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Budget gap pegged at closer to $4 billion

Is it $3.2 billion? $3.5 billion?

The budget hole state politicians will try to fill next year may be bigger than commonly reported.

A new report from the National Conference of State Legislatures on budget conditions in the 50 states and Puerto Rico puts the hole North Carolina is facing at more than $3.8 billion, or 20.3 percent of current budget. NCSL collected information for its report from legislative fiscal offices.

In North Carolina, you start at $3.2 billion, which comes from the loss of federal stimulus money and the expiration of temporary state sales taxes and income tax surcharges. Here's the rest:

In addition to the previously reported gap estimate of $3.2 billion is an increase of $300 million for the state retirement system, $181.6 million for the health plan for state employees and retirees and $164 million of education enrollment growth ($34 million for community colleges, $55 million for the UNC system and $75 million for K-12 education). Medicaid enrollment growth in FY 2012 is unknown at this time. It should be noted that the general fund base is FY 2011 and does not include American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds.

Gov. Bev Perdue is going to talk about government reorganization today, offering a nonspecific preview to the budget she'll present early next year.
Pirates' Harris is C-USA MVP

East Carolina senior receiver Dwayne Harris was chosen Conference USA most valuable player on Wednesday, while Pirates' quarterback Dominique Davis earned the league's newcomer of the year award.

Harris, the program's all-time leader in receptions and yards, was voted to the All-C-USA first team as a wide receiver and return specialist. He was the first non-quarterback in league history to win the most valuable player honor.

It was the first time in ECU program history that two players earned individual C-USA awards.

Harris has caught 93 passes for 1,055 yards, setting season records in both categories.

Davis, a junior transfer, set ECU single-season records for attempts (552), completions (358), passing yards (3,699) and touchdown passes.

Harris and Davis will have one more game together when the Pirates face Maryland in the Military Bowl on Dec. 29 in RFK Stadium in Washington, D.C.

C-USA Award Winners
Most Valuable Player: Dwayne Harris, East Carolina
Offensive Player of the Year: G.J. Kinne, Tulsa
Defensive Player of the Year: Bruce Miller, UCF
Special Teams Player of the Year: Damaris Johnson, Tulsa
Coach of the Year: George O'Leary, UCF
Freshman of the Year: Jeff Godfrey, UCF
Newcomer of the Year: Dominique Davis, East Carolina
Hotels, others catering to tourists uncover savings in sustainability

By Shannan Bowen, The Wilmington Star News
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Published: Wednesday, December 8, 2010 at 5:53 p.m.

That glowing welcome sign, well-lit lobby and exit signs that stay on 24 hours a day add up to one of the biggest costs of operating a hotel.

And with increases in energy rates, mandatory practices have emerged to make hotels more sustainable both environmentally and economically. Homewood Suites by Hilton at Mayfaire implemented several green practices when it opened in April to meet guidelines that will be required for all hotels in the company by 2012.

"I think it's a relatively new trend, and our industry, as well as others, was relatively slow to embrace change," said Jason Smith, general manager of the hotel.
Energy-saving tactics include motion-detector heating and cooling systems that automatically adjust temperatures when someone walks into a room and fluorescent lights, which last longer and use less energy than incandescent bulbs. Also, the Hilton hotels use a program to measure water and energy consumption to ensure the hotel's sustainability practices have an impact.

But being energy-efficient is just one aspect of sustainability. Staff at the Center for Sustainable Tourism at East Carolina University created a working definition for the term as applied to tourism, which includes "actions that contribute to a balanced and healthy economy by generating tourism-related jobs, revenues and taxes while protecting and enhancing the destination's socio-cultural, historical, natural and built resources for the enjoyment and well-being of both residents and visitors."

The Center for Sustainable Tourism, created just three years ago, acts as a resource for businesses that want to achieve those practices, outreach coordinator Alex Naar said.

"Tourism businesses are starting to ask the question, ‘How can we be a part of the solution instead a part of the problem,’" he said.

The center held a free online seminar Tuesday on energy-efficient lighting practices that tourism-related businesses can use. Topics included LED lights, implementing natural lighting and reducing the number of lamps and other fixtures in common areas.

The webinar's guest speakers said businesses can save tens of thousands of dollars by switching from traditional lighting sources to LED, which is a semiconductor light source.

