  
7 what purpose do you rise?

8 SENATOR BERGER: A motion and an  
9 announcement.

10 PRESIDENT HUNT: You have the floor.

11 SENATOR BERGER: Thank you,  
12 Madam President.

13 Members, we need to stand in recess  
14 until 1:00 p.m. We are awaiting the final draft  
15 of a conference report. So I would move that we  
16 stand in recess until 1:00 p.m.

17 And during the recess, an announcement,  
18 Republicans will caucus.

19 PRESIDENT HUNT: Without objection, so  
20 ordered. Recess until 1:00.

21 (Recess.)

22 PRESIDENT HUNT: Senate will come back  
23 to order.

24 Senator Daniel, for what purpose do you  
25 rise?

1 SENATOR DANIEL: Point of order.

2 PRESIDENT HUNT: State your point of  
3 order.

4 SENATOR DANIEL: Thank you,  
5 Madam President.

6 Prior to recessing earlier today,  
7 Senator Grafstein announced her intention to  
8 circulate a discharge petition for  
9 Senate Bill 403 under Rule 47B. That  
10 announcement and circulation of the petition is  
11 premature because it had not been ten  
12 legislative days since the bill was referred to  
13 the rules committee. This bill was referred to  
14 the committee on the hundredth legislative day,  
15 and only two legislative days have passed since  
16 then. We're now on Day 102.

17 So any announcement of circulation of  
18 discharge petition would be in order following  
19 the tenth legislative day and would need to be  
20 raised again at that time.

21 PRESIDENT HUNT: Senator Grafstein, for  
22 what purpose do you rise?

23 SENATOR GRAFSTEIN: To speak to the  
24 point of order.

25 PRESIDENT HUNT: Yes. You have the

1 floor.

2 SENATOR GRAFSTEIN: Thank you,  
3 Madam President, and thank you, Senator Daniel.

4 You're correct in the -- on the rule.  
5 I'm not going to dispute you on the rule. We  
6 have -- I was actually at something earlier  
7 today of folks who are here to ask us to fund  
8 Medicaid. Hundreds of people were there,  
9 providers all over the state.

10 So the discharge petition really is an  
11 effort for us to address the call from these  
12 folks. I appreciate that it's out of order. We  
13 will be bringing it back. My hope is that we  
14 don't have to bring it back after ten  
15 legislative days. Ten legislative days will be  
16 beyond the November 1 timeframe when people are  
17 going to start losing benefits, when people are  
18 going to start losing providers.

19 So I would ask Senator Daniel as acting  
20 rules chair if -- in lieu of the petition, if  
21 you would bring Senate Bill 403 to the floor  
22 tomorrow so that -- or today so that we can vote  
23 on it and make sure that people get the benefits  
24 that they are entitled to, so providers don't go  
25 out of business or don't have to lay people off.

1 PRESIDENT HUNT: Senator Grafstein.

2 SENATOR GRAFSTEIN: I would ask if  
3 Senator Daniel would yield for a question.

4 PRESIDENT HUNT: Senator Daniel, will  
5 you yield?

6 SENATOR DANIEL: I yield.

7 SENATOR GRAFSTEIN: Senator Daniel,  
8 will you bring Senate Bill 403 to the floor as  
9 acting rules chair so that we can give relief to  
10 people and so that we can fund Medicaid at a  
11 level the House and Senate agree on, put aside  
12 differences for today, get people what they need  
13 in case we don't come back before November which  
14 it sounds like we're not?

15 SENATOR DANIEL: So I think,  
16 Senator Grafstein, if you refer to the  
17 adjournment resolution, that is not in  
18 accordance with the adjournment resolution. It  
19 wouldn't be eligible for this session.

20 SENATOR GRAFSTEIN: I wonder if  
21 Senator Daniel will yield for one more question.

22 PRESIDENT HUNT: Senator Daniel, will  
23 you yield?

24 SENATOR DANIEL: I'll yield.

25 PRESIDENT HUNT: He yields.

1           SENATOR GRAFSTEIN: Senator Daniel,  
2 would you be willing to waive the rules so that  
3 we can bring that bill back to the floor for  
4 consideration?

