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Gov. Beverly Perdue signs House Bill 1403 into law at the Greenville Police Department on Thursday morning. The bill requires a DNA sample be taken from individuals arrested for committing certain violent or potentially violent offenses, ranging from cyber-stalking to murder.

Rhett Butler/The Daily Reflector


Rhett Butler/The Daily Reflector

Gov. Beverly Perdue, left, holds a simulator baby while talking to ECU nurse anesthesia graduate students Sara Brannigan and Amber Varner.

Cliff Hollis/ECU News Services
Perdue signs DNA legislation into law
By JOSH HUMPHRIES
The Daily Reflector

Thursday, July 15, 2010

Gov. Beverly Perdue signed the DNA Database Act of 2010 into law at the Greenville Police Department on Thursday morning.
The law, which becomes effective in October, will require that a DNA sample be taken by police from any person arrested for first-degree or second-degree murder, manslaughter, rape, certain sex offenses, stalking, assault and kidnapping among other felony offenses.
“DNA is the 21st century’s fingerprinting,” Perdue said. “In many, many cases, DNA becomes the difference maker in catching a bad guy or gal or having the bad guy or gal slip through your fingers.”
The law, introduced by Rep. Wil Neumann, R-Belmont, passed through the General Assembly last week after a heated debate regarding privacy rights.
The bill passed 44-1 in the Senate and 83-21 in the House.
“This was a tough battle in the General Assembly,” Perdue said. “It was hotly debated; sometimes it got testy.”
Neumann said he thought it would be easy to pass the bill, which was backed strongly by Perdue and Attorney General Roy Cooper. Cooper also attended the signing of the bill into law Thursday.
“This will save lives,” Neumann said. “I think it is important that we put people in prison, and they will not continue to get away.”
The law requires a DNA swab from anyone arrested for certain offenses, and the sample will be analyzed and stored by the State Bureau of Investigation. Every sheriff’s office and police department in the state will collect DNA samples and send them to the SBI for storage.
The law has strong support from law enforcement, Greenville Police Chief William Anderson said.
“I believe I can speak for all North Carolina law enforcement when I say thank you for signing this bill and to the General Assembly for its passage,” Anderson said. “We believe it will make a difference and take dangerous felons off of our streets.”
Cooper, who said he hopes to make the law broader to include more offenses, estimates the law will help solve 100 cases in North Carolina in the first year. He said the SBI had five DNA analysts when he took office in 2001. Now the lab’s database has 40 analysts, contains 190,000 samples and has helped solve 1,400 crimes.
“DNA is a precise science,” Cooper said. “It gives law enforcement a tool to fight crime, but it also allows us to exonerate the innocent.”
Bill opponents, including the American Civil Liberties Union, say Fourth Amendment rights to privacy would be violated.
If a person is arrested and later exonerated for the charge, the DNA sample will be destroyed and removed from the data base, the law states.
“I believe that is a sense of fairness for the people of North Carolina,” Perdue said.
The law includes a charge of $3 to anyone who has DNA collected and is later convicted of a crime.
It will cost the Department of Justice between $1.3 million and $2.6 million annually to manage the database system during the next five years. Approximately 10 positions will be added each year for the next five years to handle the database.
Perdue said she chose to sign the law in Greenville partly to honor her friend, former member of the State Board of Education and Greenville resident Kathy Taft, who was seriously beaten on March 6 in a Raleigh home and later died from her injuries.
Perdue said DNA science played a major role in finding Taft’s alleged killer, Jason Williford, 30, of Raleigh. He faces charges of first-degree murder and first-degree forcible rape.
Perdue also visited the East Carolina University College of Nursing’s anesthesia program Thursday.
The nurse anesthesia program is a 28-month course of study designed to prepare professional nurses to be practitioners of nurse anesthesia.
The governor spoke to students who were conducting a simulated Caesarean section in one of the college’s operating rooms.
Students are able to go through many scenarios with simulated patients. Instructors can control every part of the operation including things like the mock patient’s heart rate and other vital signs.
Perdue said she was extremely impressed with the operating room at the college, where she held a replica baby and helped administer anesthesia to the computerized patient.
The nurse anesthesia program has a 100 percent completion rate and the college as a whole has 96 percent completion rate and a large percentage of its graduates stay and work in North Carolina.
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Tuition at ECSU to go up by $414

From staff and wire reports

Wednesday, July 14, 2010

A last-minute tuition increase — on top of increases approved earlier this year — will make attending Elizabeth City State University more pricey this fall.

Tuition hikes were presented Tuesday at all 16 University of North Carolina state universities by UNC system President Erskine Bowles to the Board of Governors. The latest add-on will boost ECSU's tuition by $414 this year.

By comparison, NC State and UNC-Chapel Hill will see a $750 increase, East Carolina a $563 increase, and Fayetteville State a $250 increase.

