

Opinion

The fabric of Bertie County since 1832

Cabinet battle rages on...

You might have already forgotten about 2017's most over-hyped political drama between the state legislature and Gov. Roy Cooper, but the lawsuit is still crawling its way through the court system – with important implications for state government's power balance.

The fight over Senate confirmation hearings for Cooper's Cabinet secretaries hasn't gotten much attention lately, so let's flash back to February for a refresher: Senators had set up a table, microphone and paper nameplate for Cooper's pick to lead the state's veterans and military affairs department, former state Rep. Larry Hall.



COLIN CAMPBELL
Today in
North Carolina

But Hall twice didn't show up for his confirmation hearing, while Cooper asked the courts to intervene and halt the process.

Cooper didn't succeed, so Hall and the rest of the governor's Cabinet eventually took questions from senators. We reporters went to the meetings expecting fireworks: Surely Republican senators would give Democratic Party appointees a Washington-style grilling, and they'd seek to block at

least some of the nominees. After all, one of North Carolina's top Republicans is U.S. Sen. Richard Burr, who proudly blocked one of President Barack Obama's judicial nominees to create what he noted was "the longest judicial vacancy in the history of the United States."

But the confirmation hearings proved to be boring affairs, just like any other job interview where both sides know the process is just a formality. The Senate approved Cooper's Cabinet picks with bipartisan support, and the issue faded from the headlines.

Cooper, however, continued his lawsuit over the law that created the confirmation process - one of several measures passed by the legislature last December to ensure Cooper has less power than his Republican predecessor. The governor argues the confirmation process infringes on the constitutional powers of the executive branch, but the legislature points to a line in the state constitution that says the "governor shall nominate and by and with the advice and consent of a majority of the Senators appoint all officers whose appointments are not otherwise provided for."

That's a pretty clear component of the constitution, and so far Cooper has been losing this legal battle. The N.C. Court of Appeals sided with the legislature in early November - upholding a lower court ruling - and now the matter heads to the state Supreme Court.

