

The Daily Bulletin: 2026-05-01

PUBLIC/HOUSE BILLS

H 1161 (2025-2026) **OMNIBUS ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE PROTECTIONS**. Filed Apr 30 2026, *AN ACT ENACTING PROTECTIONS CONCERNING DEPLOYMENT OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND RELATED TECHNOLOGIES IN ELECTIONS, EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT, THE COURTS, AND THE INSURANCE INDUSTRY IN THIS STATE AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS FOR IMPLEMENTATION.*

Part I.

Adds new GS 163-278.18A, prohibiting the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in political advertisements by any candidate, candidate campaign committee, political party organization, political action committee, referendum committee, individual, or other sponsor. Defines AI as the capability of computer systems or algorithms to imitate intelligent human behavior, including generative AI. Defines political ad to include communications sent by mail, text, or appearing on a website or social media platform. Makes violations a Class 1 misdemeanor with a fine to the State Board of Elections (SBE) based on the cost to produce and distribute the AI, along with the specified limits on donations or contributions (limited solely to PACs). Subjects persons that are not affiliated with a campaign but who create AI content of a candidate designed to confuse or interfere with a candidate's campaign to a fraud or election interference conviction. Exempts material that clearly states it is AI or parody law, so long as neither qualifies as any form of harassment, including sexual harassment. Applies to political ads using AI after the act becomes law.

Part II.

Authorizes local boards of education (new GS 115C-102.13), the schools for the deaf and blind (GS 115C-150.12C), charter schools (GS 115C-218.33), regional schools (GS 115C-238.66), and laboratory schools (GS 116-239.8) to adopt a policy on student use of AI tools (any algorithm, product, software, or system that uses AI to perform tasks), that can include provisions allowing schools to block access to AI tools on the specified student devices and internet connections, and to impose disciplinary action for policy violations. Requires any such policy to include exceptions for authorized educational purposes or if required by a student's individualized education plan (IEP).

Requires, in GS 115C-81.46, the State Board of Education (Board) to include instruction on critical thinking and civics in the standard course of study for middle school students, including the five topics identified. Makes computer science mandatory at the middle school level, and requires that such courses provide instruction on the six enumerated topics, including proper uses of AI in academic and professional setting, identifying AI, and introduction to basic cybersecurity. Appropriates \$500,000 from the General Fund to the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) for 2026-27 to implement the above provisions.

Applies beginning with the 2026-27 school year.

Requires the UNC Board of Governors, in GS 116-11, and the State Board of Community Colleges (SBCC), in GS 115D-10.85, to develop a policy requiring each UNC constituent institution/Community College to develop standards for the use of AI in the classroom, to include disciplinary action, as described, for student AI misuse and annual presentation of the policy to students each year. Applies beginning with the 2026-27 academic year.

Part III.

Enacts GS Chapter 95A, the Fair AI Hiring Act. Contains four NCGA findings. Defines ten terms, including *automated employment decision tool or AEDT* (any computational process, or any technology that incorporates such a process, derived in whole or in material part from machine learning, statistical modeling, data analytics, or artificial intelligence, that issues a simplified output, including a score, classification, ranking, or recommendation, that is used to substantially assist or replace the exercise of discretionary judgment by an employer or employment agency in making a covered employment decision. A tool does not qualify as an AEDT solely because it translates or transcribes text, performs arithmetic computation on manually

entered data without autonomous parameter adjustment, or conducts background checks governed exclusively by the federal Fair Credit Reporting Act.); and *covered employment decision* (a decision to hire an individual for, or to promote an employee to, a position within this State, including a remote position performed primarily by an individual who resides within this State),

Prohibits use of AEDT in making a covered employment decision unless three conditions are met: (1) the AEDT has been subject to a bias audit conducted by an independent auditor within the 12-month period immediately preceding each use of the AEDT; (2) a summary of those results is publicly accessible as required by new Chapter 95A, and (3) the required advance notice has been provided. Provides process for how bias audit should be conducted when an AEDT is going to be used for the first time. Clarifies that the absence of statistically significant adverse impact findings in a bias audit does not constitute a defense to a claim of employment discrimination under any other provision of State or federal law. Requires disclosure of the bias audit results and written notice to individuals when AEDT is used to make a covered employment decision. Provides for enforcement by the Attorney General against private employers with civil fines ranging from \$500 per day for an initial violation to \$5,000 per day for each subsequent violation within a rolling three-year period, a private civil action against a private employer, investigation and adjudication of complaints against a public employer by the State Human Resources Commission (SHRC) with judicial review available to the employee after exhausting administrative remedies. After finding an employer has committed a violation, requires that the finding be sent to OSHR to initiate personnel disciplinary proceedings against the responsible employee. Sets out allowable sanctions. After SHRC finds that a public employer has violated the independent bias audit provisions and has failed to cure the violation within 30 days, requires certifying the finding and the agency's failure to cure to the OSBM, which must then withhold from the noncompliant agency's personnel services budget allotment an amount equal to two times the reasonable cost of a conforming independent bias audit for the AEDT at issue. The withheld amount is credited back to the agency's personnel services allotment in full upon OSHR's certification to OSBM that the agency has cured the violation; if it is not cured within 180 days of the withholding, the withheld amount is transferred to the General Fund as a nonrecurring credit. Limits a single withholding to \$50,000 per violation. Requires OSBM to report each withholding action taken under this statute to the NCGA and Fiscal Research Division within 30 days of taking the action and requires including a summary of all withholding actions in its annual report.

Tasks SHRC, in conjunction with the Attorney General and the Department of Administration (DOA) the enumerated standards concerning employer use of AEDT. Requires prime contractors (any person that enters directly into a personal service contract exceeding \$25,000 or more including all renewals and amendments, with a State agency) to comply with the audit, disclosure, and notice requirements of Chapter 95A with respect to any AEDT used to select contract employees under a covered contract. Specifies that such use constitutes a covered employment decision. Provides for contract terms in State contracts and a complaint process through SHRC.

Contains five exemptions to the Chapter, including tools used solely by employers with fewer than 15 employees and the judicial or legislative branches of government except that the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court and the Legislative Services Officer may establish substantially equivalent provisions and requirements concerning the deployment of AEDT. Clarifies that GS Chapter 95A does not supplant any of the listed State or federal civil rights laws and other local ordinance, rule, or policy. Contains severability clause.

Effective July 1, 2026, appropriates from the General Fund to the SHRC \$250,000, DOJ \$250,000, and DOA \$100,000, to be used for the purposes described.

Part IV.

Includes using AI (any machine-based system that, for a given set of objectives, generates predictions, recommendations, or decisions influencing outcomes without direct human control) as the primary method of processing an insurance claim as an unfair claims settlement practice under GS 58-63-15. Applies to policies issued or renewed on or after October 1, 2026.

Part V.

Enacts Article 64, concerning the use of AI to GS Chapter 7A, authorizing a trial court to dismiss a case without prejudice if a party to a case in a trial court uses any form of generative artificial intelligence (defined) in a court filing or appearance, regardless of whether a deepfake (defined) or hallucination (defined) is present. Provides for refiling or an appeal of the trial court's dismissal. Allows for sanctions and dismissal with prejudice for use of AI in any refiling when the original case was dismissed due to misuse of AI as described above. Applies to court documents filed and proceedings initiated on or after July 1, 2026.

Part VI.

Appropriates \$1 million from the General Fund to the Office of State Budget and Management for 2026-27 to be allocated for implementation of this act upon application made by the affected State agency, department, or institution. Specifies that the funds are not subject to reversion.

Intro. by Logan, Cervania, Greenfield, Hawkins.

[APPROP, GS 7A, GS 58, GS 115C, GS 115D, GS 116, GS 163](#)

[Business and Commerce, Consumer Protection, Insurance, Courts/Judiciary, Civil, Civil Law, Civil Procedure, Court System, Administrative Office of the Courts, Education, Elementary and Secondary Education, Higher Education, Employment and Retirement, Government, Budget/Appropriations, Elections, State Agencies, Community Colleges System Office, UNC System, Department of Administration, Department of Public Instruction, State Board of Education, State Government, State Personnel](#)

[View summary](#)

H 1163 (2025-2026) [WORKFORCE ACT OF 2026](#). Filed Apr 30 2026, *AN ACT TO PROVIDE FOR THE CONTINUATION AND EXPANSION OF PROGRAMS AND SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE STATE FOR WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND TO APPROPRIATE FUNDS FOR THOSE PURPOSES.*

Part I titles the act as the Workforce Act of 2026 and specifies the purpose of the act's appropriations.

Part II.

States legislative findings. Appropriates \$3.1 million in recurring funds from the General Fund to the Community Colleges System Office (Office) for 2026-27 to administer the ApprenticeshipNC program.

Part III.

States legislative findings. Appropriates \$350,000 in recurring funds from the General Fund to the Department of Commerce (Department) for 2026-27 to be used for operational expenses and staffing to support NC Workforce Credentials pursuant to the act and state law. Directs the Department to engage employers to provide workforce data and link data on industry-valued credentials to five labor market outcomes, including wage outcomes and work location. Requires consultation with the Office, UNC System, and other stakeholders to align with the rules and regulations of federal Workforce Pell Grants and institutionalize workforce data sharing across State government. Directs the Department to require entities issuing industry-valued credentials to submit data to the NC Collaboratory and NC Longitudinal Data System for incorporation into the System's warehouse. Requires the Department to give substantial weight to demonstrated wage outcomes and evidence that a credential provides students a positive return on investment. Authorizes the Department to use up to \$50,000 each fiscal year for outreach and communications.

States legislative findings. Amends GS 115D-10.19 to authorize the Office to use up to 4% of funds appropriated to the NC Community College Short-Term Workforce Development Grant Program for administration of the Program. Appropriates \$1 million in recurring funds from the General Fund to the Office for 2026-27 for the NC Community College Short-Term Workforce Development Grant Program.

Part IV.

Directs the State Education Assistance Authority to incorporate private colleges and universities in the State into the common digital transcript developed pursuant to SL 2023-134, Section 8A.15. Requires consultation with specified State entities. Directs the SEAA to report to the specified NCGA committee by March 15, 2027. Specified required content.

States legislative findings. Directs the UNC System Office to expand the current initiative for the 2026-27 academic year to accelerate the transfer of course credits among postsecondary institutions using postsecondary transfer technology. Requires consultation with the Office and Department of Information Technology. Requires the expansion to provide and improve

technology at participating institutions to simplify the credit transfer process, compare credit transfer options, and make decision making more efficient for students. Appropriates \$2.5 million from the Information Technology Reserve to the UNC Board of Governors (BOG) for 2026-27 for the expanded initiative and requires the funds be used to identify and develop programs to accelerate the transfer of postsecondary course credits. Directs the UNC System Office to report to the specified NCGA committee by March 15, 2027. Specifies required content.

Part V.

States legislative findings. Appropriates \$200,000 in nonrecurring funds and \$585,000 recurring funds from the Information Technology Reserve to the Department for 2026-27 to contract with Year13, Inc. to replatform, host, and maintain the NC Careers website on its proprietary system. Details required contractual terms regarding unified infrastructure requirements.

Part VI.

Directs the NC Collaboratory to evaluate programs and initiatives established in Parts I through V of the Act each academic year through 2029-30 and annually report to the specified NCGA committee by March 15. Specifies required content. Appropriates \$600,000 from the General Fund to the UNC BOG for 2026-27 to be allocated to the Collaboratory for required evaluation and reporting.

Part VII.

Directs the Superintendent of Public Instruction to create an Annual Career Development Plan Pilot Program (program) for students entering seventh grade at select schools during the 2026-27 and 2027-28 school years through the students' graduation for evaluation of Career Development Plans (Plans) as defined and described. Provides for selection of 12 partnered schools, defined as a middle school and high school governed by a local board of education where at least half of the middle school student population is assigned to attend the associated high school. Details requirements for partnered schools and local boards in ensuring each student completes and reviews Plans each year and includes parental involvement and notice as specified. Lists information partnered schools are required to provide students by grade to inform annual Plan updates. Requires the NC Collaboratory to develop reporting requirements for partnered schools and to report to the specified NCGA committee by August 15, 2027, and annually thereafter on the Program, with a final report by August 15, 2033. Applies beginning with the 2026-27 school year.

Part VIII.

Enacts GS 115C-302.9 to direct the State Board of Education (State Board) to establish a consolidated teach bonus program to reward teacher performance and encourage student learning and improvement. Directs the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) to administer the bonus to qualifying teachers whose salaries are supported from State funds in January of each year based on data from the prior school year. Defines seven terms. Defines *qualifying teacher* as an eligible teacher who either (1) remains employed teaching in the same qualifying public school unit or Virtual Public School program as specified or (2) retired after the last day of the school year in which the data was collected after attaining specified age or years of service. Defines *qualifying public school unit* to mean local school administrative units, charter schools, regional schools, and elementary and secondary schools operated by UNC. Grants a \$50 bonus for qualifying advanced course teachers for each student taught in each advanced course who receives one of three described scores. Grants a bonus of either \$25 or \$50 for qualifying career and technical education teachers for students taught in courses that led to an industry certification or credential. Directs the Department of Commerce to assign a value ranking for CTE courses based on academic rigor and employment value. States weight of each basis and lists elements to be used to determine each. Directs DPI to provide bonuses to eligible teachers based on student growth as well as a bonus for employment in a unit where three or fewer total teachers were employed in the grade level and the student growth index from the previous school year exceeded expected growth in specified grades and subjects. Sets the bonus amount or allocation of specified funds based on criteria justifying the teacher's qualification set forth in the definition of eligible growth teacher, with set bonuses ranging from \$2,000 to \$7,000 and specified funds for equal distribution at \$5 million for both statewide and local growth bonuses. Establishes caps for specified qualifying teacher bonuses and provides for receipt of bonuses under two of the qualifying criteria. Clarifies that bonuses are not compensation. Directs the NC Collaboratory to study the bonus program's effect on teacher performance and retention and annually report to the specified NCGA leaders, committee, and division by March 15. Specifies required content. Effective July 1, 2026, and applies beginning with bonuses awarded in January of 2028 based on data from the 2026-27 school year.

Part IX.

Effective July 1, 2026.

Intro. by Blackwell, Lambeth, Paré, Schietzelt.

APPROP, STUDY, GS 115C

[View summary](#)

Business and Commerce, Education, Elementary and Secondary Education, Higher Education, Employment and Retirement, Government, Budget/Appropriations, State Agencies, Community Colleges System Office, UNC System, Department of Commerce, Department of Public Instruction

H 1164 (2025-2026) [NSF FOR TAXES PENALTY MODIFICATION](#). Filed Apr 30 2026, *AN ACT TO MODIFY THE PENALTY ASSOCIATED WITH INSUFFICIENT FUNDS FOR PAYMENT OF TAXES.*

Contains whereas clauses.

Amends GS 105-357(b)'s penalty for presenting a check or electronic funds transfer to pay taxes that is returned or not completed due to insufficient funds or nonexistence of an account of the drawer or transferor as follows (was, the greater of \$25.00 or 10% of the amount of the check or electronic invoice, subject to a maximum of \$1,000): (1) for the first two violations where a penalty is imposed within the past five years, the penalty is \$25.00 plus 1% of the amount of the check or electronic invoice; (2) for any other violation, \$50.00 plus 2% of the amount of the check or electronic invoice. The penalty is subject to a maximum of \$1,000 for either (1) or (2). Removes provision that the penalty does not apply if the tax collector finds that the drawer or transferor had sufficient funds in an account at a financial institution in NC when the check or transfer was presented for payment and inadvertently failed to draw the check or initiate a transfer on the account that had sufficient funds. Applies to payments of taxes made on or after this act's effective date, effective when it becomes law.

Appropriates \$15,000 for 2026-27 from the General Fund to the Department of Revenue to be used by the Department for educational materials and assistance to the public and county tax collectors with respect to this change in the penalty law.

Intro. by Rubin, Budd, Logan, Roberson.

APPROP, GS 105

[View summary](#)

Banking and Finance, Government, Budget/Appropriations, State Agencies, Department of Revenue

H 1165 (2025-2026) [HYGIENE PRODUCTS PROTECTIONS/SALES TAX](#). Filed Apr 30 2026, *AN ACT TO EXEMPT QUALIFYING MENSTRUATION PRODUCTS FROM THE STATE SALES TAX, TO DIRECT THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE TO CERTIFY MENSTRUATION PRODUCTS THAT ARE FREE OF INTENTIONALLY ADDED PFAS, AND TO APPROPRIATE MONEY TO THE DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE.*

Exempts *qualifying menstrual products* (tampons, panty liners, menstrual cups, sanitary napkins, and other similar tangible personal property designed for menstrual hygiene in connection with the menstrual cycle that contain no intentionally added PFAS as certified by the Department of Commerce-DOC) from the retail sales tax under GS 105-164.13.

Directs the Secretary of Revenue to take requisite action required by the Streamlined Agreement to request an amendment to the Streamlined Agreement that would allow a member state to limit the definition of Menstrual Discharge Collection Devices consistent with this section or otherwise modify the agreement to allow a member state to provide an exemption consistent with this section without violating the Streamlined Agreement. Upon amendment of the Streamlined Agreement to allow a member state to provide an exemption, this section becomes effective on the first day of a calendar quarter that begins at least 90 days after amendment of the Streamlined Agreement.

Adds new Part 3D, PFAS Certification, to Article 10 of GS Chapter 143B instructing DOC to certify menstruation products that do not contain any intentionally added PFAS (Perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances, a class of fluorinated organic chemicals containing at least two fully fluorinated carbon atoms). Requires DOC to adopt rules to implement the certification program. Provides for an application for certification, notification to DOC of any material changes related to the menstrual

product, and decertification. Makes it a Class 2 misdemeanor to knowingly provide false information or make a material misrepresentation to DOC.

Provides for interim administration of the certification program by DOC. Specifies that any menstrual product that has been certified by a nationally recognized, independent testing laboratory, as not containing any intentionally added PFAS is deemed to satisfy the PFAS content standards described above. Requires DOC to certify the menstrual product upon receiving such certification. Sunsets these provisions upon the effective date of permanent rules adopted by DOC.

Appropriates \$100,000 from the General Fund to DOC for 2026-27 to assist with the implementation of the modification of the Streamlined Agreement. Effective July 1, 2026.

Intro. by Budd, Harrison.

[APPROP, GS 105, GS 143B](#)

[View summary](#)

[Business and Commerce, Consumer Protection, Government, Budget/Appropriations, State Agencies, Department of Commerce, Tax, Health and Human Services, Health, Public Health](#)

H 1168 (2025-2026) [LIMIT ELECTRIC UTIL. HIST. FUEL COST RECOVERY](#). Filed Apr 30 2026, *AN ACT TO RESTORE CERTAIN LIMITATIONS PREVENTING ELECTRIC PUBLIC UTILITIES FROM RECOVERING HISTORIC FUEL COSTS FROM CUSTOMERS*.

