

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2009

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HOUSE BILL 1444

Short Title: Limited Hunting Privilege/Nonviolent Felons. (Public)

Sponsors: Representatives Haire; and Lucas.

Referred to: Judiciary III, if favorable, Finance.

April 13, 2009

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
2 AN ACT TO CREATE A LIMITED HUNTING PRIVILEGE PERMIT THAT AUTHORIZES  
3 A PERSON WHO HAS ONLY ONE NONVIOLENT FELONY CONVICTION TO  
4 POSSESS AND USE A LONG GUN FOR HUNTING PURPOSES IN CERTAIN  
5 CIRCUMSTANCES.

6 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

7 **SECTION 1.** Chapter 14 of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new  
8 Article to read:

9 "Article 54C.

10 "Limited Hunting Privilege Permit.

11 "**§ 14-415.40. Definitions.**

12 The following definitions apply to this Article:

- 13 (1) Carry a firearm. – The term includes possession and use of a firearm. The  
14 term also includes possession of the appropriate ammunition for the firearm.  
15 (2) Firearm. – A weapon that is either a rifle or a shotgun. The term does not  
16 include either a rifle or shotgun with a barrel length of less than 18 inches or  
17 an overall length of less than 26 inches.  
18 (3) Law enforcement officer. – The term includes a law enforcement officer of  
19 the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission  
20 (4) Permit. – A Limited Hunting Privilege Permit issued pursuant to this Article.  
21 (5) Rifle. – A weapon designed or redesigned, made or remade, and intended to  
22 be fired from the shoulder and designed or redesigned and made or remade  
23 to use the energy of an explosive to fire only a single projectile through a  
24 rifle bore for each single pull of the trigger. The term does not include a rifle  
25 with a barrel length of less than 18 inches or an overall length of less than 26  
26 inches.  
27 (6) Shotgun. – A weapon designed or redesigned, made or remade, and  
28 intended to be fired from the shoulder and designed or redesigned and made  
29 or remade to use the energy of an explosive to fire through a smooth bore  
30 either a number of ball shot or a single projectile for each single pull of the  
31 trigger. The term does not include a shotgun with a barrel length of less than  
32 18 inches or an overall length of less than 26 inches.

33 "**§ 14-415.41. Limited Hunting Privilege Permit; long gun exception to Felony Firearms**  
34 **Act; scope of permit; duty to notify sheriff of address changes, loss, or**  
35 **destruction of permit.**

36 (a) Notwithstanding G.S. 14-415.1, a person who has been convicted of a felony but  
37 who is issued a limited hunting privilege permit pursuant to this section may carry a firearm



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1 that a reasonable person would use to hunt game. The person may carry a firearm solely for the  
2 purpose of hunting game or related hunting activities. The person shall carry the permit  
3 together with valid identification whenever the person is carrying the firearm, shall disclose to  
4 any law enforcement officer that the person holds a valid permit and is carrying the firearm  
5 when approached or addressed by the officer, and shall display both the permit and the proper  
6 identification upon the request of a law enforcement officer.

7 (b) The sheriff shall issue a permit to a person who qualifies for a permit under this  
8 Article. The permit shall be valid throughout the State for a period of five years from the date  
9 of issuance. However, the permit shall only be valid in North Carolina and no other state, and  
10 any person to whom a permit is issued under this section shall be restricted to hunting or related  
11 hunting activities in North Carolina.

12 (c) A permit does not authorize a person to carry a firearm for any purpose other than  
13 those set out in this section.

14 (d) A person who is issued a permit shall notify the sheriff who issued the permit of any  
15 change in the person's permanent address within 30 days after the change of address. If a permit  
16 is lost or destroyed, the person to whom the permit was issued shall notify the sheriff who  
17 issued the permit of the loss or destruction of the permit. A person may obtain a duplicate  
18 permit by submitting to the sheriff a notarized statement that the permit was lost or destroyed  
19 and paying the required duplicate permit fee.

20 **"§ 14-415.42. Criteria to qualify for the issuance of a permit.**

21 (a) The sheriff shall issue a permit under this section to an applicant if the applicant  
22 qualifies under the following criteria:

23 (1) The applicant has had his or her United States citizenship restored and has  
24 been a resident of the State for one year or longer immediately preceding the  
25 filing of the application.

26 (2) The applicant has only one felony conviction and the conviction for that  
27 felony occurred at least 20 years before the date of the permit application.  
28 For purposes of this subdivision, multiple felony convictions arising out of  
29 the same event shall count as one felony only.

