

# NORTH CAROLINA GENERAL ASSEMBLY



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## AMERICA'S SEMIQUINCENTENNIAL COMMITTEE

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### REPORT TO THE 2026 SESSION of the 2025 GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA

JULY 2026

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# TRANSMITTAL LETTER

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July 28, 2026

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TO THE MEMBERS OF THE 2026 REGULAR SESSION  
OF THE 2025 GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The AMERICA'S SEMIQUINCENTENNIAL COMMITTEE, respectfully submits the following report to the 2026 Regular Session of the 2025 General Assembly.

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Sen. W. Ted Alexander (Co-Chair)

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Rep. Hugh Blackwell (Co-Chair)

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# COMMITTEE PROCEEDINGS

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The America's Semiquincentennial Committee met 3 times after making its second interim report in March 2026. The following is a brief summary of the Committee's proceedings. Detailed minutes and information from each Committee meeting are available in the Legislative Library.

## **April 8, 2026**

The America's Semiquincentennial Committee met on April 8, 2026, to continue planning North Carolina's commemoration of the nation's 250th anniversary. During the meeting, the Committee approved the minutes from its previous meeting and unanimously adopted its 2026 2nd Interim Committee Report for submission to the General Assembly.

A featured presentation was delivered by North Carolina Supreme Court Associate Justice Trey Allen, who discussed the history and significance of North Carolina's 1776 Constitution. Justice Allen explained how the Halifax Resolves paved the way for independence, highlighted the importance of the State's Declaration of Rights, and described the lasting influence of the original Constitution on North Carolina's government. He also discussed the landmark case *Bayard v. Singleton*, which established the principle of judicial review in North Carolina years before it was recognized by the United States Supreme Court.

Committee members received updates on several major America 250 initiatives planned for the summer of 2026. Commissioner of Labor, Luke Farley, announced that the official Fourth of July Parade would be held in downtown Raleigh and described plans for a patriotic celebration honoring both the nation's founding and North Carolina's important role in the American Revolution. The Committee also learned more about the July 3rd patriotic concert in High Point, which will feature the North Carolina Brass Band, the North Carolina Baptist Choir, and award-winning bluegrass artists, Darin and Brooke Aldridge. The concert will be free to the public and is expected to be recorded for statewide broadcast.

Additional reports highlighted educational and historical programming taking place across North Carolina. Updates included restoration work along the Overmountain Victory Trail, preparations for the Freedom 250 traveling museum exhibit, new historical publications, museum exhibits, Revolutionary War commemorations, and statewide outreach efforts through the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources. Plans were also shared for the Capitol 250 North Carolina Freedom Fest, which will include

historical exhibits, musical performances, food vendors, history demonstrations, and family-friendly activities on July 4th in downtown Raleigh.

The meeting concluded with updates from community partners on Revolutionary War exhibits, educational programs, and volunteer initiatives taking place throughout North Carolina. Committee members expressed their appreciation for the collaboration among state agencies, nonprofit organizations, historians, and volunteers working together to make North Carolina's Semiquincentennial celebration meaningful and accessible to residents and visitors alike.

### **May 21, 2026**

The America's Semiquincentennial Committee met on May 21, 2026, to review progress on North Carolina's America 250 celebrations as preparations continued for several major public events. The Committee approved the minutes from its April meeting before hearing updates from partners across the State who are helping coordinate educational programs, historical exhibits, and Independence Day celebrations.

The meeting featured a presentation by Michael Noriega of the American Journey Experience, who discussed the organization's traveling historical exhibit currently on display in the Legislative Building. His presentation focused on America's founding principles, the importance of preserving historical artifacts, and encouraging citizens to learn more about the nation's history during the Semiquincentennial. The exhibit includes rare documents and artifacts connected to the American Revolution and the founding of the United States.

Committee members received encouraging updates on preparations for the July 4th Parade and the July 3rd patriotic concert. Organizers reported that parade advertising was underway, concert tickets were available to the public, and North Carolina PBS was expected to record the concert for future broadcast. Progress was also reported on the North Carolina Brigade replica wagon, which is expected to participate in the Independence Day festivities, and on a limited-edition America 250 commemorative wine being produced by Duplin Winery to support the Celebrate America Foundation.

The Committee also reviewed a proposed design for a commemorative America 250 North Carolina license plate. Members offered suggestions to better reflect the State's geography and history while retaining patriotic elements such as the America 250 logo, the State bird, and the dates 1776–2026. The final design will be refined before submission to the Department of Transportation for production.

Representatives from the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources provided updates on several statewide exhibits and educational initiatives, including the North Carolina Brigade Sketch traveling exhibit, the *Knowing the West* exhibition, the *Witnesses to the American Revolution* exhibit, and additional Patriotic Pops concerts. The

Committee also received a preview of the Capitol 250 North Carolina Freedom Fest, which will feature live music, historical demonstrations, family activities, food trucks, trolley tours, and exhibits from numerous state agencies and cultural organizations on July 4 in downtown Raleigh.