Amends GS 62-133.2(d) requiring the North Carolina Utilities Commission (Commission) to incorporate in its cost of fuel and fuel-related costs determination, the experienced over-recovery or under-recovery of reasonable costs of fuel and fuel related costs prudently incurred, during the test period (was, by the electric public utility), based on prudent standards set in GS 62-133.2(d1), in fixing an increment or decrement rider. Adds that the Commission cannot incorporate in this determination any fuel or fuel-related costs incurred prior to the test period. Mandates that any experienced over-recovery or under-recovery of reasonable fuel and fuel-related costs prudently incurred during the test period (previously, no “during the test period” language) will accrue interest at the commercial paper rate identified by the Federal Reserve for A2/P2 nonfinancial issuers, or reasonable successor, on a weighted average basis over the applicable time period.

Appropriates \$10,000 for 2026-27 from the General Fund to the Utilities Commission to be used for purposes consistent with this act.

Effective July 1, 2026, and applies to any rate-making mechanisms filed by an electric public utility on or after that date.

Intro. by T. Brown, Reives, Prather, Pittman.

[APPROP, GS 62](#)

[View summary](#)

[Government, Budget/Appropriations, Public Enterprises and Utilities](#)

H 1169 (2025-2026) [PROHIBIT DRIVING WITH ANIMAL IN LAP](#). Filed Apr 30 2026, *AN ACT TO INCREASE SAFETY ON THE ROADS BY PROHIBITING THE OPERATION OF A MOTOR VEHICLE WHILE THE DRIVER IS HOLDING A LIVE ANIMAL IN THE PERSON'S LAP*.

Enacts GS 20-140.6 making it an infraction punishable by a \$100 fine and costs of court for a person to operate a vehicle on a public street, highway, or public vehicular area while holding a live animal in the person’s lap. States that no drivers license points or insurance surcharge can be assessed as a result of a violation of this statute and that failure to comply with the provisions does not constitute negligence per se or contributory negligence per se by the operator. Effective December 1, 2026, and applies to offenses committed on or after that date.

Appropriates \$50,000 for 2026-27 from the General Fund to the Department of Transportation to be used to conduct a public awareness campaign regarding act’s requirements. Effective July 1, 2026.

Intro. by Hawkins, Greenfield.

APPROP, GS 20

[View summary](#)

**Courts/Judiciary, Motor Vehicle, Government,
Budget/Appropriations, State Agencies, Department of
Transportation**

H 1171 (2025-2026) **PROHIBIT GAMBLING IN PREDICTION MARKETS**. Filed Apr 30 2026, *AN ACT TO PROHIBIT GAMBLING IN PREDICTION MARKETS*.

Amends GS 14-292 making it a Class 2 misdemeanor for a person (was, any person or organization) that operates any game of chance or that plays at or bets on any game of chance at which money, property, or another thing of value is bet, whether in stake or not, excluding playing a lottery game being lawfully conducted in any state. Adds new subsection (b) clarifying that GS 14-292 applies to any physical location in NC or any online market or platform offered to residents in NC, including a prediction market (a market or platform where a person can bet on the outcome of a future event). Makes technical changes to account for new subsection and small language changes. Effective December 1, 2026, and applies to offenses committed on or after that date.

Appropriates \$10,000 for 2026-27 from the General Fund to the State Lottery Commission to enforce this act. Effective July 1, 2026.

Intro. by Harrison, Morey, Butler.

APPROP, GS 14

[View summary](#)

**Courts/Judiciary, Criminal Justice, Criminal Law and
Procedure, Government, Budget/Appropriations, Lottery and
Gaming**

H 1173 (2025-2026) **JALEEYAH'S LAW**. Filed Apr 30 2026, *AN ACT TO MAKE CERTAIN MODIFICATIONS RELATED TO THE CRIMINAL LAWS OF NORTH CAROLINA AND TO APPROPRIATE CERTAIN FUNDS*.

Section 1

Appropriates \$397,014 in recurring funds for 2026-27 and \$7,504 in nonrecurring funds from the General Fund to the Conference of District Attorneys (Conference) to be used to hire two additional resource prosecutors and those prosecutors must focus on the prosecutions of criminal gang activity.

Appropriates \$136,298 in recurring funds for 2026-27 and \$4,198 in nonrecurring funds from the General Fund to the Conference to be used to hire a district attorney investigator who must focus on prosecutions of criminal gang activity.

Effective July 1, 2026.

Section 2

Amends GS 14-50.16A by amending the definitions of (1) *criminal gang* (removing the requirement that one of a group's primary activities be the commission of criminal or delinquent acts and adding that a group must engage in criminal gang activity); (2) *criminal gang activity* (removing "to further any criminal purpose of a criminal gang" from the end of the condition that participants in the offense are identified as criminal gang members acting individually or collectively); (3) *criminal gang leader or organizer* (requiring a criminal gang member to meet at least one of the listed criteria (was, at least two)); and (4) *criminal gang member* (requiring a person to meet two or more criteria (was, at least three)). Effective December 1, 2026, and applies to offenses committed on or after that date.

Section 3

Amends GS 14-50.17 making it a Class F felony (was, Class H) for any person to cause, encourage, solicit, or coerce a person at 18 years of age or older to participate in criminal gang activity (was, 16 or older) and adds that for purposes of GS 14-50.17

causing, encouraging, soliciting, or coercing a person to participate in such activity includes both publicly and privately shared communications created or shared online, including social media platforms.

Similarly, amends GS 14-50.18 making it a Class D felony (was, Class F) for any person to cause, encourage, solicit, or coerce a person under 18 (was, 16) to participate in criminal gang activity and adds that for purposes of GS 14-50.18 causing, encouraging, soliciting, or coercing a person to participate in such activity includes both publicly and privately shared communications created or shared online, including social media platforms.

Effective December 1, 2026, and applies to offenses committed on or after that date.

Section 4

Enacts GS 14-50.31 making it a Class H felony for any person identified by any court in NC as a member of a criminal gang to purchase, own, possess, or have in their custody, care, or control any firearm or any weapon of mass death and destruction. Defines firearm as any weapon that will, is designed to, or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by action of an explosive, or its frame or receiver, or any firearm muffler or silencer. Specifies that the statute does not apply to an antique firearm.

Enacts GS 14-50.32 defining *brandish* (display all or part of a firearm or otherwise make firearm presence known to another person), *crime of violence* (crime where physical force is used or threatened against the person or property of another in the course of committing a crime), *drug crime* (any offense chargeable by indictment under GS Chapter 90, Article 5), and *firearm* (identical to GS 14-50.31 above). Makes it a Class G felony for any member of a criminal gang during and in relation to any crime of violence or drug crime the person can be charged by indictment under NC law to use, carry, or possess a firearm in furtherance of that crime; a Class F felony if a firearm is brandished during the commission of the offense; and a Class D felony if a firearm is discharged during the commission of the offense.

Enacts new GS 14-50.33 making it a Class G felony for any person to sell, deliver, give, or transfer a firearm to a person the transferor knows or has reasonable cause to believe is a member of a criminal gang if the transferor knows or has reasonable cause to believe the member intends to carry, possess, discharge, or otherwise use the firearm in commission of a criminal act listed in GS 14-50.16A(2). Makes it a Class G felony for a criminal gang member to sell, deliver, give, or transfer a firearm to a person the member knows or has reasonable cause to believe is a juvenile (person under the age of 18) if the member knows or has reasonable cause to believe the juvenile intends to carry, possess, discharge, or otherwise use the firearm in commission of a criminal act listed in GS 14-50.16A(2).

Enacts new GS 14-50.34 allowing criminal gang activity, membership, association, leadership, and existence to be proven through testimony of a fact witness, expert witness, or combined fact expert witness. Provides that expert testimony is admissible to show conduct, status, and customs as indicative of criminal gangs and criminal gang activity in any proceeding pursuant to GS Chapter 14, Article 13A and provides list of what that includes.

Enacts new GS 14-50.35 providing that in any criminal proceeding brought under GS Chapter 14, Article 13A the crime will be construed to have been committed in any county in which any act was performed as part of criminal gang activity.

Effective December 1, 2026, and applies to offense committed on or after that date.

Section 5

Amends GS Chapter 8C, Article 4 by adding new rule of evidence, Rule 416 allowing evidence of criminal gang activity, as defined in GS 14-50.16A, to be admissible in certain proceedings related to criminal gang activity or any proceeding under GS Chapter 14, Article 13B. Requires prosecutor disclosure of evidence to defendant where prosecutor intends to offer evidence under the rule. Clarifies this rule is not the exclusive means to admit or consider evidence described in the rule. Effective December 1, 2026, and applies to offenses committed on or after that date.

Section 6

Amends GS 15A-1340.16E(a) enhancing the sentence of a person convicted of any felony other than Class A, B1, or B2 and it is found the offense was committed as part of criminal gang activity in GS 14-50.16A(2) by requiring the person be sentenced at a felony class level two classes (was, one) higher than the principal felony the person is convicted of. Amends GS 15A-1340.16E(b) by requiring a person be sentenced at a felony class level three (was, two) classes higher than the principal felony

the person is convicted of, if GS 15A-1340.16(a) applies and the person is found to be a criminal gang leader or organizer, as defined in GS 14-50.16A(3). Effective December 1, 2026, and applies to offense committed on or after that date.

Intro. by Bell, Stevens.

[APPROP, GS 8C, GS 14, GS 15A](#)

[View summary](#)

[Courts/Judiciary, Evidence, Court System, Criminal Justice, Criminal Law and Procedure, Government, Budget/Appropriations](#)

H 1174 (2025-2026) [HOA OVERSIGHT ACT](#). Filed Apr 30 2026, *AN ACT TO REQUIRE THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE TO PROVIDE OVERSIGHT OF COMPLAINTS REGARDING OWNERS' ASSOCIATIONS AND THEIR MEMBERS AND TO REQUIRE THE DEPARTMENT TO PUT FORTH A COMMITTEE REPORT AS WELL AS A PUBLIC REPORT.*

Enacts new GS 114-8.8 requiring the Department of Justice (DOJ) to receive and record complaints and concerning disputes between unit/lot owner associations and their members. Allows complaints to be submitted via phone, mail, or online; sets out the information that DOJ must collect when it receives a complaint. Requires DOJ to provide a copy of the complaint to the party complained against and to allow them to respond. Requires DOJ to post the following on their website: (1) information on the process to submit complaints; (2) information about the laws governing associations; (3) general information about roles, rights, and responsibilities of associations of unit owners and lot owners, their members, and other related parties; (4) summary report of complaints on the DOJ website that is publicly accessible, and searchable; and (5) an executive summary of the previous reporting year's complaints, including specified items. Requires DOJ to submit an annual report to the specified NCGA committees and division and publish the report on its website; sets out what must be included in the report. Prohibits DOJ from (1) promulgating regulations or issuing guidelines concerning the administration, governance, or governing documents of associations of unit owners or lot owners and from (2) serving as an arbiter in disputes between an association of unit owners or lot owners and its members.

Appropriates \$100,000 in recurring funds for 2026-27 from the General Fund to DOJ to implement and manage this act.

Intro. by Ward, Pike, Liu.

[APPROP, GS 114](#)

[View summary](#)

[Development, Land Use and Housing, Property and Housing, Government, Budget/Appropriations, State Agencies, Department of Justice](#)

H 1176 (2025-2026) [NORTH CAROLINA-IRELAND TRADE COMMISSION](#). Filed Apr 30 2026, *AN ACT TO CREATE THE NORTH CAROLINA-IRELAND TRADE COMMISSION.*

Identical to [S 996](#), filed on 4/30/26.

Enacts new Article 85, the "North Carolina-Ireland Trade Commission" (Commission) to GS Chapter 143.

Establishes the seven-member Commission, administratively located in the Department of Commerce, and sets out membership and meeting requirements. Sets terms at three years, with members eligible for reappointment. Describes the duties of the Commission to encourage bilateral trade, mutual investment, and business, educational, and cultural exchanges between the State and Ireland and to take joint action on policy issues. Requires the Commission to submit an annual report to the NCGA including specified meeting information and any recommendations or requests, beginning by October 1, 2027.

Appropriates \$10,000 in nonrecurring funds for 2026-27 from the General Fund to the Department of Commerce for administrative services to the Commission. Effective July 1, 2026.

Effective October 1, 2026 except as otherwise provided.

Intro. by K. Hall, Strickland, Lambeth, Blackwell.

APPROP, GS 143

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**Business and Commerce, Government,
Budget/Appropriations, State Agencies, Department of
Commerce**

H 1177 (2025-2026) [CONSUMER PROTECTION AI BILL OF RIGHTS](#). Filed Apr 30 2026, *A HOUSE RESOLUTION ENCOURAGING CONGRESS TO PRESERVE NORTH CAROLINA'S AUTHORITY TO REGULATE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN MATTERS RELATED TO CONSUMER PROTECTION AND TO OPPOSE FEDERAL MORATORIA THAT WOULD RESTRICT STATES FROM ENFORCING EXISTING LAWS.*

Includes whereas clauses.

Urges the US Congress to take any necessary steps to continue to allow states to regulate harmful uses of artificial intelligence, to allow state entities to retain full investigative and enforcement authority over such harmful uses, to affirm that states may enact laws addressing consumer harms arising from artificial intelligence usage, and to otherwise preserve North Carolina's authority and duty to investigate, regulate, and enforce laws against harmful and deceptive trade practices perpetrated by unlawful actors, regardless of whether those actors use artificial intelligence or more traditional means of subterfuge.

Intro. by Hawkins, Rubin, Lopez, Johnson.

HOUSE RES

[View summary](#)

Business and Commerce, Consumer Protection

H 1179 (2025-2026) [SENIOR PROPERTY TAX RELIEF MODERNIZATION ACT](#). Filed Apr 30 2026, *AN ACT TO MODIFY THE ELDERLY OR DISABLED PROPERTY TAX HOMESTEAD EXCLUSION, TO EXPAND THE PROPERTY TAX HOMESTEAD CIRCUIT BREAKER AND TO REIMBURSE LOCAL GOVERNMENTS FOR THEIR RESULTING REVENUE LOSS, AND TO PROVIDE GRANT FUNDING TO THE NORTH CAROLINA ASSOCIATION OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS TO SUPPORT MORE FREQUENT PROPERTY TAX REAPPRAISALS.*

Contains whereas clauses.

Modifies the elderly or disabled property tax homestead exclusion under GS 105-277.1 as follows. Specifies that qualifying owners with: (1) an income at or below 55% of the State median income receive the full exclusion; (2) an income between 55% and 80% of the State median income, the exclusion begins at 100% of the exclusion amount of property tax relief provided, and is reduced by 3.33% for every 1% of income above the 55% threshold; and (3) disallows any relief under GS 105-277.1 for those with an income at or above 80% of the State's median income. Makes conforming change to *qualifying owner*. Allows owners receiving an exclusion under the statute to also relieve the circuit breaker relief under GS 105-277.1B, so long as they meet the requirements of that statute. Defines *resident senior* and *state median income*. Creates a resident senior carveout, specifying that a permanent residence owned and occupied by a resident senior is entitled to the full property tax relief provided GS 105-277.1 notwithstanding that the resident senior has a proportional ownership interest in the property so long as no other non-spouse resides in the property and that any co-owners do not object.

Makes the following changes to GS 105-277.1B (Property tax homestead circuit breaker). Defines *hold harmless amount*, *resident senior*, *total hold harmless amount*. Specifies that for the taxable year beginning July 1, 2008, the income eligibility limit is \$25,000, for taxable years beginning on or after July 1, 2009, sets the income eligibility limit as the amount for the preceding year, adjusted by the same percentage as any COLA increases to Social Security rounded to the nearest \$100. Tasks the Department of Revenue with determining the income eligibility amount to be in effect for the taxable year beginning the following July 1 and must notify the assessor of each county of the amount to be in effect for that taxable year, by July 1 of each year. Lowers the residency requirements for a qualifying owner from owning the subject property as a permanent residence for at least five consecutive years to owning the property for at least three consecutive years. Removes requirement that all non-married, joint owners of property must qualify and elect to defer taxes under GS 105-277.1. Instead provides for proportional amounts of the exclusion, as described.

Specifies that a permanent residence owned and occupied by a resident senior is entitled to the full property tax relief provided GS 105-277.1B notwithstanding that the resident senior has a proportional ownership interest in the property so long as no other non-spouse resides in the property and co-owners do not object. Specifies that if any co-owner objects to the resident senior receiving the full property tax relief provided by this subsection, the proportional relief available in the statute applies. Provides for interest rates on liens under GS 105-277.1. Provides for reimbursement of a county's hold harmless amount, upon the county's notice to the Secretary of Revenue, as described.

Effective for taxes imposed for taxable years beginning on or after July 1, 2027.

Appropriates \$20 million from the General Fund to the NC Association of County Commissioners (Association) for 2026-27 to be used by the Association to provide grants to local governments for the purpose of transitioning those governments to shortened reappraisal cycles and thereby ensure more frequent and accurate property valuations, as specified. Appropriates \$250,000 from the General Fund to the Department of Revenue for 2026-27 to be used to study how to efficiently and effectively implement a system of automatic income eligibility verification for applicants for property tax relief under GS 105-277.1, GS 105-277.1B, and GS 105-277.1C. Appropriates \$2 million from the General Fund to the Department of Justice in recurring funds beginning with 2026-27 to support eight full-time equivalent attorney positions at the Department to assist local governments and the Department of Revenue with property tax appeals cases arising under GS Chapter 105. Effective July 1, 2026.

Intro. by Rubin, Ager, Cervania, Carney.

[APPROP, GS 105](#)

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[Development, Land Use and Housing, Property and Housing, Government, Budget/Appropriations, State Agencies, Department of Justice, Department of Revenue, Tax, Local Government](#)

H 1180 (2025-2026) [DATA CENTER AMENDMENTS](#). Filed Apr 30 2026, *AN ACT AMENDING THE UTILITIES AND TAX LAWS RELATIVE TO DATA CENTERS*.

Amends GS 62-3 to add definitions of *large-load data center* (a facility (1) whose primary services are the storage, management, and processing of digital data, (2) that is used to house computer and network systems, including associated components such as servers and other telecommunications equipment and appliances, and (3) that has or is projected to have an aggregate demand of more than 20 megawatts) and *tariff* (any compensation, charge, fare, rate, schedule, toll, or classification demanded, observed, charged, or collected by any public utility, for any service product or commodity offered by it to the public, and any rules, regulations, practices, or contracts affecting such compensation, charge, fare, rate, schedule, toll, or classification). Makes technical changes.

