



**RESOLUTION TITLE:        GASTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
LEGISLATIVE AGENDA FOR THE 2021 SESSION OF THE NORTH  
CAROLINA GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

WHEREAS, the Gaston County Board of Commissioners are committed to strengthen and diversify Gaston County's economy, make Gaston County a top choice of business and industry expansion and to encourage the growth of safe and healthy communities; and,

WHEREAS, job creation, economic development, education, workforce development, healthy communities, public safety and quality of life are adopted priorities of the Commission and are important guiding principles for future policy decisions; and,

WHEREAS, the Gaston County Board of Commissioners recognizes that State policies, programs and investments can have a significant influence on local policy-making; and,

WHEREAS, the Gaston County Board of Commissioners has identified numerous goals for consideration and support during the 2021 General Assembly Session.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Gaston County Board of Commissioners respectfully requests the Gaston County Delegation to the North Carolina General Assembly to:

1. Support the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners' legislative priorities; most importantly, oppose unfunded mandates and any shifts of State responsibilities to counties.
  2. Focus on Economic Development:
    - A. Continue to support tax policy to promote advancement of a business climate in Gaston County that fosters competitiveness, encourages new investment and provides for the expansion of current industry to support the local workforce and quality of life:
      - Support the continued efforts toward lowering and eventual elimination of the NC Corporate Tax.
      - Oppose new and repeal targeted taxes, policies, codes and rules that would impede business development.
      - Continue support of Local Option Sales Tax and maintaining dedicated revenue for economic development.
      - Support reduction of the Franchise Tax.
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- B. Support job creation and retention efforts; fully fund job recruitment efforts and support various economic development performance based incentives:
  - Maintain economic development programs of Golden Leaf Foundation
  - Maintain the Governor's One NC Fund's
  - Continue support for workforce development through the Community College system and to strengthen the educational offerings in partnerships with industry and K-12 education; including programs like College and Career Promise and Early College
  - Support State investment in rural infrastructure of water and sewer.
- C. Support funding for travel and tourism, historic preservation, land conservation, state parks and the arts in North Carolina as it spurs economic development:
  - Support Crowder's Mountain State Park
  - Support Mountain Island Educational State Forest
- D. Encourage Federal Delegation to support:
  - Expansion of the H-1B Visa Program
    - A. Crucial to recruitment of foreign companies
    - B. Allows new and existing companies engage their foreign workers in specific training fields
    - C. Need to allow additional visas to be issued to support set up of foreign companies
    - D. Expansion of Gastonia's Municipal Airport
    - E. LYNX Silver Line light rail expansion from Charlotte to Belmont.
- 3. Support Transportation Funding:
  - Support a Transportation Seminar for Elected Official in Gaston County in Summer, 2021
  - Support the funding of transportation improvements required for new business and industry as well as high residential growth regions
  - Support the development of innovative and sustainable methods of funding transportation and infrastructure projects to meet the needs of our growing population, including a mix of funding methods such as bonds, public-private partnerships, and new revenue sources
  - Support LOCAL Transportation Funding Priorities which include:
    - Bridge over Catawba River (South Fork Crossing/Catawba Crossing)
    - Widening of I-85
    - Establish timelines on 24 projects that have been stopped in Gaston County due to funding availability.

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4. Continue to Support appointments of Gaston County residents, who are interested, to statewide boards and commissions. Specific commissions of interest include, but are not limited to: Parks and Recreation Trust Fund, Board of Transportation, Property Tax Commission, Partnership for Children, Local Government Retirement System, Local Government Commission and Housing Finance Agency.
5. Support the reinvestment of lottery ticket sale proceeds for education spending as originally intended and restore the statutory requirement that 40% of net lottery proceeds be allocated to counties for school capital needs.
6. Support funding for school facilities.
7. Support LME-MCO, Partners Behavioral Health as local publically managed behavioral health services, in order to preserve locally driven system of care. Support every counties right to choose and contract the LME-MCO that serves their community.
8. Support funding for School Resource Officers. Support flexibility to allow retired officers working as SROs to be compensated without compromise to their retirement.

**COVID-19 Support for Gaston County**

**1. Health & Human Services**

- A. Support funding to address the additional critical needs for vulnerable populations, children, aging seniors and disabled adults.
- B. Support county services due to the additional strain on vulnerable populations during the pandemic. Services such as independent living for seniors and disabled adults, foster care, child care during school closures to ensure parents maintain job security.
- C. Support of COVID vaccine rollout to all populations. Stronger support of data systems at DHHS during pandemic.
- D. Stop overcrowding in local jail facilities and increase funding for inmates to recover full cost of state inmate housing.

**2. Business**

- A. Support Let Them Work initiatives and stop government shutdowns of business.
- B. Stop government mandates of landlords to provide free shelter during COVID. Government should make landlords whole who have lost rental income due to halting evictions for non-payment of rent.
- C. Continue support for displaced workers including funding workforce development training, vocational training opportunities and unemployment benefit extensions during the course of the pandemic.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this Resolution be forwarded to the Gaston County Legislative Delegation to the NC General Assembly and the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners.