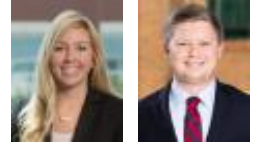


# Back to Work: NC Lawmakers Gear Up for the 2022 Short Session

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**After wrapping up one of the longest sessions in the North Carolina General Assembly's history, lawmakers return this week for the first day of the 2022 Short Session.**

Historically, the Short Session operates on a two-year biennium, occurring in the even-numbered years and lasting anywhere from six weeks to several months if

things are running a little slow.

The main purpose of convening the Short Session is to modify the budget approved by the General Assembly in the year prior. That's where most of the energy will go, but there are other issues that we believe may be up for discussion during this year's Short Session. Here are a few things to watch:

- 1.) **State Budget:** In November 2021, lawmakers agreed to implement North Carolina's first budget since 2018. The budget established state spending for the 2022-2023 fiscal year at an unprecedented \$27 billion. On top of that, a forecast of state revenue released this month gives much cause for optimism regarding the state's finances, such as a \$6.2 billion surplus. We expect that this unprecedented surplus will accelerate budget discussions and motivate all parties to work together.
- 2.) **Medicaid Expansion:** Normally, lawmakers tend to shy away from controversial topics during the Short Session. However, Medicaid expansion has long been a priority for the Governor, and we've recently seen some softening in the House and Senate Republican leadership's position around the willingness to discuss the issue.
- 3.) **Medical Cannabis:** Medical cannabis is currently legal in 38 states. There has been some discussion in the legislature around making it legal in North Carolina as well. Senate Bill 711, the N.C. Compassionate Care Act, which would legalize marijuana for medicinal purposes, was filed last year by a bipartisan and particularly influential trio of Senators. The bill made its way through all of its committee assignments in the last session and is now pending in the Senate Rules Committee. There is a strong chance that it will be heard on the Senate floor soon and then transferred to the House, where we expect the bill to have a bumpy ride.
- 4.) **Sports Wagering:** We predict this will be another hot topic during the Short Session. In May 2018, the U.S. Supreme Court struck down a federal law that banned sports betting in most states. Since then, several jurisdictions have enacted laws to legalize sports betting. There have been signals from House

and Senate leadership in North Carolina that the topic could come up this session.

Lawmakers return to Raleigh on Wednesday for the start of the Short Session, which will begin with non-voting sessions but should pick up momentum after Memorial Day. Our team will be watching these issues closely and will keep you updated on major developments.

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