Adds new GS 62-133.25 to Article 7, Rates of Public Utilities, of GS Chapter 62 titled "Electric Service Tariffs for Large-Load Data Centers." Requires public utilities to file a tariff for the provision of electric service to large-load data centers for approval by the North Carolina Utilities Commission (NCUC). Authorizes the NCUC to approve tiered tariff schedules based on factors related to the cost of service to large-load data centers. Provides that the tariff applications are designed to ensure that large-load data centers bear all costs of capital investments or operational expenses necessary for the public utility to provide electric service to large-load data centers, and to protect the public utility's other electric customers from rate increases or stranded costs caused by service of large-load data centers.

Directs the NCUC to require each tariff incorporate specified terms and conditions: (1) minimum contract term of at least 10 years, (2) minimum billing demand to pay for a period of no less than 10 years after beginning service, at least 85% of maximum electric service requested, (3) financial assurance to prevent material rate increase for other customers if the large-load data center ceases operations or uses less service than requested, (4) advanced notice of anticipated reduction in demand for electricity, and (5) other reasonable provisions in the public interest.

Authorizes the NCUC to only approve tariff applications for electric service to large-load data centers if the application complies with the requirements of this statute and contains additional terms necessary to ensure other customers do not bear increased costs attributable to serving large-load data centers.

Requires tariff applications to be filed no later than 180 days after this section becomes law. Prohibits public utilities from providing electric service to large-load data centers except in accordance with this section effective January 1, 2028.

Repeals GS 105-164.3(47) (defining *datacenter*), GS 105-164.3(79) (defining *eligible internet datacenter*), GS 105-164.3(201) (defining *qualifying datacenter*), GS 105-164.13(43a)b (sales tax exemption for computer software sold to datacenter operators for datacenter use), and GS 105-164.13(55a) (sales tax exemption for electricity used at qualifying datacenters for a listed purpose). Effective on and applies to sales made on or after January 1, 2027.

Intro. by Logan, Budd, Cervania.

GS 62, GS 105

[View summary](#)

Government, Tax, Public Enterprises and Utilities

H 1182 (2025-2026) **PART-TIME STATUS FOR DISABLED STUDENTS**. Filed Apr 30 2026, *AN ACT TO REQUIRE LOCAL SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE UNITS AND CHARTER SCHOOLS TO ALLOW PART-TIME ENROLLMENT OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES THAT ATTEND NONPUBLIC SCHOOLS*.

Adds new GS 115C-364.1 requiring local school administrative units and charter schools to allow a child with a disability who attends nonpublic school to enroll part-time to access any courses, programs, or services offered by the local school administrative unit or the charter school, so long as the child is eligible for admission to public school. Defines *child with a disability* as a child with at least one disability who because of that disability requires special education and related services. Defines *disability* as including intellectual disability; hearing impairment, including deafness; speech or language impairment; visual impairment, including blindness; serious emotional disturbance; orthopedic impairment; autism; traumatic brain injury; other health impairments, specific learning disability, or other disability as may be required to be included under IDEA. For a child aged 3 through 7, this term also includes developmental delay.

Requires local boards of education (GS 115C-47), local educational agency (GS 115C-107.6), and charter schools (GS 115C-218.45) to allow students with disabilities who attend nonpublic schools to enroll part-time in line with new GS 115C-364.1.

Appropriates \$10,000 from the General Fund to the Department of Public Instruction for 2026-27 to be allocated to local boards of education and charter schools for the administrative costs of implementing the provisions of this act.

Effective July 1, 2026, and applies to requests to begin part-time enrollment in the 2026-27 school year.

Intro. by Greenfield, Almond, Hawkins.

APPROP, GS 115C

[View summary](#)

**Education, Elementary and Secondary Education,
Government, Budget/Appropriations, State Agencies,
Department of Public Instruction**

H 1186 (2025-2026) **EQUIPPING LAW ENF. FOR BETTER DRUG DETECTION**. Filed Apr 30 2026, *AN ACT DIRECTING THE NORTH CAROLINA COLLABORATORY TO ESTABLISH AND IMPLEMENT A PILOT PROGRAM TO PROVIDE PARTICIPATING LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES WITH NEW DRUG-DETECTING TECHNOLOGY TO IMPROVE CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE INVESTIGATIONS AND REDUCE THE RISK OF FALSE ARRESTS*.

Contains whereas clauses. Mandates the NC Collaboratory (Collaboratory) establish and implement a pilot program to support law enforcement, improve controlled substance investigations, and reduce the risk of false arrests by providing participating law enforcement agencies with new field drug-detecting technology and measuring the impact of the technology on case clearance, officer safety, controlled substance testing accuracy, identifying new or novel substances, drug organization investigations, and cost effectiveness.

Provides the following minimum requirements for the pilot program: (1) provide participating agencies with drug-detection devices meeting all seven of the listed requirements to use in place of color-based field drug tests for detecting suspected controlled substances; (2) use both quantitative and qualitative methods to address four specific research questions and any

other questions determined relevant by the Collaboratory related to use of a drug-detection device provided under the pilot program; (3) leverage available relevant data from state agencies to track case-level outcomes across jurisdictions over time; (4) measure drug enforcement and case processing outcomes and forensic laboratory system impacts; (5) employ appropriate quantitative methods to compare outcomes in pilot program jurisdictions to comparable non-pilot program jurisdictions before and after deployment of the drug-detection devices; and (6) conduct qualitative inquiry in pilot program sites using appropriate methods.

Requires Collaboratory to consult with persons or entities it deems subject matter experts in drug detection, law enforcement, and public policy. Permits collaboration with any person or entity the Collaboratory deems appropriate as well. Requires any person or entity utilized by the Collaboratory under this authority to have the same access to data and cooperation provided to the Collaboratory.

Requires state agencies that maintain data determined relevant to the pilot program by the Collaboratory, including the Administrative Office of the Courts and the North Carolina State Crime Laboratory, make such data available to the Collaboratory if the Collaboratory deems it reasonably necessary to conduct this program (to the extent permitted by applicable State and federal law and subject to appropriate privacy protections and data use agreements). Requires a state agency requested to provide assistance to the Collaboratory in performing its duties to do so to the extent such assistance is consistent with its duties. Participating law enforcement agencies must cooperate with the Collaboratory in the conduct of the pilot program, including making relevant personnel available for interviews and providing access to operational documents and records related to the program. Clarifies that none of the data access and cooperation requirements mandate disclosure of information that would compromise an ongoing investigation, reveal a confidential informant, or is otherwise confidential or privileged under State or federal law.

Requires the Collaboratory to select the law enforcement agencies to participate in the program and ensure those participating are representative of law enforcement throughout the State, including agencies from rural and urban areas and agencies that would allow for analysis of data from the I-85 and I-95 drug-trafficking corridors.

Requires the Collaboratory to provide multiple reports to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Justice and Public Safety and the Fiscal Research Division beginning three months after the Act's effective date and concluding with a final report no later than two years from the date the Collaboratory receives appropriated funds.

Appropriates \$1.75 million for 2026-27 from the General Fund to the Collaboratory to be used for costs related to development and implementation of the pilot program. Any funds remaining unspent or unencumbered at the end of 2026-27 do not revert but remain available to spend until the pilot program expires. Effective July 1, 2026.

Defines *drug-detection device* as a device designed to detect the presence of controlled substances, not impairment of nor consumption by a person.

Pilot program expires on the earlier of the date the final report is provided or December 1, 2028.

Intro. by Chesser, Pyrtle, Rhyne, Rubin.

APPROP

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**Government, Budget/Appropriations, Public Safety and
Emergency Management, State Agencies, UNC System**

H 1187 (2025-2026) [SAVE OUR BEACHES](#). Filed Apr 30 2026, *AN ACT TO DISAPPROVE A RULE RELATED TO THE USE OF WHEAT STRAW BALES FOR SAND FENCING IN OCEAN HAZARD AREAS*.

Disapproves 15A NCAC 07H .0314 (Installation and Maintenance of Wheat Straw Bales for Sand Fencing in Ocean Hazard Areas) adopted by the North Carolina Resources Commission on April 30, 2025, and approved by the Rules Review Commission on June 26, 2025.

Intro. by Harrison, Butler, Greenfield, Cook.

UNCODIFIED

H 1188 (2025-2026) **LIMITS ON IMMIGRATION DETENTION FACILITIES**. Filed Apr 30 2026, *AN ACT TO PROHIBIT CONTRACTS WITH CITY, COUNTY, OR LOCAL OR STATE LAW ENFORCEMENT TO DETAIN PERSONS FOR CIVIL IMMIGRATION CUSTODY*.

Enacts GS 15A-407 establishing limitations on immigration detention facilities, defined as any facility in the state that holds detainees for proceedings or removal from the United States under the authority of the federal Department of Homeland Security, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, or Customs and Border Protection.

Prohibits cities, counties, and local and State law enforcement agencies from contracting with federal agencies or private corporations to hold noncitizens in civil immigration custody in a locked immigration detention facility.

Prohibits cities, counties, and local and State law enforcement agencies from maintaining facilities specifically used to hold noncitizens in civil immigration custody.

Directs the Department of Public Safety (DPS) to collect specified data from immigration detention facilities and report findings to the General Assembly by May 1 annually.

Appropriates \$50,000 for 2026-27 from the General Fund to the DPS for administrative costs.

Includes a severability clause.

Effective December 1, 2026.

Intro. by Harrison, Butler, Cervania, Cook.

APPROP, GS 15A

[View summary](#)

**Government, Budget/Appropriations, Public Safety and
Emergency Management, State Agencies, Department of
Public Safety, Immigration**

H 1189 (2025-2026) **DATACENTER TRANSPARENCY ACT**. Filed Apr 30 2026, *AN ACT TO: ESTABLISH A TWO-YEAR MORATORIUM ON THE ISSUANCE OF PERMITS REQUIRED FOR SITING OF DATACENTERS; DIRECT THE COLLABORATORY TO STUDY VARIOUS IMPACTS OF DATACENTERS; REQUIRE DATACENTERS TO ANNUALLY SUBMIT DETAILED DOCUMENTATION AND APPLY FOR AN EXEMPTION CERTIFICATE FROM SALES AND USE TAXES; AND REQUIRE THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE TO REPORT TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON THE REVENUE IMPACTS TO THE STATE FROM THE SALES AND USE TAX EXEMPTIONS FOR DATACENTERS*.

Section 1.

Defines *datacenter* as a facility designed to have a load of 100 megawatts or more with a primary purpose to store, manage, and process digital data through information technology and network telecommunications equipment and related facilities and infrastructure.

Establishes a moratorium on permits, certifications, or approvals required by a State agency or local government for datacenter siting in North Carolina. Provides that moratorium's purpose is to allow NCGA to evaluate datacenter impacts. Sets out moratorium duration from August 1, 2026, to August 1, 2028.

Directs the North Carolina Collaboratory at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (Collaboratory) to study datacenter impacts and provide recommendations to address identified negative impacts. Requires the study to assess potential impacts on the State's electric grid, water supply, wastewater treatment facilities, air quality, noise, property values, and other pertinent matters in cooperation with specified agencies. Requires Collaboratory to report findings and any proposed legislation to the specified NCGA committees by December 1, 2027.

Appropriates \$200,000 for 2026-27 from the General Fund to the Collaboratory to conduct the study.

Section 2.

Enacts GS 105-164.13G regarding sales tax exemptions for datacenters. Defines *datacenter* as an eligible internet datacenter or qualifying datacenter per GS 105-164.3. Requires a datacenter that purchases an item exempt from sales tax under GS 105-164.13 to obtain an exemption certificate from the Department in order to receive the exemption. Provides that exemption certificates must be renewed annually.

Authorizes a datacenter that has not commenced construction to apply for a conditional exemption certificate. Provides that a datacenter that does not meet application requirements within 90 days of the end of the taxable year becomes liable for any taxes on which an exemption was claimed. Such taxes are due when the conditional exemption certificate expires and subject to interest.

Lists required information and documentation that must be submitted to the Secretary to receive an exemption certificate or a conditional exemption certificate.

Effective July 1, 2027, and applies to purchases occurring on or after that date.

Requires datacenters sited or under construction in the State as of the Act's effective date to provide the same information and documentation to the Department of Revenue and the Department of Commerce for the five most recent taxable years the datacenter has claimed an exemption under GS 105-164.13 by December 1, 2026. Directs Department of Commerce to aggregate the data and submit annual reports on lost revenue by March 1 to the chairs of the House and Senate Finance Committees.

Except as otherwise provided, effective when the act becomes law.

Intro. by Loftis, Ward, Harrison.

STUDY, GS 105

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Government, State Agencies, UNC System, Department of Commerce, Tax, Public Enterprises and Utilities

H 1191 (2025-2026) **FOSTERING CARE IN NC ACT 2026**. Filed Apr 30 2026, *AN ACT TO MAKE VARIOUS CHANGES TO THE LAWS AFFECTING JUVENILES AND ASSOCIATED SERVICES, AGENCIES, AND DEPARTMENTS*.

Part I.

Amends GS 7B-2901(a) regarding confidentiality of juvenile abuse, neglect, and dependency cases to expand the confidentiality requirements to all cases brought under Subchapter I of GS Chapter 7B, including proceedings involving placement on or expungement from the responsible individuals list (RIL). Revises the listed persons and entities who may examine and obtain copies of juvenile records under subsection (a) without a court order to explicitly include juveniles who have reached 18 or been emancipated and their attorney, the Division of Social Services of the Department of Health and Human Services (Division, DHHS), and any party named in the action and their attorney (replacing the previous inclusion of the juvenile's parent, guardian, or custodian).

Amends GS 50-13.2, enacting new subsection (g) to require a court to order a custody matter sealed where the physical or mental health, substance use, or abuse or maltreatment against the minor child is raised. Allows release without a court order to parties to the custody proceeding and their attorneys, a court of competent jurisdiction hearing or reviewing the custody matter, and a department of social services (dss) providing protective services pursuant to GS 7B-300 when the child is alleged to be abused, neglected, or dependent. Requires a showing of good cause for a court to order release of sealed records to any other person or agency not listed. Applies to actions filed on or after October 1, 2026.

Part II.

Amends GS 7B-200 establishing exclusive, original jurisdiction over proceedings involving placement on or expungement from the RIL (was limited to review of placement on the RIL).

Amends GS 7B-325(b) concerning petitions for expungement from the RIL. Specifies a copy of the petition is required to be delivered to the dss director who determined the abuse or serious neglect and identified the petitioner as a responsible

individual.

Part III.

Amends GS 7B-900.1 concerning findings a court must make when transferring venue after the adjudication of a juvenile as abused, neglected, or dependent. Where current law allows for a finding that the Division Director or their designee has made a determination as to each county's responsibility for the provisions of financial support and services in the event the dss directors involved have not reached such an agreement, alternatively allows for a finding that the Division Director has appointed a county department to assume management of the case pursuant to the Chapter's provisions governing conflicts of interest, GS 7B-302.1.

Amends GS 7B-901(d) to explicitly establish that once a court determines reunification efforts are not required, reunification is excluded as a permanent plan. Instead, requires a court to order a permanent plan as soon as possible after each party is provided a reasonable opportunity to prepare and present evidence at a permanency planning hearing. Clarifies that the court is required to hold a permanency planning hearing to address the permanent plan within 30 days from completion of the initial dispositional hearing.

Amends GS 7B-903.1(c), concerning the requirement for dss to make reasonable efforts to place juvenile siblings removed from the home in the same placement, to specify that the requirement applies to juvenile siblings removed and placed in dss custody (was nonsecure custody).

Makes technical changes to GS 7B-906.1, GS 7B-906.2, and GS 7B-908 to clarify that a court can order one permanent plan, rather than concurrent plans, when reunification is not identified as a permanent plan. Makes a technical correction to GS 7B-906.1(e).

Amends GS 7B-909.2 governing post-adoption contact agreements to direct that the agreement and order approving the agreement are not to be filed in the underlying juvenile proceeding. Regarding disclosure of the civil record, specifies that the minor adoptee or their attorney may examine the record only after the adoptee turns 18 or is otherwise emancipated, or by court order.

Amends GS 7B-909.3, which bars appeal of an order terminating, modifying, or enforcing post-adoption contract agreements and orders. Adds a new provision granting a party the right to appeal an order finding the party in contempt of the post-adoption contract agreement order pursuant to GS Chapter 5A. Makes conforming changes to the statute's caption.

Applies to actions filed on or after October 1, 2026.

Part IV.

Amends GS 7B-1101.1 to modify the required appointment of a Rule 17 guardian ad litem (GAL) for a minor respondent parent in a termination of parental rights (TPR) proceeding. Now requires appointment of a Rule 17 GAL for any parent who is under 16 and allows for appointment for any parent who is 16 or 17 years old who is not married or otherwise emancipated on motion of any party or the court's own motion (currently, requires appointment for any parent under age 18 who is not married or emancipated).

Amends GS 7B-1103 to establish standing for any dss who receives a safety surrendered infant to file a TPR petition or motion. Clarifies standing under subdivision (a)(4) applies to juveniles relinquished (was, surrendered) for adoption.

Corrects a statutory cross-reference in GS 7B-1112 concerning rights over the placement of a juvenile in the custody of dss or a child-placing agency and post-TPR review orders.

Part V.

Amends GS 7B-1905 with regard to authorized temporary residential placements for juveniles who are runaways or are alleged to be undisciplined or delinquent juveniles, meet the criteria for secure custody and the court finds nonsecure placement to be in the juvenile's best interest. Clarifies that the authorized options listed are available to the dss with placement responsibility, not another person to whom the court order's nonsecure custody. Adds facilities licensed to provide care to juveniles to the permissible placements and specifies that the existing placement option of any other home or facility approved by the court and designated in the order includes the home of a parent, relative, nonrelative kin, or other person with legal custody of a sibling of the juvenile. Prohibits dss from placing the juvenile in an unlicensed facility or any facility not licensed to provide care for the juvenile without prior court approval and designation in the court order.

Amends GS 7B-2001 to specify that a court may appoint a guardian of the person for a juvenile at any time during the delinquency case. Prohibits appointment of dss as a guardian of the person for a juvenile. Adds a new requirement for the court to consider whether a limited guardianship would meet the needs and best interests of the juvenile and if so, specify the powers and duties of the limited guardian over the juvenile while the parent, guardian, or custodian retains certain legal rights and privileges such as physical custody, educational and medical decision-making, and religious upbringing. Excepts instances where the court orders limited guardianship (was generally instances where the court orders otherwise) from the listed powers and duties of a guardian under the statute. Makes organizational changes.

Part VI.

Authorizes municipal and county governments to contract with third-party vendors to supply required background checks for individuals applying for employment involving work with children pursuant to state law. Terminates such contracts on the later of December 1, 2026, or the date by which the State Bureau of Investigation's request for proposal is awarded. Directs the SBI to prescribe minimum requirements for contracted background checks.

Part VII.

Amends GS 7B-302 regarding dss assessment of reports alleging abuse, neglect, or dependency. Establishes a new requirement for immediate referral of a case to the dss director when the department has received and screened out three reports within six months or five reports within one year regard the same juvenile or the juvenile's household. Prohibits the dss director from delegating review of the screened out reports and requires the director to determine whether the reports require an assessment, and if that determination is made, direct that an assessment be initiated.