30 (3) The applicant has not been convicted of any subsequent felony or any  
31 misdemeanor since the conviction of the felony other than a traffic violation  
32 under the laws of the United States or the laws of this State or any other  
33 state.

34 (4) The applicant has been of good behavior for the period since the date of  
35 conviction of the felony conviction.

36 (5) The felony for which the applicant was convicted was not any of the  
37 following:

38 a. An offense that includes assault as an essential element of the  
39 offense.

40 b. An offense that includes the possession or use of a firearm as an  
41 essential element of the offense.

42 c. An offense for which the offender was armed with or used a firearm.

43 d. An offense for which the offender must register under Article 27A of  
44 Chapter 14 of the General Statutes.

45 (6) The applicant does not suffer from a physical infirmity that prevents the safe  
46 handling of a firearm.

47 (7) The applicant is not disqualified under subsection (b) of this section.

48 (b) The sheriff shall deny a permit to an applicant who:

49 (1) Is ineligible to carry a firearm under the provisions of federal or State law.

50 (2) Is under indictment or against whom a finding of probable cause exists for a  
51 felony.

- 1           (3)    Is a fugitive from justice.  
2           (4)    Is an unlawful user of, or addicted to marijuana, alcohol, or any depressant,  
3           stimulant, or narcotic drug, or any other controlled substance as defined in  
4           21 U.S.C. § 802.  
5           (5)    Is or has been discharged from the armed forces under conditions other than  
6           honorable.  
7           (6)    Is or has been adjudicated guilty of or received a prayer for judgment  
8           continued or suspended sentence for one or more crimes of violence  
9           constituting a misdemeanor, including, but not limited to, a violation of a  
10          misdemeanor under Article 8 of Chapter 14 of the General Statutes, or a  
11          violation of a misdemeanor under G.S. 14-225.2, 14-226.1, 14-258.1,  
12          14-269.2, 14-269.3, 14-269.4, 14-269.6, 14-276.1, 14-277, 14-277.1,  
13          14-277.2, 14-277.3, 14-281.1, 14-283, 14-288.2, 14-288.4(a)(1) or (2),  
14          14-288.6, 14-288.9, 14-288.12, 14-288.13, 14-288.14, 14-318.2,  
15          14-415.21(b), or 14-415.26(d).  
16          (7)    Has had entry of a prayer for judgment continued for a criminal offense  
17          which would disqualify the person from obtaining a permit.  
18          (8)    Is free on bond or personal recognizance pending trial, appeal, or sentencing  
19          for a crime which would disqualify the person from obtaining a permit.

20    **§ 14-415.43. Application for a permit.**

21          A person shall apply to the sheriff of the county in which the person resides to obtain a  
22          permit. The applicant shall submit to the sheriff all of the following:

- 23           (1)    An application on a form provided by the sheriff.  
24           (2)    An affidavit by the applicant stating that the information provided in the  
25           application form is true, that the applicant has been of good behavior for the  
26           period since the date of conviction of the felony in question, and that the  
27           applicant has not been convicted of any subsequent felony or any  
28           misdemeanor since the conviction of the felony in question other than a  
29           traffic violation under the laws of the United States or the laws of this State  
30           or any other state.  
31           (3)    A nonrefundable permit fee.

32    **§ 14-415.44. Application form to be provided by sheriff; information to be included in**  
33    **application form.**

34          (a)    The sheriff shall make permit applications readily available at the office of the  
35          sheriff or at other public offices in the sheriff's jurisdiction. The permit application shall be in  
36          triplicate, in a form to be prescribed by the Administrative Office of the Courts, and shall  
37          include the following information with regard to the applicant: name, address, physical  
38          description, signature, date of birth, social security number, military status, and the drivers  
39          license number or State identification card number of the applicant if used for identification in  
40          applying for the permit.

41          (b)    The permit application shall also contain a warning substantially as follows:

42          "CAUTION: Federal law and State law on the possession of firearms differ. If you are  
43          prohibited by federal law from possessing a firearm, you may be prosecuted in federal court. A  
44          State permit is not a defense to a federal prosecution."

45    **§ 14-415.45. Issuance or denial of permit.**

46          (a)    Except as permitted under subsection (b) of this section, within 90 days after receipt  
47          of the items listed in G.S. 14-415.43 from an applicant, the sheriff shall either issue or deny the  
48          permit. The sheriff may conduct any investigation necessary to determine the qualification of  
49          the person applying for the permit, including record checks.