The hikes were reportedly approved in an effort to offset the impact of budget cuts that were recently imposed by the General Assembly.

The new tuition increases come on top of hikes of up to $200 in 2010-11 that had already been enacted earlier this year, varying by campus.

In his most recent meeting with the Board of Trustees, Chancellor Willie Gilchrist warned that budget cuts would 'definitely hurt' ECSU, as well as the entire UNC system.

"We cannot survive with the present budget situation or proposals that are coming out right now. We need help," Gilchrist said, in early June. "Not just Elizabeth City (State) but the entire UNC (system) needs help."

Attempts to reach Gilchrist for comment on the latest tuition hike were unsuccessful, Wednesday.

Other tuition hikes, which were sent to the Board of Governors in late December by ECSU's board of trustees, totaled approximately $344 more than what students paid in the 2009-2010 academic year.

Although ECSU's latest increase isn't the largest of the UNC system, it isn't the smallest either.

"This may be the best of some bad options," said Hannah Gage, chairwoman of the board. "Nobody wants to do this on the backs of students. But the reality is clear."

The state budget approved two weeks ago includes a $70 million cut in the university system's budget, which will be spread among the 16 college campuses and the N.C. School of Science and Math, a residential high school.

The budget also allowed campuses to increase tuition by as much as $750 to mitigate the effects of the cuts.

UNC-Chapel Hill and N.C State are the two largest campuses and received the biggest cuts — nearly $20 million each. Bowles gave the two campuses the option of enacting the full $750 tuition increase, and each chose to do so.

University officials say that even with these new increases, the state's public universities remain a bargain. Tuition at all public universities will remain in the lowest quarter when compared to their public peer institutions nationwide.

The UNC School of the Arts was the only other campus allowed to hit the $750 limit.

NCCU could have increased its rates by as much as $532, but chose only a $435 hike, figuring anything larger would hurt the institution's ability to recruit good students, Bowles said.

Twenty percent of revenue raised is to be used for financial aid.

The UNC system has cut $575 million in spending and eliminated more than 900 positions in the last three years. Tuition hikes were seen as the way to avoid cutting academics, including instructor layoffs and the eliminating course sections.

While the tuition increases will allow most campuses to completely counter the reduced state funding, UNC Chapel Hill and N.C. State must take additional action after each receiving cuts of nearly $20 million.
The NCAA is investigating two University of North Carolina football players in connection with possible improper involvement with sports agents, according to multiple sources familiar with the situation.

UNC athletic director Dick Baddour confirmed Thursday that the NCAA “had been to Chapel Hill to speak with some of our student-athletes” but declined to provide further details.

“We told [the NCAA] we will give them our total cooperation and maintain the confidence of their visit and review,” Baddour said.

Baddour said he had spoken at length with NCAA representatives about the issue.

“I’m going to do exactly what they ask me to do,” Baddour said. “We work hard in doing things the right way.”

Asked Thursday night whether the investigation involved the football team or players’ involvement with agents, Baddour said he would have no further comment.

NCAA representatives met with the players on Monday and Tuesday, according to a source.

The NCAA allows players to have contact with sports agents after their junior season, and UNC even hosts an on-campus event for agents, but the players cannot accept gifts, money or other improper benefits.

Players also are prohibited from making any type of commitment, informal or otherwise, to sign with an agent.

The NCAA dealt with two high-profile cases last year, one each in football and men’s basketball, concerning an inappropriate relationship with an agent, or potential representative.

Oklahoma State receiver Dez Bryant was suspended for 10 games in the 2009 college football season after he admitted he lied to NCAA officials about the details of his relationship with former NFL player Deion Sanders.

Kentucky guard John Wall was suspended for two college basketball games by the NCAA for an improper relationship with an agent when he was a high school player in Raleigh.

The NCAA made waves in the college football world earlier this month with its punishment of the University of Southern California’s football team. The NCAA banned the Trojans, winners of two national titles in the past decade, from the postseason in 2010 and 2011 and docked the program 30 scholarships over the next three years after it learned former star Reggie Bush received improper benefits while he was a student-athlete in 2004 and 2005.

UNC has built a reputation as one of the top athletic departments, both on and off the field, under Baddour, who has been the AD since 1997.

“We try to do things in a first-class way,” Baddour said. “In this case, we have to withhold some information. That’s not typically how we would do things; we always want to be transparent.”

Baddour declined to comment on the scope or severity of the NCAA’s interest in UNC’s athletic department.

“I would encourage people not to jump to any conclusions,” Baddour said. “We need to see what their interests are and how we can respond and cooperate.”

Former Miami athletic director Paul Dee is the chairman of the NCAA’s infractions committee. Dee hired Butch Davis as head football coach at Miami in 1995, and the two worked together for six years before Davis left for the NFL in 2001. Davis is beginning his fourth season at UNC this fall.