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\$500 tuition could apply to ECSU students

By Anna Gronewold
RALEIGH (AP) - North Carolina lawmakers have re-included one historically black university in an experimental program to cut tuition to just \$500 a semester for in-state students at some University of North Carolina campuses.

House and Senate leaders announced as part of the two chambers' budget compromise that tuition cuts for in-state students would apply to students at Elizabeth City State University in addition to Western Carolina University and University of North Carolina at Pembroke.

The bill would lower tuition to \$500 a semester for in-state students and \$2,500 a semester for out-of-state students at the three universities with the expressed aim of increasing access to affordable education and boosting enrollment at campuses that needed it.

The original proposal by Sen. Tom Apodaca, R-Henderson, also included historically black universities Fayetteville State and Winston-Salem State, but received such vehement push-back from students, alumni and civil rights groups who argued it would cheapen the quality and reputation of their degrees that Apodaca excluded all three historically black universities from the bill last month.

Senate leader Phil Berger said leaders reintroduced Elizabeth City State University to the final budget compromise because administrators and chancellors requested it. Berger said that, of the three historically black universities, lawmakers believed Elizabeth City State would benefit most from the enrollment increases low tuition would prompt.

Apodaca said he believes the situation at Elizabeth City State University has reached "critical." A March audit showed sharp drops in enrollment and administrative shortfalls. In the 2015 fall semester, only 232 of the 1,186 freshmen admitted actually enrolled.

"They need something to build them up, and we got to keep them," Apodaca said. "They're a valuable asset to the state."

North Carolina NAACP President Rev. William Barber, who has been a harsh critic of the bill, said tuition decreases signal cuts in programs and services for the universities that typically serve African-Americans and minorities. Barber called the plan a "shell game" and said meaningful change would include expanding Medicaid and increasing minimum wage to allow families to better afford college tuition.

Apodaca has said the General Assembly would commit this year to continue financing programs affected by tuition reductions. The budget includes up to \$40 million to offset tuition reductions.

The budget also would guarantee no tuition increases for in-state UNC students who finish their degrees within a standard four year time frame, and limit student fee increases to a maximum of three percent a year.



A member of the Black Lives Matters movement speaks to members as they stage a sit-in at the annual Pride Parade in Toronto on Sunday, July 3. (Mark Blinch/The Canadian Press via AP)

North Carolina General Assembly ends work session

By Gary D. Robertson

RALEIGH (AP) - The North Carolina legislature adjourned for the year late Friday after lawmakers gave final approval to the state budget, hammered out or scrapped other compromises and agreed to make a small change to a new law that limits nondiscrimination rules for LGBT people.

The Senate and House gavelled down this year's session after nearly 10 weeks of work just before midnight, following an all-day marathon that went well into the evening.

Their biggest task of the session was completed early when the House gave its second formal endorsement to the budget adjustments for the new fiscal year starting Friday, again with robust bipartisan support. With the \$22.3 billion spending plan already passed twice by the Senate earlier in the week, the measure went to Gov. Pat McCrory for his expected signature.

The budget's completion removed the largest obstacle to ending this year's work session. Senate and House Republicans approved several outstanding pieces of legislation that one or both chambers wanted, but several others were set aside or defeated in the last hours of negotiations and horse-trading.

Complicated regulatory and environmental proposal appeared were among the casualties, as was legislation still in the House requiring criminal background checks for prospective teachers and mandating testing of older public schools and day care centers for lead in drinking water.

"They knew we were going to be finished, and they're just not here," Senate leader Phil Berger, R-Rockingham, shortly after announcing before 11 p.m. that his chamber would take no more votes. "There comes a time where you just have to say, 'we're finished' ... and we're finished."

Unless McCrory vetoes a bill and the legislature attempts an override, the General Assembly won't return after adjournment until early January, after the November elections for all 170 seats.

"We ran out of time at the end of session," said House Speaker Tim Moore, R-Cleveland, after adjournment. "It appeared those bills just weren't going to be dealt with. We'll come back and deal with them in January."

In keeping with previous end-of-session behavior, House and Senate members moved in and out of floor sessions, committees and private partisan caucus meetings. They did send to the governor the annual farm bill, adjustments to last year's Medicaid overhaul and an economic incentives tool involving natural gas promoted as a way to lure a major automotive plan to the state.

The two chambers also late Friday agreed to make a change to the law known as House Bill 2 as requested by McCrory, who wanted to have restored the right of workers to sue for employment discrimination using a state law. It cleared the House by a vote of 85-15 and 27-14 in the Senate and now goes to McCrory. His office didn't immediately respond the action.

But the change to House Bill 2, approved in March and the subject of criticism nationally, didn't repeal provisions that limited non-discrimination rules for lesbians, gays, bisexual and transgender people and directed which restroom transgender people can use.

The atmosphere became testy in the expected final hours of this year's session as House members defeated two bills sent over by the Senate.

One sought by powerful Senate Rules Chairman Tom Apodaca, R-Henderson, would have directed that Asheville City Council members be elected by districts, rather than by the current at-large method. Some House Republicans who said they were feeling bullied by their Senate counterparts joined Asheville-area members in defeating the measure.

The House's final vote was 91-22 on the budget. Republicans have boasted that it gives an average 4.7 percent permanent pay raises to teachers and 1.5 percent raises and a bonus to rank-and-file state employees. Retirees also would get bonuses of 1.6 percent.

"Although any budget you look at is never going to be perfect ... on the whole this budget does a wonderful job of rewarding teachers (and) state employees within the limited resources that we have," said Rep. Nelson Dollar, R-Wake, the House's top budget-writer.

