

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2019

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SENATE BILL DRS35378-MM-122B

Short Title: NC Freedom to Work Act.

(Public)

Sponsors: Senators Daniel, Sawyer, and Ford (Primary Sponsors).

Referred to:

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
2 AN ACT GUARANTEEING THE CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHT OF NORTH CAROLINIANS  
3 TO ENJOYMENT OF THE FRUITS OF THEIR OWN LABOR AND THE PURSUIT OF  
4 HAPPINESS BY LIMITING CERTAIN PENALTIES FOR VIOLATIONS OF  
5 EXECUTIVE ORDERS AND LOCAL PROHIBITIONS AND ACTIONS BY  
6 OCCUPATIONAL LICENSING BOARDS.

7 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

8 **SECTION 1.(a)** Notwithstanding G.S. 14-288.20A(2) and G.S. 166A-19.30(d), no  
9 criminal liability shall apply to any person who violates any provision of any of the following:

10 (1) The following executive orders issued by Governor Roy A. Cooper and  
11 subsequent extensions or amendments to the same:

- 12 a. Executive Order No. 118 issued March 17, 2020.  
13 b. Executive Order No. 120 issued March 23, 2020.  
14 c. Executive Order No. 121 issued March 27, 2020.  
15 d. Executive Order No. 131 issued April 9, 2020.  
16 e. Executive Order No. 135 issued April 23, 2020.

17 (2) Any executive order issued by Governor Roy A. Cooper after April 23, 2020,  
18 in response to the COVID-19 emergency and exercising the authority granted  
19 by G.S. 166A-19.30(b)(1) through (b)(3) and G.S. 166A-19.30(c).

20 All prosecutions for violation of executive orders described in this subsection shall  
21 be abated.

22 **SECTION 1.(b)** Notwithstanding G.S. 14-288.20A(1) and G.S. 166A-19.31(h), no  
23 criminal liability shall apply to any person who violates any provision of a prohibition or  
24 restriction issued by a city or a county that mirrors or exceeds the limitations contained in the  
25 executive orders referenced in subsection (a) of this section and that is issued for the same  
26 emergency to which those executive orders apply.

27 All prosecutions for violation of prohibitions or restrictions described in this  
28 subsection shall be abated.

29 **SECTION 2.** The maximum civil fine that may be levied against any person who is  
30 liable for a violation of any local prohibition or restriction referenced in Section 1 of this act shall  
31 be twenty-five dollars (\$25.00) for the first violation and one dollar (\$1.00) per day for each  
32 subsequent violation. Any funds that are subject to Section 7(a) of Article IX of the North  
33 Carolina Constitution that have already been collected by a county or municipality as a result of  
34 such violation shall be deposited as required by law. The county or municipality shall use other  
35 available funds to refund to the citizen the total collected fine less twenty-five dollars (\$25.00)



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1 for the first violation and one dollar (\$1.00) per day for each subsequent violation that has  
2 occurred prior to the date of refund.

3 **SECTION 3.** No occupational licensing board, as that term is defined in  
4 G.S. 93B-1(2), may revoke a license, issue a fine, or take any adverse action against a licensee  
5 on the basis that the licensee has violated any executive order or prohibition or restriction  
6 referenced in Section 1 of this act. Nothing in this section restricts the authority of an  
7 occupational licensing board to otherwise perform its statutory authority to regulate an  
8 occupation.

9 **SECTION 4.** There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Secretary of State  
10 the sum of five thousand dollars (\$5,000) in nonrecurring funds for the 2019-2020 fiscal year to  
11 be used to provide educational materials to the public on the provisions of this act. The Secretary  
12 of State shall consult with State occupational licensing boards in developing the educational  
13 materials and dissemination methods.

14 **SECTION 5.** Section 4 of this act is effective when it becomes law. The remainder  
15 of this act is effective when it becomes law and applies retroactively to March 17, 2020.