



**From: Jim Williams, Public Policy Polling**  
**To: Interested Parties**  
**Subject: Wayne, Wilson, and Greene County Voters Express Serious Concern Over Budget Impacts on Local Teachers, Hospitals, and Medicaid**  
**Date: March 31, 2026**

A new Public Policy Polling survey of voters in North Carolina's 4th Senate District finds that the nearly three-year failure to pass a state budget is generating significant constituent backlash against State Senator Buck Newton, who chairs the Senate Appropriations Committee on Justice and Public Safety. Voters in the district express serious concern about the impact of the budget stalemate on local teachers, hospitals, and Medicaid recipients, and those concerns appear to be translating into electoral vulnerability for Newton.

The survey finds Trump underwater in the district at 41% approve / 53% disapprove, and Democrats hold a narrow lead on the generic legislative ballot (45-44). Newton posts a negative job approval rating, with just 25% approving of his performance and 27% disapproving, while nearly half of voters have no opinion of him at all.

When voters are presented with specific, local consequences of the budget failure, they register serious concern at high levels:

- 57% of voters express serious concern that Newton's inaction has left nearly 2,000 teachers in Wayne, Wilson, and Greene Counties waiting nearly three years for a pay raise that depends on a state budget.
- 55% express serious concern that more than 83,000 people in Wayne, Wilson, and Greene Counties who depend on Medicaid for their health coverage are at risk without a state budget.
- 55% express serious concern that rural hospitals in Wayne, Wilson, and Greene Counties depend on state budget funding to keep their doors open and serve local patients.

When voters learn that Newton chairs a Senate budget committee and North Carolina families have still gone nearly three years without a budget, 54% express serious concern about his role. These concerns are showing up on the ballot. In an initial test, Newton leads Democratic candidate Jess Rivera 41-35. After voters hear information about the budget's impact on their community, the race moves to a dead heat at 42-42. That 6-point swing is driven almost entirely by budget accountability, and it suggests that as voters learn more about the real cost of legislative inaction, Newton's position could continue to erode.

Public Policy Polling surveyed 504 voters in NC Senate District 4 on March 25-26, 2026. The margin of error is +/- 4.4%. 88% of interviews were conducted by text message and 12% by telephone.

