

Good evening. My name is Dennis Boos. I've lived in Wake County since 1977 and have had two daughters progress through the Wake County Schools with very good experiences. So I know what you do and appreciate your hard work. I'm also a professor at NC State, but don't hold that against me.

I want to speak tonight against the proposed JROTC programs at Garner and Knightdale High Schools. My main argument is that this is essentially an extra-curricula activity that should not be part of the regular academic day. JROTC is certainly not for college-bound students. But those are not the only students we serve. I contend that JROTC is not the best option for non-college bound students either. In Sunday's News and Observer there was an article pointing out that the unemployment rate for veterans seeking civilian jobs since 9/11 is 12.1%. Why is that? At least part of the reason is that many jobs in the military do not provide suitable experience or training for civilian jobs. As an alternative to JROTC, I would like you to consider the new program proposed by Governor Perdue, the N.C. Career and College Promise initiative, that would allow high school students to take courses at community colleges for free. In particular these could be job training courses that would prepare students to be electricians, plumbers, etc., that we all need. For those students not heading off to college, let's give them a chance to compete in the real job market instead of learning in JROTC how to march and use firearms and learn about military history and culture. Let's get them started on skills that will be useful for their whole lives.