50          (b)    A person's application for a permit shall be denied only if the applicant fails to  
51          qualify under the criteria listed in this Article. If the sheriff denies the application for a permit,

1 the sheriff shall, within 90 days, notify the applicant in writing, stating the grounds for denial.  
2 An applicant may appeal the denial, revocation, or nonrenewal of a permit by petitioning a  
3 district court judge of the district in which the application was filed. The determination by the  
4 court, on appeal, shall be upon the facts, the law, and the reasonableness of the sheriff's refusal.  
5 The determination by the court shall be final.

6 **"§ 14-415.46. Renewal of permit.**

7 The holder of a permit shall apply to renew the permit at least 30 days prior to its expiration  
8 date by filing with the sheriff of the county in which the person resides a renewal form  
9 provided by the sheriff's office, a notarized affidavit stating that the permittee remains qualified  
10 under the criteria provided in this Article, and a renewal fee. Upon receipt of the completed  
11 renewal application and the appropriate payment of fees, the sheriff shall determine if the  
12 permittee remains qualified to hold a permit in accordance with the provisions of  
13 G.S. 14-415.42. The permittee's criminal history shall be updated. If the permittee applies for a  
14 renewal of the permit within 30 days of its expiration date and if the permittee remains  
15 qualified to have a permit under G.S. 14-415.42, the sheriff shall renew the permit.

16 **"§ 14-415.47. Permit; sheriff to retain and make available to law enforcement agencies a**  
17 **list of permittees.**

18 The permit shall be in a certificate form, as prescribed by the Administrative Office of the  
19 Courts, that is approximately the size of a North Carolina drivers license. It shall bear the  
20 signature, name, address, date of birth, social security number of the permittee, and the drivers  
21 license identification number used in applying for the permit. The sheriff shall maintain a  
22 listing of those persons who are issued a permit and any pertinent information regarding the  
23 issued permit. The permit information shall be available upon request to all State and local law  
24 enforcement agencies.

25 Within five days of the date a permit is issued, the sheriff shall send a copy of the permit to  
26 the State Bureau of Investigation. The State Bureau of Investigation shall make this information  
27 available to law enforcement officers and clerks of court on a statewide system.

28 **"§ 14-415.48. Revocation or suspension of permit.**

29 (a) The sheriff of the county where the permit was issued or the sheriff of the county  
30 where the person resides may revoke a permit subsequent to a hearing for any of the following  
31 reasons:

- 32 (1) Fraud or intentional or material misrepresentation in the obtaining of a  
33 permit.
- 34 (2) Misuse of a permit, including lending or giving a permit to another person,  
35 duplicating a permit, or using a permit with the intent to unlawfully cause  
36 harm to a person or property.
- 37 (3) The doing of an act or existence of a condition which would have been  
38 grounds for the denial of the permit by the sheriff.
- 39 (4) The violation of any of the terms of this Article.
- 40 (5) The applicant is adjudicated guilty of or receives a prayer for judgment  
41 continued for a crime which would have disqualified the applicant from  
42 initially receiving a permit.

43 A permittee may appeal the revocation or nonrenewal of a permit by petitioning a district  
44 court judge of the district in which the applicant resides. The determination by the court, on  
45 appeal, shall be upon the facts, the law, and the reasonableness of the sheriff's refusal.

46 (b) The court may suspend a permit as part of and for the duration of any orders  
47 permitted under Chapter 50B of the General Statutes.

48 **"§ 14-415.49. Fees.**

49 The permit fees assessed under this Article are payable to the sheriff. The sheriff shall  
50 transmit the proceeds of these fees to the county finance officer to be remitted or credited by

1 the county finance officer in accordance with the provisions of this section. Except as otherwise  
2 provided by this section, the permit fees are as follows:

3	
4	<u>Application fee.....\$25.00</u>
5	<u>Renewal fee.....\$20.00</u>
6	<u>Duplicate permit fee.....\$15.00</u>
7	

8 The county finance officer shall remit ten dollars (\$10.00) of each new application fee and  
9 five dollars (\$5.00) of each renewal fee assessed under this section to the North Carolina  
10 Department of Justice for the costs of State and federal criminal record checks performed in  
11 connection with processing applications and for the implementation of the provisions of this  
12 Article. The remaining fifteen dollars (\$15.00) of each application or renewal fee shall be used  
13 by the sheriff to pay the costs of administering this Article and for other law enforcement  
14 purposes. The county shall expend the restricted funds for these purposes only.

