

CAUCUS ATMOSPHERE

I have been a member of the House of Representatives for twelve years. I know this place well: its enormous potential, its strengths, and its limitations.

The Caucus should be seen as a collection of individuals, each accountable to their constituents and colleagues, rather than as a top-down organization with employees accountable to a boss. The Speaker should function as a floor leader, a vision and strategy facilitator, a fundraiser, and an openly accessible resource of information and assistance for members as they serve their constituents. I pledge to be exactly that kind of Speaker for you.

Toward that end, I would implement a caucus atmosphere and structure that entrusts and empowers each member to accomplish the writing, running, and vetting of their own bills. That atmosphere requires committee chairs to be entrusted to make sound, balanced, caucus-oriented decisions about how to run

their own committees in favor of the caucus as a whole. The same caucus-first perspective is also required of me as Speaker. In turn, members must accept the responsibility that comes with power: to investigate for themselves whether or not they have the votes, whether or not others in the caucus have significant opposition, or whether or not there are other bills or pieces of policy afoot that would cause unintended consequences. It is incumbent on members to persuade their colleagues with facts and arguments, not run them over. We will debate, and we will disagree, but we will stand as one caucus.

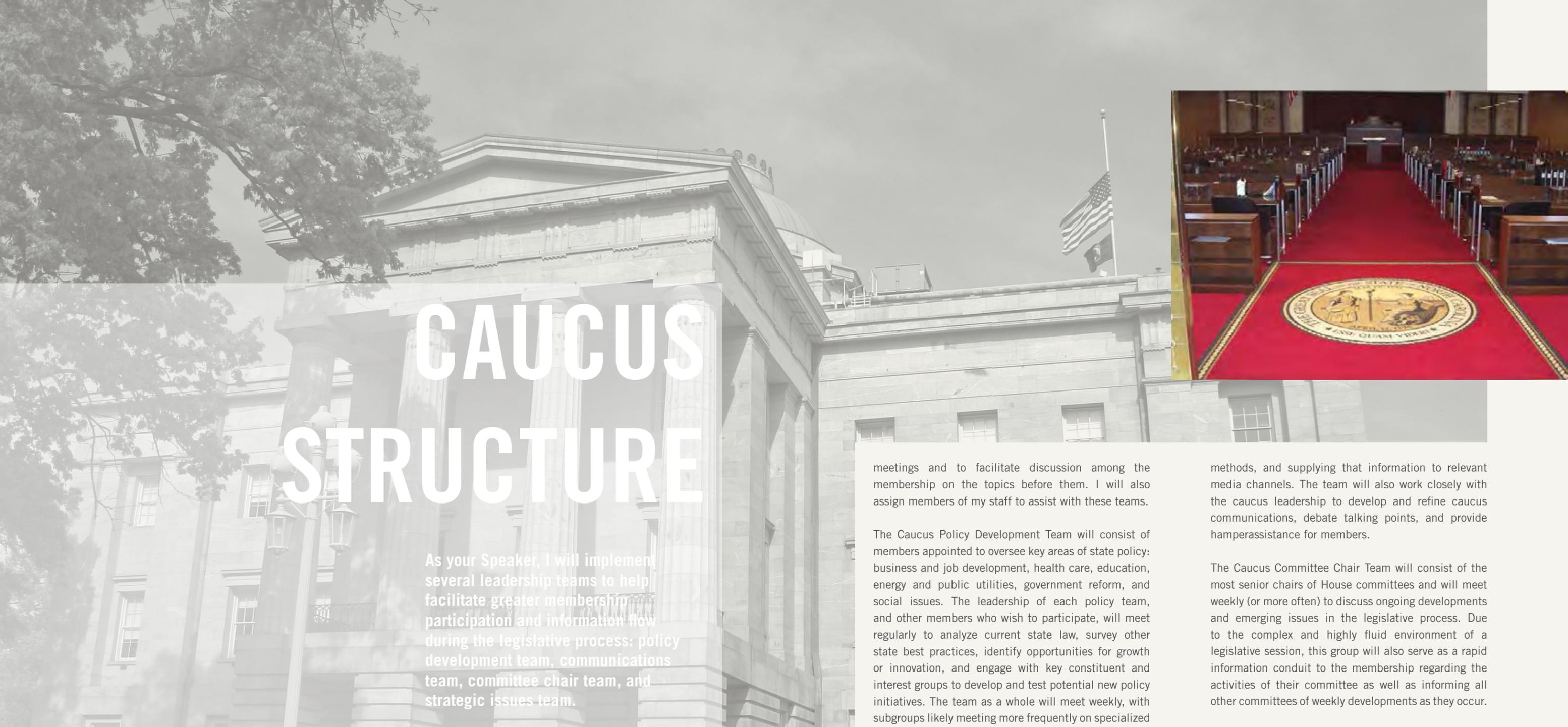
To be sure, the dynamic nature of last minute legislative changes in information or negotiation position will require course corrections or pulling items back for further consideration that once appeared headed to the floor for a final vote. However, it is incumbent on the Speaker - and all members of leadership - to explain the reasons for such actions.

