

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2015**

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**HOUSE BILL 499
PROPOSED COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE H499-PCS30520-TG-64**

Short Title: Study/Public Records & Open Meetings. (Public)

Sponsors:

Referred to:

April 2, 2015

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT TO CREATE THE JOINT LEGISLATIVE STUDY COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC RECORDS AND OPEN MEETINGS.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. Creation. – There is created the Joint Legislative Study Committee on Public Records and Open Meetings. The Committee shall consist of 10 members to be appointed as follows:

- (1) Five members of the House of Representatives appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives.
- (2) Five members of the Senate appointed by the President Pro Tempore of the Senate.

SECTION 2. Study. – The Joint Legislative Study Committee on Public Records and Open Meetings shall study ways to improve transparency of State and local government in North Carolina. In the conduct of its study, the Committee shall examine existing State laws regarding public access to government records and meetings and legislation enacted in other states that allow greater public access than currently exists in North Carolina. Specifically, the Committee shall study:

- (1) Strategies for the executive branch of North Carolina State government to streamline the processes by which the public may access government records and meetings.
- (2) Strategies for local government entities in North Carolina to streamline the processes by which the public may access government records and meetings.
- (3) The development of legislative alternatives to existing provisions of the North Carolina Public Records Act and Open Meetings Law that restrict or entirely prohibit public access to government records of meetings.

SECTION 3. Cochairs; Vacancies. – The Speaker of the House of Representatives shall designate one representative to serve as cochair, and the President Pro Tempore of the Senate shall designate one senator to serve as cochair. Vacancies on the Committee shall be filled by the same appointing authority making the initial appointment.

SECTION 4. Powers. – The Committee, while in the discharge of its official duties, may exercise all powers provided for under G.S. 120-19 and G.S. 120-19.1 through G.S. 120-19.4. The Committee may meet at any time upon the joint call of the cochairs. The Committee may meet in the Legislative Building or in the Legislative Office Building.

SECTION 5. Staffing. – The Legislative Services Commission, through the Legislative Services Officer, shall assign professional staff to assist the Committee in its work. The Directors of Legislative Assistants of the Senate and of the House of Representatives shall



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1 assign clerical staff to the Committee and the expenses relating to the clerical employees shall be
2 borne by the Committee. Members of the Committee shall receive subsistence and travel expenses
3 at the rates set forth in G.S. 120-3.1, 138-5, or 138-6, as appropriate.

4 **SECTION 6.** Report. – The Committee shall submit a final report, including findings
5 and legislative recommendations, to the 2017 General Assembly. The Committee shall terminate
6 upon filing its final report.

7 **SECTION 7.** This act is effective when it becomes law.