

Perdue Vetoes Premiums for State Employees

Written by Steve Frank
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Governor Bev Perdue has vetoed two recently-passed measures, including that half-billion-dollar overhaul of the health insurance program for state employees. The measure would have charged state employees monthly premiums for the first time ever.

Plan members would also pay more for dependent coverage and other out-of-pocket expenses. The bill would have killed a wellness initiative and transfer oversight to the State Treasurer's office. Perdue said premiums would be a tax on teachers. "Now is simply not the time to cut teachers' pay yet again," said Perdue, expressing fears teachers would flee the state. Senate President Pro Tempore Phil Berger said the GOP-backed measure was very similar to a plan put forward by Perdue, and House Speaker Thom Tillis, said lawmakers will now work to quickly pass an alternative that doesn't include monthly premiums for state employees in the basic plan to save \$76 million.

In addition, Perdue vetoed legislation that would allow state community colleges to opt out of a federal loan program. She added that the bill would prevent more than 177,000 students from using the safest and least expensive method of borrowing money. Perdue also said the proposal would make North Carolina the worst state in the country when it comes to providing access to federal loans.