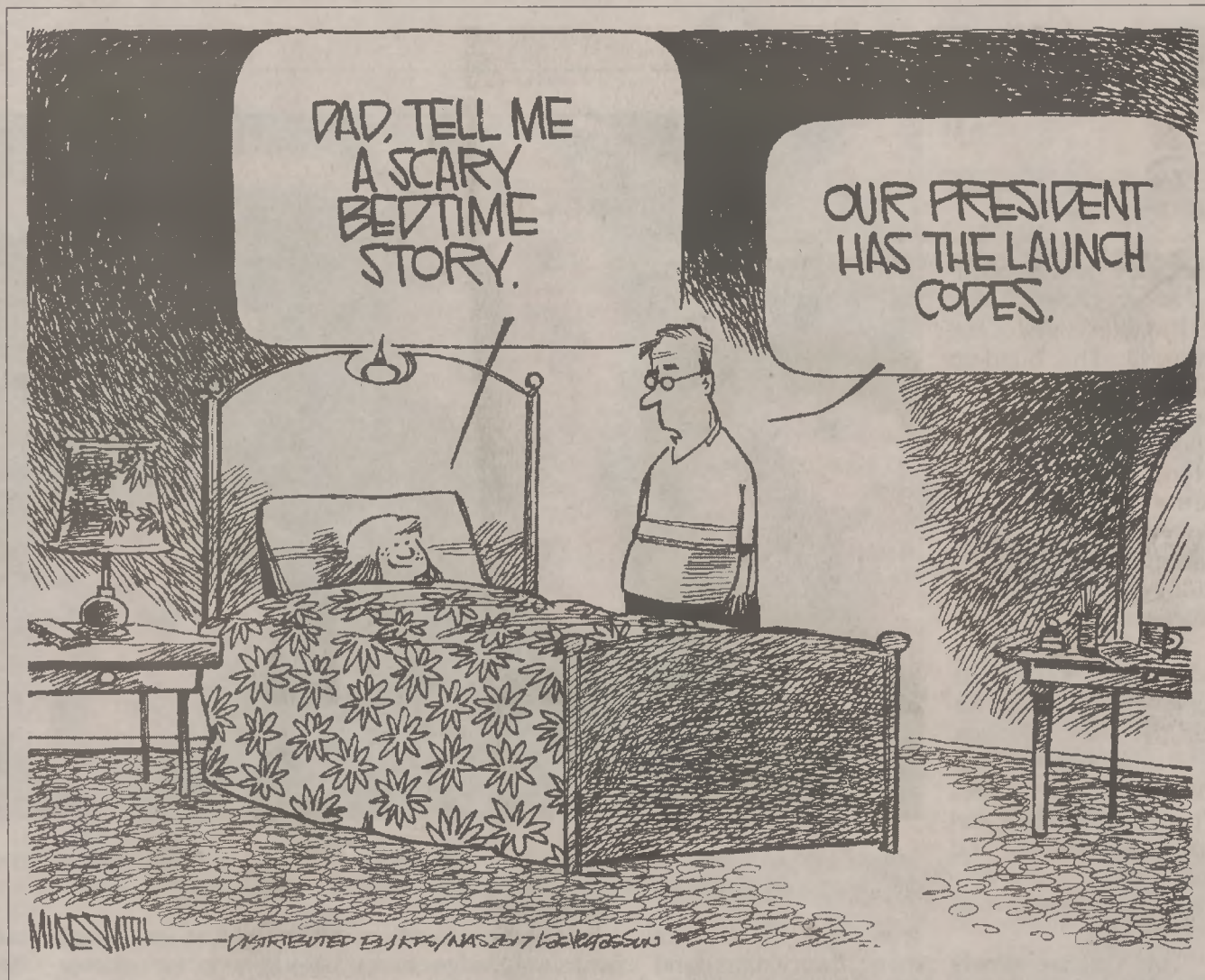
Given that the Supreme Court has four Democrats and three Republicans, the governor has an incredibly cynical view of the state's judiciary - if the judges are in his political party, he'll win. If not, he'll lose. He's suggesting that judges will blindly follow their party regardless of what the laws, constitution and legal precedent say.

But a recent analysis by the conservative John Locke Foundation of 2017 Supreme Court rulings found that's not true. The vast majority of rulings were unanimous, and 4-3 splits have only fallen along party lines twice this year. Odds are good that the majority ruling on the confirmation case will include justices from both parties.

It's understandable that Cooper still wants the law struck down - even though this year's confirmations didn't harm his administration. It's possible the Senate was on its best behavior during confirmation hearings to avoid adding fuel to the governor's legal case. That could change once the matter becomes settled law. Republicans would find it tempting to pull a Richard Burr and block Democrats' nominations indefinitely.

Let's hope that doesn't happen, regardless of who wins in court. The last thing North Carolina needs is a legislature that acts like Congress.

Colin Campbell is editor of the *Insider State Government News Service*. Follow him at NCInsider.com or [@RaleighReporter](https://twitter.com/RaleighReporter). Write to him at ccampbell@ncinsider.com.



The reason for the season is love...

Black Friday used to be a rite of passage in our family.

You had to be of an adult age to go out early with the aunts and uncles to fight the crowds on the ominous sounding day.

Later that evening, when turkey leftovers were finished up, the family went out again. All six of us cousins were left behind to watch reruns of old Christmas movies at Grandma's.

I never understood the mystery behind those early morning and late night shopping sprees, but I felt like I was missing out on something.

As an adult, I tried this early morning mysterious Black Friday shopping - once. It cured me of ever wanting to do it again.

Yet, Black Friday is no longer what it once was - where parades of people would wind around

buildings with some even spending the night in the parking lot, all in anticipation of the opening hour and the promise of huge savings.

Black Friday now has turned into "Black Friday Weekend."

And these days we have two more excuses to shop: Small Business Saturday and Cyber Monday. Even Cyber Monday has stretched into Cyber Week, as if we needed any more fuel for our obsession for finding the perfect Christmas presents for the ones we love at the right price.