5           SENATOR DANIEL: No.

6           SENATOR GRAFSTEIN: Madam President,  
7 may I speak one more time on the --

8           SENATOR DANIEL: And it would have to  
9 be -- it couldn't just be the Senate. It would  
10 have to be -- like to change the adjournment  
11 resolution, we would have to have the House  
12 agree with us.

13          PRESIDENT HUNT: All right. So the  
14 ruling is that it is only the second legislative  
15 day, so that is put to bed right now on the  
16 point of order.

17          SENATOR GRAFSTEIN: Thank you,  
18 Madam President.

19          PRESIDENT HUNT: Senator Daniel, for  
20 what purpose do you rise?

21          SENATOR DANIEL: Motion.

22          PRESIDENT HUNT: You have the floor for  
23 a motion.

24          SENATOR DANIEL: If I can find it.  
25 Conference report for Senate Bill 449,



1 Continuing Budget Operations Part 4 has been  
2 handed in to the principal clerk. I move that  
3 it be placed on today's calendar for immediate  
4 consideration.

5 PRESIDENT HUNT: So ordered.

6 Senate Bill 449, the clerk will read.

7 THE CLERK: Senate Bill 449, Conference  
8 Committee Substitute Continuing Budget  
9 Operations Part 4.

10 PRESIDENT HUNT: Senator Jackson is  
11 recognized to explain the conference report.

12 SENATOR JACKSON: Thank you,  
13 Madam President.

14 Before I get in to explaining the  
15 highlights of this bill, I want to take just a  
16 few moments and thank our central staff as well  
17 as pro tem staff and all those that have worked  
18 on this bill. There's been a lot of time spent  
19 on it behind the scenes, making sure it's  
20 together and making sure the I's are dotted and  
21 the T's are crossed. And we as members don't  
22 always see that, and the public certainly  
23 doesn't, of the time it takes to put something  
24 like this together, but I would like to thank  
25 all of them. And the majority of them are

1 sitting here behind me.

2 And I also -- I want to say goodbye.  
3 Deborah stand up, please. Deborah Landreth,  
4 this will probably be -- and she's probably  
5 happy about it, y'all -- will be her last budget  
6 cycle with us. She is retiring, and as after a  
7 well-earned retirement coming. And I just want  
8 to say thank you to you and Jennifer and all  
9 those that have worked on this, but thank you,  
10 Deborah, and we wish you the very best in your  
11 retirement, and thank you for giving us the time  
12 you've begin us. And don't be a stranger.  
13 Thank you.

14 Let's give Deborah a hand, y'all.

15 [Applause.]

16 And, Deborah, just so you know, I'll  
17 miss you, and we all will. And I had to go  
18 ahead and say that because y'all know how  
19 absent-brained I can be part of the time and I  
20 got on the end of all this explaining and I  
21 forgot it, so I didn't want to forget it. Try  
22 to do the important things first.

23 So, Madam President, with that, I'd  
24 like to explain the bill.

25 PRESIDENT HUNT: You have the floor.

1           SENATOR JACKSON: Members, this is a  
2     technical fix. These are time-sensitive issues,  
3     or so we have been told and we believe them to  
4     be. It is pre-negotiated between the House and  
5     the Senate, and I'll just highlight briefly some  
6     of the changes.

7           We have made several adjustments to  
8     various Hurricane Helene programs and provisions  
9     including extending the restriction on local  
10    tree ordinances as well as valid development  
11    approvals by one year for Helene-impacted  
12    counties. We've increased the Golden LEAF loan  
13    program for small businesses. Hopefully they  
14    will be able to get more money out to more  
15    businesses.

16          We have modified the Helene local  
17    government cash flow loan programs that are  
18    administered by the treasurer and modifications  
19    to the Local Government Capital Grant Program  
20    project set to be denied by FEMA can receive  
21    grant funding prior to that without delay.

22          We are allowing the Board of Governors  
23    to raise out-of-state tuition at NC Promise  
24    institutions by \$1,000 a semester, and this was  
25    a request by the UNC system. This balances the

1 need to keep costs down for in-state students  
2 while also addressing budget concerns at the  
3 North Carolina Promise campuses.

4 There is 2.1 million recurring for  
5 VIPER operations of maintenance, 7.2 million  
6 nonrecurring for Administrative Office of Courts  
7 to implement IT improvements. It allows the SBI  
8 to contract with a third party to process  
9 fingerprints and criminal background checks. It  
10 appropriates nearly 22 million of the biennium  
11 from the IT reserve for the state budget system  
12 stabilization and replacement program, and this  
13 was a request from OSBM.

