

## News Roundup

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Remember that officer in Utah who handcuffed the nurse who refused to draw blood from an unconscious patient? CNN [reports](#) that he has been fired. Keep reading for more news.

**Judicial elections, redistricting, judicial selection, Attorney General budget cuts, and other matters going on in Raleigh.** Rather than try to summarize all the different developments it notes, I'll let [this WRAL article](#) speak for itself:

Gov. Roy Cooper vetoed legislation Monday that would have canceled next year's judicial primary elections, saying he saw it as a precursor to a Republican push to appoint judges instead of having the public elect them. . . .

Leaders for the General Assembly's Republican majority said they needed a time cushion to continue working on a planned overhaul of voting districts for trial court judges statewide. The plan, House Bill 717, passed the House last week but has not been heard in the Senate.

Cooper called canceling the primaries a "first step toward a constitutional amendment that will rig the system so that the legislature picks everybody's judges."

Something like that has been discussed in the Senate, which has seemed cool to the House's plan to redraw districts for judges. Changing the constitution to allow appointments instead of elections would require a statewide voter referendum.

The article also notes that "Cooper signed a separate bill, Senate Bill 582, making a number of changes to the state budget," including a provision "forbid[ding] Attorney General Josh Stein from pushing criminal appeals work off on local district attorneys, something his office had planned as part of its response to a surprise \$10 million budget cut the General Assembly enacted earlier this year."

**Supreme Court to tackle recurrent rental car question.** The Supreme Court has granted certiorari on a question that comes up relatively often in the field and that has divided the lower courts:

Does a driver have a reasonable expectation of privacy in a rental car when he has the renter's permission to drive the car but is not listed as an authorized driver on the rental agreement?

The case is *Byrd v. United States*, and you can check out SCOTUSblog's coverage [here](#). Of course, we'll keep you posted when the case is decided.

**Extreme prison temperatures.** The Marshall Project has [a new piece](#) up about hot weather and hot prisons. This excerpt conveys the gist:

Among roughly 150,000 people in Texas prisons, about four in five have no access to air-conditioning in their cells. . . . [I]nmates and their families are taking their complaints [about heat] to the courtroom. In the past several years, courts in Arizona, Mississippi, and Wisconsin have sided with prisoners suing officials over extreme heat. In 2012, a federal

judge ordered the Louisiana State Penitentiary to lower temperatures on death row to 88 degrees; at times, the heat index had reached 109. But Texas is the center of the legal battle. More than 20 state prisoners have died from the heat since 1998. . . . The Texas Department of Criminal Justice is facing numerous wrongful death lawsuits . . . along with a class action suit to force cooler conditions.”

Here in North Carolina, [CBS reports](#) that 37 percent of prison beds are not air conditioned.

**Grisham wins appeal.** Finally, in Chapel Hill, famous author John Grisham has won approval to remove four small, run-down cottages that sit behind his new house on Franklin Street. He’s making room for guest parking and landscaping. However, he won’t be allowed to demolish the structures for a year, during which time he must attempt to relocate them.