Public Outcry at Harnett County Commissioners Meeting over HB1108

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This morning the Harnett County commissioner's board room was packed with people from all over the county in opposition of the newly created house bill 1108 that Rep. David Lewis attached to a Duplin County bill.

The bill was created to place a stop on the voting power of Commissioners and school board members leaving their term within 7 months. Meaning that, our elected officials would not have the power to offer contracts to County Manger and School Superintendent. The Bill was introduced to the North Carolina house without the prior knowledge of neither the county board nor the board of education.

The crowd filled the chairs of this early morning meeting with the tensions high the public comment period was open for a period of 30 mins. The first speaker was Lillington resident Paul Long; Mr. Long said that this was a bill created to give full control over to a select few. The next Speaker was Harnett NAACP President of Harnett County Carolyn McDougal, MS. McDougal said that she was there on behalf of the county and state NAACP and that she found the bill to be disgusting and that the NAACP would fight this injustice against the voters here in the county and at the state level.

NC State Senate candidate Joe Langley took the podium and said that he found it puzzling that with all of the stuff going on in the Legislative session that Mr. Lewis would have found the time to come up with this bill on his own without the coaching of a county commissioner. Mr. Langley challenged the commissioners who knew about the bill to raise their hands, none of the commissioners raised their hands and Mr. Langley continued to show his opposition to the proposed bill.

Susan Byerly, said that she is upset by the actions of Mr. David Lewis and if he wanted to run the County Commissioners or school board he should have ran for one of those offices, but we will not allow that state to legislate the county government.

Ben Slaughter of Harnett County spoke and said that this was a dirty move by the legislative and our Representative and that the people of Harnett County would show that in the upcoming elections, Teresa Odeuh the chair of the Harnett County Democratic party said she was on hand to speak on behalf of the Harnett County Democratic in opposition to this proposed bill that would take away power from our elected officials.

Harnett
COUNTY
NORTH CAROLINA

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RESOLUTION BY THE HARNETT COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OPPOSING HARNETT COUNTY'S INCLUSION IN HOUSE BILL 1108

THAT WHEREAS, the Harnett County Board of Commissioners is the duly elected governing body of Harnett County; and

WHEREAS, it is the sole authority of the Board of Commissioners to appoint and dismiss a County Manager by majority vote; and

WHEREAS, House Bill 1108 would undermine the authority of this duly elected board by requiring that within seven months of a newly elected board taking office, a County Manager could only be appointed by unanimous vote of the Board of Commissioners; and

WHEREAS, this language was added to House Bill 1108 without the knowledge or approval of the Harnett County Board of Commissioners; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Harnett County Board of Commissioners:

1. Strongly opposes Harnett County's inclusion in House Bill 1108; and
2. Asks Harnett County's elected State representation to remove the county from House Bill 1108; and
3. Directs that a copy of this resolution be sent to members of Harnett County's State delegation.

Adopted this 2nd day of June 2014.

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS HARNETT COUNTY N.C.

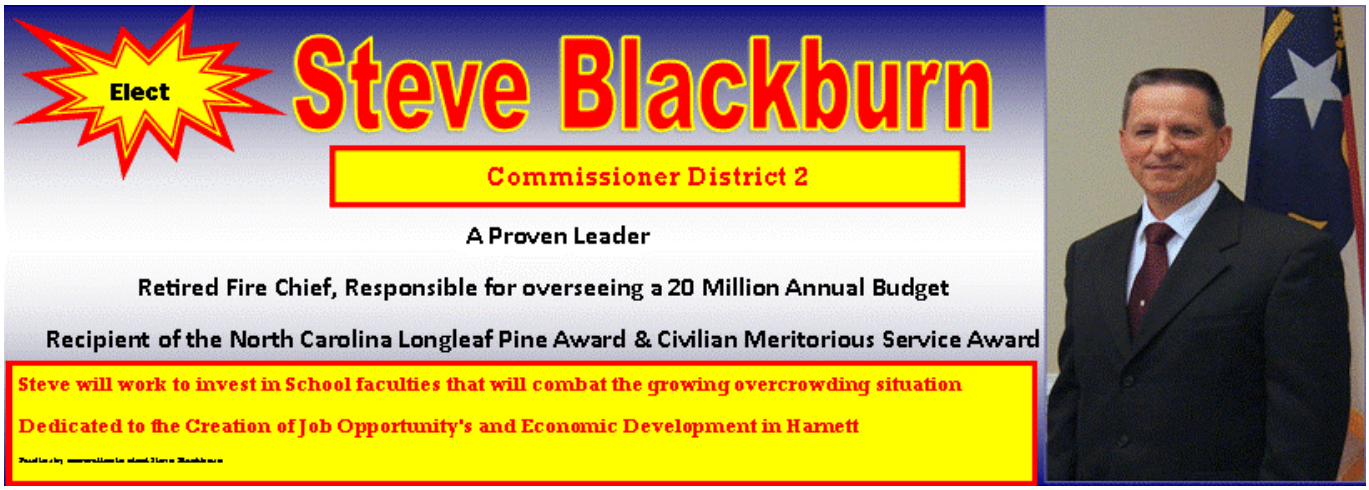
HARNETT COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Joe Miller, Chairman

Attest:

Margaret Regina Wheeler, Clerk to the Board

Rev. Felton Smith spoke out in opposition of HB 1108 and said that a grave injustice had been placed on the voters of Harnett County. Daniel Glover the editor of the Harnett Dispatch and former candidate for senate approached the podium and “said here we are again facing another situation that is hurting the county, Mr. Glover stated that there has always been a a lot of lip service about transparency in local government and that he was happy to inform the board that he is willing and able to provide transparency but it might be more than they ever imagine. He said that you can’t try to dictate the outcome of an election before it takes place and that the people of Harnett “will not be moved” we have our eyes on ya’ll and will be watching ya’ll...Keep your hands out of our county government and keep the state in their government.



County Manager Tommy Burns took the opportunity to speak out against the proposed bill and said that it was just wrong, “sure I have heard rumors that my job maybe in jeopardy but I dismissed them to rumors. Mr. Burns looked at Commissioner Jim Burgin and said “Jim how would it make you feel for you to be at baseball game with your son and someone come up to you and tell you that you are going to lose your job and you then have to explain that to you son” I have always try to work with everyone and never felt that I was in risk of losing my job until this bill was passed in the house. I saw Mr. Lewis that same day that this bill was attached and he never not once said anything about this bill and that’s just wrong and Mr. Lewis is a coward for doing that, let me spell that out for Mr. Lewis C.O.W.A.R.D... After Mr. Burns finished his speech the crowd broke out into a standing applause and County Commissioner candidate Steve Blackburn yelled out that we have your back Tommy.

After the public period, Commissioner Hill said that we were unaware of this bill and that a

select few from Tennessee would not take our rights away, one member in the audience yelled out that he would back a tractor trailer back to his house and help him move the hell out of Harnett County.

Chairman Miller took the floor and handed out a resolution that requested that Harnett County be removed from HB1108 and that Rep. David Lewis take action now, Mr. Burgin made an argument that the resolution was not done properly and made a motion that it be tabled until a later time the motion failed and the resolution was passed 3-2 with Gordon Springle and Jim Burgin voting against the resolution.

The School Board adopted the same type of resolution tonight with a 4-1 vote with school board member Bill Morris voting against it.