

# **Update on National and State Issues Jan 2022**

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NC Farm Bureau



# H.R. 3684, Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act

- The H.R. 3684, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act was signed into law on 11/15/21. This bill was a **bipartisan package** first negotiated in the Senate by a core group of 5 Democrats and 5 Republicans. The following are highlights most critical for agriculture:
- The bill touts \$550 billion in new spending over the next 5 years.
  - \$110 billion – Roads, bridges, & major projects
  - \$66 billion – Passenger and freight rail
  - \$11 billion – Safety
  - \$39.2 billion – Public Transit
  - \$65 billion – Broadband
  - \$17.3 billion – Ports and Waterways
- In addition, this bipartisan agreement includes several provisions designed to boost the resiliency of our farms, ranches and rural communities.

Sec. 23018 of the bill includes an exemption for livestock and insect haulers from Hours of Service regulations within a 150 air-mile radius from their final destination.

# Workforce/Federal Level

- Farmers' labor costs (AEWR) up by an average of 6% year over year AEWR NC **\$14.16/hr.**
- Over the last five years, the national average AEWR has increased by 28%, while revenues for fruits/nuts have only increased **3%**; revenues for vegetables and melons have **not increased at all.**



# Farm Bill discussions in the Works

- Expires September 30, 2023
- Speak up for programs that are beneficial
- NAP (through Farm Service Agency)
  - If you participate in NAP, please let FSA know how it can be improved
  - 2018 Farm Bill allowed greater buy-up: Was that helpful?
    - NAP, loss that exceeds 50 percent of expected production at 55 percent of the average market price for the crop.
    - The 2018 Farm Bill re-authorizes higher levels of coverage ranging from 50 to 65 percent of production, in 5 percent increments, at 100 percent of the average market price.
- Permanent Disaster Relief being discussed again
- Supports beginning farmers (\$50 million)
- 2018 Farm Bill maintained funding for pest and disease research (\$75 million annually)
- 2018 Farm Bill funded urban, indoor & emerging ag (\$10 million) and established an Office for Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production

# **Farm Bill '18 Specialty Crops Block Grants**

## **North Carolina: \$1,267,999.71 in 2021**

- Controlling Guava Root-Knot Nematode (GRKN) in Sweet Potato Packing Facilities
- UAV Biosurveillance of Cucurbit Downy Mildew
- Precise Indoor Vine Conditioning
- Mitigating Soilborne Diseases in Floriculture Crops
- Greenhouse Production of Strawberry in North Carolina
- Extending Muscadine Shelf-life for New Markets
- Genetic Understanding of HWA-Susceptibility in Hemlocks
- Management of Sweet Potato Bacterial Postharvest Diseases
- Improved Christmas Tree Health through Genomics
- Protecting Pollinators in Ornamental Plant Production
- Specialty Crops in Early Childhood Education

# 2022 Specialty Crops Block Grants

- \$1.2 million in funding this year
- “The success and growth of specialty crops are important as North Carolina agriculture continues to diversify and as the industry inches closer to the \$100 billion mark in economic impact”—Comissioner Troxler
- The department will accept grant requests up to \$200,000 from nonprofit organizations, academia, commodity associations, state and local government agencies, colleges and universities. The application deadline is noon on March 4.

# Local producer insurance policy

- The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Risk Management Agency (RMA) new insurance option specifically for agricultural producers with small farms who sell locally. The new **Micro Farm policy** simplifies record keeping and covers post-production costs like washing and value-added products.
- Based on research directed by the 2018 Farm Bill, and it includes feedback from producers who grow for their local communities. The policy will be available beginning with the 2022 crop year./
- The policy is offered **through Whole-Farm Revenue Protection (WFRP)** and it has distinct provisions that can provide more access to the program, including:
  - No expense or individual commodity reporting needed, simplifying the recordkeeping requirements for producers
  - Revenue from post-production costs, such as washing and packaging commodities and value-added products, are considered allowable revenue
- The Micro Farm policy for producers who have a farm operation that earns an average allowable revenue of **\$100,000 or less**, or for carryover insureds, an average allowable revenue of \$125,000 or less. RMA research showed that 85% of producers who sell locally reported they made less than \$75,000 in gross sales.