As Speaker, I will support, organize, and lead the Caucus. It will be my job to lead in fundraising for the caucus, and I have. It will be my job to craft legislative solutions for members that unlock their critical bills from stubborn negotiations, and I have. It will be my job to spot issues and votes that may damage vulnerable members in the election, and I have. It will be my job to respectfully and effectively steer debate in the chamber and interact with the media to communicate our message, and I have. I have no higher purpose and no ulterior motive other than to ensure that our members are well informed, well-funded, debated and challenged when necessary, and free to exercise their wisdom and will to the extent their conscience, constituents, and colleagues allow.

In short, I am confident in my ability to be your Speaker because I have succeeded in doing the hard work to work with colleagues to achieve success for our cause in the past. It will be my constant goal as Speaker to promote the long term interests of the caucus by developing lasting relationships, working to fundraise, passing key bills, steering important legislation, and being strong and forceful during negotiations with both the Senate and Governor.

I want to improve and evolve the structure and operation of House leadership during my tenure as Speaker. The reason I know I can be successful in leading that change is because I have done it at your side for twelve years, successfully working through a broad and deep crucible of issues over the last four as your Rules Chair.





CAUCUS STRUCTURE

As your Speaker, I will implement several leadership teams to help facilitate greater membership participation and information flow during the legislative process: policy development team, communications team, committee chair team, and strategic issues team.

The creation of these teams is designed to accomplish two things. The first is to foster greater collaboration: to delegate and decentralize, to trust, and to hold accountable in the management of House affairs. Members can and should be expected to routinely participate in and shoulder the burden of House affairs as equal partners. The second is to substantially increase communication and debate among members regarding pertinent issues.

As your Speaker, I pledge to be engaged in these

meetings and to facilitate discussion among the membership on the topics before them. I will also assign members of my staff to assist with these teams.

The Caucus Policy Development Team will consist of members appointed to oversee key areas of state policy: business and job development, health care, education, energy and public utilities, government reform, and social issues. The leadership of each policy team, and other members who wish to participate, will meet regularly to analyze current state law, survey other state best practices, identify opportunities for growth or innovation, and engage with key constituent and interest groups to develop and test potential new policy initiatives. The team as a whole will meet weekly, with subgroups likely meeting more frequently on specialized matters.

The Caucus Communication Team will consist of members appointed to provide timely legislative information and constituent engagement and support. The team will assist members in taking in constituent suggestions or requests for information and supplying constituents with timely information regarding the operations of the General Assembly and the House of Representatives in particular. Because some constituent groups access information in different ways, this team will also assist members in supplying tailored information through a variety of communication

methods, and supplying that information to relevant media channels. The team will also work closely with the caucus leadership to develop and refine caucus communications, debate talking points, and provide hamperassistance for members.

The Caucus Committee Chair Team will consist of the most senior chairs of House committees and will meet weekly (or more often) to discuss ongoing developments and emerging issues in the legislative process. Due to the complex and highly fluid environment of a legislative session, this group will also serve as a rapid information conduit to the membership regarding the activities of their committee as well as informing all other committees of weekly developments as they occur.

The Caucus Strategic Issues Team will consist of members appointed to identify and respond to emerging issues in legislative management, caucus dynamics, and key matters of policy consideration or negotiation. This team will likely call upon other members for assistance in gaining and sharing information regarding the matters under their consideration.

Each of these teams will be responsible for keeping other members informed of their meetings and progress whenever possible. The meetings of each team would be open to all caucus members who wish to attend.





GOALS TO GROW NORTH CAROLINA STRONGER

The conservative core of our state has moved from the sidelines to the center of state governance and our State has begun to turn in the right direction. We have come a long way toward righting the ship in a short time. However, there is much more to do. First and foremost we must focus on governing.