15 **"§ 14-415.50. No liability of sheriff.**

16 A sheriff who issues or refuses to issue a permit under this Article shall not incur any civil  
17 or criminal liability as the result of the performance of the sheriff's duties under this Article.

18 **"§ 14-415.51. Violations of this Article; penalties.**

19 (a) A person who has been issued a valid permit who is found to be carrying a firearm  
20 without the permit in the person's possession or who fails to disclose to any law enforcement  
21 officer that the person holds a valid permit and is carrying a firearm, as required by  
22 G.S. 14-415.41, shall be guilty of an infraction for the first offense and shall be punished in  
23 accordance with G.S. 14-3.1. In lieu of paying a fine for the first offense, the person may  
24 surrender the permit. Subsequent offenses for failing to carry a valid permit or for failing to  
25 make the necessary disclosures to a law enforcement officer as required by G.S. 14-415.41  
26 shall be punishable as a Class 2 misdemeanor.

27 (b) Any person who makes any false affidavit, or who knowingly swears or affirms  
28 falsely, to any matter or thing required by the terms of this Article to be sworn to or affirmed  
29 shall be guilty of perjury which shall be punishable as a Class I felony.

30 **"§ 14-415.52. Ineligible for permit if convicted of second or subsequent felony.**

31 No person who is convicted of two or more felonies is eligible for a permit under this  
32 Article. If a person who is issued a permit under this Article is convicted of a second or  
33 subsequent felony, then the person's permit shall be revoked as provided by G.S. 14-415.48,  
34 and the person shall be ineligible to receive another permit under this Article."

35 **SECTION 2.** G.S. 14-415.1 reads as rewritten:

36 **"§ 14-415.1. Possession of firearms, etc., by felon prohibited.**

37 (a) ~~It~~ Except as otherwise provided by law, it shall be unlawful for any person who has  
38 been convicted of a felony to purchase, own, possess, or have in his custody, care, or control  
39 any firearm or any weapon of mass death and destruction as defined in G.S. 14-288.8(c). For  
40 the purposes of this section, a firearm is (i) any weapon, including a starter gun, which will or  
41 is designed to or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive, or  
42 its frame or receiver, or (ii) any firearm muffler or firearm silencer. This section does not apply  
43 to an antique firearm, as defined in G.S. 14-409.11.

44 Every person violating the provisions of this section shall be punished as a Class G felon.

45 (a1) A person who has been convicted of a felony but who has had his or her citizenship  
46 rights restored pursuant to Chapter 13 of the General Statutes and who obtains a limited  
47 hunting license as provided by Article 54C of Chapter 14 of the General Statutes may carry a  
48 firearm as defined by G.S. 54C-415.40 that a reasonable person would use to hunt game.

49 (b) Prior convictions which cause disenfranchisement under this section shall only include:

- 50 (1) Felony convictions in North Carolina that occur before, on, or after
- 51 December 1, 1995; and

1 (2) Repealed by Session Laws 1995, c. 487, s. 3, effective December 1, 1995.

2 (3) Violations of criminal laws of other states or of the United States that occur  
3 before, on, or after December 1, 1995, and that are substantially similar to  
4 the crimes covered in subdivision (1) which are punishable where committed  
5 by imprisonment for a term exceeding one year.

6 When a person is charged under this section, records of prior convictions of any offense,  
7 whether in the courts of this State, or in the courts of any other state or of the United States,  
8 shall be admissible in evidence for the purpose of proving a violation of this section. The term  
9 "conviction" is defined as a final judgment in any case in which felony punishment, or  
10 imprisonment for a term exceeding one year, as the case may be, is permissible, without regard  
11 to the plea entered or to the sentence imposed. A judgment of a conviction of the defendant or a  
12 plea of guilty by the defendant to such an offense certified to a superior court of this State from  
13 the custodian of records of any state or federal court shall be prima facie evidence of the facts  
14 so certified.

15 (c) The indictment charging the defendant under the terms of this section shall be  
16 separate from any indictment charging him with other offenses related to or giving rise to a  
17 charge under this section. An indictment which charges the person with violation of this section  
18 must set forth the date that the prior offense was committed, the type of offense and the penalty  
19 therefor, and the date that the defendant was convicted or plead guilty to such offense, the  
20 identity of the court in which the conviction or plea of guilty took place and the verdict and  
21 judgment rendered therein."

22 **SECTION 3.** This act becomes effective December 1, 2009, and applies to  
23 offenses committed on or after that date.