The meeting concluded with reports from conservation organizations regarding efforts to preserve Revolutionary War battlefields and improve the Overmountain Victory Trail, as well as information about upcoming educational programs such as the Race to the Dan symposium. Public comments included questions about participating in the Fourth of July Parade, and Committee leaders were encouraged to continue public involvement in the many events planned throughout North Carolina as the State prepares to commemorate the nation's Semiquincentennial.

### **July 28, 2026**

The committee met to approve the final committee report.

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## FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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The Committee has had a presence either in attendance or as presenters in locations across the state, including Raleigh, Charlotte, Lexington, Cramerton, High Point, Edenton, Windsor, Asheboro, Lincolnton, Shelby, Gastonia, Salisbury, Greensboro, Chapel Hill, and Louisburg. The Committee was also represented in Washington, D.C. at the national 250 convention and online with national groups based out of Dallas, TX and Tallahassee, FL.

The Committee approved Letters of Commendation for Foundation Forward and for the Raleigh Chapter of the Sons of American Revolution. The letters have greatly helped the groups work to build monuments of America's founding documents to be erected across the State and to build a replica of the North Carolina Brigade wagon.

The Committee also gave a representative from the Conservation Fund a forum to discuss Over Mountain Victory Trail (OMVT). This forum has led to preservation of acreage on the OMVT at no additional cost to the State.

The Committee co-hosted a patriotic concert on July 3, 2026 in High Point, NC. Out of the auditorium seating capacity of 910 seats, 898 tickets were ordered. Performers included the NC Brass Band, the NC Adult Choir, and Darin and Brooke Aldridge. The concert was featured on WGHP Fox 8 and recorded by PBS NC. The concert will air on PBS NC on Veterans Day 2026 and be rebroadcast on subsequent anniversaries.

The Committee also co-hosted a parade in downtown Raleigh, NC. It is estimated that 10,000 people attended. WRAL-TV live streamed the parade. Reports show that 8,501 viewed the parade online and it's still available on WRAL's website.

The Committee's events have received wide applause and will serve as a standard for subsequent concerts and parades.

The Committee helped with the Senate special session at the historic Capitol building in 2026. It was the first special session held at the Capitol since 2019. The Executive Director of the Committee helped write the senatorial speeches and the senatorial statement.

The Committee also printed special Semiquincentennial copies of a booklet containing the U.S. Constitution and the NC Constitution. It was popular among the public.

The Committee helped, as needed, with State Capitol projects.

The Committee also brought in historical exhibits, including the American Journey Experience. The public was able to see artifacts such as a copy of the Declaration of Independence, a Geneva Bible, a 1612 edition of King James Bible, and writings from George Washington.

Committee members and guest speakers were able to publish columns in the North State Journal. These columns included topics such as what Albanians think about America 250 celebrations and the role and contributions of African Americans during the American Revolution.

The Committee also created a website that served not only as an informative resource but also as a community calendar for hereditary groups across the State.

The Committee was instrumental in designing a commemorative license plate for the America 250 celebration. It features a mountain-to-the-sea concept and emphasizes North Carolina landmarks.

#### **Committee Recommendations:**

The 250th anniversary commemorations of the American Revolution should proceed until 2033 since the war lasted from 1775 to 1783. Events intensified in North Carolina especially from 1780 to 1782.

Subsequent commemorations should include reminders of why North Carolina is “First in Freedom,” as the dates on the State flag and State seal indicate.

Also, the General Assembly should make plans to commemorate North Carolina’s role in drafting and ratifying the U.S. Constitution. North Carolina was the only state that had two ratifying conventions, one in Hillsborough and one in Fayetteville. North Carolina wanted to ensure that a Bill of Rights was added to the founding document.

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## COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

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2025-2026

**President Pro Tempore of the Senate**  
**Appointments:**

Sen. W. Ted Alexander (Co-Chair)

**Speaker of the House of Representatives**  
**Appointments:**

Rep. Hugh Blackwell (Co-Chair)

- Mr. Bruce J. Daws
- Mr. Kyle J. Luebke
- Mr. Jason E. Luker
- Hon. Charles Batcheller Neely
- Ms. Tanzy Barrow Wallace

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## COMMITTEE CHARGE/STATUTORY AUTHORITY

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### S.L. 2023-134

#### AMERICA'S SEMIQUINCENTENNIAL COMMITTEE

**SECTION 14.10.(a)** There is created the America's Semiquincentennial Committee (the Committee).

**SECTION 14.10.(b)** Membership. – The Committee shall be composed of seven members, as follows:

- (1) Three members appointed by the President Pro Tempore of the Senate, one of whom shall be a member of the Senate and the remainder of whom shall be members of the public.
- (2) Three members appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, one of whom shall be a member of the House of Representatives and the remainder of whom shall be members of the public.