The bill also contains an income tax break weighted toward low- and middle-income earners, and money to raise the state's reserves to nearly \$1.6 billion.

Democrats again criticized the increased use of earmarks for local projects, which they call pork, even as waiting lists remain for services like child care subsidies and pre-kindergarten.

"We have serious needs that are still unmet in this budget," House Minority Leader Larry Hall, D-Durham. But instead, "we got stuck in the cash machine line for those that have special interests."

The Senate and House honored veteran members who aren't seeking re-election this fall, including Senate Finance Committee Co-Chairman Bob Rucho, R-Mecklenburg, and Apodaca. On the House side, there's Speaker Pro Tempore Paul Stam, R-Wake, and Rep. Leo Daughtry, R-Johnston, a former majority and minority leader and 2000 candidate for governor.

In a farewell speech, Daughtry jokingly likened the General Assembly to an addiction but had serious words for his colleagues: "When I leave here, a part of my soul will be left in this place."

House members also celebrated late Friday the career of House Principal Clerk Denise Weeks, retiring after 23 years at the post.

Associated Press writer Anna Gronewold contributed to this report.

Trump's star tweet appeared on a white supremacist site

By Jill Colvin

WASHINGTON (AP) - Donald Trump's tweet that featured Hillary Clinton and a six-pointed star atop a pile of money has also appeared on a white supremacist website.

Trump's account on Saturday tweeted the so-called "meme" - then deleted it and replaced it substituting a circle for the star symbol that resembles the Jewish Star of David. The change came after a social media uproar about the star tweet's potentially anti-Semitic implications.

The meme first appears to have hit the Internet on June 15, when it was posted by the Twitter user (at)FishBoneHead1. The account, which described itself as belonging to a comedian, regularly tweeted out anti-Clinton and right-leaning messages and images.

The image also appeared on June 22, on /pol/, an active neo-Nazi Internet message board that features many anti-Semitic posts.

It remains unclear where Trump's campaign obtained the image. A spokeswoman for the campaign did not immediately respond to questions about the original tweet or who was responsible for sending it out. Trump's twitter account remained silent on the issue Sunday.

The (at)FishBoneHead1 account was deleted amid the uproar on Sunday afternoon. The person who operated the feed did not respond to a request for comment before it was deleted. The post itself was deleted from the /pol/ message board, but its existence was confirmed by The Associated Press through an internet search engine that combs internet archives.

The image's appearance on /pol/ and (at)FishBoneHead1's twitter feed was first reported by the website mic.com.

Trump, who is running for president as a Republican, has repeatedly said that he would remain a staunch defender of Israel and last week shot down a question from a town hall attendee who questioned the U.S.'s defense of the Jewish state. His daughter, Ivanka, converted to Judaism and is raising her children Jewish.

Trump has been criticized in the past for repeatedly re-tweeting posts from white supremacists' accounts and failing to immediately denounce the support of former Ku Klux Klan grand wizard David Duke. Trump has a loyal following on white supremacist message boards and has been endorsed by several prominent white nationalist leaders who have credited him for invigorating their cause. Among them are William Johnson, chair of the American Freedom Party, which ran pro-Trump robo-calls during the GOP primary.

Trump's former campaign manager, Corey Lewandowski, dismissed the controversy in an interview with CNN Sunday, accusing the media of trying to create something out of nothing.

Century-old rule book describes KKK beliefs, practices

By The Associated Press

For all the hatred, terror and mayhem blamed on the Ku Klux Klan through 150 years, the group actually has a rule book.

First published in 1916, the Kloran lays out a series of beliefs, titles and rituals that formed the core of Klan practices, sometimes dubbed "KlanKraft," during much of the last century. The Kloran was supposedly secret for generations, but today copies are posted on the internet.

Some groups within the modern, splintered Klan say they don't follow the Kloran, while others do. Regardless, an online version of the Kloran published by the University of Wisconsin library offers a glimpse into the world of the nation's most notorious organizations.

WHITE SUPREMACY

Some Klan groups try to present themselves in a soft light today, but white supremacy combined with religion is at the core of the group, which considers itself a Christian organization. From the "Ku Klux Klan Creed" at the opening of the Kloran: "We avow the distinction between the races of mankind as same has been decreed by the Creator, and we shall ever be true in the faithful maintenance of White Supremacy and will strenuously oppose any compromise thereof in any and all things." Aspiring members must swear that they are a "native-born white, Gentile American citizen."

ROBES AND HOODS

The title page of the Kloran includes a drawing of the garb most commonly associated with the Ku Klux Klan. In it, a Klansman wearing a white robe and hood sits astride a rearing horse, which also is wearing a white robe bearing a cross.

BURNING CROSSES

The practice of setting crosses aflame dates back to the organization's earliest days of the KKK. The script of a ritual proscribed by the Kloran describes flaming crosses as "the emblem of that sincere, unselfish devotedness of all Klansmen to the sacred purpose and principles we espoused."

A SOUTHERN THING

KKK groups exist from coast to coast in the U.S. and in a handful of other countries. But the organization is rooted in the perceived atrocities committed upon white Southerners by the federal government during Reconstruction, the period after the Civil War. A lecture published in the Kloran describes the Klan as the protector of whites who "stood aghast and pale, wondering at the meaning and purpose of the gathering gloom" after the South's defeat by the Union in 1865.

TITLES

The Kloran lays out titles for multiple positions within the Klan. The "imperial wizard" is the "emperor of the invisible empire." A "grand dragon" oversees a geographic area within the Klan, and an "exalted cyclops" is the chief officer of a single Klan unit, also known as a "klavern." Group chaplains go by "kludd," a term taken from the ancient Druids.