14 It also waives the local state plan,  
15 the 2.4 percent increase for the state health  
16 plan. It's going to waive that to the local  
17 governments. And we are applying 25 million  
18 recurring for the pay plan reserves which we put  
19 in place last spring to implement staff  
20 increases for the General Assembly authorized,  
21 like I said earlier this year, which was last  
22 spring, across various agencies, including  
23 teachers, through DPI, SBI, State Highway  
24 Patrol, and DPS.

25 It appropriates 7 million to the

1 Department of Transportation for ferry  
2 maintenance, operations, and dry docking. And  
3 it does various other things, but these are the  
4 highlights.

5 And, Members, I would ask for your  
6 support, and I'll be happy to entertain any  
7 questions. Thank you.

8 PRESIDENT HUNT: Is there further  
9 discussion or debate?

10 Hearing none -- Senator Mayfield, for  
11 what purpose do you rise?

12 SENATOR MAYFIELD: To ask the bill  
13 sponsor a question or the conference  
14 report -- to ask Senator Jackson a question.

15 PRESIDENT HUNT: Senator Jackson, do  
16 you yield?

17 SENATOR JACKSON: Yes, ma'am.

18 PRESIDENT HUNT: He yields.

19 SENATOR MAYFIELD: Thank you.

20 And you may or may not be able to  
21 answer this, but there's a provision in the  
22 conference report related to the local  
23 government loan program, cash flow loan program,  
24 and there's no redlining in that section so  
25 it's -- I can't tell what has changed. I'm not

1 suspicious. I don't know -- but my question are  
2 what are those changes there?

3 SENATOR JACKSON: Madam President, to  
4 respond.

5 Senator Mayfield, I can't tell you the  
6 changes. We did tweak that program some to do  
7 what the county commissioner association had  
8 asked us to do, so we did do that.

9 SENATOR MAYFIELD: So it was in  
10 response to a request from the county  
11 commissioners.

12 SENATOR JACKSON: Yes, ma'am.

13 SENATOR MAYFIELD: Great. All right.  
14 Thank you so much.

15 SENATOR JACKSON: You're welcome.

16 PRESIDENT HUNT: Is there further  
17 discussion or debate?

18 Hearing none, the question before the  
19 body is the adoption of the conference report  
20 for Senate Bill 449.

21 All in favor will vote aye, all opposed  
22 will vote no. Five seconds will be allowed for  
23 voting, and the clerk will report the vote.

24 46 having voted in the affirmative, 0  
25 in the negative, the conference report for

1 Senate Bill 449 is adopted and the House will be  
2 so notified.

3 Is there further business to come  
4 before the Senate?

5 If not, Senator Berger -- Senator Hise,  
6 for what purpose do you rise?

7 SENATOR HISE: A moment of personal  
8 privilege.

9 PRESIDENT HUNT: Yes, you have the  
10 floor.

11 SENATOR HISE: Thank you,  
12 Madam President.

13 Members of the Senate, I just wanted to  
14 take a moment -- hopefully this is the last day  
15 in a while that we're going to be meeting -- to  
16 recognize my research assistant, Leah Byers, who  
17 is leaving us here in the General Assembly to go  
18 be a liaison, so you'll still get to see her  
19 regularly in the building and others. I'll let  
20 her do the announcements where and when that is,  
21 but I wanted to take the opportunity to thank  
22 her for the years of work that she's given to my  
23 office, put together with making sure the  
24 budget -- both passed and unpassed budgets that  
25 we've done have been put together and

1 appropriate and make sure were represented.

2 She's done an incredible job, and I  
3 couldn't be more excited to see her moving up  
4 and on. There's great things ahead for you and  
5 hopefully in state government, but in any  
6 direction you seem to go. And thank you for the  
7 opportunity for us to work with you.

8 [Applause.]

