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Short Title: Revise Gang Laws. (Public)

Sponsors: Representatives McNeill, Faircloth, Hurley, and R. Turner (Primary Sponsors).
For a complete list of sponsors, refer to the North Carolina General Assembly web site.

Referred to: Judiciary II

February 21, 2017

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
2 AN ACT TO STANDARDIZE CRITERIA FOR CLASSIFICATION OF CRIMINAL GANG
3 MEMBERSHIP, CREATE A SENTENCING ENHANCEMENT FOR CERTAIN
4 CRIMES PERPETRATED BY GANG MEMBERS, AND INCREASE THE PENALTIES
5 FOR CERTAIN GANG-RELATED OFFENSES.

6 Whereas, the General Assembly finds that it is the right of every person to be secure
7 and protected from fear, intimidation, and physical harm caused by the activities of criminal
8 gangs; and

9 Whereas, the General Assembly also recognizes the constitutional right of every
10 citizen to harbor and express beliefs on any lawful subject whatsoever and to lawfully associate
11 with others who share similar beliefs; and

12 Whereas, the General Assembly finds a need for enhanced punishment of criminal
13 gang activity to afford adequate protection of the people of North Carolina from the harms
14 caused by criminal gangs; and

15 Whereas, it is the intent of the General Assembly to outlaw certain conduct
16 associated with the existence and proliferation of criminal gangs and provide enhanced criminal
17 penalties when crimes are committed in the course of criminal gang activity; Now, therefore,
18 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

19 **SECTION 1.** G.S. 14-50.16 is repealed.

20 **SECTION 2.** The title for Article 13A of Chapter 14 of the General Statutes reads
21 as rewritten:

22 "North Carolina ~~Street~~Criminal Gang Suppression Act."

23 **SECTION 3.** G.S. 14-50.15 reads as rewritten:

24 "**§ 14-50.15. Short title.**

25 This Article shall be known and may be cited as the "North Carolina ~~Street~~Criminal Gang
26 Suppression Act."

27 **SECTION 4.** Article 13A of Chapter 14 of the General Statutes is amended by
28 adding a new section to read:

29 "**§ 14-50.16A. Criminal gang activity.**

30 Definitions. – The following definitions apply in this Article:

- 31 (1) Criminal gang. – Any ongoing organization, association, or group of three or
32 more persons, whether formal or informal, that (i) has as one of its primary
33 activities the commission of criminal or delinquent acts and (ii) shares a
34 common name, identification, signs, symbols, tattoos, graffiti, attire, or other
35 distinguishing characteristics, including common activities, customs, or



1 behaviors. The term shall not include three or more persons associated in
2 fact, whether formal or informal, who are not engaged in criminal gang
3 activity.

4 (2) Criminal gang activity. – The commission of, attempted commission of, or
5 solicitation, coercion, or intimidation of another person to commit (i) any
6 offense under Article 5 of Chapter 90 of the General Statutes or (ii) any
7 offense under Chapter 14 of the General Statutes except Article 9, 22A, 40,
8 46, or 59 thereof, and further excepting G.S. 14-82, 14-145, 14-183, 14-184,
9 14-186, 14-190.9, 14-247, 14-248, or 14-313 thereof, and either of the
10 following conditions is met:

11 a. The offense is committed with the intent to benefit, promote, or
12 further the interests of a criminal gang or for the purposes of
13 increasing a person's own standing or position within a criminal
14 gang.

15 b. The participants in the offense are identified as criminal gang
16 members acting individually or collectively to further any criminal
17 purpose of a criminal gang.

18 (3) Criminal gang leader or organizer. – Any criminal gang member who acts in
19 any position of management with regard to the criminal gang and who meets
20 two or more of the following criteria:

21 a. Exercises decision-making authority over matters regarding a
22 criminal gang.

23 b. Participates in the direction, planning, organizing, or commission of
24 criminal gang activity.

25 c. Recruits other gang members.

26 d. Receives a larger portion of the proceeds of criminal gang activity.

27 e. Exercises control and authority over other criminal gang members.

28 (4) Criminal gang member. – Any person who meets three or more of the
29 following criteria:

30 a. The person admits to being a member of a criminal gang.