As the last crumb from the Thanksgiving table fell, a silent alarm went off across America.

Time to decorate, shop, wrap, shop, celebrate and shop.

We can barely finish giving our thanks before we jump into a season of overindulgence, albeit with good intentions.

Those good intentions should be at the heart of our merriment, remembering that Christmas is not just a celebration of the ones

we love.

Christmas came about because we are loved.

We are so loved by our Creator that He sent His son as a tiny baby into a dark world to save us. His gift exceeded any gift mankind could ever bestow.

He was born to die for us - before we even knew it - so we could live eternally with Him.

In a world of Winter Festivals and Holiday Specials and Seasons Greetings, remember why we even have the concept of Christmas. We have hope in Christ.

As you gather once again this year with friends and family, don't forget to reach out to those who may need to be reminded they are loved with an eternal love found only in Christ, the hope of Christmas.

The only rite of passage needed is to believe in Him.

Deborah Griffin is Staff Writer at the *Enterprise & Weekly Herald*. She can be reached at dgriffin@ncweeklies.com.



DEBORAH GRIFFIN
Farmlife
Wife

Lesson from my toppled hero...

North Carolina lost another monument. It came like a flash.

And I am still reeling.

Charlie Rose was one of North Carolina's nationally best-known and most admired people. He was right up there with Michael Jordan, Billy Graham and the late Andy Griffith, as someone that people in the rest of the country know and admire.

After stating that North Carolina had given to the world giants of 20th Century journalism Edward R. Murrow, David Brinkley, and Charles Kuralt, the "Moon Guidebook to North Carolina" says, "Charlie Rose carries their torch today."

Like these predecessor giants, Rose brought Southern charm and spirit to the television screen. Polite, earnest, and a disarming, twinkle-in-the-eye seriousness, he charmed the guests on his television programs and captivated his viewers.

Even at the age of 75, Rose co-hosted the daily CBS Morning Show and a daily talk show for

PBS and Bloomberg News.

In addition to that amazing and grinding schedule, he made regular appearances on CBS Television's "60 Minutes."

His work paid well, \$2.5 million a year, and gave him a net worth of 10 times that amount, according to estimates in the media.

I have had another reason to admire Rose. As host of UNC-TV's North Carolina Bookwatch, I have the weekly responsibility and privilege to interview North Carolina-connected authors.

Rose's interviews were my great teachers. His careful preparation, his skillful listening that showed respectful curiosity about his guests and their achievements and opinions, his reliance on the flow of conversation rather than a hard and ordered list of questions, and his studied reluctance to interrupt, made him a valuable role model.

I could never be in his league, but Charlie Rose's example helped me do better, and I am grateful to him.

Having taught me about interviewing, his example is now helping to teach us another lesson.

Last week, The Washington Post reported that eight women who worked or sought work with Rose

accused him of sexual harassment by groping, walking around naked, and other provocations.

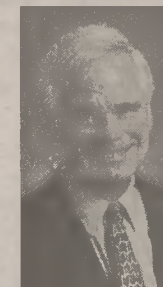
The hammer came down hard and immediately. CBS News President David Rhodes fired Rose, explaining that because of "extremely disturbing and intolerable behavior" he had been terminated.

"Despite Charlie's important journalistic contribution to our news division, there is absolutely nothing more important, in this or any organization, than ensuring a safe, professional workplace-a supportive environment where people feel they can do their best work," Rhodes said.

Anticipating that some of us might say that this kind of conduct had been tolerated in the past, Rhodes stated, "I've often heard that things used to be different. And no one may be able to correct the past. But what may once have been accepted should not ever have been acceptable."

What may once have been accepted no longer is. That is the hard and sad lesson Charlie Rose's recent troubles teach us.

D.G. Martin hosts "North Carolina Bookwatch," which airs Sundays at noon and Thursdays at 5 p.m. on UNC-TV.



D.G. MARTIN
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