- (3) One member jointly appointed by the President Pro Tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives who shall be a noted historian with expertise regarding the American Revolution.

**SECTION 14.10.(c)** Terms; Chairs; Vacancies; Quorum. – Members appointed shall serve until the Committee terminates. The Committee shall have two cochairs which shall be the legislative member designated by the President Pro Tempore of the Senate and the legislative member designated by the Speaker of the House of Representatives. The Committee shall meet upon the call of the cochairs. Vacancies shall be filled by the appointing authority. A quorum of the Committee shall be a majority of the members.

**SECTION 14.10.(d)** Duties. – The Committee shall (i) study means for the State to celebrate the two hundred fiftieth anniversary of the founding of our nation and (ii) report the means and anticipated costs of the celebratory events to the General Assembly.

**SECTION 14.10.(e)** Compensation; Administration. – Members of the Committee shall receive subsistence and travel allowances at the rates set forth in G.S. 120-3.1, 138-5, or 138-6, as appropriate. The Committee may contract for consultants or hire employees in accordance with G.S. 120-32.02. The Legislative Services Commission, through the Legislative Services Officer, shall assign professional staff to assist the Committee in its work. Upon the direction of the Legislative Services Commission, the Directors of Legislative Assistants of the Senate and of the House of Representatives shall assign clerical staff to the Committee. The expenses for clerical employees shall be borne by the Committee.

**SECTION 14.10.(f)** Reports; Termination. – The Committee shall make an interim report to the 2025 Regular Session of the 2025 General Assembly and a final report to the 2026 Regular Session of the 2025 General Assembly no later than January 14, 2026. The Committee shall terminate on January 15, 2026.

**SECTION 14.10.(g)** This section is effective when it becomes law.

## **S.L. 2025-97**

### **AMERICA'S SEMIQUINCENTENNIAL COMMITTEE EXTENSION**

**SECTION 6.5.(a)** Subsection (f) of Section 14.10 of S.L. 2023-134 reads as rewritten:

**"SECTION 14.10.(f)** Reports; Termination. – The Committee shall make the following reports to the General Assembly prior to terminating on August 1, 2026:

- (1) ~~an~~An interim report to the 2025 Regular Session of the 2025 General Assembly ~~and a final report to the 2026 Regular Session of the 2025 General Assembly no later than January 14, 2026. The Committee shall terminate on January 15, 2026.~~Assembly.
- (2) An interim report by March 31, 2026.
- (3) A final report by August 1, 2026."

**SECTION 6.5.(b)** This section is effective when it becomes law.

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## SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

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**America's Semiquincentennial Committee**  
**Wednesday, April 8, 2026 at 2:00 PM**  
**1228/1327 Legislative Building**

### AGENDA

#### **I. CALL TO ORDER**

**Co-Chairs: Rep. Hugh Blackwell, Presiding**

**Sen. Ted Alexander**

#### **II. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

#### **III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES (February 11, 2026)**

#### **IV. PRESENTATION**

**Trey Allen, Associate Justice of the North Carolina Supreme Court:**  
**"North Carolina's 1776 Constitution"**

*Justice Allen has practiced education law at Tharrington Smith LLP in Raleigh. He also became a partner at the firm. The UNC School of Government named him the Albert and Gladys Distinguished Term Associate Professor for 2020-2022. Justice Allen is a graduate of UNC Law.*

#### **V. REPORT LANGUAGE AND APPROVAL**

#### **VI. UPDATES**

- 1. PARADE**
- 2. CONCERT**
- 3. PUBLICATION OPPORTUNITIES**
- 4. FREEDOM 250**
- 5. POTENTIAL PARTNERS**
- 6. COMMITTEE UPDATES**

#### **VII. OTHER BUSINESS**

#### **VIII. PUBLIC COMMENT (Three Minutes for Each Individual)**

#### **IX. ADJOURNMENT**



**America's Semiquincentennial Committee  
Thursday, May 21, 2026 at 2:00 PM  
1228/1327 Legislative Building**

**AGENDA**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

**Chairs: Senator Ted Alexander, Presiding  
Representative Hugh Blackwell**

**II. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

**III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES (April 8, 2026)**

**IV. PRESENTATION**

**V. AMERICAN JOURNEY EXPERIENCE**

**VI. UPDATES**

- A. PARADE**
- B. CONCERT**
- C. PROMOTIONAL MATERIAL**
- D. PUBLICATION OPPORTUNITIES**
- E. THE AMERICAN CONSTITUTION FILM**
- F. AMERICAN BATTLEFIELD TRUST**

**VII. COMMITTEE OUTREACH**

**VIII. OTHER BUSINESS**

**IX. PUBLIC COMMENT**

**X. ADJOURNMENT**