Part VIII.

Appropriates \$250,000 in recurring funds from the General Fund to the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), Office of Indigent Services (IDS) for 2026-27 to contract with an approved vendor to implement a secure web and mobile based communications platform for abuse, neglect, and dependency proceedings and related TPR proceedings. States the purpose of the platform is to ensure compliance with federal and State requirements related to described advance notice of court hearings and interagency team meetings, and communication between attorneys, their clients, and parties to the proceedings. Effective July 1, 2026.

Directs AOC, Indigent Services of NC, the GAL Program, the Division, and other necessary state or local entities to enter into a data sharing agreement to enable the selected vendor to receive data necessary for timely notification and communication.

Part IX.

Amends GS 108A-77.1, which defines terms applicable to Article 3A governing Child Advocacy Centers (CAC). Amends *Department* (defined by statutory cross-reference to GS 7B-101(8a), meaning a county dss) to include the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (EBCI) Public Health and Human Services Department of Human Services. Adds to the required composition of a CAC's *multidisciplinary team* the tribal prosecutor for the EBCI in the alternative to the county district attorney or assistant district attorney.

Amends GS 108A-77.4 to allow disclosure of CAC information and records to a tribal prosecutor of the EBCI.

Intro. by Chesser, Loftis, Reeder, Alston.

[APPROP, UNCODIFIED, GS 7B, GS 50, GS 108A](#)

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[Courts/Judiciary, Civil, Family Law, Juvenile Law, Abuse, Neglect and Dependency, Delinquency, Court System, Administrative Office of the Courts, Government, Budget/Appropriations, State Agencies, Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Justice, Local Government, Native Americans, Health and Human Services, Health, Public Health, Social Services, Child Welfare](#)

H 1193 (2025-2026) [REP. MIKE CLAMPITT BONE MARROW DONATION ACT](#). Filed Apr 30 2026, *AN ACT DESIGNATING THE MONTH OF NOVEMBER AS MARROW DONATION AWARENESS MONTH; DIRECTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AND THE DEPARTMENT OF MOTOR VEHICLES TO RAISE AWARENESS THROUGH PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS ABOUT BONE MARROW DONATION AND BONE MARROW DONATION REGISTRIES; AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES TO CONDUCT A PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGN ON MARROW DONATION AWARENESS MONTH.*

Contains whereas clauses.

Titles the act the "Mike Clampitt Advocacy for Marrow Education and Registration Act" or "Clampitt Act."

Adds new GS 103-12.5, designating the month of November each year as Marrow Donation Awareness Month. Requires the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to publish a public service announcement on its website containing medically accurate information regarding bone marrow donation and transplantation that is sufficient to allow an individual to make an informed decision about whether to participate in a local or national bone marrow donation registry. Directs DHHS to provide the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) an internet link to the public service announcement for the DMV to broadcast on monitors at drivers license office locations around the State.

Appropriates \$100,000 from the General Fund to DHHS's Division of Public Health for 2026-27 to conduct the public awareness campaign.

Effective July 1, 2026.

Intro. by Liu, Potts, Lambeth, Crawford.

[APPROP, GS 103](#)

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[Government, Budget/Appropriations, Cultural Resources and Museums, State Agencies, Department of Health and Human Services, Health and Human Services, Health, Public Health](#)

H 1200 (2025-2026) [TAX-FREE FAMILY ESSENTIALS ACT](#). Filed Apr 30 2026, *AN ACT TO EXEMPT DIAPERS, BABY WIPES, OVER-THE-COUNTER CHILDREN'S MEDICATION, PRENATAL VITAMINS, AND FEMININE HYGIENE PRODUCTS FROM THE SALES TAX.*

Amends GS 105-164.13 to exclude from sales tax baby wipes, prenatal vitamins, and feminine hygiene products, as now defined under GS 105-164.3. Excludes grooming and hygiene products from the definition of feminine hygiene products. Further amends GS 105-164.13 to exclude from sales tax sales of diapers or incontinence pads (removing the existing qualification that the sale be on those prescribed by an enrolled State Medicaid/health Choice provider for use by program beneficiaries when the provider is reimbursed by the State Medicaid program or a Medicaid MCO). Adds an exclusion for over-the-counter drugs intended for the treatment of a health condition in children 12 and under and labeled with a Drug Facts panel containing specific dosage instructions for children 12 and under. Applies to sales made on or after October 1, 2026.

Intro. by Schietzelt, Rhyne, Campbell, Chesser.

[GS 105](#)

[View summary](#)

[Government, Tax, Health and Human Services, Health](#)

H 1203 (2025-2026) [FAMILY SUPPORT FOR THOSE WHO SERVE ACT](#). Filed Apr 30 2026, *AN ACT TO EXPAND TUITION WAIVERS TO THE CHILDREN OF CERTAIN PUBLIC SAFETY EMPLOYEES FOR ENROLLMENT IN NORTH CAROLINA COMMUNITY COLLEGES.*

Identical to [S 1004](#), filed 4/30/26.

Amends GS 115B-2 (tuition waivers), so that community colleges must permit any child, if the child is at least years old but not yet 24 years old, whose parent, legal guardian, or legal custodian is a law enforcement officer, experienced correctional

officer (a correctional officer with at least ten years of service as a correctional officer in the State), or firefighter to attend classes for credit or noncredit purposes without the required payment of tuition. Caps the number of free tuition at the number of months required to complete the educational program for which the child is applying. Makes conforming changes. Makes conforming and organizational changes to GS 115B-1. Applies beginning with the 2026-27 academic year.

Intro. by Schietzelt, Chesser, Rhyne.

[View summary](#)

**Education, Higher Education, Government, Public Safety and
Emergency Management, State Agencies, Community Colleges
System Office**

H 1204 (2025-2026) **REQUIRE SEAT BELTS ON SCHOOL BUSES**. Filed Apr 30 2026, *AN ACT TO REQUIRE SEAT BELTS AT ALL DESIGNATED SEATING POSITIONS ON SCHOOL BUSES AND ACTIVITY BUSES PURCHASED, LEASED, OR RENTED BY PUBLIC SCHOOL UNITS AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS*.

Amends GS 115C-240(c) by making technical changes to its language and structure and amending the minimum rules the State Board of Education (Board) must adopt addressing school bus equipment in the following ways: (1) requires an alternating flashing stoplight on the rear of the bus (was, the front of the bus and rear of the bus) and (2) adds new requirement that every school bus is equipped with type-two seatbelt assemblies compliant with all applicable regulations adopted under 49 U.S.C. § 30111 at all designated seating positions (previously, there was no seatbelt requirement), with an exception that the Board can adopt reasonable rules modifying this requirement with respect to integrated child safety restraint systems, the transportation of students with disabilities, and the use of other federally approved restraint or securement systems where required by federal law.

Makes conforming changes related to the new seatbelt requirement in GS 115C-240(c) to:

- (1) GS 115C-247 (to add that local boards of education can purchase, lease, or rent only activity buses equipped with the proper seatbelts);
- (2) GS 115C-218.40 (to add that a charter school can purchase, lease, or rent only a school or activity bus, for the purpose of transporting students, equipped with the proper seatbelts);
- (3) GS 115C-238.66 (to add a new subdivision stating that a regional school can purchase, lease, or rent only a school or activity bus, for the purpose of transporting students, equipped with the proper seatbelts);
- (4) GS 115C-150.12C (to add a new subdivision stating that a board of trustees (of schools for deaf and blind students) can purchase, lease, or rent only a school or activity bus, for the purpose of transporting students, equipped with the proper seatbelts);
- (5) Article 39 of Chapter 115C (to add new GS 115C-548.2 stating that a private church school or school of religious charter can purchase, lease, or rent only a school bus equipped with the proper seatbelts and new GS 115C-566.2 stating that a qualified nonpublic school can purchase, lease, or rent only a school bus equipped with the proper seatbelts);
- (6) GS 116-239.8(b) (to add a new subdivision stating that a laboratory school can purchase, lease, or rent only a school or activity bus, for the purpose of transporting students, equipped with the proper seatbelts).

Appropriates \$10,000 for 2026-27 from the General Fund to the Department of Public Instruction to develop policies that public school units may use to implement the act's requirements.

GS 115C-240(c)(2)d. (the new seatbelt requirement), as enacted by this act, applies to all contracts to purchase or lease school buses and activity buses executed after June 30, 2030. Clarifies that this act does not require any educational entity to equip buses with seat belts at all designated seating positions if the buses are purchased or leased before June 30, 2030.

Intro. by Greenfield, Willis, Logan.

APPROP, GS 115C, GS 116

PUBLIC/SENATE BILLS

S 962 (2025-2026) **INVESTING IN NORTH CAROLINA ACT**. Filed Apr 30 2026, *AN ACT TO APPROPRIATE FUNDS TO RAISE SALARIES FOR TEACHERS, STATE EMPLOYEES, COMMUNITY COLLEGE EMPLOYEES, AND EMPLOYEES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AND TO PROVIDE A COST-OF-LIVING INCREASE FOR RETIREES IN THE EVENT THE CURRENT OPERATIONS APPROPRIATIONS ACT DOES NOT BECOME LAW AND TO PROVIDE FOR FUTURE SALARY INCREASES FOR TEACHERS, STATE EMPLOYEES, COMMUNITY COLLEGE EMPLOYEES, AND EMPLOYEES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA IN THE EVENT FUTURE CURRENT OPERATIONS APPROPRIATIONS ACTS DO NOT BECOME LAW.*

Part I.

Specifies that Parts II and III of the act become effective only if the Current Operations Appropriations Act for 2026-27 does not become law in the 2025 Regular Session of the General Assembly. In that case, the effective date of those parts are the earlier of when the NCGA adjourns the 2025 Regular Session sine die or January 1, 2027.

Part II.

Sets a monthly teacher salary schedule for "A" teachers for 2026-27 for licensed public school personnel classified as teachers, based on years of experience, ranging from \$4,600 for teachers with 0 years of experience to \$6,370 for 29 or more years of experience. Provides for a 12% salary supplement for licensed teachers who have National Board for Professional Teaching Standards certification; a 10% salary supplement for licensed teachers classified as "M" teachers; a \$126 salary supplement for licensed teachers with licensure based on academic preparation at the six-year degree level, in addition to the "M" teachers salary supplement; a \$253 salary supplement for licensed teachers with licensure based on academic preparation at the doctoral degree level, in addition to the "M" teachers salary supplement; a 10% salary supplement for certified school nurses; and a \$100 salary supplement for school counselors licensed as counselors at the master's degree level or higher.

Requires that the first step of the salary schedule for school psychologists, school speech pathologists licensed at the master's degree level or higher, and school audiologists licensed at the master's degree level or higher must be equivalent to the sixth step of the "A" salary schedule. Provides for a 10% and \$500 salary supplement. Deems these employees eligible to receive salary supplements equivalent to those of teachers for academic preparation at the six-year degree level or the doctoral degree level. Requires that the twenty-sixth step of the salary schedule for school psychologists, school speech pathologists licensed at the master's degree level or higher, and school audiologists licensed at the master's degree level or higher must be 7.5% higher than the salary received by these same employees on the twenty-fifth step of the salary schedule. Provides that in lieu of the amounts of annual longevity payments to teachers paid on the teacher salary schedule, beginning with the 2014-15 fiscal year, the amounts of those longevity payments are included in the monthly amounts under the teacher salary schedule.

Details teacher compensation for the 2026-27 school year based on either (1) the applicable salary schedule; (2) the sum of the salary the teacher received in 2013-14, longevity pay for the 2013-14 school year, and annual bonus provided in SL 2014-100; or (3) the sum of the salary and annual bonus the teacher received in the 2014-15 school year, with the compensation amount determined to be equal to the greater of those amounts. Provides that "teacher" includes instructional support personnel. Appropriates \$921.2 million in recurring funds for 2026-27 from the General Fund to the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) to increase salaries for teachers and support personnel.

Part III.

Raises salaries for certain individuals whose salaries are (1) set/authorized in this Part under the State Human Resources Act (SHRA) and (2) who are employed in a state-funded position on June 30, 2025, by 6% effective July 1, 2026, in addition to any other raises permitted by law. Exempts employees of local boards of education, local community college employees, employees of The University of North Carolina, officers and employees of the Department of Adult Correction (DAC) or Department of Public Safety (DPS) subject to Sections 3.7 and 3.8 of this Part, clerks of superior court compensated under GS 7A-101, state law enforcement officers to which Section 3.9 applies, employees of the State Highway Patrol to which Section

3.9A applies, and employees of schools operated by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), DPS, DAC, the specified schools for the deaf and blind, and the State Board of Education (SBE) who are paid based on the Teacher Salary Schedule. Allows for permanent part-time employees to receive the increase on a prorated and equitable basis. Specifies that no eligible State-funded employee will be prohibited from receiving the full salary increase solely because the employee's salary after applying the increase would be above the maximum of the salary range prescribed by the State Human Resources Commission (SHRC).

Authorizes state agencies to use the funding allotted to them from the Receipt-Supported Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) Reserve to fundshift a limited number of receipt-supported positions in the General Fund to net appropriation funding.

Replaces references to "longevity pay" in GS Chapter 126 with "retention pay." Sets retention pay provided to employees who are full-time or over half-time and have a permanent, time-limited, or probationary appointment and who are in pay status for one-half of the regularly scheduled workdays and holidays in a pay period ranging from 1% for those employees with two years but less than five years of service to 4.5% for those employees with 25 or more years of service.

Provides for retention bonuses for the 2026-27 fiscal year as follows: (1) the school personnel described in Part I and continuously employed by the State or a public school unit from July 1, 2026, to October 31, 2026, a retention bonus of \$500 paid during November 2026; (2) the school personnel described in Part I and continuously employed by the State or a public school unit from November 1, 2026, to March 31, 2027, a retention bonus of \$500 paid during April 2027; (3) an additional retention bonus of \$250 to all permanent full-time State employees and local education employees continuously employed from July 1, 2026, to October 31, 2026, who earn an annual salary that does not exceed \$75,000, payable in November 2026; and (4) all permanent full-time State employees and local education employees employed by the State or a public school unit from November 1, 2026, to March 31, 2027, and who earn an annual salary that does not exceed \$75,000 must be paid an additional retention bonus of \$250 paid during April 2027 by employers of State employees and local education employees. Specifies that the funds appropriated for retention bonuses in excess of the amounts required to implement these bonuses will revert and not be credited to the Pay Plan Reserve. Specifies how bonuses are to be paid and treated in terms of whether they are categorized as salary.

Effective July 1, 2026, directs the State Board of Community Colleges shall provide community college faculty and non-faculty personnel with an across-the-board salary increase in the amount of 6%. Sets out the minimum salaries for nine-month, full-time curriculum community college faculty for the 2025-27 fiscal biennium based on education level. Prohibits full-time faculty members from earning less than the minimum salary for his or her education level.

For the UNC system, directs that SHRA employee salaries will be increased as provided by this act. Authorizes the UNC Board of Governors to provide EHRA employees a salary increase pursuant to policies adopted by the board for one or more of the following purposes: merit pay, across-the-board increases, recruitment bonuses, retention increases, and other compensation increases pursuant to those policies. Requires the Board of Governors to report on the use of compensation to the General Assembly by March 1 of each year of the biennium.

Requires correctional officers in the Department of Adult Correction to be compensated at a specific pay rate on the basis of a salary schedule based on years of experience. Also requires employees in DPS's Division of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention to be compensated at a specific pay rate based on years of experience; sets out the salary schedule to be used based on type of position. Sets out the annual salary schedule for correctional officers, based on experience and job class, for 2026-27 ranging from \$39,913 for correctional officers classified as COI with 0 years of experience to \$57,371 for correctional officers classified as COIII with six or more years of experience.

Sets an annual salary schedule for probation and parole officers, based on experience, for 2026-27 ranging from \$48,189 for officers with 0 years experience to \$70,314 for officers with 6 years or more of experience. Requires Juvenile Court Counselors working in the Division of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention to also be paid on this salary schedule.

Sets an annual salary schedule based on the officer's respective work experience, based on experience and job class, for law enforcement officers of Alcohol Law Enforcement and the State Bureau of Investigation compensated pursuant to an experience-based salary schedule for 2026-27 ranging from \$56,733 for those with 0 years experience and \$82,785 for those with 6 years or more of experience.

Sets an annual salary schedule based on the officer's respective work experience, based on experience and job class, for law enforcement officers of the State Highway Patrol pursuant to an experience-based salary schedule for 2026-27 ranging from \$58,350 for those with 0 years experience and \$85,140 for those with 6 years or more of experience;.

Specifies that employees of the schools operated by DHHS, DPS, and the Board who are paid on the Teacher Salary Schedule will be paid as authorized by the act and that employees of the School of Science and Mathematics of The University of North Carolina paid pursuant to a salary schedule adopted by the North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics Board of Trustees will be paid in accordance with the schedule adopted by that board. Applies those same provisions to employees of the Governor Morehead School for the Blind, the Eastern North Carolina School for the Deaf, and the North Carolina School for the Deaf.

Specifies that the COLAs authorized by the act will be paid on July 1, 2026, and do not apply to persons who separated from service due to resignation, dismissal, reduction in force, death, or retirement or whose last workday is prior to June 30, 2026. Provides for flexibility by the Director of the Budget (Director) to administer the act. Sets forth provisions related to the effective dates of State employer contribution rates for administrative purposes. Applies to all employees paid from state funds, including employees of public schools, community colleges, and UNC.

Provides that the annual salaries in effect for the following on June 30, 2026, must be legislatively increased as provided in Section 2.1 of the act, unless another requirement applies under other provisions of the act: permanent, full-time State officials and persons whose salaries are set in accordance with the SHRA; permanent, full-time State officials and persons in positions exempt from the SHRA; permanent, part-time State employees; and temporary and permanent hourly State employees.

Requires the Office of State Budget and Management (OSMB) to ensure the appropriations are being used appropriately. Specifies that funds appropriated for COLAs and employee benefit increases cannot be used to adjust the budgeted salaries of vacant positions or to provide salary increases in excess of those required by the General Assembly except to increase the budgeted salary of any position to the minimum of the position's salary range and to meet retention pay needs. Authorizes the Director to reallocate funds if they find the funds are being used for other purposes. Specifies that the funds appropriated for COLA and employee benefit increases in excess of the amounts required will be credited to the Pay Plan Reserve. Requires OSMB to report to the specified NCGA committee and division by March 1 on the expenditure of funds for legislatively mandated salary increases and employee benefits with four specified matters that must be addressed.