9 PRESIDENT HUNT: Senator Settle, for  
10 what purpose do you rise?

11 SENATOR SETTLE: A moment of personal  
12 privilege, please.

13 PRESIDENT HUNT: You have the floor.

14 SENATOR SETTLE: Thank you,  
15 Madam President.

16 With all the fun we've been having in  
17 here the last couple of days, I haven't had a  
18 chance. I wanted to bring this up and just  
19 congratulate -- in my office, my intern Liva  
20 Lathem back here will be graduating from  
21 North Carolina State this fall. And we found  
22 out today that she has -- yesterday she has been  
23 accepted and a full scholarship to Elon Law  
24 School, so we're really happy about that and  
25 wanted to congratulate her. Thank you.



1 [Applause.]

2 PRESIDENT HUNT: Senator Adcock, for  
3 what purpose do you rise?

4 SENATOR ADCOCK: A moment of personal  
5 privilege.

6 PRESIDENT HUNT: You have the floor.

7 SENATOR ADCOCK: Please join me in  
8 recognizing and honoring the senator to my left,  
9 Senator Kandie Smith on her birthday yesterday.

10 [Applause.]

11 PRESIDENT HUNT: Senator Applewhite,  
12 for what purpose do you rise?

13 SENATOR APPLEWHITE: A moment of  
14 personal privilege.

15 PRESIDENT HUNT: You have the floor.

16 SENATOR APPLEWHITE: Thank you -- oh, I  
17 turned my own mic off.

18 Thank you, Madam President.

19 I think we all can agree that this is  
20 really tough work, what we do here in the  
21 Senate, many hours that we spend not in this  
22 chamber preparing for to do the people's work.  
23 And I just wanted to take a moment to say to my  
24 Democratic colleagues how much I appreciate you  
25 all. And although it's hard for all of us, it's

1 hard for us to be in the minority knowing that  
2 every day we come on the floor, we're going to  
3 lose. We are going to lose the battle. We are  
4 going to lose the vote. But we still show up  
5 every day, and we do this work. And I just  
6 wanted to say thank you for that. And we still  
7 laugh, and we still enjoy each other.

8 And this last two days has really been  
9 a challenge for us with the redistricting bill,  
10 and I just wanted to acknowledge all of the  
11 floor speeches that we gave and spoke about  
12 democracy. That was really important.

13 And many of you know, I love political  
14 science, that's my graduate degree, and I just  
15 eat this stuff up all day, but I did want to  
16 really recognize Senator Garrett's comments this  
17 morning, his floor speech. I enjoyed it. I  
18 think that you painted an accurate historical  
19 narrative. I listened to your words. I was  
20 somehow at the no king marches. I was somehow  
21 crossing the Edmund Pettus Bridge. I somehow  
22 saw the feet being wrapped at Valley Forge of  
23 frozen feet, right. So thank you for your  
24 words.

25 And as you were speaking, there was a

1 group of middle schoolers that came in, and I  
2 watched how they were watching you. And  
3 although your words were not sprinkled across  
4 the journal, they were sprinkled across the  
5 hearts and minds of our young people.

6 Thank you, Madam President.

7 PRESIDENT HUNT: Upon motion of  
8 Senator Jarvis of Davidson and Davie county, the  
9 chair is happy to extend courtesies to Lexington  
10 city councilman Joe Watkins who is in the  
11 gallery. Please stand and be recognized.

12 [Applause.]

13 PRESIDENT HUNT: Senator Murdock, for  
14 what purpose does rise?

15 SENATOR MURDOCK: Point of personal  
16 privilege.

17 PRESIDENT HUNT: You have the floor for  
18 a point of personal privilege.

19 SENATOR MURDOCK: A notice was sent out  
20 by the clerk, but still just wanted to take the  
21 time since we'll be adjourning for -- or  
22 adjourning now for a few days.

23 We did unfortunately lose a former  
24 colleague that was a part of my freshman class,  
25 Senator Ernestine Bazemore. So she was elected

1 in 2020, joined -- or elected in 2020, joined in  
2 2020, and was only with us for a short period,  
3 but had to lift her up as a lot of you know that  
4 are still serving had so many health challenges  
5 while she was serving but would still muster up  
6 a smile, ask us how we were doing, did her best  
7 to represent her district. Before that, was an  
8 educator, was even vice chair of the Bertie  
9 county commission, was really a legend in her  
10 district, had a passion and a heart for rural  
11 communities, particularly healthcare access and  
12 broadband.

13 So just on the Senate floor wanted to  
14 acknowledge the life, legacy, and memory of the  
15 late, great state Senator Ernestine Bazemore.

