

**NORTH CAROLINA WOMEN
UNITED**

**LEGISLATIVE
REPORT CARD**

2019-2020

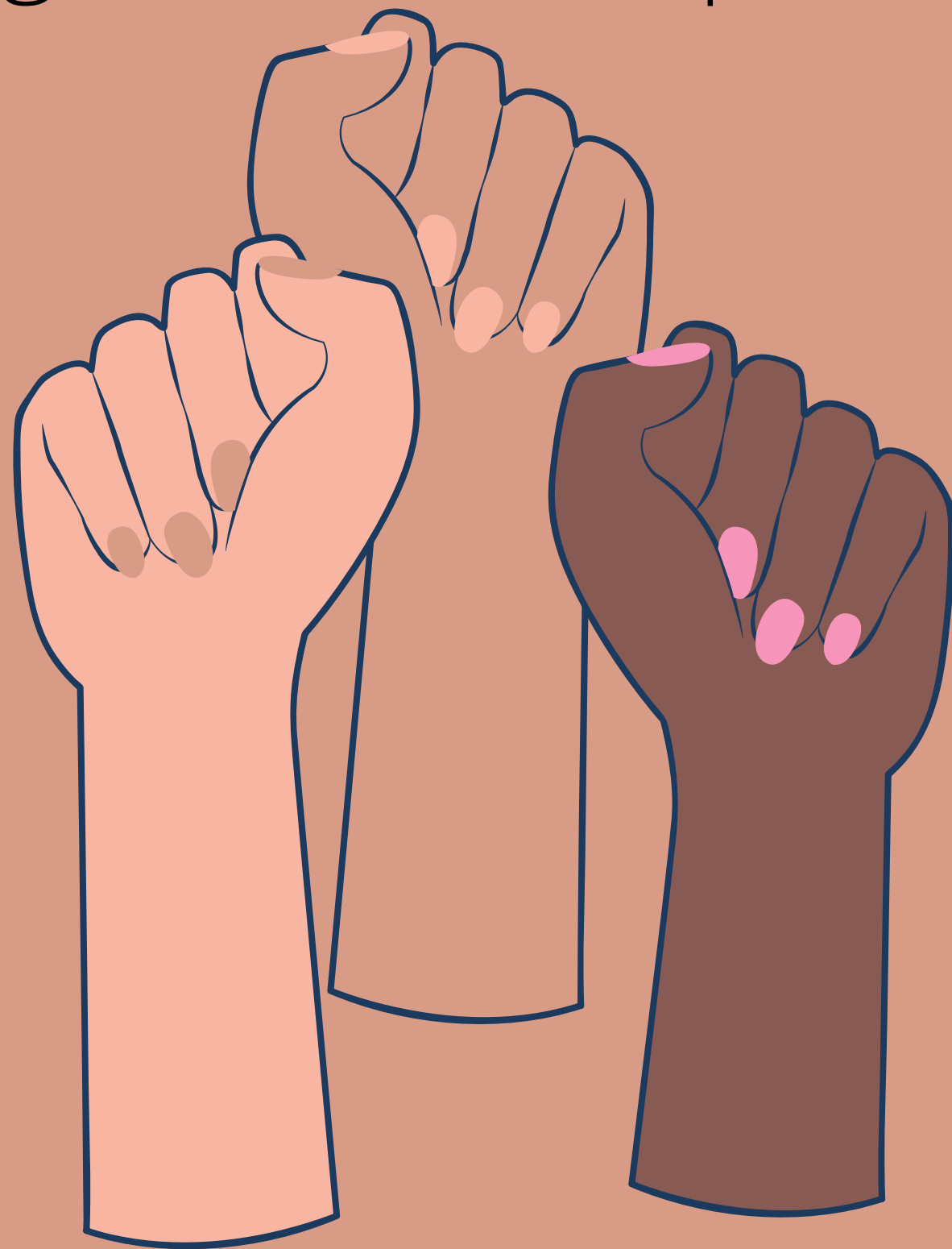


**NCWomen
United**

WHO WE ARE

NCWU

NC Women United (NCWU) is a coalition of progressive state and local organizations working to achieve the full political, social, and economic equality of all women across North Carolina. NCWU works to build women's power through grassroots activism, community organizing, legislative advocacy, and engagement in the political process.