31 b. The person is identified as a criminal gang member by a reliable
32 source, including a parent or a guardian.

33 c. The person has been previously involved in criminal gang activity.

34 d. The person has adopted symbols, hand signs, or graffiti associated
35 with a criminal gang.

36 e. The person has adopted the display of colors or the style of dress
37 associated with a criminal gang.

38 f. The person is in possession of or linked to a criminal gang by
39 physical evidence, including photographs, ledgers, rosters, written or
40 electronic communications, or membership documents.

41 g. The person has tattoos or markings associated with a criminal gang.

42 h. The person has adopted language or terminology associated with a
43 criminal gang.

44 i. The person appears in any form of social media to promote a
45 criminal gang."

46 **SECTION 5.** Article 81B of Chapter 15A of the General Statutes is amended by
47 adding a new section to read:

48 **"§ 15A-1340.16E. Enhanced sentence for offenses committed by criminal gang members**
49 **as a part of criminal gang activity.**

50 (a) Except as otherwise provided in subsection (b) of this section, if a person is
51 convicted of any felony other than a Class A, B1, or B2 felony, and it is found that the offense

1 was committed as part of criminal gang activity as defined in G.S. 14-50.16A(2), then the
2 person shall be sentenced at a felony class level one class higher than the principal felony for
3 which the person was convicted.

4 (b) If subsection (a) of this section applies and the person is found to be a criminal gang
5 leader or organizer as defined in G.S. 14-50.16A(3), the person shall be sentenced at a felony
6 class level two classes higher than the principal felony for which the person was convicted.

7 (c) No defendant sentenced pursuant to this section shall be sentenced at a level higher
8 than a Class C felony. Any sentence imposed under this section shall run consecutively with
9 and shall commence at the expiration of any sentence being served by the person sentenced
10 under this section.

11 (d) An indictment or information for the felony shall allege in that indictment or
12 information the facts that qualify the offense for an enhancement under this section. One
13 pleading is sufficient for all felonies that are tried at a single trial.

14 (e) The State shall prove the issues set out under subsection (a) or (b) of this section
15 beyond a reasonable doubt. The issues shall be proven and found in the same manner as provided
16 for aggravating factors in G.S. 15A-1340.16(a1), (a2), or (a3) as applicable.

17 (f) This section shall not apply to any gang offense included under Article 13A of
18 Chapter 14 of the General Statutes."

19 **SECTION 6.** G.S. 14-34.9 reads as rewritten:

20 **"§ 14-34.9. Discharging a firearm from within an enclosure.**

21 Unless covered under some other provision of law providing greater punishment, any
22 person who willfully or wantonly discharges or attempts to discharge a firearm, as a part of a
23 ~~pattern of criminal street gang activity;~~criminal gang activity, from within any building,
24 structure, motor vehicle, or other conveyance, erection, or enclosure toward a person or persons
25 not within that enclosure shall be punished as a Class E felon."

26 **SECTION 7.** G.S. 14-50.17 reads as rewritten:

27 **"§ 14-50.17. Soliciting; encouraging participation.**

28 (a) It is unlawful for any person to cause, encourage, solicit, or coerce a person 16 years
29 of age or older to participate in criminal ~~street-gang~~ activity.

30 (b) A violation of this section is a Class H felony."

31 **SECTION 8.** G.S. 14-50.18 reads as rewritten:

32 **"§ 14-50.18. Soliciting; encouraging participation; minor.**

33 (a) It is unlawful for any person to cause, encourage, solicit, or coerce a person under
34 16 years of age to participate in criminal ~~street-gang~~ activity.

35 (b) A violation of this section is a Class F felony.

36 (c) Nothing in this section shall preclude a person who commits a violation of this
37 section from criminal culpability for the underlying offense committed by the minor under any
38 other provision of law."

39 **SECTION 9.** G.S. 14-50.19 reads as rewritten:

40 **"§ 14-50.19. Threats to deter from gang withdrawal.**

41 (a) It is unlawful for any person to communicate a threat of injury to a person, or to
42 damage the property of another, with the intent to deter a person from assisting another to
43 withdraw from membership in a criminal ~~street-gang~~.

44 (b) A violation of this section is a Class ~~H felony~~F felony."