16 PRESIDENT HUNT: Is there further  
17 business to come before the Senate?

18 Senator Garrett, for what purpose do  
19 you rise?

20 SENATOR GARRETT: For a moment of  
21 personal privilege.

22 PRESIDENT HUNT: You have the floor.

23 SENATOR GARRETT: Colleagues, Guilford  
24 county lost a true public servant on Monday.  
25 Dot Kendall Kearns was the first woman to serve

1 on the Guilford County Board of Commissioners.  
2 She was a member of the High Point City Council  
3 and then went on to become a member of the  
4 Unified Guilford County Board of Education. And  
5 so I would just ask -- also a personal friend of  
6 mine and served with my mother on the Board of  
7 Education for 20 years -- that we adjourn in her  
8 honor today.

9 PRESIDENT HUNT: Without objection, so  
10 ordered.

11 Is there further business to come  
12 before the Senate?

13 If not, Senator Berger is recognized  
14 for a motion.

15 Senator Garrett, could you please  
16 repeat the name that we are adjourning in honor  
17 in memory of.

18 SENATOR GARRETT: Yes. Sorry. Dot  
19 Kendall.

20 PRESIDENT HUNT: Dot Kendall.

21 SENATOR GARRETT: Kearns.

22 PRESIDENT HUNT: Hurns?

23 SENATOR GARRETT: Kearns, K-E-A-R-N-S.

24 PRESIDENT HUNT: Thank you.

25 SENATOR GARRETT: Thank you.

1           SENATOR BERGER: Thank you,  
2           Madam President.

3           I move that Senate do now adjourn in  
4           memory of Dot Kendall Kearns, to reconvene on  
5           October 22nd -- that's tomorrow -- 2025, at  
6           10:00 a.m. Members, this will be a nonvoting  
7           session. There will be no further voting  
8           sessions this week.

9           UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Objection,  
10          Madam President, to adjourning.

11          PRESIDENT HUNT: Okay. We will have a  
12          vote on whether or not to adjourn.

13          UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: May I speak to  
14          the --

15          PRESIDENT HUNT: Yes.

16          UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Thank you,  
17          Madam President.

18          I appreciate the person whose honor  
19          we're -- the motion is to adjourn. I'm not  
20          objecting to that.

21          My objection is we have business to do.  
22          I've raised several times today this issue  
23          around Medicaid. I feel like I have to raise it  
24          one more time. There are hundreds of people in  
25          this building right now, there are thousands of

1 people across this state who are going to lose  
2 access to services. There are small providers  
3 across this state who are going to lose their  
4 businesses if we don't do something by  
5 November 1st.

6 I am objecting that we're adjourning  
7 today without taking care of that very important  
8 piece of business. And for that reason,  
9 Madam President, I hope that we can all vote not  
10 to adjourn at this time.

11 PRESIDENT HUNT: Give me a second on  
12 the adjournment motion.

13 SENATOR BERGER: Madam President, I'll  
14 restate the motion and see if there's a second  
15 out there.

16 PRESIDENT HUNT: Senator Berger.

17 SENATOR BERGER: Members, I'll move  
18 that Senate do now adjourn in memory of  
19 Dot Kendall Kearns, to reconvene on  
20 October 22nd, that's tomorrow, at 10:00 a.m.  
21 Members, this would be a nonvoting session. No  
22 further voting sessions this week.

23 SENATOR DANIEL: Second.

24 PRESIDENT HUNT: We will now have a  
25 vote on the adjournment motion.

1 All in favor of adjourning will vote  
2 aye, all opposed will vote no. Five seconds  
3 will be allowed for voting, and the clerk will  
4 record the vote.

5 Senator Everitt. Senator Everitt.  
6 Senator Everitt.

7 Senator Newton. Senator Newton.  
8 Senator Newton.

9 28 having voted aye, 16 having voted  
10 no, the motion to adjourn passes.

11 The motion is that the Senate do now  
12 adjourn to reconvene Wednesday, October 22,  
13 2025, at 10:00 a.m., seconded by Senator Daniel.

14 All in favor will say aye.

15 SENATE MEMBERS: Aye.

16 PRESIDENT HUNT: Opposed no.

17 The ayes have it and the Senate stands  
18 adjourned in memory and honor of Dot Kendall  
19 Kearns.

20 (Adjourned.)  
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