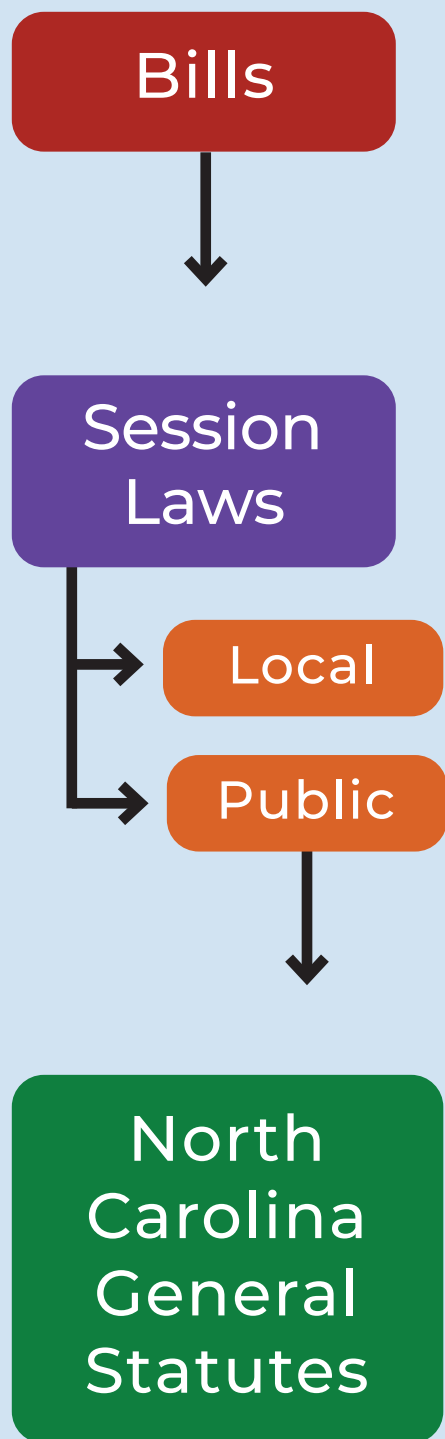


# North Carolina Legislative Process



## BILLS

May be introduced in either chamber  
Numbered Sxxx (originating in Senate) or Hxxx (originating in House)  
Considered and finalized by one or more legislative committees  
Must pass both chambers with majority vote before ratification

## SESSION LAWS

Ratified bills and resolutions that have become law  
Governor may sign a bill, veto it or let it become law without signature  
Vetoed bills are not session laws unless veto is overridden  
Bills receive new number (e.g., S.L. 2023-xx) upon becoming session laws and are published in the order they were ratified  
Two types

- Public laws affect every NC citizen (traffic, tax, criminal, etc.)
- Local laws affect citizens of 15 or fewer counties (not subject to veto)

## STATUTES

Collection of statewide laws in effect at time of publication  
Arranged by subject into

- Chapters
- Articles
- Sections

Session laws create new statutes or amend or repeal existing ones  
Each section includes history notes  
Print statutes also include editors' notes, case annotations, an index and more

## Bills - Online

DEFINITION: Bills are drafts of proposed laws introduced to the legislature for consideration.

EXAMPLES OF BILL CITATIONS:

Senate Bill 5936 (1992)	House Bill 250 (2023)
SB 514, 2011	HB 303, 2003
S.B. 511 (2015)	H.B. 45 (2017)

### (1) Quick Search Box (NCGA home page - top right corner)

- Select the Session
- Bill lookup by number
- Bill Text Search – locate specific word(s) or phrase found in bill title or text