45 **SECTION 10.** G.S. 14-50.20 reads as rewritten:

46 **"§ 14-50.20. Threats of punishment or retaliation.**

47 (a) It is unlawful for any person to communicate a threat of injury to a person, or to
48 damage the property of another, as punishment or retaliation against a person for having
49 withdrawn from a criminal ~~street-gang~~.

50 (b) A violation of this section is a Class ~~H felony~~F felony."

51 **SECTION 11.** G.S. 14-50.22 reads as rewritten:

1 **"§ 14-50.22. Enhanced offense for misdemeanor criminal gang activity.**

2 A person age 15 or older who is convicted of a misdemeanor offense that is committed for
3 the benefit of, at the direction of, or in association with, any criminal ~~street-gang~~ is guilty of an
4 offense that is one class higher than the offense committed. A Class A1 misdemeanor shall be
5 enhanced to a Class I felony under this section."

6 **SECTION 12.** G.S. 14-50.23 reads as rewritten:

7 **"§ 14-50.23. Contraband, seizure, and forfeiture.**

8 (a) All property of every kind used or intended for use in the course of, derived from, or
9 realized through criminal ~~street-gang activity or a pattern of criminal street-gang activity~~ is
10 subject to the seizure and forfeiture provisions of G.S. 14-2.3.

11 (b) In any action under this section, the court may enter a restraining order in
12 connection with any interest that is subject to forfeiture.

13 (c) Innocent Activities. – The provisions of this section shall not apply to property used
14 for criminal ~~street-gang activity~~ where the owner or person who has legal possession of the
15 property does not have actual knowledge that the property is being used for criminal ~~street-gang~~
16 activity."

17 **SECTION 13.** G.S. 14-50.25 reads as rewritten:

18 **"§ 14-50.25. Reports of disposition; criminal ~~street-gang~~ activity.**

19 When a defendant is found guilty of a criminal offense, other than an offense under
20 G.S. 14-50.16 through G.S. 14-50.20, the presiding judge shall determine whether the offense
21 involved criminal ~~street-gang~~ activity. If the judge so determines, then the judge shall indicate
22 on the form reflecting the judgment that the offense involved criminal ~~street-gang~~ activity. The
23 clerk of court shall ensure that the official record of the defendant's conviction includes a
24 notation of the court's determination."

25 **SECTION 14.** The title for Article 13B of Chapter 14 of the General Statutes reads
26 as rewritten:

27 "North Carolina ~~Street~~Criminal Gang Nuisance Abatement Act."

28 **SECTION 15.** G.S. 14-50.42 reads as rewritten:

29 **"§ 14-50.42. Real property used by criminal ~~street-gangs~~ declared a public nuisance:
30 abatement.**

31 (a) Public Nuisance. – Any real property that is erected, established, maintained,
32 owned, leased, or used by any criminal ~~street-gang~~ for the purpose of conducting criminal ~~street~~
33 gang activity, as defined in ~~G.S. 14-50.16(e)~~, G.S. 14-50.16A(2), shall constitute a public
34 nuisance and may be abated as provided by and subject to the provisions of Article 1 of
35 Chapter 19 of the General Statutes.

36 (b) Innocent Activities. – The provisions of this section shall not apply to real property
37 used for criminal ~~street-gang~~ activity where the owner or person who has legal possession of
38 the real property does not have actual knowledge that the real property is being used for
39 criminal ~~street-gang~~ activity or the owner is being coerced into allowing the property to be used
40 for criminal ~~street-gang~~ activity."

41 **SECTION 16.** G.S. 14-50.43 reads as rewritten:

42 **"§ 14-50.43. ~~Street-gangs~~Criminal gangs declared a public nuisance.**

43 (a) A ~~street~~criminal gang, as defined in ~~G.S. 14-50.16(b)~~, G.S. 14-50.16A(a), that
44 regularly engages in criminal ~~street-gang activities~~, activity, as defined in
45 ~~G.S. 14-50.16(e)~~, G.S. 14-50.16A(2), constitutes a public nuisance. For the purposes of this
46 section, the term "regularly" means at least five times in a period of not more than 12 months.

