



**ONE OF NORTH CAROLINA'S LONGEST SERVING AND MOST DISTINGUISHED LAWMAKERS** has announced he will not seek re-election after 32 years in the House of Representatives. Representative **Joe Hackney**, who during his 16 terms was speaker pro tem, majority leader and speaker of the House before the GOP took control in 2010, will leave the legislature at the end on 2012. "I enjoyed all of it immensely and gave it my all. I think I made a contribution," he said. Hackney, who was president of the National Conference of State Legislatures in 2008-2009, was lauded as a principled speaker and outstanding lawmaker who will be sorely missed. "Joe Hackney never wavered from the principles that brought him to public service," said Governor Beverly Perdue. Speaker **Thom Tillis** called Hackney "a true public servant" who has "led a distinguished career in the legislature." Tillis said Hackney's "respect for the traditions and integrity of the House has had a significant impact on my first year as speaker." Hackney said he will actively work for a Democratic majority in the upcoming election.



**NORTH DAKOTA'S LONGEST SERVING LEGISLATOR** will not seek re-election this year, but the state's oldest lawmaker will. Senator **David Nothing**, who first won his seat in 1966 and is the architect of the state plan giving colleges broad authority to make their own decisions on spending, announced he is leaving the legislature at the end of his term. Nothing served as majority leader and appropriations chair during his 45-year career and was also president of the National Conference of State Legislatures. Currently the longest-serving Republican state senator in the country, Nothing is 78. His 80-year old colleague, Senator **John Andrist**, says he will run for another four year term to work on oil and gas issues. A retired newspaper publisher, Andrist was first elected to the Senate in 1992.



**DR. MATT HEINZ, AN OPENLY GAY ARIZONA STATE LAWMAKER**, has announced he plans to run for former Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords' U.S. House seat. A special primary has been set for April 17, with the general election on June 12. Heinz, 34, has not yet decided whether he will resign his seat in the House during the race.



**NEW JERSEY REPUBLICAN ASSEMBLY LEADER ALEX DECROCE** collapsed and died in the Statehouse moments after the Legislature concluded its final voting session on the night of January 9. Assemblyman **Herb Conaway**, a physician, tried in vain to revive DeCroce. His death stunned lawmakers and staff who had worked with him late into the night at the end of the lame duck session. DeCroce, who was 75, had served in the Assembly for 23 years and was widely liked and respected on both sides of the aisle. Governor Chris Christie, who

considered DeCroce "a dear friend, colleague and mentor," rushed to the Capitol around midnight and embraced Assembly Speaker **Sheila Oliver**. Christie, who was scheduled to deliver his state of the state address hours later, instead gave a poignant eulogy for his long-time friend the next day. He quoted the words DeCroce intended to deliver on the opening day of session. "We will solve more problems working together than apart," the governor quoted him. "Alex had planned to tell us to 'reach across the aisle to work cooperatively toward solving our biggest problems.' His closing words were to be 'We owe our constituents nothing less.'" Three former governors stood near DeCroce's empty desk. "Democrats and Republicans alike are crying," said Assemblyman **Jon M. Brannick**. "He was like the father figure of the family." More than 1,000 people attended DeCroce's funeral Mass.

#### THE OPENING SESSION OF THE NEW MEXICO HOUSE

took on a somber tone when Speaker **Ben Lujan** announced he has stage IV lung cancer and will not seek re-election. Lujan was diagnosed in 2009 and underwent chemotherapy and radiation since then. He apologized for keeping his condition a secret and said that criticism of his leadership during his quiet fight against cancer "sadly took a tremendous toll on me and my family..." Lujan was first elected to the New Mexico House in 1974 and has served as speaker since 2001. Lujan was praised by the governor, U.S. Senator Tom Udall and members of the Legislature on both sides of the aisle. "Today is a day we will remember as a day of a heroic statesman that fights for his state," said Majority Leader Ken Martinez. And Lujan had words of inspiration: "Let's make this session a work of art."

#### FORMER LOUISIANA SENATE PRESIDENT SAMMY NUNEZ

was "a tireless, dedicated public servant who loved Louisiana and wanted nothing more than to see Louisiana and its people succeed," according to **John Alario**, the incoming president of the Senate. Nunez, who was first elected to the Legislature in 1964, died in January. He was 81. He served as Senate president twice, the first time from 1982 to 1988, and then from 1990 to 1996. He was

also president of the National Conference of State Legislatures in 1988-89. Nunez lost his leadership position when Governor Buddy Roemer was elected on a reform campaign. But two years later, Nunez was back and continued leading the Senate until he lost his seat in 1995. His defeat came on the heels of criticism for handing out campaign contribution checks from the Star Casino to members on the floor. "Somebody has to do it," he said.