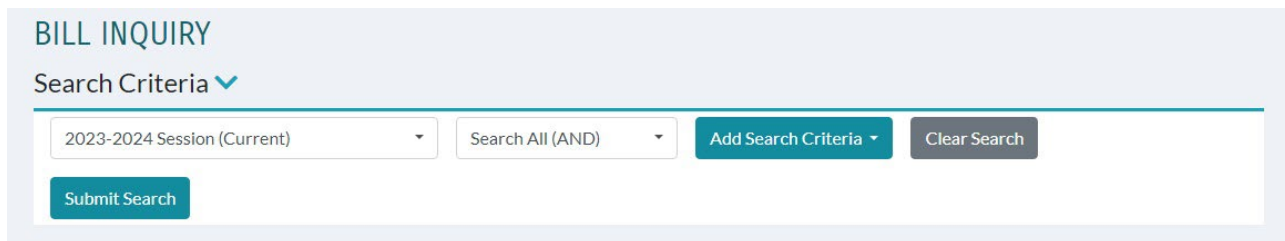
Bill ▾	Bill # (Ex: H1 or S1)	2023-2024 Session ▾	
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### (2) Bills & Laws → Bills & Laws Page

- **Bill Reports Column**
  - Bill lookup by number
  - Search Bill Text
  - Bills by keyword
- **Miscellaneous**
  - Bill Action Abbreviations
  - Keyword List
- **Laws**
  - Statutes
  - Constitution
  - Session laws
  - Resolutions
  - City Charters
- **Governor's Actions**
  - Bills pending the governor's signature
  - Bills signed by the governor
  - Bills vetoed by the governor
  - Enacted bills that became law without the governor's signature

### (3) Bills & Laws → Bills & Laws Page → Bill Inquiry

The Bill Inquiry System provides for a guided search of bills by multiple criteria.



- Select the session. Defaults to current session, use the drop-down menu to select an earlier session.
- Click Add Search Criteria and select a category from the drop-down menu.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Attribute</li><li>○ Bill/Res. Number</li><li>○ Chamber</li><li>○ Committee</li><li>○ County</li><li>○ General Statutes</li><li>○ Intro Date</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Keyword</li><li>○ Last Action Date</li><li>○ S.L. Number</li><li>○ Short Title</li><li>○ Sponsor</li><li>○ Status</li></ul> |
|---|---|

- Click arrow and select specific search criteria.
- Repeat steps to add additional search criteria.
- Click the Submit Search button to run the search.
- Results display in bill number order and may be printed or downloaded as a CSV or PDF file.



## Bills - *Print*

- Print copies of all bills during the session are kept in the Principal Clerk's offices and the Legislative Library.
- To obtain multiple print copies of bills to distribute to the public, contact either the Printed Bills Office (1st floor LB) or the Print Shop (basement LOB).

## Older Bills

The Legislative Library has copies of all bills, regardless of whether they became law, beginning with the 1971-1972 session.

We have bills from 1971-2008 on microfilm. 2009-forward are available online via the NCGA website. The Library also has 2023-current available in paper.

There are other resources to obtain copies of earlier bills.

**State Archives of North Carolina** – Copies of bills and resolutions dating from 1776 forward.

**UNC -Chapel Hill School of Government Library** - Copies of bills and resolutions from 1940 forward.

# Session Laws - Online

**DEFINITION:** Session Laws are ratified bills and resolutions passed during each session arranged in the order in which they became law.

## EXAMPLES OF SESSION LAW CITATIONS:

Generally, the first number refers to the year of passage and the second number refers to the session law chapter. Also, 'c' stands for chapter and "s" stands for section.

