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Legislature delays closing property tax loophole

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RALEIGH
Lawmakers in North Carolina agree that a state property tax loophole is costing local governments millions in tax revenue loss, but the legislature has yet to close it. Two state House members say that lobbying of the state Senate has contributed to the holdup.
The tax break is called the “Blue Ridge Housing” loophole, which allows for-profit busi-

nesses to avoid paying property taxes by sharing ownership of a property with a nonprofit. In North Carolina, nonprofit organizations are exempt from paying property taxes. However, there is no clear law that states how much of a property must be owned by a nonprofit for it to be considered owned by that nonprofit.
This means that if a nonprofit owns 1% of a property, a for-profit that owns 99% can claim nonprofit status and be exempt from property taxes. This allows private-equity investors to take

majority ownership of property that starts out as affordable housing and raise rents, all while avoiding property tax.
Five North Carolina counties, among the most urban, have experienced roughly \$60 million in annual property tax revenue loss because of the loophole, The News & Observer previously reported. And there’s been a “dramatic” increase in the number of applications for this exemption across the state, according to a report from the House Select Committee on Property Tax Reduction and Reform.

Although budget writers had the opportunity to include a policy to close the loophole in the state budget that passed in early July, it was left out. Rep. Erin Paré, a Holly Springs Republican and budget writer, said that the provision “didn’t make the cut” during budget negotiations between Senate leader Phil Berger and House Speaker Dustin Hall.
Paré, who is also a co-chair of the House property tax committee, added that lobbyists representing “private sector interests” are raising concerns to senators,

which may be giving them pause. A bill to close the loophole awaits a vote in the Senate after receiving a unanimous House vote.
“It’s a really good bill,” Paré told The N&O. “There’s a lot of support for it I know (in the Senate) as well. Whether there’s still some outstanding questions about it or concerns, and whether that will change ... the trajectory of passing the bill in the Senate, remains to be seen.”
Paré said that the House, unlike the Senate, had the advantage of having a committee that researched the topic extensively, which allowed representatives ample time to understand the loophole.
This loophole, Paré said, burdens residents by increasing their property tax responsibilities. The tax exemption, Paré said, is intended for “legitimate” affordable housing and not for

SEE LOOPHOLE, 9A



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Visitors overlook a water feature at Cary Downtown Park in Cary on Tuesday, June 30, 2026. A chorus of male green tree frogs can be heard in the evenings during the spring and summer, especially after rainfall.

Loud, nighttime calls by tree frogs draw visitors to Downtown Cary Park

BY LUKE BOWLES
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CARY
Queenk, queenk, queenk.
On summer nights, Downtown Cary

Park comes alive with a wild chorus echoing from the ponds. It’s not a quirky new sound system — it’s the green tree frog, the headliner of Cary’s summer nights.
Most easily heard late at night or after a rain, these tiny crooners have become local celebrities. When the Cary Report posted a

video on social media featuring the frogs’ calls, it racked up more than 80,000 views and dozens of comments from people across the Southeast who recognized the familiar soundtrack of

SEE TREE FROGS, 2A

Raleigh to get Billy Graham, Revolutionary War statues

BY DAWN BAUMGARTNER
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North Carolina’s historic State Capitol building will get two new statues — the first since Confederate statues were taken down in 2020 — as part of the new state budget.
The late Rev. Billy Graham, known worldwide as a conservative Christian evangelist preacher whose crusades drew thousands for decades, will be represented on the Capitol grounds near monuments to North Carolinians who served or were killed in wars, or who went on to serve as president or governor.
The pitch for a statue of Graham first came as the state House of Representatives was writing its budget last year, from Gaston County Republican Rep. John Torbett.

**WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT
UPCOMING BILLY GRAHAM,
REVOLUTIONARY WAR
MONUMENTS**
The Raleigh statue would be a duplicate of the Graham statue in Congress’ Statuary Hall Collection, Torbett told The N&O in 2025, when the first proposal came out. That plan then became part of this year’s final budget legislation that Gov. Josh Stein signed into law.
“I think it’s very important that we recall our history, and to

SEE STATUES, 4A

COMMENTARY

NC teen wins contest for Duck tape prom tuxedos, dresses

BY JOSH SHAFFER
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HILLSBOROUGH
To make her dazzling prom ensemble, Imogen Curry labored for 109 hours crafting a 6-foot set of white wings, fashioning a dark-blue belt decked out with a ram’s head, fishes and other signs of the zodiac, topping the whole creation off with a curlicue pattern of 222 handmade beads — some of them dangling from her cuffs

like the fringe on a sombrero.
But even more impressive: Curry built this intricate and majestic outfit entirely out of duct tape — material normally reserved for repairing a banged-up fender or patching the holes in a pair of sneakers.
And for her artistry, she earned a spot as a top 10 finalist in the national Stuck at Prom contest sponsored by Duck Tape itself, for which Curry might win a \$10,000 scholarship.
“I don’t think I could wear it to prom,” Curry, a rising home-

schooled sophomore in Hillsborough, told The N&O last week, “because the wings are 6 feet wide, so it might create some problems.”
FIRST IN FLIGHT
Curry obviously hopes the fashion-minded public will choose her handiwork in the voting, and were she to make the case for her own work, she would make her pitch thusly:
“Look at the details of my

SEE SHAFFER, 2A



Imogen Curry

Imogen Curry of Hillsborough and her prom ensemble made of Duck tape, a finalist in a national contest.



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