Allows, during the 2025-27 fiscal biennium, State agencies, departments, institutions, the North Carolina Community College System, and UNC to offer State employees the opportunity to use or to cash in special bonus leave benefits that have accrued pursuant to specified provisions under the following conditions: (1) employee participation in the program must be voluntary; (2) special leave that is liquidated for cash payment to an employee must be valued at the amount based on the employee's current annual salary rate; and (3) by September 1, 2026, a report on the demographic information must be submitted to the respective agency head or employing agency and to the Fiscal Research Division.

Amends GS 135-5 (pertaining to benefits under TSERS), GS 135-65 (post-retirement increases under CJRS), GS 120-4.22A (post-retirement increases under LRS) as follows. Effective July 1, 2026, provides for a 2% COLA for certain beneficiaries who retired on or before July 1, 2025, and for employees who retired after July 1, 2025, and before June 30, 2026. Provides for proration. After September 1, 2026, but on or before October 31, 2026, provides for a one-time 1% COLA supplement payment to be paid on or behalf of living beneficiaries whose retirement began on or before September 1, 2026. Does not allow for proration. Sets forth provisions related to payment if the beneficiary dies before payment is made. Specifies that no beneficiary will be deemed to have acquired a vested right to any future supplemental payments.

Appropriates from the General Fund to the Reserve for Compensation Increases: (1) \$701.1 million in recurring funds for 2026-27 and (2) \$503.5 million for 2026-27 to fund pay increases and cost-of-living adjustments.

Part IV.

Amends GS 143C-5-4 to automatically increase the State employee salary schedule and teacher salary schedule, principal salary schedule, and any other salary grade or salary range for State/public school employees in effect on June 30 of the prior fiscal year by 5% until the Current Operations Appropriations Act for the current fiscal year becomes law. Applies beginning in 2027-28. (Currently, law provides for current salaries to stay in effect until a new state budget is passed.)

Intro. by Grafstein, Garson.

[APPROP, GS 120, GS 135, GS 143C](#)

[View summary](#)

[Courts/Judiciary, Court System, Education, Preschool, Elementary and Secondary Education, Higher Education, Employment and Retirement, Government,](#)

S 964 (2025-2026) **EXPANDED ACC. TO DOULAS AND MIDWIVES/BC LIC.** Filed Apr 30 2026, *AN ACT TO REQUIRE NC MEDICAID TO COVER DOULA SERVICES DURING PREGNANCY AND THE POSTPARTUM PERIOD, TO PROVIDE FUNDING FOR SUPPORT SERVICES TO THE DOULA WORKFORCE, TO ESTABLISH THE CERTIFIED PROFESSIONAL MIDWIVES LICENSING ACT, AND TO ESTABLISH A LICENSURE PROCESS AND ANNUAL LICENSE FEES FOR BIRTH CENTERS.*

Section 1.

Directs the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Division of Health Benefits (DHB) to seek approval from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to implement Medicaid coverage for certain doula services. Requires DHB, in collaboration with DHHS's Division of Public Health (DPH) to develop the parameters of services to be covered, update applicable coverage policies, and determine credentialing requirements. Provides a list of education and experience considerations for implementing credentialing requirements.

Specifies that DHB must implement coverage as soon as possible after receiving approval from CMS. Requires DHB to provide a report no later than March 1, 2027, to the specified NCGA committee regarding the Medicaid coverage and estimated recurring costs to the State.

Section 2.

Appropriates \$1,000,000 in recurring funds and associated receipts beginning with 2026-27 from the General Fund to DHB to implement the Medicaid-related changes. Appropriates an additional \$550,000 in recurring funds beginning with 2026-27 to DHB for support services and technical assistance to the doula workforce. Effective July 1, 2026.

Section 3.

Enacts new Article 10B, Certified Professional Midwives, to GS Chapter 90. Prohibits any person from practicing or offering to practice midwifery without a Certified Professional Midwife (CPM) license as provided in new Article 10B. Exempts the following circumstances from the licensure requirement: (1) an individual approved to practice as nurse midwife under Article 10A (Midwifery Practice Act); (2) a physician licensed to practice medicine; (3) the performance of medical acts by a physician assistant or nurse practitioner when performed according to Board rules, (4) the practice of nursing by a registered nurse as allowed under Article 9A (Nursing Practice Act), and (5) the rendering of childbirth assistance in emergency situations.

Includes definitions applicable to Article 10B. Defines *midwifery* as the provision of primary health or maternity care to childbearing people and infants.

Creates a seven-member North Carolina Council of Midwives (Council), with members appointed by the Secretary of Health and Human Services (Secretary; DHHS). Provides for initial members to be appointed on or before October 1, 2026, or within three months of the Article becoming law, whichever is later. Details Council member requirements and term limits and includes provisions for compensation, meeting procedures, and Council administration. Directs the Council to adopt rules within one year of the initial meeting to implement the Article. Enumerates 12 powers and duties of the Council, in consultation with the Division of Health Service Regulation (DHSR) of DHHS and with guidance from the National Association of Certified Professional Midwives Standards of Practice, including rulemaking, licensing, and disciplinary authority.

Lists five requirements for licensure as a certified professional midwife, including completion of an application and payment of required fees, and completion of all required educational and clinical training and earning the national Certified Professional Midwife certification credential awarding by an accredited midwifery certification agency.

Lists nine responsibilities of a licensed CPM, including the responsibility to provide care for the healthy client who is expected to have a normal pregnancy, labor, birth, and postpartal phase in the setting their choice; the responsibility to order routine antepartal or postpartal screening or lab analysis at a licensed lab or testing facility; and the responsibility to instruct the parents about all State-required newborn screening requirements. Directs a CPM licensed under Article 10B to display the license at all times in a conspicuous place where the midwife is practicing. Sets forth provisions for biennial license renewal, periods of lapsed licensure, and granting inactive status. Authorizes the Council to grant a license to a person residing in North Carolina licensed, certified, or registered to practice as a CPM in another jurisdiction if that jurisdiction's standards are substantially equivalent and the person submits an application and required fees. Directs the Council to establish a formulary of drugs and devices appropriate to CPM care from which licensed CPMs are limited to dispensing from, subject to applicable state and federal laws and recordkeeping requirements. Directs the Council to set all fees under Article 10B and to pay all expenditures out of funds from the fees or other funds. Allows the Council to discipline applicants or licensees, after a hearing, under seven specified circumstances.

Authorizes the Council to apply to superior court to enjoin violations of Article 10B. Provides that no health care provider will be liable for an injury to a woman or infant arising during childbirth and resulting from an act or omission by a licensed CPM.

Effective October 1, 2026.

Section 4.

Enacts Part 7 to Article 6 of GS Chapter 131E, the "Birth Center Licensure Act," to establish licensing requirements for birth centers. Defines *birth center* as a facility licensed for the primary purpose of performing normal, uncomplicated deliveries that is not a hospital or ambulatory surgical facility and where births are planned to occur away from the mother's usual residence following a low-risk pregnancy (defined). Tasks DHHS with reviewing and revising as necessary the Freestanding Birth Center Fee Schedule (Schedule) every three years in new GS 131E-154.20. Requires, in GS 131E-154.21, DHHS to inspect birth centers as it deems necessary to investigate unexpected occurrences involving death or serious physical injury and reportable adverse outcomes. Specifies that birth centers are subject to inspection by DHHS at all times. Allows for public disclosure of information received by DHHS or the NC Birth Center (Commission), except where doing so would violate laws pertaining to patient records and confidentiality.

Establishes the seven-member Commission in DHHS to (1) adopt rules establishing standards for birth centers and (2) to review and make recommendations to DHHS about whether to approve or disapprove of birth center license applications. Provides for appointees, vacancies, terms and term limits, removal by the Governor for misfeasance, malfeasance, or nonfeasance, compensation, quorum, and clerical and support services. Instructs the Commission to adopt rules on accreditation, risk status procedures, mandating second trimester ultrasounds and targeted ultrasounds, patient transfers, and reporting, including on unexpected occurrences involving death or serious physical injury and any other adverse outcomes. Requires DHHS to enforce new Part 7 and the Commission's rules. Authorizes release of confidential or nonpublic information to any health care licensure board in this State or another state or to DHHS personnel with investigative or enforcement authority over licensees in new GS 131E-154.25.

Adds GS 131E-154.17 to new Part 7, requiring birth centers to be licensed by DHHS. Provides for an application, one-year license, and posting of the license. Allows birth centers that (1) are operating in this State on the date the act becomes effective, (2) are accredited by the Commission for the Accreditation of Birth Centers (CABC), and (3) remain continually accredited to continue operations as the Commission is constituted and promulgates permanent rules. Provides for application process for those birth centers after that occurs. Authorizes DHHS, including the Secretary or designee, to take adverse action on a license in new GS 131E-154.18. Allows a birth center to challenge those actions under the contested case provisions of the APA. Prohibits a birth center from rendering the following services: (1) surgical procedures outside of those normally accomplished outside of an uncomplicated birth, to be determined by the Commission; (2) abortions; (3) general or conduction anesthesia; and (4) a vaginal birth after cesarean (VBAC) or trial of labor after cesarean (TOLAC). Effective one year after the rules promulgated by the North Carolina Birth Center Commission are adopted and applies to licenses granted on or after that date.

Makes it a Class 3 misdemeanor for a person to own, in whole or in part, or operate a birth center without a license, subject to a \$50 fine for a first offense and up to \$500 fines for subsequent offenses. Applies to offenses committed on or after December 1, 2026.

Directs DHHS, by October 1, 2026 to review and, as necessary, revise its current Freestanding Birth Center Fee Schedule to ensure that (1) the fees are sufficient to cover the costs of providing intrapartum, birth, postpartum, and initial newborn care

and (2) the cost for any State-mandated newborn screening is reimbursed at no less than the cost of the screening. Tasks DHHS with developing a licensure application. Requires the initial Commission appointments to be made not later than 60 days after the act's effective date. Provides for initial staggering of terms.

Intro. by Burgin, Chitlik.

APPROP, GS 90, GS 131E

[View summary](#)

Business and Commerce, Occupational Licensing, Government, Budget/Appropriations, State Agencies, Department of Health and Human Services, Health and Human Services, Health, Health Care Facilities and Providers, Public Health, Social Services, Public Assistance

S 966 (2025-2026) **THE SAVE ACT**. Filed Apr 30 2026, *AN ACT TO DEFINE THE PRACTICE OF NURSING FOR ADVANCED PRACTICE REGISTERED NURSES: NURSE PRACTITIONERS (NP), CERTIFIED NURSE MIDWIVES (CNM), CERTIFIED REGISTERED NURSE ANESTHETISTS (CRNA), AND CLINICAL NURSE SPECIALISTS (CNS)*.

Includes whereas clauses.

Enacts new GS 90-171.36B to prohibit an advanced practice registered nurse (APRN) from practicing as such without a license. Defines advanced practice registered nurse or APRN as an individual licensed by the The North Carolina Board of Nursing (Board) as an advanced practice registered nurse within one of the following four roles: (1) certified nurse practitioner or CNP, (2) certified nurse midwife or CNM, (3) clinical nurse specialist or CNS, or (4) certified registered nurse anesthetist or CRNA. Enacts GS 90-171.36C to require the Board to issue an APRN license to any person recognized by the Board as an APRN or approved to practice as an APRN in the state on or before the date that this statute becomes law. Enacts GS 90-171.36D, which specifies the process for APRN license renewal and reinstatement. Makes conforming changes to GS 90-171.43, GS 90-171.43A, and GS 90-171.44.

Amends the definitions of terms used in the Nursing Practice Act. Adds definitions for advanced assessment, advanced practice registered nurse, population focus, practice of nursing as an advanced practice registered nurse or APRN, practice of nursing as a certified nurse midwife or CNM, practice of nursing as a certified registered nurse anesthetist or CRNA, practice of nursing as a clinical nurse specialist or CNS, and practice of nursing as a certified nurse practitioner or CNP. Amends the components listed that define the practice of nursing by a registered nurse to include collaborating with other health care providers in determining the appropriate health care for a patient (previously, limited to not prescribing a medical treatment regimen or making a medical diagnosis, except under the supervision of a licensed physician). Removes the term practice of nursing by a licensed practical nurse. Makes clarifying, organizational, and technical changes.

Amends GS 90-18(c) to establish that the practice of nursing by a APRN does not constitute practicing medicine or surgery.

Repeals GS 90-18.2, which places limitations on nurse practitioners. Makes conforming changes to GS 90-2, GS 90-18.3, GS 90-85.24, and GS 90-85.34A.

Amends GS 90-29(b) to establish that a certified registered nurse anesthetist administering anesthetic does not constitute practicing dentistry.

Amends the powers of the Board in GS 90-171.23 by empowering the Board to grant prescribing, ordering, dispensing, and furnishing authority to holders of the advanced practice registered nurses license (deletes the power of the Board to appoint and maintain a subcommittee to work with the NC Medical Board to develop rules and regulations to govern the performance of medical acts by registered nurses and to determine related application fees).

Amends GS 90-171.27 to set out fees for application for licensure, license renewal, and reinstatement of lapsed licenses for APRNs.

Repeals GS 90-171.37(b) regarding the Board's disciplinary authority over registered nurses.

Repeals Article 10A of GS Chapter 90, Nurses Registered Under Previous Law, Practice of Midwifery. Makes conforming changes to GS 90-21.11.

Amends GS 115C-407.57 by specifying that certified nurse practitioners (was, nurse practitioners) are allowed to clear student athletes that have signs of a concussion for participation, and adds that they must do so consistent with provisions of Article 9A of GS Chapter 90.

Requires the Governor to submit an opt-out letter to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services within 30 days of the date the section becomes law, requesting an exemption that allows hospitals, ambulatory surgical centers, critical access hospitals, and rural hospitals in the state the maximum flexibility to obtain Medicare reimbursement for anesthesia services in a manner that best serves each facility and its patients and community. Effective when the bill becomes law.

Directs the Board, the NC Medical Board, and the State Board of Dental Examiners to adopt implementing rules. Effective when the bill becomes law.

Requires the Revisor of Statutes to change all references to nurse practitioners to certified nurse practitioners and change all references to the abbreviation NP to the abbreviation CNP, wherever those terms appear in: GS 15-190, GS 20-37.6(c1), GS 55B-14(c), GS 58-3-169, GS 58-50-30, GS 58-51-45, GS 90-1.1, GS 90-3, GS 90-21.17, GS 90-21.81, GS 90-171.21, GS 90-724, GS 108A-77.1, GS 115C-323, GS 115C-375.2A, GS 122C-263.1, GS 122C-465, GS 130A-115, GS 130A-440.1, and GS 131D-4.8.

Effective 90 days after the act becomes law.

Intro. by Burgin, Hise.

[GS 15](#), [GS 20](#), [GS 55B](#), [GS 58](#), [GS 90](#), [GS 108A](#), [GS 115C](#), [GS 122C](#), [GS 130A](#), [GS 131D](#)

[View summary](#)

[Health and Human Services](#), [Health](#), [Health Care Facilities and Providers](#)

S 976 (2025-2026) [REDUCE HEALTHCARE COSTS & AMP PROTECT PATIENTS](#). Filed Apr 30 2026, *AN ACT REDUCING HEALTHCARE COSTS AND PROTECTING PATIENTS*.

Includes whereas clauses.

Part I.

Enacts GS 58-3-182 to cap cost-sharing for any health benefit plan (plan) for prescription drug coverage at \$2,000 annually per covered person. Specifies that cost-sharing includes copayments, deductibles, and other out-of-pocket expenses for a prescription drug. Applies to insurance contracts entered into, renewed, or amended on or after October 1, 2026.

Part II.

Amends new GS 58-3-182, adding a provision to require nonemergency care provided at an in-network facility of a covered individual's health benefit plan to be charged to the individual at an in-network rate. Bars plans from allowing cost-sharing at an out-of-network rate if the facility is in the plan's network.

Amends GS 58-3-200 regarding the use of penalties for services outside of a health benefit plan's provide network when a contracted provider is reasonably available to the insured without unreasonable delay. Provides that upon notice or request from the insured, an insurer must determine whether a contracted provider is available to the insured without unreasonable delay by referencing the insured's location and specific medical needs.

Applies to healthcare services provided on or after October 1, 2026, and contracts issued, renewed, or amended on or after that date.

Requires that emergency ground ambulance services by considered part of the essential health benefit package under the specified federal law beginning with the 2027 calendar year. Directs the Commissioner of Insurance to share this change with

the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services and insurers offering plans in the State on the federally facilitated marketplace.

Part III.

Enacts new Article 11C to GS Chapter 131E, Fair Billing and Collection Practices for Hospitals and Ambulatory Surgical Facilities. Recodifies GS 131E-91 (concerning fair billing and collections) as GS 131E-214.50 and amends the statute as follows. Adds to the collections practices hospitals and ambulatory surgical facilities must adhere to (1) bars referring a patient's unpaid bill to a collections entity unless an informed decision is made that the patient is not eligible for financial assistance under the hospital or facility's policies, and (2) bars reporting a patient's unpaid bill to a credit reporting agency until the bill is at least 180 days past due.

Part IV.

Amends GS 131E-214.13 governing pricing disclosure for frequently reported Diagnostic Related Group (DRG), Current Procedural Technology (CPT), and the Healthcare Common Procedure Coding System (HCPCS). Adds CPT, DRG, HCPCS, and statewide data processor to the defined terms. Changes the reporting requirements in subsections (b) and (d) to now require hospitals to quarterly (was, annually) report to the statewide data processor (was, the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)) specified information about (1) the 100 most frequently reported admissions by DRG for inpatients and (2) total costs for the 20 most common surgical procedures and the 20 most common imaging procedures performed in outpatient settings or ambulatory surgical facilities (facilities) along with CPT and HCPCS codes. Specifies that when calculating the amount, each hospital or facility must include charges for each billable item and service associated with the DRG or procedure regardless of whether a physician or nonphysician practitioner performed the service. Reorganizes the rulemaking provisions and adds that the Medicare Care Commission (Commission) must establish procedures for the statewide data processor to receive receive and submit data reported to DHHS for publication on its website. Makes conforming changes.

Enacts GS 131E-214.18 to authorize DHHS to assess civil penalties for violations of Article 11B in addition to any federal penalty. Sets the daily penalty at no less than .01% of the annual salary of the CEO of the noncompliant hospital or facility or more than \$2,000.

Adds receipt of data from hospitals and facilities reported pursuant to GS 131E-214.13, as amended, to the duties of a statewide data processor set forth in GS 131E-214.4 and requires submitting the data to DHHS.

Makes the above changes effective on the later of January 1, 2027, or the date rules adopted by the Commission regarding uniform reporting pursuant to GS 131E-214.13(d) becomes effective. Directs the Commission to notify the Revisor of Statutes when rules pursuant to GS 131E-214.13(f)(1) and (2) become effective.