A MESSAGE

from our President

Greetings,
2020 was, by any measure, an extraordinary year.

A global pandemic wrought havoc on our state's health, economy and society, the backdrop against which a fraught election played out and protests against systemic racism, police violence and white supremacy erupted statewide. Statues came down, and new chapters are being written in our history books, giving voices to new perspectives and experiences that have not traditionally been represented there.

It was in this context that North Carolina Women United conducted member outreach and virtual listening sessions over the summer of 2020, in order to update our legislative agenda to reflect the considerably different needs of women and communities across the state, incorporating an intersectional analysis centering dual and reinforcing streams of marginalization: gender, race, and rurality to name a few.

This report card reflects the Legislature's progress against that intersectional agenda, on issues that are key to promoting women's equality and combating systemic racism. In each of our priority areas, we have identified the policy goal(s) and what actions the General Assembly can take. Based on the actions taken, the NC General Assembly is given a grade from A-F on each policy goal. Two versions of this report card exist: a shorter summary scorecard and an extended version that includes bill references.

Since its inception, NC Women United understood that one of the most significant hindrances to improving women's conditions is public awareness about what goes on in the legislature. For the average citizen, there is not enough time to understand the mechanics of "long session, short session, or special session, and that limits civic engagement in a meaningful way. Conversely, legislative leaders too rarely hear from women as a constituency, and the issues that should be prioritized by representative government.

We hope that this document and other NCWU products and activities help to fill that gap: that legislators are aware of and engaged on an equity agenda to improve the lives of women across the state, and constituents have the knowledge and feel empowered to navigate the North Carolina legislative terrain in a way that holds our elected officials accountable to those ends.

Later this year, we plan to host a Women's Advocacy Day (WAD). WAD will be an opportunity to let your voice be heard by those who represent your district. Due to an evolving pandemic landscape, we are not currently able to announce whether this will be virtual or in-person, but please check our website soon for more details.

In addition to advocacy days, we hope you will participate in related events hosted by our member organizations and other allied community partners. To stay informed on those opportunities and engage with legislators, please visit. www.NCWU.org.

Finally, we also hope that our work breaks down the silos created by geography. Although legislative decisions happen in Raleigh, they impact women from all 100 counties. We hope this document provides a useful resource for hosting local forums to discuss the Legislature's impact on women in communities across the state, in the tradition of our women's agenda assemblies. For more information on how to host a local agenda assembly stay tuned for our updated toolkit. You can also participate in our survey and give us feedback on issues that matter to you.



Charnessa Ridley, NCWU President

Report Card: The Grading Scale



A

The legislature accomplished our desired goal(s) in the specific policy area




B

The legislature accomplished most of our goal(s), but there is room for improvement.



C

The legislature accomplished some goals, but did accomplish other goal(s), or took some good action and some bad action(s) in the specific policy area.



D

The legislature did not accomplish our goal(s), or took bad action(s) in the specific policy area.



F

The legislature did not take any action toward desired goal(s), or took action that hurt our legislative goal(s) in the specific policy area.

ECONOMIC STABILITY

North Carolina Women United urges policymakers to enhance the economic security of our state and NC families.

POLICY

NCWU

Goal

Grade

Pay a living wage, including equal pay and raising the minimum wage to \$15/hour.



F

Guarantee all workers a minimum number of paid sick days.



F

Meet or exceed the actions authorized for state employees under Executive Order No.95 for all NC families by establishing a state-run, 100% parental leave program.



F

Meet or exceed the actions authorized for state employees under Executive Order No. 82 by providing pregnant worker protection, adding reasonable accommodations and prohibiting retaliation.



F

Restore unemployment benefits



C

Invest in the education system



C

Reverse the state's ban of time-limit waivers for SNAP.



F

Restore housing as an eligible use for North Carolina Community Development Block Grant allotment.



F

EXPAND ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE

North Carolina Women United urges policymakers to ensure women and families are able to enjoy the highest standard of health and well-being.

POLICY

NCWU

Goal

Grade

Expansion of Medicaid.

C

Provide age-appropriate health and sexual education and information for students.

F

Protect and expand access to all reproductive healthcare.

F

Ensure that women are able to access the full range of safe and legal reproductive health care.

F

Protect and expand access to all reproductive health care, including birth control and abortion care.

