

**Post Card Party # 250 October 1, 2022**

 **Clean House in the Department of Homeland Security (DHS)**

Inspectors General serve in Federal Departments and offices to assure someone can review administrative problems and complaints. These officers exist to be Checks and Balances, part of longstanding American public tradition. But the DHS Inspector General has deviated from that work. His own staff generated an anonymous letter to President Biden this week:

“Providing effective oversight of the newest and third largest Cabinet department is difficult enough, it should not be made more difficult by our own leadership. After years of poor decision making by IG Joseph Cuffari, PhD, and his front office staff, we can no longer hope that the ship will right itself. We were hopeful that IG Cuffari would make meaningful change after GAO [General Accountability Office, an arm of Congress] completed its review of our office, when whistleblowers came forward to sound the alarm, when the CIGIE (an IG association] integrity committee opened an investigation. But here we are and the situation is the same.

 We need help...IG Cuffari has made it clear he wishes to remain in his position, even in the face of prolonged, deserved criticism in the media, from Congress, from other oversight entities, and from his own staff. ...IG Cuffari is not a true leader, He instead acts to weaken and undercut his staff at every step…

His actions do not represent his 700-plus workforce. His actions continue to damage his own, and DHS OIG’s reputation. ...We cannot complete our mission with OIG Cuffari in his position. In order to do our jobs successfully and with honor, was ask for your help to ensure that IG Cuffari and his senior staff (namely Kristen Fredericks) step aside. ...You are the only one who can help us before DHS OIG are forever damaged by IG Cuffari.

Signed, Concerned DHS OIG employees representing every program office at every grade level (for fear of retaliation we cannot identify ourselves)

<https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/22671436-anonymous-dhs-oig-staff-letter-calling-on-president-biden-to-remove-ig-cuffari>

Also: <https://www.pogo.org/letter/2022/04/pogo-calls-on-president-biden-to-remove-dhs-ig-joseph-cuffari>

That office maintains near silence about why Secret Service communications are not available to investigate for January 6, 2021. **Ask President Biden to immediately remove DHS Inspector General Joseph Cuffari and appoint an adequate replacement.**

**FAVOR ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE OVER SENATOR MANCHIN’S SIDE DEAL**

The Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), which now offers funds for several environmental and climate initiatives, is now no longer burdened by Senator Manchin’s side deal with Majority Leader Schumer to speed environmental (and fossil fuel) permitting. Many IRA supports will help us get more environmentally adequate homes! (Stay tuned for those, US PIRG and Rewire America just made a fine video call.) Progressives can now push to get better climate ideas onto the community agenda.

Let’s write in support of the **Environmental Justice for All Act** (H.R. 2021; S. 872). This pair of bills would set up a White House environmental justice (interagency) council, to set strategy to reduce burdens on America’s poorest communities from waste processing, bulk chemical facilities, refineries and the like, that often get very limited oversight. These bills are tentative rather than solid guard rails, but they cover topics that are rarely dealt with until serious damage to health or community viability has occurred. We need a better process to stave off harmful compromises or plain neglect. Tell candidates Jasmine Beach-Ferrara and Chuck Edwards, Senator Tillis and Senate candidates Ted Budd and Cheri Beasley.

**REJECT THE TAIWAN POLICY ACT OF 2022**

For 50 years America and China have developed strong trade relations, despite different visions of society. Part of the stability comes from America acknowledgment of a One China policy – it is not democratic, but it does resemble the Monroe Doctrine. This rather stable peace takes diplomacy, and effort, to maintain. But the Senate Foreign Relations Committee has now approved S. 4428, the Taiwan Policy Act, highlighting $6.5 billion assistance to Taiwan for military spending, and supportive ‘treatment of a major non-NATO ally.’ That’s after hearing support from 15 think tanks, of which 14 disclose being funded by arms manufacturers (the other one does not disclose donors). This is ridiculous self-dealing posing as policy guidance. **Tell Senators Burr and Tillis to reject this bill**. Do not escalate this. It is not our struggle.

**THE LOCAL FOCUS: THE DRAFT HENDERSON COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

A public review of the 92 page draft at Blue Ridge Community College today drew about 25 people, though only one declared student (the session had been set up to try to draw college students). That is discouraging given the large public turnout at Commissioners’ meeting of September 6. A few people had hard copies of the draft plan. I urge you to seek out the plan. Think about how its recommendations could affect your life and the lives of your family. Fill out the new survey linked below. If you have questions, ask the staff lead planner **Janna Bianculli** (jbianculli@hendersoncountync.gov) or planning director Autumn Radcliff aradcliff@hendersoncountync.gov , both reachable at (828) 697-4819. This plan will help shape changes to the County Land Development Ordinance and could be a major factor in zoning law and map revisions.

