

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Media Contact: Dr. Althea Taylor Jones, Forsyth County Delegate  
E: Mail: [drataylorjones@gmail.com](mailto:drataylorjones@gmail.com) Mobile/Phone: (336) 705-2501

**NC Senior Tar Heel Legislature Seeks Legislative Sponsors for 2023-24**

February 27, 2023 – Raleigh, NC

Since the approval of its top five legislative priorities at the October 2022 General Session in Chapel Hill, NC, the NC Senior Tar Heel Legislature (NCSTHL) has launched new efforts to seek sponsorship and support from the NC General Assembly for the 2023-24 lawmaking cycle.

The top five legislative priorities were chosen from among 67 proposals submitted by NCSTHL members in 2022. The proposals were vetted and deliberated by the NCSTHL's six issues committees during the months leading up to the October General Session. These five priorities represent the NCSTHL's determination of the most crucial issues facing older adults in North Carolina and an increase of \$18.75 million to the budget of the NC Division of Aging and Adult Services (DAAS) which operates under the state's Department of Health and Human Services.

According to various sources, North Carolina ranks 9<sup>th</sup> in the nation for both total population size and adults aged 65 plus. In 2022, adults age 60+ comprised 24% of the total NC population. Eighty-six of our 100 counties have more people aged 60 plus than people aged 17 and younger. The NCSTHL recommends the appropriation of state funds to keep pace with the growth of the older adult population. Positive outcomes will provide the protections and support that enable our 'seasoned citizens' to live with dignity and as much independence as possible. Moreover, more costly interventions such as long-term care placement can be lessened and/or avoided.

The NCSTHL's top five legislative priorities for 2023-24 are:

- #1 Allocate an additional \$8 million in recurring funds for county Adult Protective Services (APS) programs, to cover current staff shortages.
- #2 Increase the senior center general purpose appropriation by \$1.265 million in recurring funds for the state's 169 senior centers.
- #3 Increase recurring state funding by \$8 million for the state's Home & Community Care Block Grant (HCCBG).
- #4 Increase the number of regional long-term care ombudsman by appropriating \$1.5 million to add 11 full-time staff.
- #5 Enact minimum standards of staff-to-patient ratios in long-term care facilities for personnel providing direct patient care, such as certified nursing assistants (CNAs).

The NCSTHL calls upon the residents of the state to support its top five legislative priorities by learning about the issues, studying the benefits, and contacting our state senators and house representatives to endorse and enact these recommendations. Elected members of the NC General Assembly can be found at [www.ncleg.org](http://www.ncleg.org).

About the NCSTHL: The North Carolina Senior Tar Heel Legislature was created as a nonpartisan, unicameral body by the North Carolina General Assembly with the passage of Senate Bill 479 in July of 1993. Its purpose is to identify the most pressing issues facing older adults across the state and propose legislation that will improve their quality of life to the NC General Assembly. The NCSTHL is comprised of delegates and alternates representing each of North Carolina's 100 counties, supported by the Area Agency on Aging serving the state's sixteen service areas.

For more information about NCSTHL, contact Forsyth County Delegate Dr. Althea Taylor Jones at [drataylorjones@gmail.com](mailto:drataylorjones@gmail.com), visit [www.ncseniortarheellegislature.org](http://www.ncseniortarheellegislature.org) or email [ncsthpr@gmail.com](mailto:ncsthpr@gmail.com).

###