# Heat related illness at work



- Prioritize inspections of heat-related complaints, referrals and illnesses
- Instruct compliance safety and health officers at job sites to conduct an intervention or open an inspection when they observe employees performing strenuous work in hot conditions
- Expand the scope of other inspections to address heat-related hazards
- Develop a federal heat standard to ensure protections in workplaces across the country on heat injury and illness prevention in outdoor and indoor work settings (ANPR October 2021)
- Establish a National Emphasis Program on heat hazard cases to target high-risk industries



**WATER. REST. SHADE.**

Keeping Workers Safe in the Heat



# Heat exposure can be dangerous

## Signs of a medical emergency!



- Abnormal thinking or behavior
- Slurred speech
- Seizures
- Loss of consciousness

## Take these actions

- 1 >> CALL 911 IMMEDIATELY
- 2 >> COOL THE WORKER RIGHT AWAY WITH WATER OR ICE
- 3 >> STAY WITH THE WORKER UNTIL HELP ARRIVES



## NWS Heat Index

## Temperature (°F)

	80	82	84	86	88	90	92	94	96	98	100	102	104	106	108	110
40	80	81	83	85	88	91	94	97	101	105	109	114	119	124	130	136
45	80	82	84	87	89	93	96	100	104	109	114	119	124	130	137	
50	81	83	85	88	91	95	99	103	108	113	118	124	131	137		
55	81	84	86	89	93	97	101	106	112	117	124	130	137			
60	82	84	88	91	95	100	105	110	116	123	129	137				
65	82	85	89	93	98	103	108	114	121	128	136					
70	83	86	90	95	100	105	112	119	126	134						
75	84	88	92	97	103	109	116	124	132							
80	84	89	94	100	106	113	121	129								
85	85	90	96	102	110	117	126	135								
90	86	91	98	105	113	122	131									
95	86	93	100	108	117	127										
100	87	95	103	112	121	132										

## Likelihood of Heat Disorders with Prolonged Exposure or Strenuous Activity

Caution

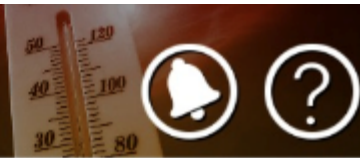
Extreme Caution

Danger

Extreme Danger



# Heat Index



3 Miles NW Raleigh North Caroli...

67°F 47%



More Info

No additional precautions necessary beyond basic health and safety planning.



The heat index is a measure of how hot it feels when relative humidity is taken into account along with the actual air temperature



Promoting productive workplaces through safety and health research / **NIOSH**



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
CDC 24/7: Saving Lives, Protecting People™



# NC Budget

- Agriculture:
  - \$40 million to Food Banks and \$10 million in new funding to Golden LEAF for grants to assist nonprofit organizations in becoming partner agencies with food banks.
  - \$17 million for Meat and Seafood Processing Grants.
  - \$30 million for the new Swine and Dairy Assistance Program.
  - \$50 million for the Crop Loss Assistance Grants (Tropical Storm Fred Relief).
  - \$38 million for a new Streamflow Rehabilitation Assistance Program.
  - A total of \$11 million over 2 years to the Tobacco Trust Fund. \$5 million of this is new, non-recurring funding.
  - \$5 million to the NC SweetPotato Commission for nematode research.
  - A total of \$26 million over 2 years to the Agricultural Development and Farmland Preservation
  - \$4 million for a new Bee Lab at NCSU
  - Also provides supplemental funding for State Fair and Western NC Agricultural Center to help replace receipt losses during the pandemic.
- \$1 billion for Broadband.
- Tax Cuts:
  - Includes a deduction for Paycheck Protection Program loans (PPP) and Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDL).
  - Takes the current 5.25 percent individual income tax rate down to 3.99 percent over the next six years
  - The standard deduction for married couples would increase to \$25,500 for married couples and \$12,750 for a single filer, increasing the number of people who pay zero taxes. Child deductions would increase as well, by \$500 with the total deduction varying by a family's income.
  - Includes a corporate tax phase out, but it wouldn't start until 2025. Assuming no changes are made between now and 2025, the current 2.5 percent tax would be phased down to zero by the end of the decade.
- Republican lawmakers and Cooper were not able to come to terms on a budget until the Fall of 2021 since 2018.