Enacts GS 131E-214.52 to require facilities to provide a written, itemized list of expected charges within three business days of the expected service when a patient requests a good-faith estimate. Requires the estimate be comprehensible to laypersons and include DRG, CPT, or HCPCS code for each expected charge. Prohibits the patient's final bill from exceeding more than 5% of any good-faith estimate provided under the statute. Directs DHHS to adopt implementing rules. Includes defined terms. Effective on the later of January 1, 2027, or the date the implementing rules take effect. Directs DHHS to notify the Revisor when the rules become effective.

Part V.

Appropriates \$2.5 million in recurring funds beginning in 2026-27 from the General Fund to the Department of Insurance to implement and enforce Parts I and II of the act. Appropriates \$2.5 million in recurring funds beginning in 2026-27 from the General Fund to DHHS to implement and enforce Parts III and IV of the act. Effective July 1, 2026.

Intro. by Grafstein.

[APPROP, GS 58, GS 131E](#)

[View summary](#)

[Government, Budget/Appropriations, State Agencies, Department of Health and Human Services, Health and Human Services, Health, Health Care Facilities and Providers, Health Insurance](#)

S 977 (2025-2026) [MORATORIUM ON NEW COASTAL FISHING REGULATIONS](#). Filed Apr 30 2026, *AN ACT TO ESTABLISH A TEMPORARY MORATORIUM ON REGULATORY ACTIONS AFFECTING COMMERCIAL AND RECREATIONAL FISHING PENDING REVIEW AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NORTH CAROLINA COLLABORATORY STUDY OF THE COASTAL AND MARINE FISHERIES OF THE STATE AND TO REESTABLISH THE JOINT LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION ON SEAFOOD AND AQUACULTURE.*

Part I.

Includes five legislative findings and establishes the purpose of the Part's provisions is to enact a comprehensive moratorium to prevent regulatory expansion affecting commercial fishing and recreational fishing activity until the NC Collaboratory study, legislatively mandated in 2021, can be fully evaluated by the NCGA.

Defines five terms, including Collaboratory study, recreational fishing, regulatory action, seafood industry, and State marine fisheries agency, and makes definitions set forth in GS 113-128 and GS 113-129 applicable. Prohibits State marine fisheries agencies, defined to include the Division of Marine Resources (Division) of the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), the Fisheries Director, the Marine Fisheries Commission, and DEQ Secretary, from establishing, implementing, or enforcing regulatory action imposing new or expanded restrictions on the seafood industry or recreational fishing in coastal water. Identifies six actions included in this moratorium, including reductions in bag, size and trap limits and additional restrictions on fishing methods and gear. Bars State marine agencies from reallocating or modifying the harvest quota allocated to the commercial and recreational fishing sectors. Directs that the recreational bag limits, size limits, seasons, and lawful harvest methods that were in effect on January 1, 2019, apply to recreational fishing in coastal fishing waters. Directs the Fisheries Director to issue consistent proclamations to restore these limits to those in effect on January 1, 2019, within 30 days of the date the act becomes law, and directs the Marine Fisheries Commission to amend its rules, guidelines, and policies to conform the limits with those that were in effect on January 1, 2019.

Bars State marine fisheries agencies from acting inconsistent with the act or its purpose unless strictly necessary to comply with a condition imposed on the receipt of federal funds or to implement federal law, with a list of specified federal laws included for compliance. Requires action taken under the federal compliance exception to be narrowly tailored for compliance or conditions of federal funding with any new or expanded restrictions the minimum necessary to maintain compliance. Requires agencies to prepare written statements identifying the federal law requiring the excepted action and reasons why action is required. Additionally allows regulatory action prohibited by the act if strictly necessary for any of five listed purposes, including to protect against imminent threats to public health and safety or to prevent catastrophic loss of marine and estuarine resources, so long as the action is narrowly tailored to address the emergency situation and any new or expanded restrictions are the minimum necessary. Requires agencies to prepare written statements identifying the emergency situation and reasons why action is required. Sunsets authorized regulatory actions no later than 180 days following their effective date.

Provides for judicial review of regulatory actions taken in violation of Part I of the act in Wake County Superior Court with relief including costs and reasonable attorneys' fees. States the APA applies to this review.

Directs the Division to biannually report to the specified NCGA committee on its review and implementation of recommendations from the Collaboratory study mandated by SL 2021-180, as amended, beginning on September 1, 2026. Specified required content. Appropriates \$10,000 from the General Fund to DEQ for 2026-27 to be used for the Division's reports. Effective July 1, 2026.

Sunsets the provisions of Part I on January 1, 2037.

Part II.

Enacts Article 12T, GS Chapter 120, establishing the Joint Legislative Commission on Seafood and Aquaculture as a 15-member Commission appointed by the NCGA, Governor, and Commissioner of Agriculture, as specified. Provides for the Commission's chair, terms, meetings, staffing, and expenses. Lists nine powers and duties of the Commission, including studying the potential increasing role of aquaculture in the State and evaluating the feasibility of creating a central permitting office for fishing and aquaculture matters. Adds that the Commission has all powers granted to joint committees by the NCGA under specified state law. Directs the Legislative Service Commission to allocate monies to fund the Commission.

Part III.

Includes a severability clause.

[View summary](#)

Environment, Aquaculture and Fisheries, Government, Budget/Appropriations, General Assembly, State Agencies, Department of Environmental Quality (formerly DENR)

S 978 (2025-2026) **HEALTHCARE COMPETITION REFORMS**. Filed Apr 30 2026, *AN ACT TO PROVIDE GREATER ACCESS TO AND COMPETITION FOR HEALTHCARE SERVICES, TO PROVIDE WHISTLEBLOWER AND EMPLOYMENT PROTECTION TO HEALTHCARE WORKERS, AND TO LIMIT THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER COMPENSATION OF NOT-FOR-PROFIT HOSPITALS THAT RECEIVE STATE FUNDS.*

Part I.

Enacts new Article 11C, Preserving Competition in Healthcare Act, to GS Chapter 131E. Sets forth defined terms. Defines *hospital entity* to include any licensed hospital, whether corporate or governmental, and any affiliated entity. Defines transaction to include all of the following, so long as the value of the assets, control, or governance interest equals or exceeds \$5 million:

1. The sale, transfer, lease, exchange, optioning, conveyance, or other disposition of no less than 50% of the assets or operations of any hospital entity to any person or entity other than another hospital entity that controls, is controlled by, or is under common control with such hospital entity;
2. the transfer of control or governance of a hospital entity to a person or entity other than another hospital entity that controls, is controlled by, or is under common control with such hospital entity;
3. any binding legal obligation between two or more persons that results in a transfer of control, responsibility, or governance of no less than 50% of a hospital entity's assets to an acquiring entity;
4. any transaction, regardless of its exact form, that would be subject to review under the Article if it was structured as a purchase, merger, or joint venture;
5. any of the above transactions that is entered into by a hospital entity or by any person or entity that controls, is controlled by, or is under common control with such hospital entity; or
6. dispositions of no less than 50% of a hospital entity's assets made in the course of a bankruptcy proceeding.

Enacts GS 131E-214.21, requiring the State Auditor (Auditor), the Attorney General (AG), and the State Treasurer (Treasurer) (collectively, the Governing Actors) to collectively act or decide together on any or decision that is required by them under the Article. Excludes from the Article's scope in GS 131E-214.22 those transactions that are in the usual and regular course of a hospital entity's activities which the Governing Parties have provided a written waiver for the transaction. Deems the Governing Parties' determination final and not subject to judicial review unless found to be arbitrary and capricious.

Establishes, in GS 131E-214.24, a procedure for hospital entities to notify the Governing Parties of proposed transactions and for the Governing Parties to review and make determinations with respect to transactions subject to the Article, as described. Requires hospital entities subject to the Article to provide the Governing Parties with written notice of a proposed transaction and certification that a copy of the Article has been provided to each member of the governing board or board of trustees of the hospital entity. Allows for a single written notice to suffice for both the hospital entity and acquiring entity, subject to the Governing Parties requesting more information as needed. Provides for the effect of the notice and directs the Governing Parties to adopt rules regarding required content and manner of the written notice. Sets forth a 60-day timeline for the Governing Parties' review in GS 131E-214.26, within which the Governing Parties must notify the hospital entity in writing of its decision to either object to or take no action regarding the proposed transaction. Provides for the Governing Parties to extend the review period for up to another 60 days. Prohibits the parties from consummating the transaction during the review period.

Additionally requires in GS 131E-214.28, for the hospital entity to give written notice of the proposed transaction by publication in at least one newspaper in general circulation in each relevant county, as specified, within ten days after providing written notice to the Governing Parties. Details requirements of the published written notice and deems failure to provide this notice as sufficient grounds for the Governing Parties to object to the proposed transaction.

Requires in GS 131E-214.30, for the hospital entity and acquiring entity to hold at least one public hearing within 30 days after providing written notice to the Governing Parties, but not within 14 days after publication of written notice. Details hearing requirements, including seven days' written notice to the Governing Parties of the time, date, and location of the public hearing. Also requires the hospital entity and acquiring entity to give written notice to the relevant local governing bodies, as specified. Requires the Governing Parties' approval to conduct the public hearing electronically. Provides specific hearing requirements for hospital entities that are nonprofits or publicly owned entities. Allows the Governing Parties to conduct an additional public hearing, subject to similar notice requirements. Deems the parties to the proposed transaction responsible for the costs of all public hearings. Excludes dispositions made in the course of a bankruptcy proceeding.

Lists eight general considerations the Governing Parties must address in making a determination about the proposed transaction in GS 131E-214.32, including (1) whether the fair market value of any asset to be transferred from the hospital entity to the acquiring entity has been manipulated by the actions of the parties in a manner that causes the fair market value of the asset to decrease; (2) whether the proposed transaction may have a significant effect on the cost, availability, accessibility, or quality of healthcare services for any affected community by considering six required factors; (3) any objections raised in the comments submitted to the AG; and (4) whether the proposed transaction complies with all applicable State and federal laws and regulations, including antitrust laws. Lists eight additional considerations the Governing Parties must take into account in making a decision about any proposed transaction subject to the provisions of the Article that would alter the control or governance of a tax-exempt or publicly owned hospital entity. Finally, for any proposed transaction subject to the provisions of the Article that involves a hospital owned by a municipality or a hospital authority, requires the Governing Parties to determine whether the transaction complies with the provisions of Article 2 of GS Chapter 131E governing the sale or conveyance of any rights of ownership the municipality or hospital authority has in a hospital entity.

Enacts GS 131E-214.36, granting the Governing Parties authority to contract, consult and receive advice from any State or US agency, or contract with experts or consultants, to assist in transaction review. Allows the Governing Parties to request from the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) a report of the anticipated effects of any proposed transaction on access to, or the pricing of, healthcare services in any part of the State; allows extension of the review period upon requests of such reports so long as the total review period does not exceed 180 days from the Governing Parties' notice that the parties have submitted a complete notice. Authorizes the Governing Parties to impose specified fees upon the acquiring entity of up to \$50,000 for the cost of all the contracts entered into by the Governing Parties, the Governing Parties' actual review costs and DHHS's actual costs for report preparations. Allows the acquiring entity to seek an order from a court to limit its liability for imposed fees. Details procedures for such an objection and the effect of failing to pay imposed fees.

Establishes requirements for instances in which the Governing Parties objects to the proposed transaction in GS 131E-214.38. Requires the Governing Parties to file an action seeking injunctive relief in superior court, as described. Details procedures of such actions based on whether the hospital entity is a nonprofit or publicly owned entity, or a for-profit entity. In either instance, the court can issue a final determination approving the transaction, approving the transaction subject to modification, or disapproving the transaction. Allows appeal of the court's decision, except prohibits the Governing Parties from appealing a court's approval of the transaction subject to the same modification the Governing Parties initially sought. Allows any party to decline to enter into a transaction modified by court order. Deems modified transactions entered into not subject the renewed objections by the Governing Parties.

Following either the conclusion of the review process by the Governing Parties under GS 131E-214.32 or, if necessary, after a final decision of any judicial action authorized under GS 131E-214-38, requires the acquiring party to submit an annual report on its compliance with the terms of the purchase agreement for the transaction, including any representations made to, or modifications made by the Governing Parties. Directs the Governing Parties to adopt rules to specify the required contents of the annual report. Requires entities that acquired a nonprofit or publicly owned hospital entities to also submit a report on its charitable activities and the disposition of its charitable assets. Authorizes the Governing Parties to file an action for relief as specified to restore the benefits of healthcare provider competition if the Governing Parties deem it reasonable and necessary to do so based on the acquiring entity's failure to comply with the terms of the agreement either approved by the Governing Parties or issued by a court, including any modifications thereto.

Prohibits an acquiring entity from changing the financial assistance policy regarding uninsured or underinsured in effect immediately proceeding consummation of the transaction without first providing 120 days' written notice to the AG, its hospital staff, and patients who have previously benefited from the hospital entity's policy, with a limited exception for increases to applicable eligibility income limits. Clarifies that this provision does not prevent a hospital from increasing its applicable income limits used to determine patient eligibility for financial assistance at any time following consummation of

the transaction, and it does not require an acquiring entity to provide prior notice to the Governing Parties. Details notice requirements for patients who previously benefited from the policy. Includes education requirements for the acquiring entity's physicians regarding new financial assistance policies and verbally informing patients of the new policy during the notice period.

Enacts GS 131E-214.42, as follows. Deems any transaction in violation of the Article void. Subjects each member of the governing board and each chief financial officer of the transaction entered in violation of the Article up to \$50,000 per transaction unless the violation was made in wanton disregard of the law, in which case the penalty may be up to \$1 million per violation. Directs the Governing Parties to initiate an action for determination of the penalty amount in the Superior Court for Wake County. Prohibits DHHS from issuing hospital licensed to any party of a transaction entered in violation of the notice, public hearing, and review requirements of the Article. Specifies the effect of the Article on the Governing Parties' authority and the effect of the Article's penalties and remedies.

Applies to activities occurring on or after January 1, 2027.

Appropriates \$50,000 for 2026-27 from the General Fund to the Office of State Auditor for examination of proposed transactions under this Part. Effective July 1, 2026.

Part II.

Amends GS 75-1.1 to limit the application of the statute's learned profession exemption to health care providers only for acts and omissions directly related to providing medical, dental, or other health care that are subject to litigation under Article 1B (medical malpractice actions) of GS Chapter 90.

Enacts new GS 95-28.1B, as follows. Defines health care professional as an individual who is a licensed physician, physician assistant, advanced practice registered nurse, or registered nurse. Defines hospital, medical staff bylaws, and stakeholder. Makes it State policy that health care professionals have the right to report violations of medical staff bylaws to appropriate authorities and make comments concerning patient care for the protection of the public. Prohibits subjecting a health care professional to adverse action for reporting a violation of medical staff bylaws or making comments concerning patient care. Makes conforming changes to GS 95-241.

Allows the NC Board of Medicine to adopt rules to implement this Part.

Enacts new Article 52, Limitations on Agreements with Health Care Professionals, in GS Chapter 66, providing as follows. Defines health care professional as a licensed physician, physician assistant, advanced practice registered nurse, or registered nurse. Also defines medical staff bylaws, nondisclosure agreement, and non-compete clause. Requires a nondisclosure agreement entered into with a health care professional to include a statement that it does not restrict them from reporting safety concerns, ethical violations, or illegal activities. Prohibits requiring a health care professional from entering into a nondisclosure agreement that would: (1) prevent the health care professional from discussing patient safety concerns with licensing agencies, accrediting bodies, or other regulatory or oversight entities; or (2) restrict the health care professional's ability to report to the appropriate authorities violations of law, medical ethics, or medical staff bylaws. Prohibits an employment contract for a health care professional employed by a hospital from containing a non-compete clause. Also prohibits any policy or contractual agreement with a health care professional from providing new practice information upon patient request, and if available, requires the information to be provided by the person receiving the request. Voids any nondisclosure agreement or non-compete clause that violates the Article. Entitles a health care professional who prevails in an action under this Article to damages plus reasonable attorneys' fees and costs. Applies to contracts entered into, modified, or renewed on or after July 1, 2026.

Part III.

Enacts new GS 131E-99.1 prohibiting the chief executive officer of a qualifying hospital (one licensed under Article 5 of GS Chapter 131E that accepts funds from the State and is exempt from taxation) from receiving an annual compensation that is more than 400 times greater than the minimum compensation (defined as the value of the annual compensation received by a full-time employee of a qualifying hospital who receives minimum wage, or if no one receives minimum wage, the values of the annual compensation received by the lowest-paid, full-time employee). Violations are punishable by a penalty equal to the amount of the chief executive officer's annual compensation. Requires an annual report from all qualifying hospitals to the North Carolina Medical Care Commission (Commission) on the minimum compensation and chief executive officer

compensation for the preceding year. Sets deadlines for notifying hospitals of penalties and for payment of those penalties.
Allows the Commission to adopt rules to implement these provisions.

Intro. by Burgin.

APPROP, GS 66, GS 75, GS 95, GS 131E

[View summary](#)

**Business and Commerce, Employment and Retirement,
Government, Budget/Appropriations, State Agencies,
Department of Justice, Department of State Treasurer, Office
of State Auditor, Health and Human Services, Health, Health
Care Facilities and Providers**

S 979 (2025-2026) [INCREASE INSURANCE RATE TRANSPARENCY](#). Filed Apr 30 2026, *AN ACT MODIFYING THE CONSENT AND NOTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS FOR INSURANCE RATE DEVIATIONS, PROHIBITING THE USE OF CREDIT SCORING TO RATE NONCOMMERCIAL PRIVATE PASSENGER MOTOR VEHICLE AND RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY INSURANCE, DIRECTING THE DEPARTMENT OF INSURANCE TO STUDY THE GRADUAL REDUCTION OF CONSENT TO RATE DEVIATIONS BY INSURERS, DIRECTING THE DEPARTMENT OF INSURANCE TO CONDUCT A PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGN ON CONSENT TO RATE DEVIATIONS, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS TO THE DEPARTMENT OF INSURANCE.*

Amends GS 58-36-30, which generally prohibits insurers from issuing or delivering insurance policies in the State that do not conform to the rates, rating plans, classifications, schedules, rules and standards made and filed by the NC Rate Bureau. Modifies subsection (b1), which allows for rate deviation for insurance against loss to residential property with no more than four housing units. Eliminates previous notice provisions regarding an insurer charging a rate higher than the rate promulgated by the Rate Bureau on any specific risk. Now allows for charging the higher rate if charged in accordance with rules adopted by the Commissioner of Insurance (Commissioner) and with the knowledge and consent of the insured, now permissible by electronic means. Requires the insurer to notify the insured at least 60 days prior to charging the higher rate (1) that the rates used to calculate the premium will be greater than those applicable to the State; (2) what the premium based upon approved rates in the State would be; (3) what the insurer's premium for coverage will be; (4) the justification for charging the higher rate; and (5) any actions the insured can take to mitigate the insurer's justification for charging the higher rate. Replaces the reporting requirements in subsection (b2). Instead requires the Commissioner to collect and annually publish aggregated data from all insurers for each geographical rate-making territory with 23 specified data points, including among them the number of policies in effect, the number of applications for coverage, the number of applications for which coverage was not provided, and the number of policies not renewed, canceled, or terminated.

