

Senate President Pro Tempore Touts Teacher Raises

By Administrator
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This release was issued by Senator Phil Berger's office: -----
Since assuming power in 2011, the Republican-led North Carolina General Assembly reversed years of teacher pay stagnation caused by massive budget deficits and unmanageable spending. Republicans acted quickly to put teacher pay on a sustainable path while still delivering crucial raises.

“Providing a high-quality education is critically important for North Carolina’s next generation,” said Senate Leader Phil Berger (R-Rockingham). “Investments in teachers are key to encouraging the best and brightest to make a long-term commitment to their profession, our students, and our state.”

Before Republicans took control of the legislature in 2011, Democrats eliminated thousands of teaching positions, furloughed educators, and froze pay. The recession stressed state budgets throughout the country, but North Carolina’s fiscal situation turned into a crisis because of irresponsible and unsustainable spending levels in the years leading up to the recession. Democrats diverted funding away from teacher pay and schools to plug holes in one of the largest budget deficits in the entire country. Between 2008 and 2010, education spending dropped by 9.1% and teacher pay plummeted from 28th in the country to 41st.

Since assuming leadership of the General Assembly in 2011, legislative Republicans followed a sustainable path that significantly increased pay for educators whose hard work and commitment are vital to the success of our children.

In the 2012 budget, the Republican-led General Assembly provided public school teachers their first raise since 2008, but that was just the beginning. Legislative Republicans made a promise to dramatically increase teacher pay in North Carolina, and they kept that promise. In 2014, the Republican-led General Assembly invested \$282 million in teacher pay –the highest raise in the entire nation.

In addition to providing teachers with an average 7% raise in the 2014 budget, Republicans also collapsed the antiquated 33-step pay scale, replacing it with a simpler, evidence-based approach. Republicans also increased the starting teacher salary from \$30,800 to \$35,000, improving the state’s ability to recruit and retain high-quality educators.

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Legislative Republicans have continued delivering on their promise to raise teacher pay, as the raise in 2014 began five consecutive years of salary increases.

“Digging out from the massive cuts was a monumental task, but Republicans established the viable path forward on teacher pay five years ago,” said Sen. Majority Leader Harry Brown (R-Onslow). “We’ve enacted raises each year since, and we were at or near the top in the entire country for three of those years. This is a success story, and we’re going to stay the course moving forward.”