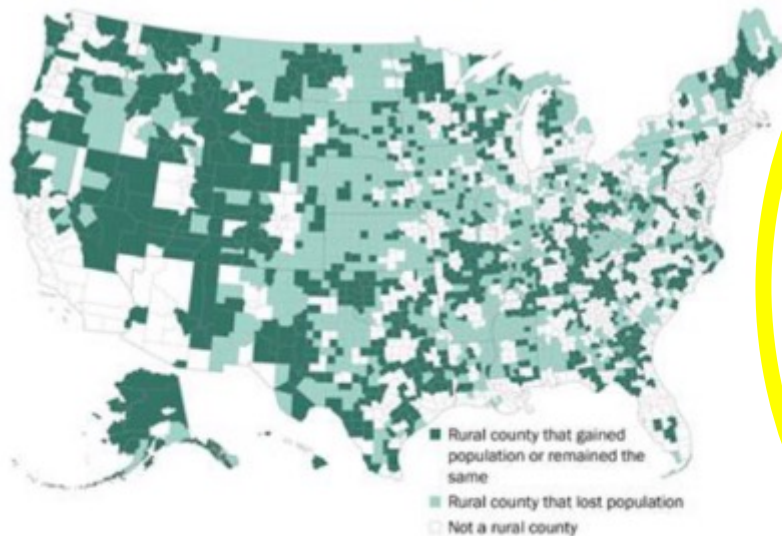
# 2020 Census



## The Rural-Urban Divide

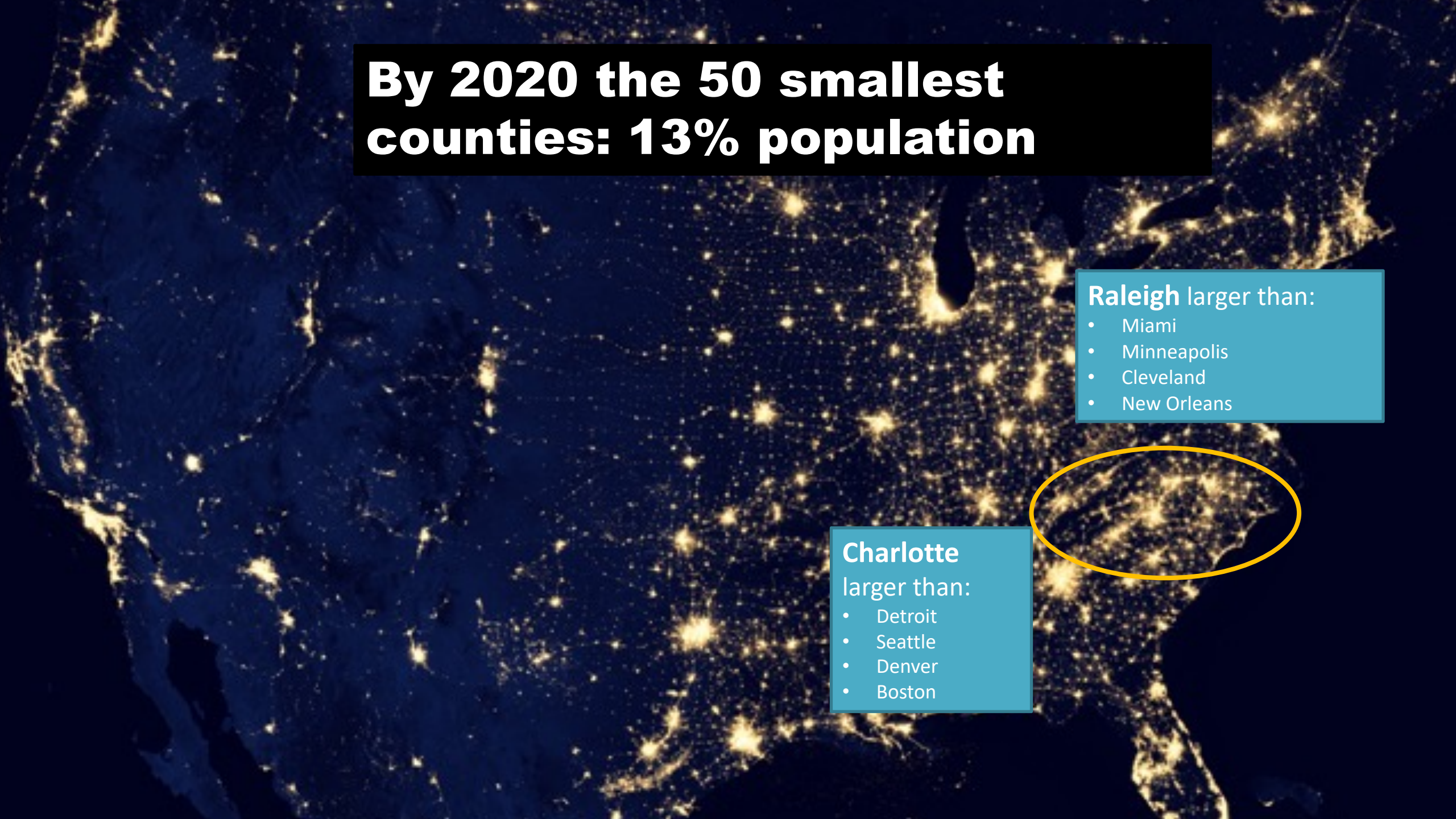
### Most rural counties in the Midwest have lost population