Amends GS 58-36-90 to prohibit insurers rating and underwriting noncommercial private passenger motor vehicle and residential insurance coverage from using credit scoring as a basis for terminating an existing policy or any coverage in an existing policy, or subjecting a policy to consent to a rate deviation (current law prohibits using credit scoring as the only basis for termination or consent). Makes conforming deletions. Makes conforming changes to the statute's caption.

Makes the above changes applicable to policies issued, amended, or renewed on or after October 1, 2027.

Directs the Department of Insurance (DOI) to adopt implementing rules.

Directs DOI to study the feasibility of and methodology for gradually reducing the number of rate deviations authorized by GS 58-36-30. Requires developing a plan for reducing households consenting to rate deviations to 20% or lower of the statement insurance market by January 1, 2040, along with strategies for preserving access to insurance while gradually reducing the use of deviations.

Directs DOI to conduct a public awareness campaign on rate deviations beginning January 1, 2027, as specified.

Directs DOI to report proposals for implementation of its reduction of the use of rate deviations to the specified NCGA committee by October 1, 2027.

Appropriates \$50,000 from the General Fund to DOI for 2026-27 to conduct the study and public awareness campaign.
Effective July 1, 2026.

Intro. by Murdock.

APPROP, STUDY, GS 58

[View summary](#)

Business and Commerce, Insurance, Development, Land Use and Housing, Property and Housing, Government, Budget/Appropriations, State Agencies, Department of Insurance

S 980 (2025-2026) **ADOPT OFFICIAL HIP-HOP SONG**. Filed Apr 30 2026, *AN ACT TO ADOPT THE SONG "RAISE UP" AS THE OFFICIAL HIP-HOP SONG OF THE STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA.*

Includes whereas clauses.

Adds new GS 145-52 adopting the censored version of Petey Pablo's "Raise Up" as the State's official hip-hop song.

Appropriates \$6.5 million for 2026-27 and 2027-28 from the General Fund to the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources for the North Carolina Music Heritage and Tourism Initiative. Directs the Initiative to use funds for (i) a statewide "First in Flight, First in Sound" promotion campaign, (ii) hip-hop related events, (iii) promotional partnerships with local governments and HBCUs, (iv) a hip-hop music heritage trail, and (v) an informational and promotional mobile app. Requires the Initiative to represent cultural and hip-hop music scenes from across the state, including Greenville, Fayetteville, Durham, Charlotte, and Raleigh at minimum and to have two honorary chairpersons representing the State's hip-hop music and heritage.

Intro. by Murdock, Smith, Salvador.

APPROP, GS 145

[View summary](#)

Government, Budget/Appropriations, Cultural Resources and Museums, State Agencies, Department of Natural and Cultural Resources (formerly Dept. of Cultural Resources)

S 981 (2025-2026) **AI IN ED TASK FORCE AND STANDARDS**. Filed Apr 30 2026, *AN ACT TO ESTABLISH THE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN EDUCATION TASK FORCE AND TO REQUIRE AGE-APPROPRIATE INSTRUCTION ON ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE.*

Section 1

Establishes the Artificial Intelligence in Education Task Force (AIE) to determine the best means to use and oversee the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in educational settings. Requires AIE consist of six voting members, including one member of the Senate, appointed by the President Pro Tem, and one member of the House, appointed by the Speaker, to serve as cochairs; the Superintendent of Public Instruction or Superintendent's designee; Chair of The University of North Carolina Board of Governors or Chair's designee; the Secretary of the Department of Information Technology or Secretary's designee, and one representative of the NC AI Leadership Council, chosen by the Council. Permits appointing ex officio nonvoting advisory members to AIE. Requires AIE to adopt certain rules and regulations governing its business. Defines quorum as a majority of members for purposes of conducting business and requires a majority vote of all members present at a meeting to give recommendations to NCGA. States AIE purpose, which is to be responsible for balancing innovation and public interest while endeavoring to mitigate risks and unintended consequences of AI and its regulation. Directs AIE to consider multiple issues related to AI use in schools. Requires the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) to provide administrative support to AIE. Directs AIE to commence within 15 days of effective date and dissolve on December 31, 2027. Requires AIE report findings and recommendations to Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee no later than March 15, 2028.

Section 2

Enacts new GS 115C-81.66 requiring the State Board of Education to adopt standards for age-appropriate instruction on AI for kindergarten through grade 12. Sets out minimum instruction the standards should include. Permits standards to allow for AI instruction in standards for computer science courses offered in middle and high school. Requires DPI to provide professional

development for teachers and administrators related to AI and its use in education, to the extent funds are made available for this purpose.

Appropriates \$250,000 for 2026-27 from the General Fund to DPI to implement Section 2 provisions. Effective July 1, 2026.

Intro. by Murdock, Salvador.

[APPROP, GS 115C](#)

[View summary](#)

[Education, Elementary and Secondary Education, Higher Education, Government, Budget/Appropriations, State Agencies, UNC System, Department of Information Technology, Department of Public Instruction](#)

S 983 (2025-2026) [TIPS TAX DEDUCTION](#). Filed Apr 30 2026, *AN ACT ALLOWING AN INCOME TAX DEDUCTION FOR TIPS*.

Amends GS 105-153.5, as the title indicates. Effective for taxable years beginning on or after January 1, 2026.

Intro. by Jones, Johnson, Chitlik.

[GS 105](#)

[View summary](#)

[Employment and Retirement, Government, Tax](#)

S 989 (2025-2026) [EPSTEIN TRUTH AND ACCOUNTABILITY ACT](#). Filed Apr 30 2026, *AN ACT TO ESTABLISH A HUMAN TRAFFICKING RECORDS COMMISSION WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE TO REVIEW AND RELEASE RECORDS RELATED TO THE EPSTEIN INVESTIGATION, TO MAKE CONFORMING CHANGES TO LEGISLATIVE PRIVILEGE AND CONFIDENTIALITY, TO AUTHORIZE THE STATE BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION TO ASSIST THE HUMAN TRAFFICKING RECORDS COMMISSION, TO ALLOW ISSUANCE OF EXTREME RISK PROTECTION ORDERS, AND TO PROVIDE FUNDING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE*.

Enacts Article 11, the Human Trafficking Records Commission (Commission) as part of GS Chapter 114 to review and release records related to the investigation of Jeffrey Epstein that are held by State authorities (Epstein records). Provides for redaction of victims' personally identifiable information. Specifies that, to the extent a member or officer of the NCGA is identified in those records, the common law of legislative privilege and the common law of legislative immunity do not apply in matters related to the investigation of Jeffrey Epstein. Makes conforming changes to GS 120-137 (legislative privilege). Designates the Epstein records released by the Commission as public records in GS 132-1.4. Authorizes the State Bureau of Investigation (SBI), upon request by the Attorney General, to assist the Commission with its investigation in GS 143B-1208.5. Makes conforming change to statute's title.

Enacts Article 54C, pertaining to Extreme Risk Protection Orders (ERPO) in Chapter 14 to restrict access and remove firearms from certain individuals identified in the Commission's release of Epstein records. Authorizes District Court judges to release ERPO's for those individuals upon reviewing the context within which the person was identified in the Epstein record before issuing any ERPO. Provides for a hearing and order of surrender of firearms, as specified. Makes conforming change to GS 14-269 (prohibiting purchase or possession of firearms by persons subject to a domestic violence order).

Appropriates \$5 million from the Opportunity Scholarship Program to the Department of Justice for 2026-27 be used to establish and operate the Commission. Appropriates \$5 million from the Opportunity Scholarship Program to the Department of Public Safety for 2026-27 be used to support the SBI investigations described above.

Intro. by Batch, Bradley, Garrett.

[APPROP, GS 14, GS 114, GS 120, GS 132, GS 143B](#)

[View summary](#)

[Courts/Judiciary, Criminal Justice, Criminal Law and Procedure, Government, Budget/Appropriations, General Assembly, Public Records and Open Meetings, Public Safety](#)

S 991 (2025-2026) **COMMUNITY COLLEGE WORKFORCE READINESS ACT**. Filed Apr 30 2026, *AN ACT TO APPROPRIATE FUNDS TO SUPPORT NORTH CAROLINA COMMUNITY COLLEGES AND TO MAKE VARIOUS CHANGES TO THE LAWS AFFECTING NORTH CAROLINA COMMUNITY COLLEGES.*

Section 1

Amends GS 115D-10.21(a) to expand the community college training program to up to 25 community colleges (was, 15). Requires the Community Colleges System Office (CCSO) to use funds appropriated for the NC Community Colleges System IDD Workforce Training Expansion as follows: (1) \$640,000 in recurring funds must be used to create two positions that will create work-based learning opportunities and be dedicated to business and industry partner engagement statewide and for the expansion of Career and College Promise high school pathways and pre-apprenticeships and work-based learning for those with intellectual and developmental disabilities; (2) \$810,000 in recurring funds may be used for marketing evaluation, online resources, professional development, and infrastructure support; and (3) remaining funds must be used to expand the program developed pursuant to GS 115D-10.21, as amended by this section, at the rate of \$194,000 per participating community college.

Appropriates \$3.85 million in recurring funds for 2026-27 from the General Fund to CCSO to implement provisions of Section 1.

Section 2

Requires ApprenticeshipNC to report to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on a plan to facilitate one or more expedited pathways for apprenticeship candidates to enter the teaching profession by March 15, 2027. Requires ApprenticeshipNC to develop the plan in collaboration with the Board of Governors of The University of North Carolina, the State Board of Community Colleges, the Department of Public Instruction, and Teach NC. Permits collaboration with other representatives of approved educator preparation programs, local school administrative units, and existing apprenticeship programs. Provides list of required plan components.

Section 3

Appropriates \$4,913,100 for 2026-27 from the General Fund to CCSO to be used to expand access to digital credentials in all community colleges in NC, to select a single Credential Management System (CrMS) vendor that meets all required criteria, and to pay for deployment costs and other costs associated with implementing the CrMS. Directs funds appropriated from this section not to revert, but to remain available until the end of 2027-28. Provides criteria a vendor must meet to be contracted to provide a CrMS.

Except as otherwise provided, act effective July 1, 2026.

Intro. by Lee, Overcash, Barnes.

[APPROP, GS 115D](#)

[View summary](#)

[Education, Elementary and Secondary Education, Higher Education, Government, State Agencies, Community Colleges System Office, UNC System, Department of Public Instruction](#)

S 992 (2025-2026) **TRUTH IN TAXATION**. Filed Apr 30 2026, *AN ACT TO IMPLEMENT TRUTH IN TAXATION PROCEDURES WHEN A GOVERNING BODY OF A TAXING UNIT INTENDS TO ADOPT A TAX RATE EXCEEDING THE REVENUE-NEUTRAL TAX RATE IN ANY YEAR A GENERAL REAPPRAISAL IS CONDUCTED AND TO INCREASE THE FEE FOR REINSTATING AN EXPIRED REAL ESTATE APPRAISER TRAINEE REGISTRATION, LICENSE, OR CERTIFICATE.*

Section 1.

Adds new GS 159-13.3 prohibiting the governing body of a taxing authority from adopting a property tax rate greater than the revenue-neutral tax rate as determined under GS 159-11(e), unless the governing body has passed a resolution or ordinance allowing the tax rate to exceed the revenue-neutral tax rate. Applies during years where a general reappraisal of real property has been conducted.

Requires the governing body to publish general and specific notice of intent to exceed the revenue-neutral tax rate, describes notice form and content, and requires a public hearing. Requires majority approval of governing body to pass an ordinance or resolution allowing the tax rate to exceed the revenue-neutral rate. Provides that such ordinance or resolution must be passed before the adoption of the budget ordinance.

Requires a governing body that does not comply with the requirements of this statute to refund any property taxes collected exceeding the amount that would have been collected under the revenue-neutral tax rate.

Adds new subdivision GS 159-13(b)(7a) binding a governing body to the requirements of GS 159-13.3 in adopting the budget ordinance for years where a general reappraisal of real property has been conducted.

Effective when the act becomes law and applies to budget ordinances adopted for fiscal years after July 1, 2027.

Section 2.

Amends GS 93E-1-7(c) to increase the late filing fee for lapsed real estate appraiser trainee registrations, licenses and certificates to \$12.00 per month (was, \$10.00 per month). Effective July 1, 2026, and applies to registrations, licenses, and certificates reinstated on or after that date.

Except as otherwise provided, this act is effective when it becomes law.

Intro. by Ford, B. Newton, McInnis.

GS 93E, GS 159

[View summary](#)

**Business and Commerce, Occupational Licensing,
Development, Land Use and Housing, Property and Housing,
Government, Tax**

S 994 (2025-2026) **EARLY VOTING PROCEDURES AT FIRE STATIONS**. Filed Apr 30 2026, *AN ACT TO ENSURE CERTAIN PROVISIONS ARE IN PLACE AT EARLY VOTING SITES LOCATED AT FIRE STATIONS*.

Adds new subsection (d1) to GS 163-166.35 requiring county boards of elections to implement certain requirements for early voting occurring at fire stations: (1) provide traffic control measures, (2) provide physical security, (3) provide phone support for voters, (4) provide sufficient signage on election day if the same fire station is not a voting place that day, (5) agree to indemnify a fire station from damage claims arising from use of the fire station as an early voting place, and (6) ensure service levels for unaffected fire stations. Effective when the act becomes law and applies to elections occurring on or after that date.

Intro. by Johnson, Settle, Moffitt.

GS 163

[View summary](#)

Government, Elections

S 995 (2025-2026) **FIX REPUBLICAN FAILURES ON PUBLIC SAFETY ACT**. Filed Apr 30 2026, *AN ACT TO PROVIDE PAY INCREASES FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS AND CORRECTIONAL OFFICERS, TO ESTABLISH MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES FOR PUBLIC SAFETY PERSONNEL, AND TO ADDRESS THE STAFFING AND RETENTION CRISIS CREATED BY REPUBLICAN FAILURES TO FUND PUBLIC SAFETY*.

Section 1.

Sets out legislative findings.

Section 2.

Increases the salary of sworn law enforcement officers employed by the State of North Carolina by \$7,500 annually, effective July 1, 2026.

Directs the Office of State Human Resources to establish a salary schedule for law enforcement officers that accounts for years of service, rank, and cost-of-living to be updated every two years. Sets minimum entry-level salary for State Highway Patrol troopers at \$62,500 annually. Directs the Department of State Treasurer (DST), in consultation with the Office of State Budget and Management (OSBM), to make a grant program available to municipalities and counties to provide comparable pay increases for local law enforcement officers.

Defines “law enforcement officer” for the purposes of this section to mean “criminal justice officer” as defined in GS 17C-2 and to include sheriffs’ deputies and municipal police officers.

Section 3.

Increases the minimum starting salary for a correctional officer employed by the Department of Adult Correction (DAC) to \$45,000 annually, effective July 1, 2026. Increases the salary of all current correctional officers by \$8,000 annually, effective July 1, 2026.

Directs Secretary of Adult Correction to develop a retention incentive program to provide retention bonuses for correctional officers who complete 5 years of service (\$2,500) and 10 years of service (\$5,000) and to provide increased hazard pay (\$3,000 annually) for officers assigned to facilities operating at or below 70% of authorized staffing levels. Requires the DAC to report on vacancy rates and staffing levels quarterly to specified NCGA committee, beginning October 1, 2026.

Section 4.

Sets out legislative findings.

Directs the State Health Plan (SHP), in coordination with the Department of Health and Human Services and the DAC, to ensure law enforcement and correctional officers covered under the SHP have access to at least 12 confidential mental health visits annually at no cost to the officer and to maintain a 24-hour mental health crisis line staffed by specifically trained clinicians.

Directs the Department of Public Safety (DPS) and the DAC to establish peer support programs that meet specified requirements for training, certification, and curriculum requirements.

Requires the DPS and DAC to each report annually to NCGA beginning January 1, 2028 on the number of officers using mental health services, officer suicide rates and rates, retention and vacancy data correlated with mental health programs, and recommendations for program improvements.

Section 5.

Appropriates \$33.1 million in recurring funds for 2026-27 from the General Fund to the OSBM for \$7,500 pay raises to State law enforcement officers.

Appropriates \$93.1 million in recurring funds for 2026-27 from the General Fund to the DAC for \$8,000 pay raises to correctional officers and other compression adjustments.

Appropriates \$8.9 million in recurring funds for 2026-27 from the General Fund to the DPS for \$8,000 pay raises to correctional officers and other compression adjustments.

Appropriates \$1.5 million in recurring funds for 2026-27 from the General Fund to the DAC for retention bonuses.

Appropriates \$9.1 million in recurring funds for 2026-27 from the General Fund to the DAC for hazard pay.

Appropriates \$100 million for 2026-27 from the General Fund to the DST for the LEO Local Government Grant Program.

Appropriates \$30 million for 2026-27 from the General Fund to the SHP for the 12-visit mental health services expansion described in the act.

Appropriates \$10 million for 2026-27 from the General Fund to the DPS for peer support programs described in the act.

Effective July 1, 2026.

Section 6.

Except as otherwise provided, effective July 1, 2026.

Intro. by Grafstein, Batch.

[APPROP](#)

[View summary](#)

[Government, Budget/Appropriations, Public Safety and Emergency Management, State Agencies, Department of Adult Correction, Department of Public Safety, Department of State Treasurer, Office of State Budget and Management, Office of State Human Resources \(formerly Office of State Personnel\), Health and Human Services, Mental Health](#)

S 996 (2025-2026) [NORTH CAROLINA-IRELAND TRADE COMMISSION](#). Filed Apr 30 2026, *AN ACT TO CREATE THE NORTH CAROLINA-IRELAND TRADE COMMISSION*.

Enacts new Article 85, the “North Carolina-Ireland Trade Commission” (Commission) to GS Chapter 143.

Establishes the seven-member Commission, administratively located in the Department of Commerce, and sets out membership and meeting requirements. Sets terms at three years, with members eligible for reappointment. Describes the duties of the Commission to encourage bilateral trade, mutual investment, and business, educational, and cultural exchanges between the State and Ireland and to take joint action on policy issues. Requires the Commission to submit an annual report to the NCGA including specified meeting information and any recommendations or requests, beginning by October 1, 2027.

Appropriates \$10,000 in nonrecurring funds for 2026-27 from the General Fund to the Department of Commerce for administrative services to the Commission. Effective July 1, 2026.

Effective October 1, 2026 except as otherwise provided.

Intro. by Johnson, Settle.

