

Rough Week in the House for Casinos

The email from House Speaker Tim Moore (R-Cleveland/Rutherford) to members of his Republican Caucus tells the story about the status of casino legislation this year.

According to media reports, the email message read in part: "To be clear, we will not pass a budget that does not have 61 Republican votes. As you can see there are not 61 Republicans willing to vote for the budget if it includes gaming."

The email was sent one day after a Tuesday Republican House Caucus meeting in which the issue of including casinos in the state's spending plan was debated. .

Speaker Moore said another House Republican Caucus meeting is scheduled for next week to discuss a budget without the inclusion of casinos.

As of publication of this e-newsletter published on September 8, the General Assembly is scheduled to vote on a budget this coming Wednesday and Thursday. However that could be delayed, according to NCTIA's legislative sources.

NCTIA is in support of allowing casinos in North Carolina.

ABC Reform Bill Advances in House

The article below was excerpted from a WRAL story published on September 5. The story was written by Travis Fain.



A major overhaul of North Carolina's alcohol laws, which would allow Sunday liquor sales and happy hour drink specials, cleared a key hurdle Tuesday at the statehouse, though its ultimate fate is unclear.

Senate Bill 527 cleared the House Alcoholic Beverage Control Committee Tuesday on a unanimous vote. It would let local governments open their ABC stores at 10 a.m. or later on Sundays, undoing a statewide prohibition. They would have the same option on holidays, except Christmas and Thanksgiving.

A state prohibition on happy hours would also be undone, again allowing local government leaders to authorize the change by passing an ordinance.

The measure would also restore a pandemic-era rule allowing restaurants to sell mixed drinks to go and for delivery. There's also a bill section cutting liquor taxes for a Durham Company that wants to send whiskey into outer space.

On Tuesday lawmakers added a new provision to the bill that would let community colleges sell beer and wine at sporting events, something the legislature authorized for universities in 2019.

The bill would also simplify permitting and sales processes for restaurants and other ABC permit holders, something that community requested. For example: Right now businesses can only get their liquor from a designated warehouse, causing problems when that warehouse is out of a particular liquor. This bill would loosen that rule.

Despite the unanimous committee vote, two committee members complained that the bill doesn't include changes sought by the state's craft distillery industry. The bill is expected to run through two more House committees before it comes to the floor for a full chamber vote.

For a more detailed analysis prepared by NCTIA Lobbyist Skye David of the tourism related provisions in the ABC Omnibus Bill, email [Vince Chelena](mailto:vince.chelena@nctia.org).