

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2025

FILED SENATE
Apr 30, 2026
S.B. 1060
PRINCIPAL CLERK

S

D

SENATE BILL DRS35423-NTa-13

Short Title: Milit. Sexual Trauma/Study Comm./Pilot Prog. (Public)

Sponsors: Senators Applewhite, Theodros, and Chitlik (Primary Sponsors).

Referred to:

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
2 AN ACT TO ESTABLISH THE NORTH CAROLINA MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA
3 STUDY COMMISSION AND TO CREATE A MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA
4 SUPPORT PILOT PROGRAM.

5 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

6 **SECTION 1.** Legislative Findings. – The General Assembly finds all of the
7 following:

- 8 (1) Sexual assault and harassment within military populations undermines
9 readiness, unit cohesion, survivor well-being, and family stability.
- 10 (2) Members of the National Guard and other reserve components face distinct
11 barriers due to part-time service, geographic dispersion, and transitions
12 between State and federal duty status.
- 13 (3) Access to trained response personnel is critical, particularly for geographically
14 dispersed or isolated units.
- 15 (4) Service members, veterans, and military families may experience difficulty
16 navigating available military and civilian support systems.
- 17 (5) North Carolina has a compelling State interest in supporting
18 military-connected populations.
- 19 (6) Establishing a State-level pilot program to connect survivors to existing
20 providers while incorporating military-informed peer support and navigation
21 will strengthen access to care, improve service utilizations, and inform future
22 statewide implementation without duplicating existing services.

23 **SECTION 2.** Definitions. – As used in this act, the following definitions apply:

- 24 (1) Military sexual trauma. – Sexual assault or repeated threatening sexual
25 harassment during military service.
- 26 (2) Reserve components. – Defined in 38 U.S.C. § 101.

27 **SECTION 3.(a)** Military Sexual Trauma Study Commission. – There is established
28 the North Carolina Military Sexual Trauma Study Commission (Commission). The Commission
29 shall have the following functions and duties:

- 30 (1) Study the following subject matters with regard to military sexual trauma:
 - 31 a. The prevalence of military sexual trauma among active duty military
32 personnel and reserve components.
 - 33 b. Barriers to reporting military sexual trauma such as retaliation and
34 confidentiality concerns.
 - 35 c. Coordination gaps between federal, State, and civilian systems for
36 reporting and reduction of military sexual trauma.



* D R S 3 5 4 2 3 - N T A - 1 3 *

- d. Availability and accessibility of support services.
- e. Jurisdictional challenges on and off military installations.
- f. Impact on women in military service and military spouses and dependents.
- g. Challenges specific to reserve components and National Guard transitions to active duty.
- h. Capacity of the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs to serve as a coordinating entity in the support of those affected by military sexual trauma.

- (2) Submit a final report to the General Assembly on the Commission's findings and any legislative recommendations no later than April 1, 2027.

SECTION 3.(b) Membership. – The North Carolina Military Sexual Trauma Study Commission shall consist of 14 members. The makeup of the Commission is as follows:

- (1) Two members appointed by the President Pro Tempore of the Senate.
- (2) Two members appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives.
- (3) One member currently serving with the North Carolina National Guard.
- (4) One member currently serving with a non-National Guard reserve component of the Armed Forces.
- (5) One member currently employed by the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs.
- (6) One member currently employed by the Department of Health and Human Services.
- (7) One member currently employed by the Administrative Office of the Courts.
- (8) Two members with expertise in military justice.
- (9) Two members currently involved with sexual trauma survivor advocacy organizations.
- (10) One member who is a licensed mental health professional.

The Department of Military and Veterans Affairs shall provide staff support, logistical assistance, and subject-matter expertise to the Commission.

SECTION 3.(c) Termination. – The North Carolina Military Sexual Trauma Study Commission shall terminate upon submission of its final report required pursuant to Section 3(a)(2) of this act.