F

Stop the diversion of health care public funds to support anti-abortion centers.

F

Ensure women's health clinic regulations are based on sound science and medical information

F

PROMOTE AN INCLUSIVE AND EQUITABLE DEMOCRACY

North Carolina Women United urges policymakers to protect civic participation, promote equality and take measures to eliminate discrimination based on sex, race, class, age, immigration status, ability or any other identity

POLICY

NCWU

Goal

Grade

Expand the authority of local governments to establish citizen review boards to investigate police misconduct.

F

Ratify the Equal Rights Amendment.

F

Amend NC General Statute 50B to remove the discriminatory "opposite sex" requirement for dating relationships.

F

Expand non-discrimination protections in housing and employment.

C

Increase accountability in law enforcement

F

Increase the scope of and penalties for hate crimes.

F

Provide fair treatment to immigrants living in NC

F

Establish an independent redistricting process

F

PROMOTE AN INCLUSIVE AND EQUITABLE DEMOCRACY

North Carolina Women United urges policymakers to protect civic participation, promote equality and take measures to eliminate discrimination based on sex, race, class, age, immigration status, ability or any other identity

POLICY

NCWU

Goal

Grade

Oppose legislation that: - seeks to create additional barriers to safety and critical resources for immigrants

F

Streamline voter registration and access
Expand non-discrimination protections in housing and employment.

B

Support laws that create open, transparent elections

C

END GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

North Carolina Women United urges policymakers to prevent and respond to gender based violence in the state.

POLICY

Goal

Enact common sense gun safety regulations.

Remove language that indicates consent, once given, can't be withdrawn

Clarify that victims who knowingly drank alcohol or took drugs are unable to consent to sexual acts

Adequately fund the Family Court system
Increase accountability in law enforcement.

Amend NC General Statute 50B/50C to accept electronic filing requests from rape crisis centers

Ending the shackling of pregnant, incarcerated people in North Carolina

End abuse of girls such as child marriage and female genital mutilation.

Taking actions to end how NC deals with adolescent sexting.

Take actions to end the epidemic of missing and murdered Indigenous women

NCWU

Grade

F

A

A

F

F

F

B

F

F

EDUCATION

Statement

In 2019, the budget was vetoed over Medicaid expansion and teacher pay and failed to be overridden. There were additional efforts to pass a teacher pay raise that were also vetoed, and therefore teachers did not receive a pay raise.

North Carolina's estimated average teacher salary for 2019-20 is still more than \$9,000 less than the estimated national salary for 2019-2020. Principals did receive an average pay raise of 6.2% in a separate bill.

An issue that the 2020 General Assembly and the Governor came to an agreement on in 2020 was broadband access. The pandemic exasperated the needs for rural connectivity, and the COVID relief packages addressed the issue. In December, amidst reports that Governor Cooper used rural broadband funding for other purposes, stating that further federal guidance was needed. After discussion with legislative leaders, legislators agreed to the Governor's redirecting of funding to other projects, vowing that the legislature would vote on a \$30 million package that will come from the State's General Fund. Educational issues during COVID will remain to be at the forefront of debate at the legislature.

Per Pupil Spending and Instructional Pay

Per pupil spending in North Carolina remains stagnant. The estimated national average for per-pupil spending in 2019-20 is \$13,384, while the estimated average per-pupil spending in North Carolina is \$10,632, ranking it 40th in the nation. The average salary for instructional staff in 2019-20 NC is projected to be \$54,682. The national average is projected to be \$66,126 in 2019-20. North Carolina's average salary for instructional staff in 2018-2019 was \$53,940, more than \$10,000 below the national average of \$64,545 in 2018-19.