Now that we have established ourselves as the conservative and common sense core in governing North Carolina, we must begin to positively position our great State for the future. That means re-evaluating and re-envisioning some fundamental aspects of North Carolina's legislative environment. Our work must be open, transparent, deliberate, and thoroughly debated. As Speaker, I will listen carefully to the will of the caucus. I welcome the ideas of every member — we all have something to contribute to the debate and the direction of our great State.

BUSINESS AND COMMERCE DEVELOPMENT

Thanks to the significant and important strides we have made since 2010, our budget is balanced, entitlement spending is coming under control, and our economy is expanding and creating jobs. Because the most effective social program on the planet is a job, our social safety net system - including unemployment insurance - has responded to our job-creating policies by becoming more economically sustainable. Our policies are working.

We must do more, however, to make our State the most attractive business environment in the Southeast, and one of the most competitive in the country. I will encourage members with a special interest in business and commerce development to advance policies that maintain an educated workforce, to plan and build a solid transportation infrastructure, and above all – to create a sensible tax and regulatory environment. I am convinced this is the right path forward for North Carolina.





HEALTH CARE

North Carolina boasts some of the most preeminent health care in the nation. But health care in North Carolina, as across our nation, has become too expensive and patients are allowed fewer choices and freedoms. Health care institutions, while constantly innovating and growing in their capacity to care for patients, are hampered in their ability to innovate by laws and regulations that are as outdated as the modes of health care in existence when those laws and regulations were conceived and passed into law. An ever-evolving industry cannot be adequately guided by inflexible and old standards. The federal solutions have failed us. Even worse, they have imposed larger and more expensive regulations. We can do better for North Carolina.

I would encourage all members of the House, and especially those members with special interest in health care issues, to pursue innovative, regulation-light, best-in-class health care policies for the citizens and health care providers of our State. These policies should aim to reduce health care costs, increase health care quality, equip patients to become better consumers of and participants in their own health care decisions, and empower and free up health care providers to innovate at the speed their industry requires without undue interference from government.

EDUCATION

North Carolina is home to some of the best and most successful educational institutions in the country. Our educators and our students are the brightest lights on tomorrow's horizon. They need our help and support to succeed as they know best. They do not need the meddling of interest groups who are more concerned to protect their turf rather than to fulfill the promise of students who have an inherent right to be taught the best curricula, by the best teachers, under the most fair and rigorous standards.

I encourage members to consider and build consensus around policies that increase education choices for all our citizens, that give parents the freedom to choose a better future for their children, and to ensure that education dollars, as nearly as possible, follow the wishes of parents and children, not of social architects and interest groups with an agenda to maintain a status quo that has outlived its usefulness. Our students and our parents deserve better. North Carolina deserves better. We saw in this last election cycle how the Left will attempt to distort the good policies we have enacted and we must message our points and define the debate even more clearly to deal with that as we work for further reforms.

ENERGY / UTILITIES

Our state already has strong and growing energy and public utility sectors. Major energy resources exist in North Carolina, within our land borders and just off our shores. Some of the largest public utility companies in the country have a significant presence in North Carolina, including energy, telecommunications, broadband, and cable industries. On behalf of the citizens served by these utilities and the utilities themselves, we must fight to maintain low costs for consumers, improve the regulatory freedom of utility providers so they can innovate at a low cost, and we must ensure the safety of our citizens. We must also define these issues and re-center the debate, pointing out the good work we have done to promote energy while protecting our state's natural resources.

GOVERNMENT

North Carolina needs smarter, smaller government, period. Our Democratic legislative predecessors enacted legislation that often stifled and suffocated our State due to over-governance. While government is not the enemy — it is a necessary part of the country envisioned by the Founding Fathers — it must be structured to work for the people, not the other way around. In short, our government must be of the people, by the people, and for the people. We have made significant strides over the last four years

in reforming our method and manner of government. I will encourage us to take further strides, at both the state and local level, to research thoroughly, debate heavily, and dream largely for a better government.

SUPPORTING THE FAMILY

The most fundamental social unit of any society is the family. Strong families make strong states. The breakdown of families in our society is expensive and socially detrimental. North Carolina's families have been under siege for some time. Tax structures have penalized family units, rather than rewarded them. Our current entitlement system has often encouraged dependence, rather than promoted self-sufficiency. While liberty requires allowing individuals to make and be responsible for their own decisions, government should not reward destructive behavior.

CONCLUSION

I have laid out my written statement of the vision for the caucus. If I am privileged to be elected as your Speaker, I will work tirelessly for our House every day, and I will do all that I can to ensure our conservative reforms continue, our state is governed wisely, and that every member of the caucus is respected and engaged. I welcome your support and I would appreciate your vote for Speaker.