*Population gain or loss since 2000 among rural U.S. counties*



### Urban, suburban regions flourish while rural areas decline

- The census found that more than half of U.S. counties shrank over the past decade.
- In rapidly growing states, such as Arizona, Georgia, North Carolina and Texas, the census found that rural counties on average lost people while urban and suburban counties outpaced expected growth.
- Less than 50% of the nation's 3,143 counties had a population increases while 81% of metropolitan areas grew.
- Metropolitan areas grew by 9%. All 10 of the country's largest metropolitan areas grew, and the two fastest-growing regions, the Dallas and Houston metropolitan areas, are both in Texas.



**By 2020 the 50 smallest  
counties: 13% population**

**Raleigh** larger than:

- Miami
- Minneapolis
- Cleveland
- New Orleans

**Charlotte**  
larger than:

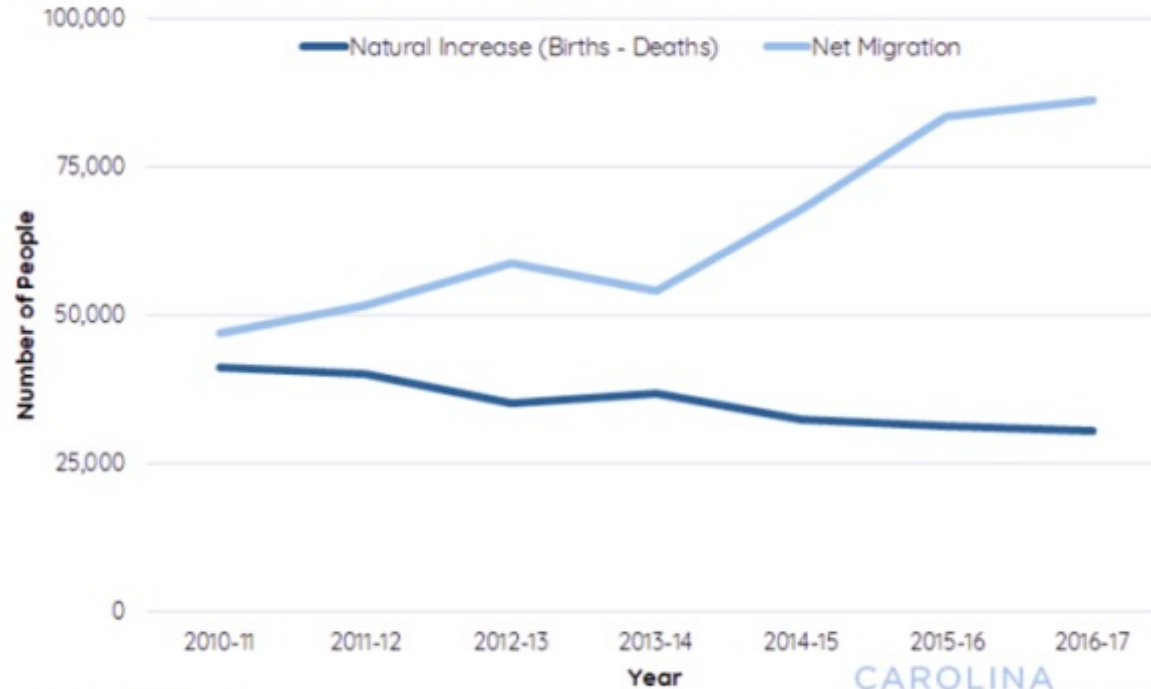
- Detroit
- Seattle
- Denver
- Boston

# NC Population 10.5 million

Dr. Rebecca Tippet, UNC SOG

## Rebounding net migration fuels NC's steady growth

Annual estimates of components of population change, 2010-2017



Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau

CAROLINA  
DEMOGRAPHY

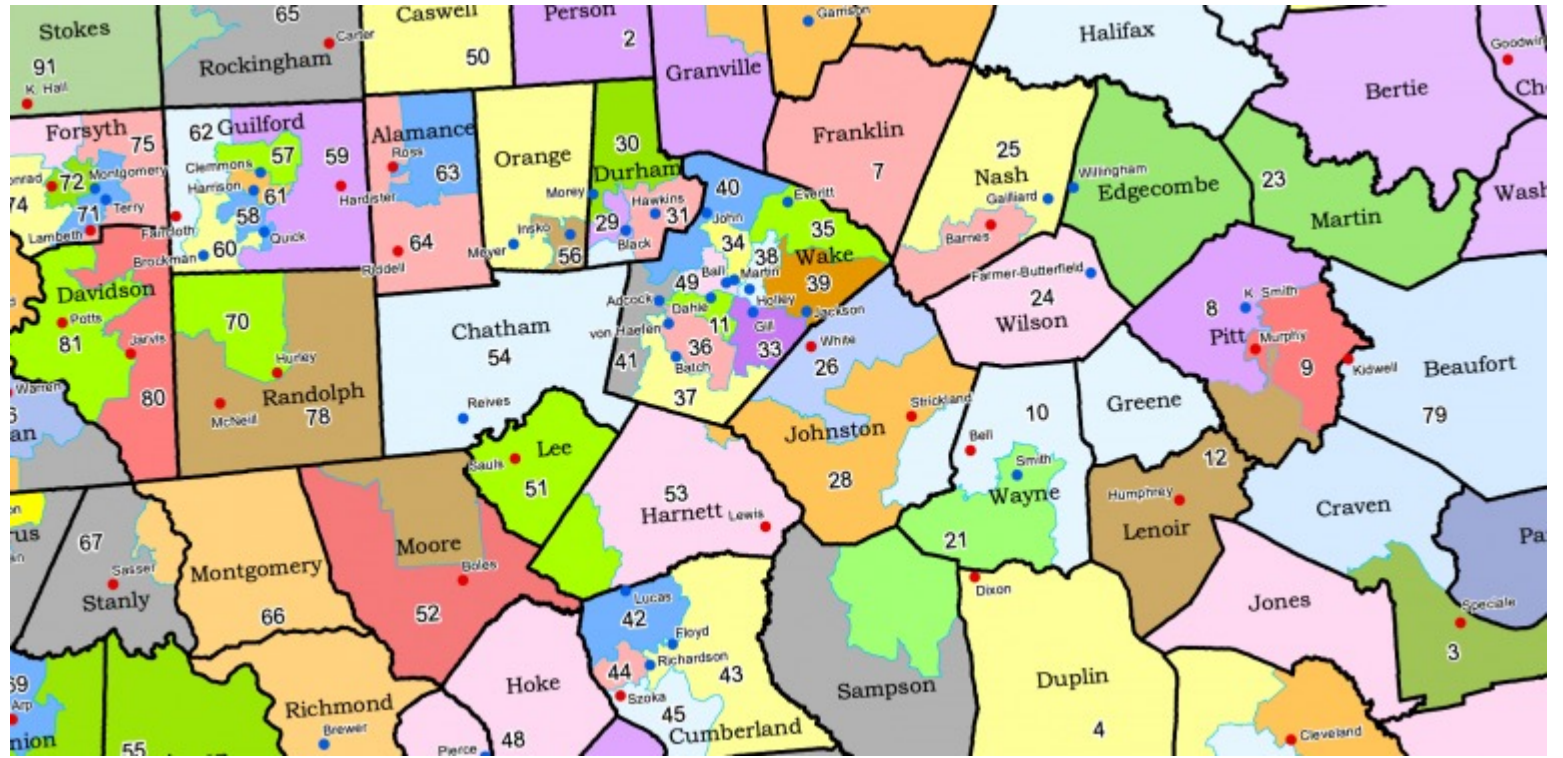
People  
want to  
move  
here—lots  
of them

