

Robert L. Bryant, President

Dear Colleagues,

Allow me to extend to all of you a special welcome to NC State, both on behalf of myself personally (a proud alumnus of the Wolfpack), and the AMS Staff and Secretariat who have worked so hard to make this meeting possible.

Our organizers have put together an exciting program of invited addresses (with special guest Gaven Martin from Massey University in New Zealand, who is our AMS-NZMS Maclaurin Lecturer) and special sessions covering a wide range of topics in pure and applied mathematics. You are sure to find a wealth of interesting talks and to have many opportunities to engage in stimulating mathematical discussions while you are here. You will also have the opportunity to meet new acquaintances and spend time with old friends.

On a somewhat more serious matter, as members of our community may well be aware, in March 2016, the North Carolina Legislature passed House Bill 2 (aka the “Public Facilities Privacy & Security Act”) that, among other things, eliminates anti-discrimination protections for gay, bisexual, transgender, genderqueer, and intersex people and legislates that, in government buildings, individuals may only use restrooms and changing facilities that correspond to the sex on their birth certificates. This legislation is clearly contrary to the spirit of inclusion and nondiscrimination that the AMS promotes as well as to its explicitly stated policy <http://www.ams.org/about-us/governance/policy-statements/welcoming-environment-policy> of ensuring that our meetings will provide a welcoming environment supportive of our diverse membership.

Our leadership at the AMS discussed this situation, but it proved impossible, at such short notice, to move the November 2016 meeting of the Southeastern Section of the AMS, scheduled to be held at North Carolina State University in Raleigh, to a location outside of North Carolina. Hence, we have decided to hold the meeting as planned while making every effort to promote the welcoming environment at this meeting that our members have come to expect.

As a practical matter, it should be noted that HB2 does not contain any guidance on how it is to be enforced and does not name any specific crimes or penalties. Moreover, police departments in Raleigh (and other large cities in NC) have stated their unwillingness to devote resources to enforcing its provisions.

We will keep a close watch on the situation with HB2. This legislation has been and continues to be protested vigorously, both within North Carolina and nationally, and is the target of a number of lawsuits seeking to overturn the law. We hope that it will soon be either repealed or nullified by judicial review, and, as long as it is in force, the AMS will not plan to hold any further sectional or national meetings in North Carolina.

Finally, please join me in extending a special thank-you to our wonderful hosts in the North Carolina State University Mathematics Department, whose hard work and dedication have made this meeting possible. And thank *you* for your contributions to our mathematical community and our profession. I hope that you'll have a chance to sample some of the cultural events taking place in Raleigh during the meeting, and I look forward to the chance to meet many of you while you are here. Please don't hesitate to say hello!

Yours,



Robert L. Bryant