Savings also are found with compact fluorescent bulbs, and Kip Damrow, sales manager of Courtyard by Marriott Wilmington on Van Campen Boulevard, said that in part thanks to those his hotel's energy bill is 25 percent less than it was a year ago.

Renovation starts this month on all rooms at the hotel, and energy-efficient cooling and heating units are already installed, he said.

The hotel adopted other resourceful practices that might seem small but add up, Damrow said. Materials for meetings are now given out on an as-needed
basis, and housekeepers are asked to adjust temperatures in vacant rooms to save on energy costs, Damrow said.

Both Homewood Suites and Courtyard by Marriott, like many other branded hotels, also adopted policies to change linens and towels only at the request of the guest instead of every day. Both hotels also have recycling programs, and Homewood Suites gives guests soaps and shampoos packaged in recyclable plastic with liquids derived from natural ingredients.

But among all sustainable practices, lighting is a "no-brainer for tourism businesses," Naar said.

Hotels and restaurants can start with implementing energy-efficient exit signs in buildings, as those stay on all day, he said.

The Center for Sustainable Tourism will offer another webinar on renewable energy practices in February, with details available soon on the center's website, www.ecu.edu/sustainabletourism.

The center also offers free tips on sustainability and consultation to visitors bureaus and tourism businesses of all types and sizes, Naar said.

"It makes a lot of sense to have a center like ours in North Carolina," he said. "It's really exciting to be able to not only participate in the tourism industry but help tourism businesses protect the valuable assets in our state."

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Pirate Concrete gives convention center walkway brick-like look

By Amanda Lisk, The Wilmington Star News
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Published: Friday, November 5, 2010 at 11:30 a.m.

Photo by Jeff Janowski
Jason Burke (from left), Chip Herring and son Josh Herring work together in their family-run business, Pirate Concrete, sealing a 1,700-square-foot stamped concrete sidewalk in front of the new Wilmington Convention Center downtown.

Concrete that looks nothing like concrete is what landed a couple of pirates the Wilmington Convention Center job.

Pirate Concrete – owned by a family of East Carolina University grads, hence the name – is becoming widely known for its acid staining, texture overlays and stamped finishes. The herringbone brick pattern installed at the entry of the convention center, set to open in a week, required multiple red brick color tones and special concrete stamps to give the appearance of real brick pavers.

“It's a pretty big job to say we did because it's such a high-profile area,” said Josh Herring, one of the Pirate family owners.

Josh works alongside his cousin Jason Burke – both of ECU's construction management program. Father and uncle Chip Herring, whose wife graduated
from ECU, started Pirate Concrete in 2005 after 18 years in public education.

“It was probably like going from flying an airplane to opening up a retail shop – a total career change, completely different, but really neat to learn something from the ground up all over again,” Chip Herring said.

He offered typical, standard concrete flatwork at first. It was the boys, Josh and Jason, who ventured outside the concrete box in 2006 when a decorative boom hit the Southeast. Attending seminars across North Carolina and in Florida, the two learned the ins and outs of the trade.

“We said, ‘Let's explore what this industry has to offer,’” said Josh. “You can create anything with concrete – any type of stone, marble, there's no limit.”

“It's become this fast-paced, cutting-edge, changing market,” Jason said. Pirate's first decorative assignment was an intricate design to a 2,000-square-foot playroom inside a multimillion-dollar house in Clinton.

“We did crazy colors, carved everything by hand. We really surprised ourselves. That's what motivated us to get going and do more,” Josh said. Earliest uses of concrete date back to the Egyptians in 2,500 B.C. followed later by the Romans to build the Roman Empire.

In the 1920s, the L.M. Scofield Co. in Los Angeles was the first to make colored concrete, says Concrete Construction magazine. Charlie Chaplin and Groucho Marx were two of its first customers.

Walt Disney World's Epcot was one of the first to use concrete stamping invented by California contractor Brad Bowman in 1970. In 1978, a concrete worker in Louisiana brought concrete stencils to the market after leaves fell onto one of his still-wet concrete patio jobs leaving an attractive impression.

The Pirate boys say overlays can transform concrete into a cobblestone walkway or stone patio. Logos and graphics scored them a job for UNC Pembroke.
“The way they can take a piece of concrete and make it look like slate or tile, that is, to me, the most amazing thing,” said Chip Herring.

**Papa pirate**
Chip remains old school, handling steady Pirate work: driveways, sidewalks, slabs and patios.

The company's ability to diversify is what's kept the family Pirate business a concrete one during shaky economic times.