[APPROP, GS 143](#)

[View summary](#)

[Business and Commerce, Government, Budget/Appropriations, State Agencies, Department of Commerce](#)

S 998 (2025-2026) [HOUSING ACCELERATION FUND](#). Filed Apr 30 2026, *AN ACT TO ASSIST AFFORDABLE HOUSING DEVELOPERS ACCESS LOW-COST FINANCING TO BUILD NEW HOUSING UNITS AND PROVIDE FUNDS FOR TRANSITIONAL HOUSING*.

Requires the State Education Assistance Authority to transfer the following amounts of the unencumbered, nonrecurring funds remaining at the end of 2025-26 that would otherwise be carried forward in 2026-27 for the award of opportunity scholarship grants pursuant to GS 115C-562.8(d)(2): \$10 million to the Housing Finance Agency (HFA) for low-cost financing for developers to build new affordable housing units and \$40 million to the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) for its Transitions to Community Living program. Appropriates those transferred funds to HFA and DHHS for 2026-27 and permits each agency to use 3% of those funds for administration of the identified programs.

Effective July 1, 2026.

Intro. by Bradley.

[View summary](#)

**Development, Land Use and Housing, Property and Housing,
Education, Government, State Agencies, Department of
Health and Human Services**

S 999 (2025-2026) **NORTH CAROLINA LET THEM BUILD ACT**. Filed Apr 30 2026, *AN ACT TO STREAMLINE ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW FOR HOUSING, DEFINE TIMELINES FOR STATE AGENCY DECISIONS IN RESIDENTIAL CONSTRUCTION, EXEMPT SMALL-SCALE INFILL PROJECTS FROM EXTENDED REVIEWS, ACCELERATE INFRASTRUCTURE, AND CREATE HOUSING AND INFRASTRUCTURE DASHBOARDS.*

Amends GS 113A-10 making organizational changes. New subsection two provides that where a state agency is required to prepare or comment on an environmental document under provisions of local law for residential development that are within existing residential development zones, do not impact protected environmental areas, and meet defined density and footprint thresholds, no separate environmental document is required to be prepared or published under Chapter 113A so long as the environmental document or comment meets the provisions of this Chapter. Clarifies that the subsection is not intended to override local zoning authority, eliminate environmental safeguards, weaken water or air quality standards, and bypass public notice requirements.

Sets out notice requirements for all agencies involved in the predevelopment phase of residential construction when providing written decisions on qualifying housing projects and notes consequences for failure to deliver notice.

Enacts GS 160D-403.1 exempting a local government from extended review requirements in all areas and districts zoned for residential use and not requiring an amendment to zoning regulations or conditional use permits for duplexes, accessory dwelling units, and small multi-family units. Clarifies this is not intended to override local zoning authority, eliminate environmental safeguards, weaken water or air quality standards, or bypass public notice requirements.

Mandates that DEQ provide rules and manage processes for expedited reviews of water and sewer expansions supporting housing, childcare facility construction, workforce housing tied to major employers, and broadband expansion supporting new housing. Clarifies this is not intended to override local zoning authority, eliminate environmental safeguards, weaken water or air quality standards, or bypass public notice requirements.

Requires local housing authorities to create publicly available dashboards to track average permit review time, agency backlog, and project approval timelines and to submit an annual report to NCGA on program performance and funds allocated.

Appropriates \$100,000 in recurring funds for 2026-27 from the General Fund to the Department of Environmental Quality to be used for staffing support to implement this act.

Intro. by Bradley.

APPROP, GS 113A, GS 160D

[View summary](#)

**Development, Land Use and Housing, Building and
Construction, Land Use, Planning and Zoning, Property and
Housing, Environment, Government, Budget/Appropriations,
State Agencies, Department of Environmental Quality
(formerly DENR)**

S 1000 (2025-2026) **ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT COMMISSION STAFFING**. Filed Apr 30 2026, *AN ACT TO PERMIT THE CHAIR OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT COMMISSION TO HIRE TEMPORARY EMPLOYEES THROUGH THE TEMPORARY SOLUTIONS PROGRAM.*

Amends GS 143B-283(b4) to permit the chair of the Environmental Management Commission to use the Temporary Solutions Program administered by the Office of State Human Resources at the chair's discretion to acquire new temporary employees.

Reduces the General Fund appropriation to the Department of Environmental Quality by \$5,000 on a recurring basis to provide dedicated staff for the Environmental Management Commission.

[View summary](#)

Environment, Government, Budget/Appropriations, State Agencies, Department of Environmental Quality (formerly DENR)

S 1001 (2025-2026) **COASTAL REGULATORY REFORM**. Filed Apr 30 2026, *AN ACT TO MODIFY THE COASTAL AREA MANAGEMENT ACT APPLICATION PROCESSING RULE TO CLARIFY ADJACENT LANDOWNER NOTICE REQUIREMENTS, TO AMEND UPLAND BASIN DISSOLVED OXYGEN AND FINANCIAL ASSURANCE REQUIREMENTS, TO MAKE OTHER TECHNICAL CORRECTIONS TO THE UPLAND BASIN PERMITTING STATUTE, AND TO EXPAND THE PERMISSIBLE USES OF THE COASTAL STORM DAMAGE MITIGATION FUND AND PROVIDE FUNDING.*

Requires the Coastal Area Management Act (CAMA) Application Processing Rule (15A NCAC07J .0204) to be implemented as follows. For both CAMA major and minor development permit applications, the CAMA Application Processing Rule must provide that documentation showing that notice was sent by certified mail to the adjacent riparian landowners at the tax address of record constitutes sufficient notice to meet the requirements of the CAMA Application Processing Rule, and the failure of an adjacent riparian landowner to receive, claim, or respond to such notice will not delay or prevent the processing of the permit application. Clarifies that nothing in this subsection is intended to limit or prohibit an applicant for a minor development permit from using any method of notice permitted by applicable law or rule. Requires the Coastal Management Commission to amend the rule so that it is consistent with this provision. Sunsets these provisions when the permanent rules adopted become effective.

Defines *project baseline area* (an area defined as 50 feet plus or minus 5 feet from the location of the proposed entrance to the proposed upland basin marina) in GS 113A-129.11 (definitions pertaining to the upland basin marinas). Amends GS 113A-129.12(b) (upland basin marina permitting and development criteria) so that if the site-specific sampling data documents pre-project ambient dissolved oxygen levels above 5.0 mg/L in the project baseline area, the applicant may demonstrate compliance with dissolved oxygen standards through site-specific modeling certified by a North Carolina licensed professional engineer that the marina design provides sufficient flushing to maintain dissolved oxygen levels equal to the greater of (1) the pre-project ambient levels or (2) the level sufficient to support aquatic habitat. If the applicant provides this demonstration, prevents the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) from requiring additional mechanical aeration or other active interventions intended to increase or maintain dissolved oxygen as a condition of permit issuance unless DEQ provides written findings to the applicant within 90 days of the receipt of the demonstration identifying material errors in the applicant's demonstration based on peer-reviewed methodology or site-specific monitoring data. Makes technical changes. Amends GS 113A-129.12(b)(3) (pertaining bond or set-aside fund requirements) so that any bond under the requirement has to identify the State or appropriate permitting agency as the beneficiary. For set-aside funds, requires the applicant to establish a trust at a financial institution and designate the State or appropriate permitting agency as the beneficiary. Provides for a form and procedure for transference.

Makes technical corrections to GS 113A-129.12(b)(1) and updates the statutory cross-reference in GS 113A-129.12(e)(3).

Expands the authorized uses of the Coastal Storm Damage Mitigation Fund under GS 143-215.73M to include costs associated with the permitting, construction, or repair of a terminal groin so long as the project is sponsored by a local government and the Secretary determines that the project would provide storm damage mitigation or resiliency benefits to public lands in the vicinity of the terminal groin. Excludes the costs of financial assurance or costs of implementation of any component of the applicable inlet management plan from construction or repair costs.

Appropriates \$800,000 for 2026-27 from the General Fund to the Department of Environmental Quality for the Coastal Storm Damage Mitigation Fund to be used for purposes consistent with GS 143-215.73M.

[View summary](#)

Environment, Aquaculture and Fisheries, Government, Budget/Appropriations, State Agencies, Department of Environmental Quality (formerly DENR)

S 1003 (2025-2026) **PERMIT TIME LINES/CERTAIN WASTEWATER SYSTEMS**. Filed Apr 30 2026, *AN ACT TO ESTABLISH PERMITTING DEADLINES FOR NPDES PERMITS TO BE ISSUED FOR NEW OR EXPANDED WASTEWATER TREATMENT SYSTEMS TO BE LOCATED IN FAST GROWING COUNTIES AND TO APPROPRIATE FUNDS TO THE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY TO IMPLEMENT THE EXPEDITED PERMITTING REQUIREMENTS*.

Amends GS 143-215.1 by adding new subsection (f6), concerning permits for new or expanded wastewater treatment systems that will be located in a county with a projected population growth rate above 2% annually or in a county that is one of the top 20% of the fastest growing counties in NC, by population. Requires permitting under authority granted by the NC Environmental Management Commission (Commission) to comply with the new subsection's procedures and timelines and requires the Commission to act on a permit application as quickly as possible. Provisions that apply include:

- (1) Commission must perform an administrative review of either a new application or resubmittal of an application determined incomplete within 30 working days of receipt to determine if the application is administratively complete. Details response and action Commission must take if application is complete, including notification that the 90-calendar day technical review period has started in the letter or response, and the response and action required if it is incomplete. Requires Commission to develop an application package checklist identifying all items and information required for an application to be administratively complete. Prohibits Commission from requesting additional information not previously identified as missing or required in an additional information letter or electronic response from the original submittal, but permits Commission to respond to a subsequent letter or response with a request for additional information, limited to information missing from that subsequent letter or response.
- (2) Provides procedure that the Commission and applicant are required to comply with if, during the 90-day calendar technical review period, the Commission determines additional information is required to continue processing the application.
- (3) Requires Commission to hold a public hearing prior to issuing a permit whenever it finds, on the basis of requests, a significant degree of public interest in the permit, in accordance with 40 C.F.R. § 124.12.
- (4) Requires the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) to either approve or deny an application within either 90 days (if no public hearing is held) or 120 days (if public hearing is held) of the date the application is deemed complete.

Appropriates \$10,000 for 2026-27 from the General Fund to DEQ to implement these expedited permitting requirements.

Intro. by Measmer.

APPROP

[View summary](#)

Environment, Government, Budget/Appropriations, State Agencies, Department of Environmental Quality (formerly DENR), Public Enterprises and Utilities

S 1004 (2025-2026) **FAMILY SUPPORT FOR THOSE WHO SERVE ACT**. Filed Apr 30 2026, *AN ACT TO EXPAND TUITION WAIVERS TO THE CHILDREN OF CERTAIN PUBLIC SAFETY EMPLOYEES FOR ENROLLMENT IN NORTH CAROLINA COMMUNITY COLLEGES*.

Amends GS 115B-2 (tuition waivers), so that community colleges must permit any child, if the child is at least years old but not yet 24 years old, whose parent, legal guardian, or legal custodian is a law enforcement officer, experienced correctional officer (a correctional officer with at least ten years of service as a correctional officer in the State), or firefighter to attend classes for credit or noncredit purposes without the required payment of tuition. Caps the number of free tuition at the number of months required to complete the educational program for which the child is applying. Makes conforming changes. Makes conforming and organizational changes to GS 115B-1. Applies beginning with the 2026-27 academic year.

Intro. by Sawrey, Jones, Barnes.

GS 115B

[View summary](#)

**Education, Higher Education, Government, Public Safety and
Emergency Management, State Agencies, Community Colleges
System Office**

S 1005 (2025-2026) **WE NEED MORE MIDWIVES ACT**. Filed Apr 30 2026, *AN ACT TO ESTABLISH THE MIDWIFERY EDUCATION GRANT PROGRAM FOR CONSTITUENT INSTITUTIONS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AND TO APPROPRIATE FUNDS FOR THAT PURPOSE.*

Establishes the Midwifery Education Grant Program (program) for the 2026-27 fiscal year to increase the number of midwives and midwife training programs in the State. Allows any UNC constituent institution that has an advanced practice registered nurse (APND) degree program to apply to the UNC System Office for a grant to establish an eligible midwife program, defined as a program that provides a certified nurse-midwife (CNM) credential. Directs the UNC System Office to develop and publish application criteria and procedures by September 30, 2026, accept applications until December 31, 2026, and select applicants by March 15, 2027. Lists required application materials, including a plan to graduate at least 20 CNM by the fifth year of program operation. Caps grants at \$4 million per grantee. Lists applicant priority and selection criteria. Lists three permissible uses of grant funds. Requires the UNC System Office to annually report to the specified NCGA committee and division, beginning October 15, 2027, and annually thereafter until all grantee funds have been expended. Specifies required content.

Appropriates \$20 million from the General Fund to the UNC Board of Governors for 2026-27 to be allocated to the UNC System Office to provide grants under the program. Specifies that the funds remain available until expended.

Effective July 1, 2026.

Intro. by Hise, Chitlik.

APPROP, UNCODIFIED

[View summary](#)

**Education, Higher Education, Government,
Budget/Appropriations, State Agencies, UNC System, Health
and Human Services, Health, Health Care Facilities and
Providers**

S 1014 (2025-2026) **A PTA FOR EVERY SCHOOL**. Filed Apr 30 2026, *AN ACT TO ESTABLISH THE PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATION LAUNCH PILOT GRANT PROGRAM.*

Requires the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) to establish a PTA for Every School Grant Program (Program) for 2026-27 to provide supplemental funds to assist public schools with establishing parent-teacher associations (PTA) (a group of public school teachers and parents of students enrolled in the public school that work together for the improvement of the school and benefit of the student). Provides for a Program application for schools that contain schools without a PTA. Specifies that local administrative school units are eligible to receive grants in the amount of \$2,000 per public school without a PTA up to a maximum of \$30,000. Requires the local school administrative unit to provide matching funds, as described. Authorizes recipient local school administrative units the discretion to allocate grant funds among public schools in the unit that do not have an existing PTA; requires the units to certify that 1 PTA was created for every \$2,000 received. For every PTA not established, the local school administrative unit must revert \$2,000 but must not revert a total amount greater than the total award received by the local school administrative unit. Requires DPI to report to the specified NCGA committee on the Program as specified, by April 1, 2027. Appropriates \$1.25 million from the General Fund to DPI for 2026-27 to establish the Program. Allows DPI to retain up to \$80,000 in administrative costs. Effective July 1, 2026.

Intro. by Chitlik, Chaudhuri.

APPROP, UNCODIFIED

[View summary](#)

**Education, Elementary and Secondary Education,
Government, Budget/Appropriations, State Agencies,**

S 1065 (2025-2026) **MORATORIUM ON NEW COASTAL FISHING REGULATIONS**. Filed Apr 30 2026, *AN ACT TO ESTABLISH A TEMPORARY MORATORIUM ON REGULATORY ACTIONS AFFECTING COMMERCIAL AND RECREATIONAL FISHING PENDING REVIEW AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NORTH CAROLINA COLLABORATORY STUDY OF THE COASTAL AND MARINE FISHERIES OF THE STATE AND TO REESTABLISH THE JOINT LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION ON SEAFOOD AND AQUACULTURE.*

Identical to S 977, filed on 4/30/26.

Part I.

Includes five legislative findings and establishes the purpose of the Part's provisions is to enact a comprehensive moratorium to prevent regulatory expansion affecting commercial fishing and recreational fishing activity until the NC Collaboratory study, legislatively mandated in 2021, can be fully evaluated by the NCGA.

Defines five terms, including Collaboratory study, recreational fishing, regulatory action, seafood industry, and State marine fisheries agency, and makes definitions set forth in GS 113-128 and GS 113-129 applicable. Prohibits State marine fisheries agencies, defined to include the Division of Marine Resources (Division) of the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), the Fisheries Director, the Marine Fisheries Commission, and DEQ Secretary, from establishing, implementing, or enforcing regulatory action imposing new or expanded restrictions on the seafood industry or recreational fishing in coastal water. Identifies six actions included in this moratorium, including reductions in bag, size and trap limits and additional restrictions on fishing methods and gear. Bars State marine agencies from reallocating or modifying the harvest quota allocated to the commercial and recreational fishing sectors. Directs that the recreational bag limits, size limits, seasons, and lawful harvest methods that were in effect on January 1, 2019, apply to recreational fishing in coastal fishing waters. Directs the Fisheries Director to issue consistent proclamations to restore these limits to those in effect on January 1, 2019, within 30 days of the date the act becomes law, and directs the Marine Fisheries Commission to amend its rules, guidelines, and policies to conform the limits with those that were in effect on January 1, 2019.

Bars State marine fisheries agencies from acting inconsistent with the act or its purpose unless strictly necessary to comply with a condition imposed on the receipt of federal funds or to implement federal law, with a list of specified federal laws included for compliance. Requires action taken under the federal compliance exception to be narrowly tailored for compliance or conditions of federal funding with any new or expanded restrictions the minimum necessary to maintain compliance. Requires agencies to prepare written statements identifying the federal law requiring the excepted action and reasons why action is required. Additionally allows regulatory action prohibited by the act if strictly necessary for any of five listed purposes, including to protect against imminent threats to public health and safety or to prevent catastrophic loss of marine and estuarine resources, so long as the action is narrowly tailored to address the emergency situation and any new or expanded restrictions are the minimum necessary. Requires agencies to prepare written statements identifying the emergency situation and reasons why action is required. Sunsets authorized regulatory actions no later than 180 days following their effective date.

Provides for judicial review of regulatory actions taken in violation of Part I of the act in Wake County Superior Court with relief including costs and reasonable attorneys' fees. States the APA applies to this review.

Directs the Division to biannually report to the specified NCGA committee on its review and implementation of recommendations from the Collaboratory study mandated by SL 2021-180, as amended, beginning on September 1, 2026. Specified required content. Appropriates \$10,000 from the General Fund to DEQ for 2026-27 to be used for the Division's reports. Effective July 1, 2026.

Sunsets the provisions of Part I on January 1, 2037.

Part II.

Enacts Article 12T, GS Chapter 120, establishing the Joint Legislative Commission on Seafood and Aquaculture as a 15-member Commission appointed by the NCGA, Governor, and Commissioner of Agriculture, as specified. Provides for the Commission's chair, terms, meetings, staffing, and expenses. Lists nine powers and duties of the Commission, including studying the potential increasing role of aquaculture in the State and evaluating the feasibility of creating a central permitting

office for fishing and aquaculture matters. Adds that the Commission has all powers granted to joint committees by the NCGA under specified state law. Directs the Legislative Service Commission to allocate monies to fund the Commission.

Part III.

Includes a severability clause.

Intro. by Hanig, Sanderson.

[APPROP, STUDY, GS 120](#)

[View summary](#)

[Environment, Aquaculture and Fisheries, Government, Budget/Appropriations, State Agencies, Department of Environmental Quality \(formerly DENR\)](#)

ACTIONS ON BILLS

No public actions on bills

No local actions on bills

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