

Real Budget Reform for North Carolina

As State Treasurer, Richard Moore holds one of the most accountable offices in state government. He is responsible for almost \$90 billion in public money and well over 700,000 North Carolinians depend on him to manage the state retirement system wisely. They closely watch over the system's performance and hold him responsible for the decisions he makes. Richard is running for governor to bring the same approach to all of state government. He believes North Carolina needs a governor who is willing to make the tough decisions and wants to be held accountable for the results. It is an approach to governing that sets him apart from the other candidates for governor.

After more than ten years of executive branch experience, Richard knows that real reform of the Raleigh budget process starts with a focus on cutting wasteful spending and pork barrel projects. Significant state budget decisions are often made behind closed doors by a select group of legislators (in the infamous Room 612). Time and time again, powerful legislators use closed meetings to sneak special provisions into the budget and to create unaccountable slush funds. Every year, it seems that even the rank and file members of the General Assembly complain that they have no say in the budget. There is not enough public input and special interests are able to insert favorable provisions that are hastily voted on before their full impact is known.

Reforming the state budget requires a change in approach and real leadership:

- ✓ **The budget needs sunshine.** The solution is not another commission of insiders that meets behind closed doors. Instead, we should establish public budget hearings that are open to all and give more time for the General Assembly and public to review the budget. As governor, Richard Moore will hold open budget hearings prior to submitting his budget to the General Assembly. He will also push for legislation that would open all budget meetings at the General Assembly and require at least one week to review the budget bill before a final budget vote. Changes to the budget should only be made in committee or on the floor of the General Assembly. Regardless of the outcome of this sunshine legislation, Moore will use the governor's office to end "closed door" meetings where pork and pet projects are slipped into the budget.

- ✓ **Increase accountability.** Another important step to stop these practices and increase accountability in the budget process is to give line-item veto power to the governor. Moore supports a ballot referendum that would give line-item veto authority to the governor. With this authority, the governor will hold legislators accountable for each individual spending decision and end the practice of sneaking special provisions into the budget. If such provisions exist in the final budget submitted to the governor, Moore will veto them. This veto power will increase the governor's accountability – the governor will have no excuse to sign a budget that contains pork. The governor will be responsible for a comprehensive review of the budget and for making the tough spending decisions.