“We say we can do this and we can do this also. That's appealing to contractors,” Josh said.

And as a family of pirates, sharing one common purple and gold thread, the business is stitched together a little tighter.

“You want to uphold your standards a little higher, doing quality work,” Jason said.
WakeMed accuses rival of ill will

BY ALAN M. WOLF - Staff Writer

UNC Health Care System's "predatory" efforts to compete in Wake County are part of a plan to orchestrate a hostile takeover of rival WakeMed, that hospital's top executive said Wednesday.

UNC Health Care officials are trying "to force us into a position where we're out of options," WakeMed CEO Bill Atkinson said after a meeting with editors and reporters at The News & Observer.

He declined to provide specific evidence but said that some of the records WakeMed requested from UNC Health Care last month will prove his assertion.

Atkinson charges that UNC Health Care, as a state-sponsored institution, is using taxpayer money for major expansions in Raleigh and to lure away local physician practices, including a group of heart doctors long associated with WakeMed. Those efforts are designed to weaken Wake Med, Wake County's largest hospital system, and disrupt the region's medical market, Atkinson said.

But UNC Health's top executive, Bill Roper, said his intent isn't to "tear down" or take over a competitor.

"WakeMed believes what we're doing is deeply harmful to them," Roper said after a separate visit to The N&O on Wednesday. "We don't intend to cause them harm. That's not the way we do business and it's totally counter to the way I do things personally."

Fusion in health care

The Triangle's health care industry will continue to consolidate, as the federal health overhaul forces major changes in how care is delivered and paid for, he added.
"Some people may want us to sit on the sidelines and let this consolidation happen without us," Roper said. "We're not going to take ourselves out of the game."

The increasing hostility signals that the battle between two of this region's medical giants won't end soon. The fight could reshape health care in this area and affect patients and providers.

Last month, WakeMed submitted a formal request that UNC Health Care turn over various financial statements and other documents, to determine whether the system is using public money to "gain an unfair advantage over WakeMed" and others. That request included e-mail messages and other correspondence between UNC Health Care officials and physicians on Wake Med's medical staff.

Atkinson is especially angry because he contends that UNC Health Care is using state money to pay for expansions at its Raleigh subsidiary, Rex Healthcare, and to buy key doctors' practices.

By asserting that UNC Health Care is acting in a predatory manner, the "undertone is that what we're doing is at least mean-spirited or underhanded or shady," Roper said. "That I categorically reject."

"We did not use state funds to buy Rex 10 years ago, period," he added. "We are not using state funds to buy doctors' practices. WakeMed knows this."

Competition between the two health systems has steadily increased for nearly a decade, especially in the fast-growing and lucrative Wake County market. In the late 1990s, WakeMed was in discussions about joining forces with Rex. But in 2000, UNC Health Care swooped in and bought Rex for about $100 million.

**UNC Health Care gets $36 million**

The rivalry has intensified since the federal health overhaul this year increased financial pressure on hospitals and physicians. The law will mean lower reimbursements and hospitals want to keep control of more lucrative parts of their business, including heart care.
WakeMed contends that state support gives UNC Health Care and Rex an unfair competitive advantage. WakeMed provides the bulk of hospital care for poor residents in Wake County and doesn't get extra money from the state.

UNC Health Care will receive $36 million in state funding this year. It also receives higher reimbursement rates from the Medicaid system than other hospitals because its flagship UNC Hospitals is owned by the state. Those subsidies help offset the $282 million of uncompensated care UNC Health Care will provide this year.

One of WakeMed's complaints is that Rex operates as a private, not-for-profit hospital and doesn't disclose details about its operations, how much financial support it receives from UNC Health Care or how that money is used. WakeMed has hired a team of lawyers and politically connected public relations consultants to help in its efforts to "level the playing field" against UNC Health.

UNC Health Care is reviewing WakeMed's records request, but Roper signaled Wednesday that he isn't planning on handing over much data. UNC Health Care and Rex already make more information available than other hospitals in this region, he said. Rex sold $123 million in tax-exempt bonds in October, for example, and revealed detailed information about its finances as part of that process.

"We are operating entirely in compliance with the state's laws and oversight," Roper said. "We're satisfied what we're doing is appropriate." UNC Health, however, does not make public some financial data about Rex, including how much its top executives are paid. Roper said that efforts to force further disclosure are simply to prevent UNC Health Care from competing effectively and to sway public opinion against it.

