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This Week at the General Assembly:

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- State Legislature held a public hearing surrounding Raleigh's lease of the former Dorothea Dix site for use as a park. Wake County leaders listened while speakers voiced their disapproval of Republican legislators' efforts to revoke the lease. The bill – which passed the Senate and now heads to the House –doesn't set a good precedent for handling business decisions conducted by previous administrations.

The State leased the 325 acres to the City of Raleigh in a \$68 million deal, although the true market value of the property is claimed to be much higher than that. However some things, such as the Dorothea Dix site, have generational value that can't be measured in dollars and cents. Simply put: everything is not just about maximum dollar value.

It will now be up to the NC House to decide whether to preserve the original contract between then - Governor Bev Perdue and the City of Raleigh to lease the Dorothea Dix campus for a “destination park.” With the Senate's vote, the deal that was inked three months ago and which would require the City to pay \$500,000 a year to lease the land, is now scraped.

I believe lawmakers are sending the wrong message by undoing State contracts and failing to honor a valid agreement made between North Carolina and the City of Raleigh. The State runs the risk of losing its credibility as an economic resource for future businesses who may question the integrity of a government that doesn't abide by its own terms. Since Medicaid expansion has been rejected, we must also remain committed to ensuring that efforts to provide mental health benefits are not forgotten.

- House lawmakers voted in favor of making gun permit holders' information private. Currently, this information is a public record that can be reviewed by anyone. The bill prevents the public from accessing confidential, detailed records of concealed-weapon and pistol-permit holders. Members also approved legislation requiring physician supervision of any nurse who provides anesthesia during a medical or dental procedure. The measure clearly signifies a “turf war,” pitting doctors against other health professionals, while possibly creating an increased cost for patients and decreased access to care.
- The House passed House Bill 17 which bars the public from reviewing the detailed records of concealed-weapon

and pistol-permit holders when those permits have been issued in the name of safety. The House voted 97-20 on Tuesday in favor of making confidential lists of people purchasing pistols or who received concealed weapons permits from local sheriffs, and their identifying information. The information is currently public record, meaning anyone can access it. Bill proponents argue permit information can help potential thieves figure out who has weapons they want to steal or wish to avoid while seeking targets. Gun rights advocates also have been angry over media outlets obtaining permit records and posting some or all of the information.

Media advocates say making gun records public record ensures that law enforcement is fair and responsible in handing out permits.

A New York Times analysis of North Carolina data in 2011 found that more than 200 of the 240,000 concealed-handgun permit holders at that time had been convicted of gun- or weapon-related felonies or misdemeanors in the previous five years.

The bill now goes to the Senate, where a similar bill has been considered.

- On Wednesday, with the approval of House Bill 181, physicians are required to supervise any nurse providing anesthesia during a medical or dental procedure. This bill now heads to the Senate, which already is considering a more liberal interpretation of State rules on the issue. The issue is a familiar one at the General Assembly, pitting doctors against other health professionals. At the heart of the anesthesiology battle is whether nurse anesthetists need to work "collaboratively" with or "under the supervision of" doctors.

- No additional State funds were allocated to help upgrade Bank of America Stadium. A proposal to allow the City of Charlotte to redirect local tax revenues to help upgrade Bank of America Stadium cruised through the House Wednesday with little debate. Carolina Panthers owner Jerry Richardson and city officials had initially asked the State to contribute \$62.5 million – one-quarter of the estimated \$250 million bill to improve the 17-year-old stadium. House and Senate leaders balked at the request. City leaders subsequently asked legislators for a 1 percent increase in their food and beverage tax to generate additional revenue. Lawmakers turned down that request, too.

The final version of House Bill 193 allows City leaders to redirect revenues from Charlotte's existing occupancy and food and beverage taxes, earmarked for the City's Convention Center, to the stadium improvements instead. The bill would also allow Charlotte to use some of the revenue for amateur sports.

"There are no new taxes on this bill. There is no new revenue, state or local," said sponsor Representative Ruth Samuelson, R-Mecklenburg. "There are just two new options for the Charlotte City Council to consider for using the revenue they already have."

- North Carolina has received a "D" when it comes to government spending transparency, according to a new report by a public interest group. The State received a poor grade compared to other states based on an inventory of the content and ease-of-use of states' transparency websites. "Following the Money 2013: How States Rank on Providing Online Access to Government Spending Data is the fourth annual report by the NCPIRG Education Fund. The group offered grades to each state ranging from "A" to "F."

The State's "NC Open Book" website provides checkbook-level spending provides information on contracts and grants. However, according to the report, it lacks detailed information in other areas such as economic

development tax credits and non-contract payments to vendors, as well as descriptions of projected and achieved benefits of economic development subsidies.

"State government across the country have become more transparent about where public money goes, providing citizens with the information they need to hold elected officials and businesses that receive public funds accountable," said Phineas Baxandall, senior analyst with the group. "But North Carolina still has a long way to go."

Enjoy this holiday weekend; as always, thank you for allowing me to be of service to you.

Best,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "George".

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