

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2015

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HOUSE BILL 355

Short Title: Enhance Protection for Group Home Residents. (Public)

Sponsors: Representatives Reives and Stam (Primary Sponsors).

For a complete list of Sponsors, refer to the North Carolina General Assembly Web Site.

Referred to: Health, if favorable, Judiciary II.

March 26, 2015

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT TO ENHANCE PROTECTIONS FOR CLIENTS OF FACILITIES WHOSE PRIMARY PURPOSE IS TO PROVIDE SERVICES FOR THE CARE, TREATMENT, HABILITATION, OR REHABILITATION OF INDIVIDUALS WITH MENTAL ILLNESS, DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES, OR SUBSTANCE ABUSE DISORDERS BY INCREASING PUNISHMENTS FOR CLIENT ABUSE, EXPLOITATION, OR NEGLECT; BY IMPOSING A REPORTING REQUIREMENT ON EMPLOYEES AND VOLUNTEERS WHO WITNESS A SEXUAL OFFENSE OR OFFENSE AGAINST MORALITY PERPETRATED AGAINST A CLIENT; AND BY MAKING FAILURE TO REPORT THESE VIOLATIONS A CLASS 1 MISDEMEANOR.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. G.S. 122C-66 reads as rewritten:

"§ 122C-66. Protection from abuse and exploitation; reporting.

(a) An employee of or a volunteer at a facility who, other than as a part of generally accepted medical or therapeutic procedure, knowingly causes pain or injury to a client or borrows or takes personal property from a client is guilty of a ~~Class 4~~Class A1 misdemeanor. Any employee or volunteer who uses reasonable force to carry out the provisions of G.S. 122C-60 or to protect himself or others from a violent client does not violate this subsection.

(a1) An employee of or a volunteer at a facility who borrows or takes personal property from a client is guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor. Any employee or volunteer who uses reasonable force to carry out the provisions of G.S. 122C-60 or to protect himself or others from a violent client does not violate this subsection.

(b) An employee of or a volunteer at a facility who witnesses or has knowledge of a violation of ~~subsection (a)~~subsection (a), subsection (a1), or of an accidental injury to a client shall report the violation or accidental injury to authorized personnel designated by the facility. No employee making a report may be threatened or harassed by any other employee or volunteer on account of the report. Violation of this subsection is a ~~Class 3 misdemeanor punishable only by a fine, not to exceed five hundred dollars (\$500.00).~~Class 1 misdemeanor.

(b1) The employee of or a volunteer at a facility who witnesses a client become a victim of a violation of Article 7A or Article 26 of Chapter 14 of the General Statutes shall report the allegations within 24 hours after witnessing the violation to (i) the department of social services in the county where the facility serves the client and (ii) the district attorney in the district where the facility serves the client. A violation of this section is a Class A1 misdemeanor. No



1 employee making a report may be threatened or harassed by any other employee or volunteer
2 on account of the report.

3 (c) The identity of an individual who makes a report under this section or who
4 cooperates in an ensuing investigation may not be disclosed without ~~his~~the reporting
5 individual's consent, except to persons authorized by the facility or by State or federal law to
6 investigate or prosecute these incidents, or in a grievance or personnel hearing or civil or
7 criminal action in which ~~a~~the reporting individual is testifying, or when disclosure is legally
8 compelled or authorized by judicial discovery. This subsection shall not be interpreted to
9 require the disclosure of the identity of an individual where it is otherwise prohibited by law.

10 (d) An employee who makes a report in good faith under this section is immune from
11 any civil liability that might otherwise occur for the report. In any case involving liability,
12 making of a report under this section is prima facie evidence that the maker acted in good faith.

13 (e) The duty imposed by this section is in addition to any duty imposed by G.S. 7B-301
14 or G.S. 108A-102.

15 (f) ~~The~~Except for reports made pursuant to subsection (b1) of this section, the facility
16 shall investigate or provide for the investigation of all reports made under the provisions of this
17 section.

18 (g) The county department of social services and the district attorney to whom a report
19 is made under subsection (b1) of this section shall investigate or provide for the investigation of
20 each such report."

21 **SECTION 2.** This act becomes effective December 1, 2015, and applies to
22 offenses committed on or after that date.