"This is a political campaign," Roper said. "For anyone to believe we're acting in an unfair and predatory manner, you have to believe" that UNC system President Erskine Bowles, UNC Chapel Hill Chancellor Holden Thorp and other top UNC officials are "complicit with us or that they are dupes, that somehow I've fooled them into letting us do these terrible things."
WakeMed is simply trying to defend its position as the biggest health provider in Wake County, Atkinson said. The system, which will celebrate its 50th anniversary next year, has more than $500 million in cash and posted a 2-1/2 percent profit margin for its latest fiscal year.

Profitable services like heart surgeries and other cardiac care help support charity care and other areas of its business that lose money, Atkinson said. "We're a healthy place but you don't have to mess very much with our equation" to interfere with WakeMed's delivery of needed care for the community, he added.

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Davis sought help for players

BY J.P. GIGLIO - staff writer

North Carolina football coach Butch Davis feared frustration and pent-up anger from the NCAA investigation was potentially destructive for the players involved in the investigation and sought counseling for them in September, according to an e-mail from Davis to UNC athletic director Dick Baddour.

Davis cited the suicides of two football players, one by an NFL player in September and one by a college player in April, as a reason to get help for the UNC players.

In an e-mail recently obtained by The News & Observer as part of a public records request, Davis wrote:

"I have great fear this situation with our players has the potential of manifesting itself in a way that could be destructive to our players."

Davis clarified "destructive" as potential problems with alcohol, substance abuse or a fight on Chapel Hill's Franklin Street or "in our own facility."

The e-mail is dated Sept. 22 and was sent with the subject line "Counseling" to Baddour and copied to UNC chancellor Holden Thorp. Davis wrote that there was "clearly a great deal of pent up anger, frustration, and animosity, in these players."

Davis wrote in the e-mail that he had asked team trainer Scott Trulock and team physician Dr. Mario Ciocca to set up a meeting and future availability with Dr. Bradley Hack, the sports psychologist for the athletic department.

Davis wrote that he wanted to make sure the players had continual access to Hack or another counselor.

"In light of the fact that it is probably going to be more weeks before we get any resolution, we should talk about this issue," Davis wrote.
Baddour said Wednesday the school followed up on Davis' request and that counseling was provided to the players.

Efforts to reach Davis were unsuccessful.

Davis continued in the e-mail: "Each day I see more frustration, anger, and sadness. To these sixteen kids, this season and their future was everything to them and their families."

Fourteen players missed at least one game and seven missed the entire season, including NFL prospects defensive end Robert Quinn, defensive tackle Marvin Austin and receiver Greg Little, during the investigation into improper benefits from sports agents and academic misconduct.

At the time of the e-mail, UNC had an 0-2 record and had not been given any of the punishments for the players from the NCAA.

Denver Broncos receiver Kenny McKinley was found dead of a gunshot wound in his Denver apartment on Sept. 20. It was subsequently ruled a suicide. Penn defensive end Owen Thomas hanged himself in April. As Davis wrote in the e-mail, both players were believed to be dealing with depression.

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Colleges That Recruit Veterans Garner Profits and Scrutiny

By ERIC LIPTON

WASHINGTON — When Congress moved in 2008 to sweeten tuition payments for veterans, it was celebrated as a way to ensure that military personnel returning from Iraq and Afghanistan could go to college at no cost and to replicate the historic benefits society gained from the G.I. Bill after World War II.

Now, a year after payouts on the so-called Post-9/11 G.I. Bill started, the huge program has turned into a bonanza of another kind for the many commercial colleges in the United States that have seen their military revenues surge.

More than 36 percent of the tuition payments made in the first year of the program — a total of $640 million in tuition and fees — went to for-profit colleges, like the University of Phoenix, according to data compiled by the Department of Veterans Affairs, even though these colleges serve only about 9 percent of the overall population at higher education institutions nationwide.

As the money flows to the for-profit university industry, questions are being raised in Congress and elsewhere about their recruitment practices, and whether they really deliver on their education promises. Some members say they want to place tighter limits on how much these colleges can collect in military benefits, a move certain federal officials say they would welcome.

These questions come as the for-profit education industry is under increased scrutiny, with the Department of Education proposing regulations that would cut off federal aid to colleges whose graduates have extremely low loan repayment rates.

