

## News Roundup

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It was a big news week, but I'll start with the General Assembly. First off, it passed a law, [S.L. 2015-31](#), that requires motor vehicles to have at least one "stop lamp," or brake light, on each side of the rear of the vehicle. It thus effectively overruled *State v. Heien*, 214 N.C. App. 515 (2011), which held that G.S. 20-129(g) only requires one stop lamp.

In other news:

**Governor to veto magistrate marriage bill.** Senate Bill 2 would allow magistrates to opt out of performing marriages altogether based on a "sincerely held religious objection," presumably by marrying same-sex couples. Both chambers of the General Assembly have passed the bill, but Governor McCrory [recently announced](#) that he will veto it, because "we are a nation and a state of laws" and "no public official who voluntarily swears to support and defend the Constitution and to discharge all duties of their office should be exempt from upholding that oath." The General Assembly may have the votes to override the veto but it is not yet clear whether it will attempt to do so.

**New graffiti law?** WRAL just ran [this story](#) about [H552](#), a bill that would create a new Class 1 misdemeanor of "graffiti vandalism." The offense would be a felony for certain recidivists. The bill is almost through the legislature and appears likely to pass.

**Soccer indictments hit close to home.** The infamously corrupt world of international soccer is quaking in its collective soccer shoes after the United States Department of Justice announced indictments against 14 senior officials. Generally, the allegation is that the officials accepted bribes in exchange for official actions, such as voting for which country would be allowed to host the World Cup and other events. The *New York Times* has the story [here](#). Sepp Blatter, the president of FIFA, the world's most important governing body for soccer, was not indicted, but many believe that it is only a matter of time until his lieutenants turn on Slippery Sepp to save themselves. Locally, Aaron Davidson, the de facto owner of the Carolina Railhawks, was among those indicted, raising questions about the team's future. As an occasional Railhawks fan, I hope the team finds new, local owners committed to building the sport here for the long haul.

**Mega law firm v. street performers.** Lawyers in the Washington, D.C., office of Skadden Arps are not happy. A group of street performers – the Spread Love Band – have taken to playing on the street near Skadden's swanky offices. Whether it's the noise, the image, or something else, Skadden wants the buskers gone. Someone at the firm apparently offered the band \$200 per week to play somewhere else. Chump change! That's the equivalent of a half a billable hour for a single junior associate, and is about what each member of the band takes home every *day* in tips, so the band turned the deal down. Skadden has tried calling the Secret Service, without success, and has even considered hiring a string quartet to occupy the space before the Spread Love Band gets there each day. (A string quartet? "We can blow 'em the f--- out of the water," said one band member.) You've got to love America, where a group of street musicians can take on a giant law firm and win. Above the Law has the story [here](#).

**Man who got lizard stoned acquitted of animal cruelty.** Finally, the *Chicago Tribune* reports [here](#) that Bruce Blunt, "whose video of himself smoking marijuana with his pet chameleon went viral and led to a misdemeanor animal cruelty charge[,] was acquitted Wednesday by a . . . judge who found his behavior immature but not criminal." The defendant

apparently “said he sometimes blew smoke into the mouth of his chameleon . . . because it seemed to calm the sometimes aggressive reptile.” Some of the experts quoted in the news story suggest that this may be no laughing matter, but I can’t help wondering whether the chameleon got the munchies.