

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2011

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HOUSE BILL 779

Short Title: Electronic Recording/Custodial Interrogations. (Public)

Sponsors: Representatives Glazier, Stam, Faircloth, and Hackney (Primary Sponsors).  
For a complete list of Sponsors, see Bill Information on the NCGA Web Site.

Referred to: Judiciary Subcommittee B.

April 7, 2011

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
2 AN ACT TO AMEND THE LAW REGARDING ELECTRONIC RECORDING OF  
3 CUSTODIAL INTERROGATIONS.

4 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

5 **SECTION 1.** G.S. 15A-211 reads as rewritten:

6 "**§ 15A-211. Electronic recording of interrogations.**

7 (a) Purpose. – The purpose of this Article is to require the creation of an electronic  
8 record of an entire custodial interrogation in order to eliminate disputes about interrogations,  
9 thereby improving prosecution of the guilty while affording protection to the innocent and  
10 increasing court efficiency.

11 (b) Application. – The provisions of this Article shall ~~only~~ apply to all custodial  
12 interrogations of juveniles in homicide-criminal investigations conducted at any place of  
13 detention. ~~detention.~~ The provisions of this Article shall also apply to any custodial  
14 interrogation of any person in a criminal investigation conducted at any place of detention if the  
15 investigation is related to any of the following crimes: any Class A, B1, or B2 felony, and any  
16 Class C felony of rape, sex offense, or assault with a deadly weapon with intent to kill inflicting  
17 serious injury.

18 (c) Definitions. – The following definitions apply in this Article:

19 (1) Electronic recording. – ~~An A visual and audio recording that is an authentic,~~  
20 ~~accurate, unaltered record; or a visual recording that is an authentic,~~  
21 ~~accurate, unaltered record.~~

22 (2) In its entirety. – An uninterrupted record that begins with and includes a law  
23 enforcement officer's advice to the person in custody of that person's  
24 constitutional rights, ends when the interview has completely finished, and  
25 clearly shows both the interrogator and the person in custody throughout. ~~If~~  
26 ~~the record is a visual recording, the~~ The camera recording the custodial  
27 interrogation must be placed so that the camera films both the interrogator  
28 and the suspect. Brief periods of recess, upon request by the person in  
29 custody or the law enforcement officer, do not constitute an "interruption" of  
30 the record. The record will reflect the starting time of the recess and the  
31 resumption of the interrogation.

32 (3) Place of detention. – A jail, police or sheriff's station, correctional or  
33 detention facility, holding facility for prisoners, or other facility where  
34 persons are held in custody in connection with criminal charges.



1 (d) Electronic Recording of Interrogations Required. – Any law enforcement officer  
2 conducting a custodial interrogation in a ~~homicide~~ an investigation of a juvenile shall make an  
3 electronic recording of the interrogation in its entirety. Any law enforcement officer conducting  
4 a custodial interrogation in an investigation relating to any of the following crimes shall make  
5 an electronic recording of the interrogation in its entirety: any Class A, B1, or B2 felony; and  
6 any Class C felony of rape, sex offense, or assault with a deadly weapon with intent to kill  
7 inflicting serious injury.

8 (e) Admissibility of Electronic Recordings. – During the prosecution of any homicide,  
9 an oral, written, nonverbal, or sign language statement of a defendant made in the course of a  
10 custodial interrogation may be presented as evidence against the defendant if an electronic  
11 recording was made of the custodial interrogation in its entirety and the statement is otherwise  
12 admissible. If the court finds that the defendant was subjected to a custodial interrogation that  
13 was not electronically recorded in its entirety, any statements made by the defendant after that  
14 non-electronically recorded custodial interrogation, even if made during an interrogation that is  
15 otherwise in compliance with this section, may be questioned with regard to the voluntariness  
16 and reliability of the statement. The State may establish through clear and convincing evidence  
17 that the statement was both voluntary and reliable and that law enforcement officers had good  
18 cause for failing to electronically record the interrogation in its entirety. Good cause shall  
19 include, but not be limited to, the following:

- 20 (1) The accused refused to have the interrogation electronically recorded, and  
21 the refusal itself was electronically recorded.
- 22 (2) The failure to electronically record an interrogation in its entirety was the  
23 result of unforeseeable equipment failure, and obtaining replacement  
24 equipment was not feasible.

25 (f) Remedies for Compliance or Noncompliance. – All of the following remedies shall  
26 be granted as relief for compliance or noncompliance with the requirements of this section:

- 27 (1) Failure to comply with any of the requirements of this section shall be  
28 considered by the court in adjudicating motions to suppress a statement of  
29 the defendant made during or after a custodial interrogation.
- 30 (2) Failure to comply with any of the requirements of this section shall be  
31 admissible in support of claims that the defendant's statement was  
32 involuntary or is unreliable, provided the evidence is otherwise admissible.
- 33 (3) When evidence of compliance or noncompliance with the requirements of  
34 this section has been presented at trial, the jury shall be instructed that it may  
35 consider credible evidence of compliance or noncompliance to determine  
36 whether the defendant's statement was voluntary and reliable.

37 (g) Article Does Not Preclude Admission of Certain Statements. – Nothing in this  
38 Article precludes the admission of any of the following:

- 39 (1) A statement made by the accused in open court during trial, before a grand  
40 jury, or at a preliminary hearing.
- 41 (2) A spontaneous statement that is not made in response to a question.
- 42 (3) A statement made during arrest processing in response to a routine question.
- 43 (4) A statement made during a custodial interrogation that is conducted in  
44 another state by law enforcement officers of that state.
- 45 (5) A statement obtained by a federal law enforcement officer.
- 46 (6) A statement given at a time when the interrogators are unaware that the  
47 person is suspected of a homicide.
- 48 (7) A statement used only for impeachment purposes and not as substantive  
49 evidence.

50 (h) Destruction or Modification of Recording After Appeals Exhausted. – The State  
51 shall not destroy or alter any electronic recording of a custodial interrogation of a defendant

1 convicted of any offense related to the interrogation until one year after the completion of all  
2 State and federal appeals of the conviction, including the exhaustion of any appeal of any  
3 motion for appropriate relief or habeas corpus proceedings. Every electronic recording should  
4 be clearly identified and catalogued by law enforcement personnel."

5         **SECTION 2.** This act becomes effective December 1, 2011, and applies to  
6 interrogations occurring on or after that date.