Amid this debate, the industry’s powerful lobbying forces are pushing for even more, including a change in the law that would allow veterans who sign up exclusively for online classes to also get government housing subsidies, even if they live at home, which would make online education even more attractive.

With their multimillion-dollar advertising and recruitment campaigns, these colleges have pitched themselves as a natural choice for veterans and active-duty personnel, given their extensive online class offerings, accelerated degree programs and campuses spread across the nation, including near many military bases.

“We offer the flexibility and career focus they want,” said Bob Larned, the executive director of military education at ECPI College of Technology, a Virginia institution with
a major online program and campuses in three states that collected $16 million in G.I. Bill benefits in the first year.

Active-duty personnel are eligible for free tuition, which explains why the for-profit colleges have received about $200 million in Department of Defense tuition reimbursement benefits and fees in the last year, mostly for online classes, in addition to money collected from the G.I. Bill.

But high dropout rates at some of these colleges, difficulty in transferring credits, higher tuition bills than at public colleges and skepticism from some employers about the value of the degrees are all creating unease among some in Congress.

“For-profit schools see our active-duty military and veterans as a cash cow, an untapped profit resource,” said Senator Tom Harkin, Democrat of Iowa, the chairman of the Senate committee that oversees federal education policy. “It is both a rip off of the taxpayer and a slap in the face to the people who have risked their lives for our country.”

It is a concern echoed by eight current and former recruiters from some of the nation’s largest for-profit chains, who in interviews said the intense drive to enroll veterans had led them, at times, to sign up military personnel for classes when they were all but certain they would drop out or fail.

“There is such pressure to simply enroll more vets — we knew that most of them would drop out after the first session,” said Jason Deatherage, who worked as military admissions adviser at Colorado Technical University until this spring, when he was fired, he said, for not meeting his quota.

“Instead of helping people, too often I felt like we were almost tricking them.”

In interviews, veterans offered conflicting views. Some said the online classes enabled them to complete their studies while also tending to their families, and perhaps a day job. But other veterans said it was a waste.

“I felt like I made a horrible, horrible decision,” said Jason Longmore, 31, a Navy veteran who spent six months at Westwood College, based in Denver, only to conclude that the degree was not attractive enough to employers, forcing him to repeat classes elsewhere before he could transfer credits to a Colorado state university.

Robert L. Songer, a retired Marine colonel who is the lead education adviser at Camp Lejeune in North Carolina, said some of the for-profit colleges hounded active-duty personnel there as they pursued “hot leads,” calling them repeatedly to get a piece of the military tuition grants.

Mr. Songer said that he was not opposed to the colleges, but that they often enrolled Marines in classes of limited educational value. In some cases, the colleges even take out high-interest-rate loans on behalf of the Marines to cover extra costs, he said.
“They are very easy targets, especially because many of them have never had anyone in their families go to college,” Mr. Songer said in an interview, citing numerous complaints he has received from Marines. “All they hear from these schools is, ‘This won’t cost you a thing.’ ”

What is beyond dispute is the extraordinary impact tuition payments by the Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs have had on the for-profit colleges, which have already experienced tremendous growth.

The number of military students at Bridgepoint Education of San Diego, a for-profit company that owns Ashford University, among others, jumped to nearly 9,200 in 2009 from 379 three years before, a far faster pace than the company’s overall growth. Just in the last year, after the adoption of the new G.I. Bill, revenue from military education benefits at 20 for-profit chains jumped 211 percent, according to a report to be released Thursday by Mr. Harkin’s committee.

Acknowledging the issue, the Defense Department is now moving to demand that colleges participating in its tuition reimbursement program maintain graduation rates at a certain minimum level, among other measures.

“What we want to do is make sure the students have the information they need in order to make informed decisions on how they want to best use the benefits,” said Keith M. Wilson, the director of education programs at Veterans Affairs, which is also assembling clearer data on graduation and dropout rates among veterans.

The rise of Colorado Technical University, whose Department of Military Education is in a suburban Chicago office building, across the street from a shopping mall and next door to the ever-popular Joe’s Crab Shack, is a testament to the impact of the federal money.

There are no professors or classrooms in this office building. Instead, lined up row by row in cubicles, are dozens of admissions advisers — they often call themselves salesmen — who spend their days trying to convince active-duty military personnel and veterans that Colorado Technical is the place to invest their education benefits, six current and former admissions advisers said.

