

Article 40.

Protection of the Family.

**§ 14-322. Abandonment and failure to support spouse and children.**

(a) For purposes of this Article:

- (1) "Supporting spouse" means a spouse, whether husband or wife, upon whom the other spouse is actually substantially dependent or from whom such other spouse is substantially in need of maintenance and support.
- (2) "Dependent spouse" means a spouse, whether husband or wife, who is actually substantially dependent upon the other spouse for his or her maintenance and support or is substantially in need of maintenance and support from the other spouse.

(b) Any supporting spouse who shall willfully abandon a dependent spouse without providing that spouse with adequate support shall be guilty of a Class 1 or 2 misdemeanor and upon conviction shall be punished according to subsection (f).

(c) Any supporting spouse who, while living with a dependent spouse, shall willfully neglect to provide adequate support for that dependent spouse shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and upon conviction shall be punished according to subsection (f).

(d) Any parent who shall willfully neglect or refuse to provide adequate support for that parent's child, whether natural or adopted, and whether or not the parent abandons the child, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and upon conviction shall be punished according to subsection (f). Willful neglect or refusal to provide adequate support of a child shall constitute a continuing offense and shall not be barred by any statute of limitations until the youngest living child of the parent shall reach the age of 18 years.

(e) Upon conviction for an offense under this section, the court may make such order as will best provide for the support, as far as may be necessary, of the abandoned spouse or child, or both, from the property or labor of the defendant. If the court requires the payment of child support, the amount of the payments shall be determined as provided in G.S. 50-13.4(c). For child support orders initially entered on or after January 1, 1994, the immediate income withholding provisions of G.S. 110-136.5(c1) shall apply.

(f) A first offense under this section is a Class 2 misdemeanor. A second or subsequent offense is a Class 1 misdemeanor. (1868-9, c. 209, s. 1; 1873-4, c. 176, s. 10; 1879, c. 92; Code, s. 970; Rev., s. 3355; C.S., s. 4447; 1925, c. 290; 1949, c. 810; 1957, c. 369; 1969, c. 1045, s. 1; 1981, c. 683, s. 1; 1989, c. 529, s. 4; 1993, c. 517, s. 3, c. 539, ss. 225, 226; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c).)

**§ 14-322.1. Abandonment of child or children for six months.**

Any man or woman who, without just cause or provocation, willfully abandons his or her child or children for six months and who willfully fails or refuses to provide adequate means of support for his or her child or children during the six months' period, and who attempts to conceal his or her whereabouts from his or her child or children with the intent of escaping his lawful obligation for the support of said child or children, shall be punished as a Class I felon. (1963, c. 1227; 1979, c. 760, s. 5; 1983, c. 653, s. 2.)

**§ 14-322.2. Repealed by Session Laws 1979, c. 838, s. 28.**

**§ 14-322.3. Abandonment of an infant not more than 30 days of age.**

When a parent abandons an infant not more than 30 days of age by voluntarily delivering the infant as provided in Article 5A of Chapter 7B of the General Statutes and does not express an intent to return for the infant, that parent shall not be prosecuted under G.S. 14-322, 14-322.1, or 14-43.14. (2001-291, s. 7; 2012-153, s. 4; 2023-14, s. 6.4(a).)

**§§ 14-323 through 14-325. Repealed by Session Laws 1981, c. 683, s. 3.**

**§ 14-325.1. When offense of failure to support child deemed committed in State.**

The offense of willful neglect or refusal of a parent to support and maintain a child, and the offense of willful neglect or refusal to support and maintain one's child born out of wedlock, shall be deemed to have been committed in this State whenever the child is living in this State at the time of the willful neglect or refusal to support and maintain the child. (1953, c. 677; 1981, c. 683, s. 2; 2013-198, s. 3.)

**§ 14-326. Repealed by Session Laws 1981, c. 683, s. 3.**

**§ 14-326.1. Parents; failure to support.**

If any person being of full age, and having sufficient income after reasonably providing for his or her own immediate family shall, without reasonable cause, neglect to maintain and support his or her parent or parents, if such parent or parents be sick or not able to work and have not sufficient means or ability to maintain or support themselves, such person shall be deemed guilty of a Class 2 misdemeanor; upon conviction of a second or subsequent offense such person shall be guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor.

If there be more than one person bound under the provisions of the next preceding paragraph to support the same parent or parents, they shall share equitably in the discharge of such duty. (1955, c. 1099; 1969, c. 1045, s. 3; 1993, c. 539, s. 227; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c).)