

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2011**

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SENATE BILL 301*

Short Title: Reappoint Ex-Offender Reintegration Study. (Public)

Sponsors: Senators Hartsell, Dannelly, and Jones.

Referred to: Rules and Operations of the Senate.

March 10, 2011

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

1 AN ACT TO REESTABLISH THE JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON EX-OFFENDER
2 REINTEGRATION INTO SOCIETY, AS RECOMMENDED BY THE JOINT SELECT
3 COMMITTEE ON EX-OFFENDER REINTEGRATION INTO SOCIETY.
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5 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

6 **SECTION 1.(a)** The General Assembly finds that each year tens of thousands of
7 individuals are arrested, convicted of crimes, placed on probation, sent to prison, or released
8 from prison. The safety of our communities depends on the successful reintegration of these
9 individuals into society. Most of these individuals need assistance finding jobs, increasing their
10 education, or accessing other essential services in order to successfully reintegrate into society
11 and improve their lives. However, most ex-offenders will encounter an array of barriers that
12 hinder their ability to become productive members of society. Ex-offenders who are barred
13 from housing, jobs, occupational licenses, needed services, education, and training are far more
14 likely to commit new crimes than they would be if they had the options and responsibilities that
15 most citizens take for granted. Further, the General Assembly finds that reducing recidivism
16 saves much needed resources by reducing the need for prison construction and makes our
17 communities a safer place to live. To that end, the Joint Select Committee on Ex-Offender
18 Reintegration Into Society is reestablished.

19 **SECTION 1.(b)** The Committee shall consist of 16 members, eight of whom shall
20 be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and eight of whom shall be
21 appointed by the President Pro Tempore of the Senate. Of the eight members appointed by the
22 Speaker of the House of Representatives, one shall be a public member who is an employee of
23 an organization that provides ex-offender services, and one shall be a public member who is a
24 successful ex-offender. Of the eight members appointed by the President Pro Tempore of the
25 Senate, one shall be a public member who is an employee of an organization that provides
26 ex-offender services, and one shall be a public member who is a successful ex-offender.

27 The Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President Pro Tempore of the
28 Senate each shall appoint a cochair for the Committee. The Committee may meet at any time
29 upon the joint call of the cochairs. A cochair or other member of the committee shall continue
30 to serve until a successor is appointed. Vacancies on the Committee shall be filled by the same
31 appointing authority as made the initial appointment.

32 **SECTION 1.(c)** The Committee, while in the discharge of its official duties, may
33 exercise all powers provided for under G.S. 120-19 and G.S. 120-19.1 through G.S. 120-19.4.
34 The Committee may contract for professional, clerical, or consultant services as provided by
35 G.S. 120-32.02.

36 Subject to the approval of the Legislative Services Commission, the Committee may
37 meet in the Legislative Building or the Legislative Office Building. The Legislative Services



1 Commission, through the Legislative Services Officer, shall assign professional staff to assist
2 the Committee in its work. The House of Representatives' and the Senate's Supervisors of
3 Clerks shall assign clerical support staff to the Committee, and the expenses relating to the
4 clerical employees shall be borne by the Committee. Members of the Committee shall receive
5 subsistence and travel expenses at the rates set forth in G.S. 120-3.1, 138-5, or 138-6, as
6 appropriate.

7 **SECTION 1.(d)** The Committee shall study issues related to reintegration of
8 offenders following incarceration. Specifically, the Committee shall study how North Carolina
9 and other states address barriers facing ex-offenders in accessing jobs, housing, education,
10 training, and services and determine best practices that reduce recidivism. There have been
11 recommendations regarding these issues from a similar committee during the 2010-2011
12 session and from the StreetSafe Task Force and the Justice Reinvestment Project; however,
13 major areas remain to be addressed. In connection with this study, the Committee may consider
14 and report on all of the following:

- 15 (1) The definition, accuracy, sale, and regulation of criminal records.
- 16 (2) Systemic and legal barriers to employment, housing, education, training, and
17 services.
- 18 (3) The availability and coordination of needed services and programs for
19 successful reentry.
- 20 (4) Best practices for reducing recidivism.
- 21 (5) Transitional services for ex-offenders with high and complex needs.
- 22 (6) Use and expansion of drug and mental health courts to divert from prison
23 people who need treatment.
- 24 (7) A comprehensive review of the collateral consequences for conviction of
25 criminal offenses, and where appropriate, the clarity, consistency, and
26 reduction of such consequences along with notice to offenders and court
27 officials of these consequences.
- 28 (8) The capacity, effectiveness, and replicability of statewide and
29 community-based programs to meet the risks and needs of both the
30 supervised and unsupervised population returning from prison.
- 31 (9) Status of recommendations from the StreetSafe Task Force, Justice
32 Reinvestment Project, and the Joint Select Committee on Ex-Offender
33 Reintegration Into Society that was established January 22, 2010.
- 34 (10) Best practices to address and reduce the disproportionate representation of
35 people of color in the offender population.

36 **SECTION 1.(e)** The Committee may submit an interim report of its findings and
37 recommendations, including any legislative recommendations, to the 2012 Regular Session of
38 the 2011 General Assembly upon its convening and shall submit a final report of its findings
39 and recommendations, including any legislative recommendations, to the 2013 General
40 Assembly upon its convening. The Committee shall terminate on the convening of the 2013
41 General Assembly.

42 **SECTION 1.(f)** Of the funds appropriated to the General Assembly for the
43 2011-2012 fiscal year and for the 2012-2013 fiscal year, the Legislative Services Commission
44 shall allocate funds for the expenses of the Committee established by this section.

45 **SECTION 2.** This act becomes effective July 1, 2011.