Comprehensive plan main page: <https://www.hendersoncounty2045.com/>

Draft plan:
<https://www.hendersoncountync.gov/sites/default/files/fileattachments/planning_board/page/136226/hccp_2045_draft_2022_09_09_reduced.pdf>

A NEW Community survey asks for responses to the draft plan:
<https://www.hendersoncounty2045.com/_files/ugd/d01c76_8b6853a406bc4ec88939d1939ba23999.pdf>

Tuesday Oct. 4, 2-4 PM: [Draft 2045 Comprehensive Plan Public Input Meeting](https://www.hendersoncountync.gov/planning/page/draft-2045-comprehensive-plan-public-input-meeting-2)  at ETOWAH Lions Club by Etowah Park

**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA**

**THE CURRENT STATE BUDGET - POORLY DRAFTED, INADEQUATELY FUNDED**

The current NC Budget was developed without hearings, or amendments allowed once it was presented by the legislative majority. It constructs a hodgepodge of 16 reserve funds, 14 of which leave money on the table pending future legislative action. The proportion of state resources allowed the state government has dropped in all NC budgets since 2009. A steady level of about 5.8% of state resources (the average since 1975) is now down to 4.07% that the State is to spend on public activities. Education takes a $421 million hit from 2021 when inflation is factored in; public safety/justice is down $190 million; natural & economic resources are down $56 million. These cuts are NOT due to a lack of revenue: There is over $4 billion in “reserves” (vs. $23 billion to spend).

 Legislators may claim these skimped accounts are short because the Federal Government’s American Rescue Plan and other Fed sources cover these needs. That claim totally discounts the ARP purpose, to restore public deficiences due to Pandemic disruptions. That’s like getting a haircut to deal with baldness! Check [www.ncbudget.org](http://www.ncbudget.org/) for a report (or summary) to see more details. Write our legislative candidates, Tim Moffitt, Jay Carey, Michael O’Shea, Jennifer Balkcom and/or Jake Johnson, to ask how well it fits NC public needs as opposed the dominant NC legislative tax-cuts-first ideology.

**VOTER SUPPRESSION STRUGGLE WILL CONTINUE**

This fall the U.S. Supreme Court will hear a case [called *Moore v. Harper*](https://www.supremecourt.gov/docket/docketfiles/html/public/21-1271.html), centered on newly drawn maps of voting districts for North Carolina's 14 seats in the next U.S. House of Representatives. This obscene arrogation of power was cooked up by the slavering Republican majority in the North Carolina General Assembly, expecting to get the hyper-right-wing Supreme Court to neuter state courts based on the ”independent state legislature theory,” which three justices have already signaled they would support. The Republican NC lawmakers argue that the U.S. Constitution's [Elections Clause](https://constitution.congress.gov/browse/article-1/section-4/) gives state legislatures the power to determine how congressional elections are **conducted without any checks and balances from state constitutions or state courts.**

We must prepare for the worst to happen. The following organizations are among those mobilizing in frontline communities in North Carolina to educate and empower voters in the upcoming 2022 elections and beyond.  The Progressive Alliance of Henderson County is also implementing a broad Get Out the Vote campaign. Please contact these groups to offer whatever support you are able to provide. Remember that as an NC Senator, Chuck Edwards is an enthusiastic litigant, seeking to subvert everyone’s right to vote.
 [**North Carolina Asian Americans Together (NCAAT)**](https://ncaatogether.org/) supports equity and justice for all by fostering community among Asian Americans and allies in North Carolina through civic engagement, leadership development, grassroots mobilization, and political participation.
**711 Hillsborough Street, Suite 102, Raleigh, NC 27603**

[**Democracy North Carolina**](https://democracync.org/) uses research, organizing, and advocacy to strengthen democratic structures, build power among disenfranchised communities, and inspire confidence in a transformed political process that works for all. They organize on the grassroots level to promote safe voting sites and expand access for eligible voters through their election advocacy and protection programs.
**3000 Aerial Center Pkwy Suite 160, Morrisville, NC 27560**

[**Forward Justice**](https://forwardjustice.org/) is a law, policy, and strategy center dedicated to advancing racial, social, and economic justice in the U.S. South via a number of avenues, including removing barriers to vote post-incarceration and increasing public understanding of the racially discriminatory origins of voter suppression tactics.
**400 W Main St, Durham, NC 27701**

[**El Pueblo**](https://elpueblo.org/) builds collective power through leadership development, organizing, and direct action so that the Latinx community and other marginalized communities control their own stories and destinies.
**2321 Crabtree Blvd, Suite 105, Raleigh, NC 27604**

[**Muslim Women For**](https://muslimwomenfor.org/) works to foster and nurture vibrant Muslim societies that create positive social change and uplift their communities through political education, leadership development, relationship building, women of color empowerment, and grassroots organizing.
[**1127 Kildaire Farm Road, Cary, NC 27511**](https://maps.google.com/maps?z=16&q=1127+kildaire+farm+road,+cary,+nc+27511)

[**Advance Carolina**](https://advancecarolina.org/) is a Black-led organization that educates and mobilizes African-American and progressive voters to take charge of their communities by building and supporting permanent political and electoral infrastructures and exercising and expanding political influence.
**6409 Fayetteville Rd #120-179, Durham, NC 27713**

**LOCAL TO WNC\*\*** [**Down Home North Carolina**](https://downhomenc.org/) is unique in their focus on building permanent, statewide organizing infrastructure in North Carolina’s rural places through their growing network of member-led, county-based chapters.
**301 N Haywood St, Waynesville, NC 28786**

The [**Southern Coalition for Social Justice**](https://southerncoalition.org/) believes that communities engaged in social justice struggles need a multi-pronged approach including a team of attorneys, social scientists, researchers, community organizers, and media specialists to support them in their efforts to dismantle structural racism and oppression.
**1415 W North Carolina 54 Suite 101, Durham, NC 27707**