47 (b) Any person who regularly associates with others to engage in criminal ~~street-gang~~
48 activity, as defined in ~~G.S. 14-50.16(e)~~, G.S. 14-50.16A(2), may be made a defendant in a suit,
49 brought pursuant to Chapter 19 of the General Statutes, to abate any public nuisance resulting
50 from criminal ~~street-gang~~ activity.

1 (c) If the court finds that a public nuisance exists under this section, the court may enter
2 an order enjoining the defendant in the suit from engaging in criminal ~~street~~-gang activities and
3 impose other reasonable requirements to prevent the defendant or a gang from engaging in
4 future criminal ~~street~~-gang activities.

5 (d) An order entered under this section shall expire ~~one year~~three years after entry
6 unless extended by the court for good cause established by the plaintiff after a hearing. The
7 order may be modified, rescinded, or vacated at any time prior to its expiration date upon the
8 motion of any party if it appears to the court that one or more of the defendants is no longer
9 engaging in criminal ~~street~~-gang activities."

10 **SECTION 17.** G.S. 15A-1340.16(d) reads as rewritten:

11 **"§ 15A-1340.16. Aggravated and mitigated sentences.**

12 ...

13 (d) Aggravating Factors. – The following are aggravating factors:

14 ...

15 (2a) The offense was committed for the benefit of, or at the direction of, any
16 criminal ~~street gang~~gang as defined by G.S. 14-50.16A(1), with the specific
17 intent to promote, further, or assist in any criminal conduct by gang
18 members, and the defendant was not charged with committing a conspiracy.
19 A "~~criminal street gang~~" means any ongoing organization, association, or
20 group of three or more persons, whether formal or informal, having as one of
21 its primary activities the commission of felony or violent misdemeanor
22 offenses, or delinquent acts that would be felonies or violent misdemeanors
23 if committed by an adult, and having a common name or common
24 identifying sign, colors, or symbols.

25"

26 **SECTION 18.** G.S. 15A-1343(b1) reads as rewritten:

27 **"§ 15A-1343. Conditions of probation.**

28 ...

29 (b1) Special Conditions. – In addition to the regular conditions of probation specified in
30 subsection (b), the court may, as a condition of probation, require that during the probation the
31 defendant comply with one or more of the following special conditions:

32 ...

33 (9b) Any or all of the following conditions relating to ~~street~~criminal gangs as
34 defined in ~~G.S. 14-50.16(b)~~G.S. 14-50.16A(1):

- 35 a. Not knowingly associate with any known ~~street~~criminal gang
36 members and not knowingly be present at or frequent any place or
37 location where ~~street~~criminal gangs gather or where ~~street~~criminal
38 gang activity is known to occur.
- 39 b. Not wear clothes, jewelry, signs, symbols, or any paraphernalia
40 readily identifiable as associated with or used by a ~~street~~criminal
41 gang.
- 42 c. Not initiate or participate in any contact with any individual who was
43 or may be a witness against or victim of the defendant or the
44 defendant's ~~street~~criminal gang.

45"

46 **SECTION 19.** G.S. 15A-533(e) reads as rewritten:

47 **"§ 15A-533. Right to pretrial release in capital and noncapital cases.**

48 ...

49 (e) There shall be a rebuttable presumption that no condition of release will reasonably
50 assure the appearance of the person as required and the safety of the community, if a judicial
51 official finds all of the following:

- 1 (1) There is reasonable cause to believe that the person committed an offense for
2 the benefit of, at the direction of, or in association with, any criminal ~~street~~
3 gang, as defined in ~~G.S. 14-50.16;G.S. 14-50.16A(1).~~
4 (2) The offense described in subdivision (1) of this subsection was committed
5 while the person was on pretrial release for another ~~offense; and~~offense.
6 (3) The person (i) has been previously convicted of an offense described in
7 ~~G.S. 14-50.16 through G.S. 14-50.20;G.S. 14-50.16 through G.S. 14-50.20~~
8 or (ii) has been convicted of a criminal offense and received an enhanced
9 sentence for that offense pursuant to G.S. 15A-1340.16E, and not more than
10 five years has elapsed since the date of conviction or the person's release for
11 the offense, whichever is later."

12 **SECTION 20.** This act becomes effective December 1, 2017, and applies to
13 offenses committed on or after that date.