

# OPINION

## THE CHRONICLE

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### Our Mission

The Chronicle is dedicated to serving the residents of Winston-Salem and Forsyth County by giving voice to the voiceless, speaking truth to power, standing for integrity and encouraging open communication and lively debate throughout the community.

## Deja vu: March pushes voting rights

U.S. citizens marching to gain their voting rights. This scene from the 1960s is repeating itself in 2015. In the 1960s, the face on the push for those rights was the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. In 2015, it is the Rev. Dr. William J. Barber II, president of the North Carolina State Conference of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. The current movement started in 2006 as the Historic Thousands on Jones Street (HKonJ) People's Assembly Coalition, with Barber as its leader.

The first annual "HKonJ People's Assembly" was held in February 2007, when more than 3,500 supporters attended as they sanctioned and signed the coalition's "HKonJ 14-Point People's Agenda." The HKonJ Coalition transformed the 14-Point People's Agenda into comprehensive reform bills that have been introduced in legislative sessions.

In 2014, the name has merged into the Forward Together Moral Movement, a broad, multiracial coalition led by the North Carolina NAACP, has called for thousands of people to assemble on Saturday, Feb. 14, Valentine's Day, for a Mass Moral March on Raleigh to protest regressive policies enacted by the Governor and General Assembly in the last few years.

Members of the Winston-Salem NAACP branch will be there. (See story on Page A1).

Dr. Barber says the movement is made up of more than 170 partners from the civil rights, women's rights, faith-based, labor, LGBTQ, immigrant justice, student and environmental communities. Participants will map out sustained campaigns and announce a number of actions for the rest of the year.

This year's march will focus on a Love and Justice agenda, which includes the demands laid out in the letter hand-delivered to legislators the week of Jan. 25.

Among the movement's demands are to reverse the attack on people's voting rights; to our former access to Early Voting, Sunday Voting and Same-Day Registration; repeal the race-based redistricting maps adopted by the General Assembly; and repeal the unconstitutional 2016 requirement for all voters to show a photo ID before they can vote.

"While elections have consequences, it remains up to the people to hold elected leaders accountable," Dr. Barber said.

"Our work is not over when the polls close; the people do not simply go away. Politicians do not get the right to do whatever they wish just because they were elected. That is why we are coming together on Feb. 14, Valentine's Day. We will be there to remind our elected leaders that they are accountable to all North Carolinians regardless of color, class, creed, gender, sexuality, health or place of birth."

Well said, Dr. Barber. Well said.

### Positive comment



Staff photo

The marquee at the Carver Educational and Learning Center on Carver School Road makes a positive statement. It wishes the public "Happy Valentines Day." This sign provides a pleasant thought and reminds us in advance of Valentine's Day, which is Saturday, Feb. 14.



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Forsyth County has new senator

To the Editor

Congratulations to Senator Paul Lowe Jr., who was elected Thursday night [Jan. 29] by the members of our Forsyth County Executive Committee from Senate District 32.

We know he'll be a strong representative for the citizens of N.C. Senate District 32. Governor McCrory officially appointed Sen. Lowe on Friday [Jan. 30], and his swearing-in took place on Sunday, Feb. 1, at 1 p.m. at Shiloh Baptist Church, 916 E. 12th St. [Senator Lowe is pastor of Shiloh.]

Thank you to Joycelyn Johnson for also stepping forward to run for State Senate. She's a respected member of our Democratic Party family and an experienced community leader.

We also appreciate the interest and involvement of the candidates and voters in this process, from attending the candidate forum and then participating in the election. An impressive 83 percent of eligible voters were in attendance for the important election Thursday night!

We couldn't have had such a smooth election without help. Catawba County Democratic Party chair, Cliff Moone, was our parliamentarian and close adviser for the election. First Vice Chair Larry Johnson was in charge of the ballot count and worked closely to verify voters.

Party Secretary Lois Roewade, Cam Choiniere, Pat Sisson, and Pat Eisenach expertly checked in voters and proxies. Thanks also to Trent Harmon and Shawn Lane for their assistance.

