

Alcohol Bill on Ice Amid Casino Feud

Last week, [NCTIA published a story](#) about the advancement of [Senate Bill 527](#), which would overhaul many of North Carolina's outdated alcohol laws.

The bill supported by NCTIA was scheduled for House votes on Tuesday, but was pulled from the calendar amid the budget controversy.

"The bill is very much alive, but the House took all the Senate bills and put them on ice and the Senate did the same to House bills," said NCTIA Lobbyist Brian Lewis. "Tensions are high right now in the General Assembly and this is an easy way for legislators to express their discontent with each other."

NCTIA Backed Pod Explains Casino Rift



The Do Politics Better podcast, which is sponsored by NCTIA, digs

deeper into the controversy around casinos and the budget.

NCTIA Lobbyists Brian Lewis and Skye David give a firsthand account of the General Assembly drama this week, including the options in play as a resolution is sought by legislative leaders.

Casino Debate Delays Budget Vote

It was a week like no other at the General Assembly – at least not in recent memory.

At the center of the controversy is a disagreement between the Senate and House on including language in the state's spending plan that would allow casinos in Anson, Nash, Rockingham, and Robeson Counties.

The Senate was prepared to vote on the budget package this week, however a vote count in the House shows that only 42 Republicans and 8 Democrats will support a budget with casinos in it – far short of the 61 votes needed to pass legislation in the House.

NCTIA lobbyists Brian Lewis and Skye David were in the General Assembly this week when it became evident no budget vote would take place this week. They report tensions were high between [Senate President Pro Tem Phil Berger \(R-Rockingham/Guilford\)](#) and [Speaker Tim Moore \(R-Cleveland/Rutherford\)](#).

"Senator Berger told the media that he had a deal with Speaker Moore and he expressed that Speaker was not keeping his end of the deal," said Lewis. "In fairness, Speaker Moore said that he can't make legislators vote against their consciences. So here we are at a temporary stalemate."

NCTIA's lobbyists were told that Speaker Moore continues to have talks with his caucus members as well as Democrats. "Essentially, votes are being counted in the House and Speaker Moore has demonstrated in the past that he is a master vote counter," David said. "We remain hopeful."

NCTIA is not working on the casino issue directly, however the organization recognizes that tourism – especially in the four counties – would become major attractions in those mainly rural areas of the state.

"We recognize that there are passionate arguments on both sides of the issue and we respect that as an organization," said NCTIA Executive Director Vince Chelena. "It is our hope that Senator Berger and Speaker Moore will broker a deal that works for all sides."



There is a decades old FUBAR Meter (we'll let you google FUBAR on your own) in the General Assembly Press room that was moved to 9 this week as the budget chaos ensued.