



March 19, 2021

Dear Rep. John Bell IV, Rep. Dr. Raymond Smith, Jr., and Sen. Jim Perry,

First of all, we want to extend our heartfelt thanks to each of you for your ongoing service to the people of Wayne County, especially during such unprecedented times.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a huge impact on all our lives and particularly on the lives of our most vulnerable citizens – our children. As advocates, parents, and service providers, we are witnessing this in Wayne County every day. Fortunately, much has already been done at the local, state, and federal levels to help children and families during this time of great need.

However, even with hope on the horizon, the negative effects of the pandemic on Wayne County children continue to add up and proactive solutions from the NC General Assembly are crucial for our long-term recovery.

In addition to, or as part of ongoing COVID-19 relief legislation, the undersigned organizations and individuals support these four specific policy recommendations:

- **Extend postpartum coverage for Medicaid recipients from six weeks to one year.** This would help new mothers and their babies be healthier, and fight infant and maternal mortality. This is especially important as we continue to fight the pandemic.
- Address student mental health, suicide prevention, and physical health by **increasing recurring funding for school nurses, psychologists, social workers, and counselors in North Carolina.** This will be crucial to support children’s well-being as they fully return to their classrooms.
- **Increase salary compensation for early childhood educators** by expanding the Child Care WAGE\$ and Infant Toddler Educator AWARD\$ programs, and by approving “hazard” pay with federal COVID relief money. This is crucial for retaining qualified staff in our struggling child care sector, where average pay statewide is less than \$12/hour.
- **Support a statewide affordable housing bond** that would appear on the ballot for voters to decide on in 2022. The pandemic has furthered the housing crisis in our state. Without affordable options, fewer families will be able to achieve home ownership or even pay their rent.

Thank you for your service to Wayne County and to our great state.

Sincerely,

| | | |
|-----------------------|------------------|---|
| Sherry | Archibald | United Way of Wayne County |
| Dr. Carol H. | Artis | Wayne County Public Schools |
| John E. | Barnes | Rebuilding Broken Places CDC |
| Vandora | Barrett | |
| Bill | Batts | Small World Child Care Center, Inc. |
| Keith | Beacon | |
| Dr. Cory | Bean | Goldsboro Pediatrics, PA |
| Patricia | Beier | WAGES, Inc. |
| Selena | Bennett | Communities Supporting Schools of Wayne County, Inc. |
| Blair | Cox | Partnership for Children of Wayne County |
| Kate M. | Daniels | Wayne County Chamber of Commerce Government Affairs Committee |
| Barbara | Dantonio | Wayne County Democrat Women |
| Ali | Eakes | |
| Sonja | Emerson | Wayne County Public Schools |
| Angela | Frady | Partnership for Children of Wayne County |
| Jane M. | Gable | |
| Corinthia | Harper | NC Families United |
| Jedidiah | Hayes | Housing Authority of the City of Goldsboro |
| Danice | Henderson | Kinetic Minds, Inc. |
| Eskabonna | Henderson | Kinetic Minds Inspire, LLC Afterschool Program |
| Jacqueline | Hendrix | WAGES, Inc. |
| LaVone | Hicks | NAACP |
| Shurod | Hieke | WAGES, Inc. |
| Patricia | Hokett | NAACP |
| Brooke | King | Skill Creations, Inc. |
| Dr. David M. | Lewis | Interim Superintendent, Wayne County Public Schools |
| Monica Crystal | McQueen | |
| Charlotte | Neely | WAGES, Inc. |
| Marsha | Newsome | Piedmont Health Services & Sickle Cell Agency |
| Dr. Lashaundon | Perkins | Renovating Lives, Inc. |
| Donna D. | Phillips | Wayne County Public Library |
| Rachel | Radford | |
| Dr. Paul | Rutter | University of Mount Olive |
| Francine | Smith | Rebuilding Broken Places CDC |
| Anna Maxwell | Snyder | Wayne County Public Library |
| Dr. David | Tayloe | Goldsboro Pediatrics, PA |
| Diana | Taylor | |
| Valerie | Wallace | Partnership for Children of Wayne County |
| Jereen | Wells | WAGES Policy Council |