

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2017

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HOUSE PRINCIPAL CLERK

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HOUSE BILL DRH30281-MVz-3 (04/05)

Short Title: Task Force on Homelessness. (Public)

Sponsors: Representative Pierce.

Referred to:

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
2 AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE JOINT LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE ON
3 HOMELESSNESS AND DIRECTING THE TASK FORCE TO STUDY "HOUSING
4 FIRST" AND ITS APPLICATION IN NORTH CAROLINA.

5 Whereas, temporary housing methods that seek to guide homeless individuals to
6 permanent housing by helping them overcome underlying obstacles have not proven effective;
7 and

8 Whereas, empirical evidence supports that the sobriety and stability necessary to
9 resolve homelessness are far more likely when individuals have permanent housing in place;
10 and

11 Whereas, the Housing First approach provides permanent housing immediately, and
12 then facilitates services to more effectively address underlying obstacles; and

13 Whereas, the Housing First approach is strongly endorsed by public and private
14 authorities as the best practice for addressing homelessness; and

15 Whereas, the federal government has recognized Housing First as a proven method
16 for ending all types of homelessness and the most effective approach to ending chronic
17 homelessness; and

18 Whereas, homeless individuals spend considerable and costly time in public
19 detention facilities, emergency rooms, and homeless shelters; and

20 Whereas, empirical evidence supports that permanent housing for the homeless is
21 less expensive for government than continued homelessness; and

22 Whereas, Housing First methods have substantially alleviated the rate of
23 homelessness in other states, while costing governments less than continued homelessness; and

24 Whereas, Housing First methods have proven successful and cost-effective in
25 portions of North Carolina; Now, therefore,

26 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

27 **SECTION 1.** There is established the North Carolina Task Force on Homelessness
28 (Task Force). The purpose of the Task Force is to (i) study methods of addressing
29 homelessness, (ii) study the needs specific to homelessness in North Carolina, and (iii)
30 recommend initiatives that are appropriately tailored to the needs of North Carolina. In carrying
31 out this study, the Task Force shall examine the following:

- 32 (1) Rates of homelessness across North Carolina and corresponding resources,
33 with particular attention to the rate of rural homelessness as compared to the
34 availability of resources in rural areas.
35 (2) Methods that have substantially alleviated homelessness in other states and
36 localities, including localities in North Carolina.



- 1 (3) Housing First principles and diverse ways in which Housing First principles
2 have been effectively applied.
- 3 (4) The financial cost of homelessness to the State and local governments of
4 North Carolina and the comparative projected cost of implementing a
5 Housing First approach.

6 **SECTION 2.** The Task Force shall consist of 12 members to be appointed as
7 follows:

- 8 (1) Two Representatives and one public member appointed by the Speaker of
9 the House of Representatives.
- 10 (2) Two Senators and one public member appointed by the President Pro
11 Tempore of the Senate.
- 12 (3) The leader of the minority party in the House of Representatives, or the
13 leader's designee, and one public member appointed by the minority party
14 leader.
- 15 (4) The leader of the minority party in the Senate, or the leader's designee, and
16 one public member appointed by the minority party leader.
- 17 (5) Two members of the public appointed by the Governor.

18 **SECTION 3.** The Task Force shall have two cochairs, one designated by the
19 Speaker of the House of Representatives and one designated by the President Pro Tempore of
20 the Senate. The Task Force shall meet upon the joint call of the cochairs, and the cochairs shall
21 convene the first meeting as soon as practicable after appointments have been made.

22 **SECTION 4.** The Legislative Services Commission shall grant adequate meeting
23 space to the Task Force in the State Legislative Building or the Legislative Office Building.
24 The Legislative Services Commission shall allocate from a portion of the funds appropriated to
25 the General Assembly sufficient funds for the operation of the Task Force. The Legislative
26 Services Commission, through the Legislative Services Officer, shall assign professional staff
27 to assist the Task Force in its work. The Directors of Legislative Assistants for the House of
28 Representatives and the Senate shall assign clerical staff to the Task Force, and the expenses
29 relating to the clerical employees shall be borne by the Task Force. The Task Force may
30 contract for professional, clerical, or consultant services as provided by G.S. 120-32.02.
31 Members of the Task Force shall receive subsistence and travel expenses at the rates provided
32 in G.S. 120-3.1, 138-5, or 138-6, as appropriate.

33 **SECTION 5.** The Task Force shall submit a final report on the results of its study
34 and recommendations, including any proposed legislation, to the General Assembly on or
35 before May 1, 2018, by filing a copy of the report with the Offices of the Speaker of the House
36 of Representatives and the President Pro Tempore of the Senate. The Task Force shall
37 terminate on May 1, 2018, or upon the filing of the final report, whichever occurs first. In
38 making its report, the Task Force shall include its guidance on the following proposals:

- 39 (1) Formal State endorsement of Housing First as the preferred model all
40 entities receiving State money that impacts homelessness.
- 41 (2) Requiring that a certain percentage of State money directed toward
42 homelessness be applied to rural populations.
- 43 (3) Directing the North Carolina Housing Trust to use disbursements on
44 Housing First projects.
- 45 (4) Appropriating funding or providing other incentives for the creation of more
46 initiatives modeled after existing Housing First programs in North Carolina.

47 **SECTION 6.** This act is effective when it becomes law.