**35% of rural** North Carolina was born out of state

American Community Survey B05002, Born in State of Residence



**52% of urban** North Carolina was born out of state



# Redistricting

# Reapportionment Outlook

**The following Reapportionment results were released on April 26, 2021.**

There was a much smaller shift than expected: only seven congressional seats shifted between states. The power shift from the Frost Belt to Sun Belt and western states followed a familiar trend. But even states without a gain or loss will have to redraw lines to account for population changes in time for 2022 (except the six states with only one district).

**NC gains  
1 House seat**

States Losing Districts (7)	States Gaining Districts (6)
California -1 (from 53 to 52) Illinois -1 (from 18 to 17) Michigan -1 (from 14 to 13) New York -1 (from 27 to 26) Ohio -1 (from 16 to 15) Pennsylvania -1 (from 18 to 17) West Virginia -1 (from 3 to 2)	Texas +2 (from 36 to 38) Colorado +1 (from 7 to 8) Florida +1 (from 27 to 28) Montana +1 (from At Large to 2) North Carolina +1 (from 13 to 14) Oregon +1 (from 5 to 6)

# NC map drawing controversy

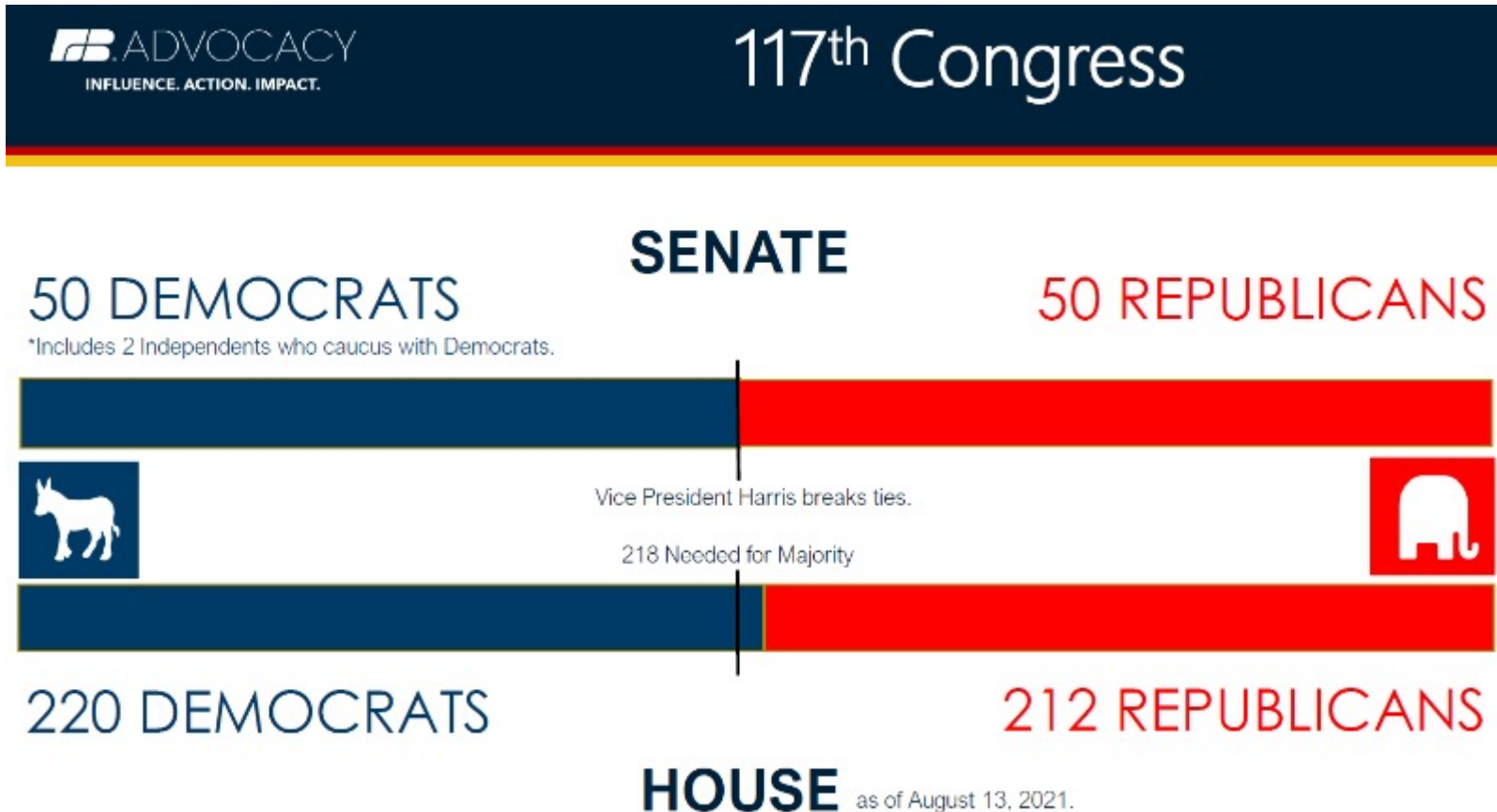