SECTION 4.(a) Pilot Program. – The Department of Military and Veterans Affairs shall partner with the Department of Health and Human Services to develop and implement the Military Sexual Trauma Support Pilot Program (Pilot Program), a two-year pilot program providing support to victims of military sexual trauma. The Pilot Program shall consist of the following initiatives:

- (1) Creating and implementing a 24/7 confidential hotline to report instances of military sexual trauma.
- (2) Providing trauma-informed counseling to covered individuals affected by military sexual trauma.
- (3) Providing legal referral services to covered individuals affected by military sexual trauma.
- (4) Providing emergency assistance to covered individuals affected by military sexual trauma.
- (5) Conducting outreach to active duty, reserve components, veterans, and military families.
- (6) Acting as a liaison between covered individuals affected by military sexual trauma and federal partners.
- (7) Coordinating with the Sexual Assault and Prevention Office and response programs of the United States Department of Defense.

1 (8) Establishing training standards in consultation with the Department of Health
2 and Human Services and advocacy organizations.

3 (9) Maintaining a directory of services available to those affected by military
4 sexual trauma.

5 **SECTION 4.(b)** Covered Individuals. – This act applies to the following groups:

6 (1) Active duty service members stationed in North Carolina.

7 (2) Members of the reserve components of the United States Armed Forces,
8 including members of the North Carolina National Guard.

9 (3) Veterans.

10 (4) Military spouses and dependents.

11 **SECTION 4.(c)** Peer Support Network. – As part of the Pilot Program, the
12 Department of Military and Veterans Affairs shall establish a peer support network. The network
13 shall consist of volunteers who are covered individuals under this section. All volunteers shall be
14 trained in trauma-informed care, military culture competency, and confidentiality laws. The peer
15 support network shall be accessible through a confidential hotline as well as online platforms.

16 **SECTION 4.(d)** Military Sexual Trauma Coordinator. – The Department of Military
17 and Veterans Affairs shall designate a Military Sexual Trauma Coordinator to be responsible for
18 oversight of the Pilot Program, interagency coordination, and policy recommendations.

19 **SECTION 4.(e)** Statewide Data Coordination. – The Department of Military and
20 Veterans Affairs shall serve as the central coordinating entity for military sexual trauma data.
21 Subject to limits to access of federal investigative records, the Department of Military and
22 Veterans Affairs shall:

23 (1) Aggregate anonymized data.

24 (2) Track utilization of military sexual trauma support services.

25 (3) Identify trends of military sexual trauma among active duty and reserve
26 components.

27 (4) Publish annual reports on its findings in a conspicuous location on the
28 Department of Military and Veterans Affairs website.

29 **SECTION 4.(f)** Evaluation and Reporting. – The Department of Military and
30 Veterans Affairs, in coordination with the Department of Health and Human Services, shall
31 evaluate the Pilot Program and shall provide an interim report of the Pilot Program to the General
32 Assembly no later than March 1, 2027, and a final report no later than March 1, 2028. The final
33 report shall include information on the utilization of the Pilot Program, outcomes, and
34 continuation and expansion recommendations, as applicable.

35 **SECTION 4.(g)** Termination. – The Pilot Program shall terminate on June 30, 2028,
36 unless unanimously extended by the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs and the
37 Department of Health and Human Services.

38 **SECTION 5.** National Guard Reporting Channels. – The North Carolina National
39 Guard shall establish confidential reporting channels for military sexual trauma. All reports shall
40 be anonymized by removing all identifying information and reported to the Department of
41 Military and Veterans Affairs annually.

42 **SECTION 6.** There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of
43 Military and Veterans Affairs the sum of one million dollars (\$1,000,000) in recurring funds
44 beginning in the 2026-2027 fiscal year to be used for implementation of the Military Sexual
45 Trauma Study Commission and the Military Sexual Trauma Support Pilot Program. There is
46 appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of Health and Human Services the sum
47 of two million dollars (\$2,000,000) in recurring funds beginning in the 2026-2027 fiscal year to
48 be used for implementation of the Military Sexual Trauma Study Commission and the Military
49 Sexual Trauma Support Pilot Program.

50 **SECTION 7.** This act becomes effective July 1, 2026.