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The U.S. Senate candidates held their first statewide debate this week. StateGovernmentRadio.com's Josh Ellis joins host Donna Martinez to assess the performance of Republican Sen. Richard Burr and his Democratic challenger, Secretary of State Elaine Marshall.

Then we revisit candidate remarks from the debate, which was sponsored by the North Carolina Association of Broadcasters Education Foundation and hear from the candidates on the stimulus package, the Pentagon budget, the War in Afghanistan, and health care reform. Later in the week, Libertarian candidate Mike Beitler joined Burr and Marshall for a debate sponsored by NBC 17 and the League of Women Voters. We hear their comments on the military's Don't Ask, Don't Tell policy, as well as the Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP).

Then the subject turns to gubernatorial power. Jeannette Doran of the North Carolina Institute for Constitutional Law joins Martinez to explain the recent N.C. Supreme Court ruling, which by a 3-3 vote, let stand a lower court ruling that said Gov. Mike Easley did not have the authority to move \$80 million from the Highway Trust Fund to the General Fund to balance the budget.

And finally, Martinez reports on another state legislator who's the subject of comic relief on Saturday Night Live.