- The 2020 census showed that roughly 900,000 more people live in the state compared to 10 years ago. The data also reveal a more urban, diverse population.
- Cooper is prevented by state law from vetoing the maps, putting Republican lawmakers in the driver's seat.
- The new maps will be used for elections through 2030.
- Experts say: *“North Carolina has the distinct honor of never having a complete set of maps – congressional or state legislative maps – last an entire 10 years for the past 40 years”*
- Expect litigation until all appeals are exhausted.



# **2022 Election Year**



**In the Senate there are 7 states that will likely determine control:  
Arizona, Georgia, New Hampshire, Nevada, North Carolina,  
Pennsylvania and Wisconsin**



Two NC Congressional Representatives retiring:

*Senator Richard Burr*  
*Congressman David Price*

# Know your Candidates!



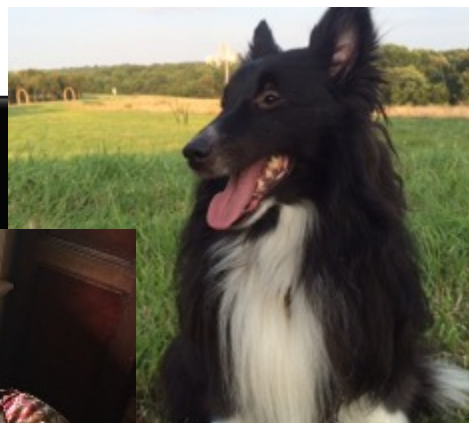
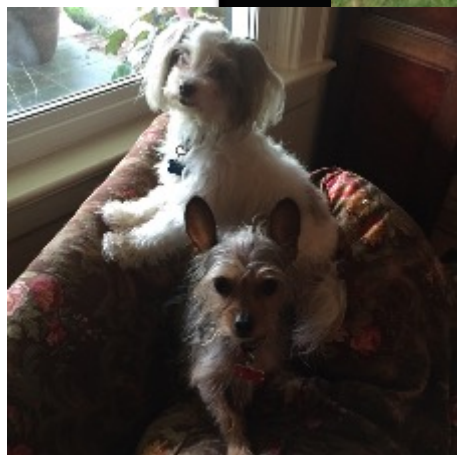
Agriculture's  
issues  
transcend  
political  
party and  
ideology.



# New NCFB President 2020



**Shawn Harding, Chocowinity**



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