Other county chairs and elected officials shared their experience and expertise with us: Marc Friedland, chair of Mecklenburg County; Ted Benson, chair of State the state House District 54 election; Casey Mann, executive director of the North Carolina Democratic Party, and State Senator Don Davis.

In addition, we appreciate the use of Forsyth Tech Mazie Woodruff Center for the forum and Kennedy High School for the election.

Thank you to all of our active Democrats, behind the scenes, as well

as the ones out front. You are the life of our Party and we appreciate your support.

Susan Campbell, chairwoman  
Forsyth County Democratic Party

### Candidate

#### promises help

To the Editor

One Voice. One Vote. This is the campaign mission and message the Ken Spaulding for Governor Campaign will use as it continues to ramp up its 2016 gubernatorial campaign.

"We will send a clear and convincing message to both political parties and across this state that when each one of us stands as one united voice of the people, we will defeat the Citizens United case and the obscene influence of multi-million dollar, big money in politics," said Spaulding, the only announced Democratic candidate for governor.

Spaulding noted that his campaign is well-positioned for 2015, having spent the last quarter of 2013 with modest fundraising, which allowed him to spend 2014 traveling the state so he could listen to the voices of the people, firsthand.

"Our emphasis and effort for 2014 was to put people first ahead of big money," he said. "We reached out to the people and communities throughout North Carolina and they told us they want their voices to be heard. They are tired of blind partisanship and unnecessary divisiveness."

"Residents are determined to take politics back from negative influences and return the power back to the hands of the people," he added, referring to the \$100 million Senate race between Democrat Kay Hagan and Republican Thom Tillis.

Spaulding said he is aware that Roy Cooper, who has yet to announce his candidacy officially, and Pat McCrory, are already going after the multi-million dollars and thus may become beholden to those high-dollar donors. The Spaulding campaign will practice sensible fundraising in a sensitive, responsible and reasonable manner.

"It is high time that in North

Carolina a statewide candidate for governor have the courage and determination to directly take on multi-million dollar, big money as a key campaign issue and give the people of this state a clear choice between multi-million dollar, big money and the voices of the people," Spaulding said. "This I will do."

The Spaulding for Governor Campaign

### Don't be fooled by gas tax bill

To the Editor:

Senate Republicans are rushing a bill through the legislature that would raise North Carolina's gas tax by \$1.2 billion over the next four years. While the intentionally deceptive bill would temporarily lower the gas tax by 2.5 cents, it would also raise the minimum gas tax rate by 14 cents. This means North Carolina families would be paying more at the pump over the long term.

"If Senate Republicans want to pump over a billion dollars in extra taxes out of North Carolina families who are already struggling to make ends meet, they should be upfront about it instead of rushing an intentionally deceptive bait-and-switch proposal through the General Assembly," said Gerrick Brenner, executive director of Progress North Carolina Action. "Lawmakers think they can fool voters by passing a tiny short-term cut which hides a massive long-term increase. Governing through bait-and-switch tax schemes is no way to run a state, and North Carolinians deserve better from their leaders."

Over four years, the 67 percent increase on the minimum gas tax is projected to cost North Carolina drivers an extra \$1.2 billion at the pump. That's more than enough to make up for the paltry 2.5-cent decrease in the short term. With about 6 million drivers in North Carolina, according to the Department of Motor Vehicles, that means each driver would be paying about \$50 more in gas taxes every year.

"This is just another deceptive tax increase coming from the state legislature in Raleigh," added Brenner.

Progress NC Action, Raleigh

## We Welcome Your Feedback

Submit letters and guest columns to [letters@wschronicle.com](mailto:letters@wschronicle.com) before 5 p.m. Friday for the next week's publication date.

Letters intended for publication should be addressed "Letters to the Editor" and include your name, address, phone number and email address. Please keep letters to 350 words or less.

If you are writing a guest column, please include a photo of yourself, your name, address, phone number and email address. Please keep guest columns to 550 words or less. Letters and columns can also be mailed or dropped off at W-S Chronicle, 617 N. Liberty St., W-S, NC, 27101; or sent via our website,

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