S.L. 2023-100	P 1901, c. 165
2007 N.C. Sess. Laws 255	PL 1921, c. 267
2005-391, s. 4	PL Ex. 1920, c. 224
1996, 2nd Ex. Sess., c. 18, s. 20.13(a)	Pub.-Local Laws 1941, c. 293, Sec. 1
1866, c. 30	Pr.1 1903, c. 277

## Bills & Laws → Session Laws

[www.ncleg.gov/laws/sessionlaws](http://www.ncleg.gov/laws/sessionlaws)

- Local Laws (1959 to date)
- Public Laws (1961-62 session to date)

### SESSION LAWS

For:  [Session Laws Archive \(1777 - Present\)](#)

Search [➤](#)

Lookup by Number [➤](#)

## Searching

- Select Biennium to display list of SLs in chapter number order
- Search all SLs at once or a single biennium
- Lookup by Number. Choose year and SL chapter number

## Divisions → Legislative Publications

- *Session Laws (1777-2015) Digitized*
- Select folder by year
- Each volume is a searchable PDF  
(Ctrl + F)

## Session Laws - *Print*

- Each vol. has subject index and cross references
- Public laws (affects 15+ counties) and local laws (affects 1-14 counties)
- Executive orders (1975- )
- Appropriations bills

### Library has

- 1800 - 1867 (scattered holdings)
- 1868 - to date (complete)

### Public, Local & Private Laws

Until 1945, public and private laws were published in separate volumes, and were numbered separately. Thus, there would be a Private Law Chapter 1, and a Public Law Chapter 1. Since 1945, all ratified laws are in a single numeric sequence.

**Public law** affects the public at large throughout North Carolina, and/or affects at least 15 counties.

**Private law** governed individual persons, property, and relationships (or affects fewer than 15 counties).

**Local law** applies to a limited number of municipalities or counties.

From **1903-1943, Private Laws were subdivided** into:

- **Private Laws** "affecting specific individuals or entities" and
- **Public-Local Laws**, which affected everyone within a specific jurisdiction, such as a city or county.

# Statutes - Online

**DEFINITION:** Statutes are general, public laws currently in force, arranged by subject, regardless of when they originally became law.

## EXAMPLES OF STATUTE CITATIONS:

Generally, the first number preceding the dash refers to the Statute Chapter and the second number refers to the Section. Also, 'c' stands for chapter and "s" stands for section.

N.C.G.S. 14-100	Rev., s. 1957
G.S. 20-100	C.S., s. 2312
N.C. Gen.Stat. §1-181 (2003)	R.C., c. 31, s. 29

## Bills & Laws → General Statutes

[www.ncleg.gov/laws/generalstatutes](http://www.ncleg.gov/laws/generalstatutes)

### NORTH CAROLINA GENERAL STATUTES

The General Statutes include changes through **SL 2022-75**.

[Statutes Table of Contents](#)

[Statutes and Session Laws affected by ratified bills - changes from all sessions](#)

[Statutes Archive](#)

#### Search

Chapter\*

All chapters

Search Text\*

Enter search text

Results type\*

Return sections

Search



## Searching

- Note about currentness appears at the top
- *No* index like print volumes
- 3 ways to access
  - Enter search terms (put exact phrase in quotation marks)
  - Use Table of Contents to drill down
  - Citation look-up

# Statutes - *Print*

## Two Versions

- LexisNexis (official)
- West (unofficial)

## Features

- History notes show when law was first enacted and lists subsequent amendments
- Editor's notes
- References to court cases, AG opinions, and legal journals/books
- Official comments
- Cross references
- Various indexes

## Superseded Statutes & Pre-1943 Codes

North Carolina's current code is the General Statutes of North Carolina. It was adopted in 1943 and is updated annually by the laws passed during each legislative session. A new edition of the statutes is published biennially and kept up to date in between editions by interim supplements.

Superseded statutes and codes are available for researching how a statute read in earlier years. Here's a list of the earlier codifications with their abbreviations.

Statutory Codification	Abbreviation
Potter's Revisal (1821, 1827)	P.R.
Revised Statutes (1837)	R.S.
Revised Code (1854)	R.C.
Code of Civil Procedure (1868)	C.C.P.
Code (1883)	Code
Revisal of 1905	Rev.
Consolidated Statutes (1919, 1924)	C.S.
North Carolina General Statutes (1943)	G.S.

# How an Idea Becomes a Law in North Carolina