Executives at the Career Education Corporation, the Illinois company that owns Colorado Technical, said they closely monitor the work of these advisers to ensure that they are accurately and fairly describing the program — not twisting arms.

“Doing what’s in the best interest of the student is paramount,” Gary E. McCullough, the company’s chief executive, wrote in an August memorandum to supervisors, which addressed accusations that certain for-profit colleges were misleading potential students.

But the admissions advisers — who have actually made the calls — said in interviews that the extremely high enrollment targets set by their bosses all but forced them at times to sign up veterans for programs or classes they knew they were not qualified for.
“They weren’t going to make it, and we knew it,” said NaQuan Hudson, who worked as an admissions adviser in the military recruitment office there until August 2009, after the university had started to sign up students under the Post-9/11 G.I. Bill. “I knew I had no business enrolling some of these students. But everything here is about numbers. You make your numbers, or you are out of a job.”

The recruiters — five of whom spoke on the record — said their goal was not to simply enroll students in online classes, but to get them to log in at least once, do their first assignment and remain for a full week. That way, the government could not get a refund.

“What about your family? Aren’t you are doing this for them? You don’t want to let them down,” Mr. Deatherage recalled of the informal script he often used with veterans who were considering dropping classes.

No records are publicly available showing how many veterans drop out of courses at Colorado Technical’s online program, where most of them take their classes. But in general, the online program has an unusually low rate of retaining first-time students pursuing bachelor’s degrees full time. Only 39 percent of those enrolled in the fall of 2008 returned the next fall, compared with a 77 percent average for four-year colleges nationwide.

A spokesman for the university said it considered this comparison unfair, because many of the military students come with prior credits, meaning they are not counted as first-time students. Regardless, Mr. McCullough said the company had recently reinforced its rules about ethical conduct with its admissions staff.

“We did go back and reiterate the right and wrongs and dos and don’t in our admissions organizations,” Mr. McCullough said last month in a presentation on the company earnings. “We take some of those issues very, very seriously.”

Two recruiters at other for-profit institutions that sought out veterans and active-duty military personnel — Ashford University and Westwood College — described similar aggressive recruitment tactics in recent years.

“We know they are going to pay, that they had a guaranteed way to get money,” said Brent Park, a former Ashford University recruitment adviser, who worked there until 2008, when the university had already started to see a surge in veterans enrolling under the previous G.I. Bill.

Ashford offers a variety of incentives for veterans to enroll, including admission fee waivers and tuition discounts.

Bridgepoint, the company that owns Ashford, last year spent more on marketing and promotion than on education for its 53,700 students, 99 percent of whom took classes online. A spokeswoman for Bridgepoint did not respond to a request for comment.
Brian Hawthorne, 25, a staff sergeant in the Army Reserves, used his benefits to get a two-year, online degree from the for-profit American Military University and was able to transfer the credits to George Washington University, where he recently received a bachelor’s degree.

Sergeant Hawthorne said online education was his only option for his associate’s degree, as his Army Reserve unit was called up while he was taking classes. He continued to study as he moved to four states and then to Iraq. Many for-profit online colleges offer accelerated schedules, meaning it is possible to get an undergraduate bachelors degree in less than three years.

“Vets are really not at college to get the traditional undergraduate experience,” he said. “We are already professionals. College is a box checker, meaning we need a college degree to go into whatever we want to go into.”

For these reasons, Sergeant Hawthorne, a board member of a group called Student Veterans of America, cautioned against condemning the whole industry. “I did not feel taken advantage of,” he said. “If there are those who feel that way, let’s investigate it as individual cases and not as an industry exploiting veterans.”

Representative Walter B. Jones, Republican of North Carolina and a member of the Armed Services Committee, said employers had told him they do not value degrees from these online, for-profit colleges as they do from traditional universities.

“Here we are telling these young men and women they can get a higher education, and they get cheated,” Mr. Jones said. “I think it is a sin.”

Harris Miller, president of the Association of Private Sector Colleges and Universities, pointed out that the two-year graduation rate at for-profit colleges was better than for the nation’s community colleges, and he said industry studies showed that job placement rates for graduates of these institutions were high.

“We are proud that our institutions provide purposeful, military-friendly education to active-duty and veteran students,” Mr. Miller said, in a statement his organization issued last month, on Veterans Day.