Racial Justice in Schools

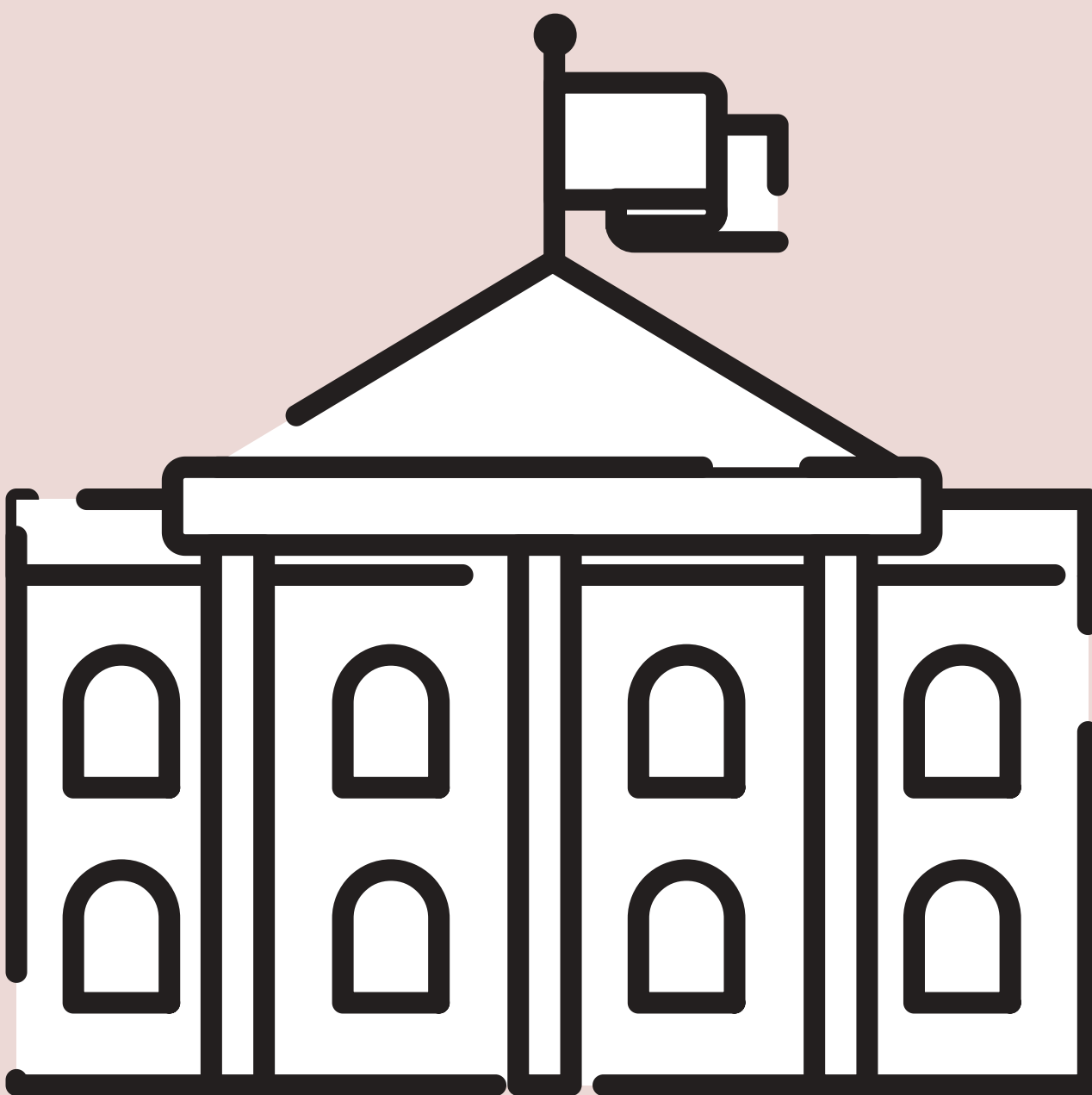
The General Assembly did pass an omnibus school safety bill, which requires the Center for Safer Schools to conduct an audit of school resource officers (SROs) annually and include data about the SROs. This bill included matching grants for funding the SROs within public schools. The General Assembly failed to take further action to address the school-to-prison pipeline.

Education-Related Bills from 2019-2020

Despite the budget stalemate, the General Assembly managed to pass many education-related bills in the 2019-2020 biennium. There were changes to the Advanced Teaching Roles, low performing schools, innovative school districts, and third grade reading changes. There is an expansive summary for education bills enacted into law, which can be found here.

REVENUE AND BUDGET

Statement



**The General Assembly passed a budget for the biennium in 2019, and the budget was vetoed by Governor Cooper, due to the failure of the General Assembly to address Medicaid Expansion, and raise teacher pay. The General Assembly then failed to override the budget, so there is no substantive revenue and budget statement, as there was no official state budget in 2019, and no attempt at a budget in 2020.