

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2017

S

1

SENATE BILL 722\*

Short Title: Local Law Enforcement/Citizens Academies. (Public)

Sponsors: Senators Rabin, Alexander, and Sanderson (Primary Sponsors).

Referred to: Rules and Operations of the Senate

May 21, 2018

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT TO ENCOURAGE LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES TO OPERATE PROGRAMS THAT EDUCATE CITIZENS REGARDING LAW ENFORCEMENT OPERATIONS, TO RECOGNIZE THE DANGER SIGNS OF POTENTIALLY VIOLENT ACTIVITIES, AND TO PROVIDE TRAINING TO CITIZENS WHO WANT TO PROVIDE VOLUNTEER SERVICES TO LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES, AS RECOMMENDED BY THE JOINT LEGISLATIVE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

**SECTION 1.** Article 13 of Chapter 160A of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new section to read:

**"§ 160A-289.3. Citizens academy and volunteer programs.**

(a) Findings. – The General Assembly finds the following:

- (1) Acts of terrorism and other forms of violence directed against innocent civilians of all ages are on the increase.
- (2) Where there are "see something, say something" programs in effect in local communities, the information gained is beneficial to the development of intelligence information that can, to some extent, preempt and ameliorate the effects of these acts of violence.
- (3) Programs conducted by local law enforcement entities that educate volunteer citizens to recognize the danger signs involved in illegal or potentially violent activities increase the effectiveness of "see something, say something" programs.
- (4) Such programs are in place and working at the local level in North Carolina. These programs demonstrate the effectiveness of getting more eyes surveilling a situation and help increase the likelihood of reported danger signs.

(b) Local Programs. – The chief of police of a local police department or of a county police department may establish a citizens academy (the program) that educates community members on the operations of the department and prepares participants to provide appropriate volunteer services. The program may provide orientation and training with department representatives from a variety of backgrounds and disciplines. The program should follow a pre-established curriculum that includes instruction on the recognition and reporting of suspicious activity indicative of criminal behavior and emphasizes recognition of activities and threats that might lead to acts of terrorism or other violence against innocent civilians. When selecting individuals to participate in the program, the department shall conduct background checks on potential participants and shall exclude individuals based on prior criminal convictions



\* S 7 2 2 - V - 1 \*

1 or pending criminal charges or investigations. Any individual who is also a veteran must have  
2 received an honorable discharge to be eligible to participate in the program.

3 (c) Volunteer Services. – The department may use graduates of the program to provide  
4 appropriate volunteer services that support the operations of the department and increase safety  
5 and security within the community. These services may include volunteers participating in  
6 community patrols or other observational activities. No individual may be armed while providing  
7 volunteer services unless the individual has successfully completed a basic law enforcement  
8 training course as approved by the North Carolina Criminal Justice Education and Training  
9 Standards Commission and is authorized in writing to do so by the chief of police of the police  
10 department sponsoring the program."

11 **SECTION 2.** Article 3 of Chapter 162 of the General Statutes is amended by adding  
12 a new section to read:

13 **"§ 162-27. Citizens academy and volunteer programs.**

14 (a) Findings. – The General Assembly finds the following:

15 (1) Acts of terrorism and other forms of violence directed against innocent  
16 civilians of all ages are on the increase.

17 (2) Where there are "see something, say something" programs in effect in local  
18 communities, the information gained is beneficial to the development of  
19 intelligence information that can, to some extent, preempt and ameliorate the  
20 effects of these acts of violence.

21 (3) Programs conducted by local law enforcement entities that educate volunteer  
22 citizens to recognize the danger signs involved in illegal or potentially violent  
23 activities increase the effectiveness of "see something, say something"  
24 programs.

25 (4) Such programs are in place and working at the local level in North Carolina.  
26 These programs demonstrate the effectiveness of getting more eyes surveilling  
27 a situation and help increase the likelihood of reported danger signs.

28 (b) Local Programs. – The sheriff may establish a citizens academy (the program) that  
29 educates community members on the operations of the department and prepares participants to  
30 provide appropriate volunteer services. The program may provide orientation and training with  
31 department representatives from a variety of backgrounds and disciplines. The program should  
32 follow a pre-established curriculum that includes instruction on the recognition and reporting of  
33 suspicious activity indicative of criminal behavior and emphasizes recognition of activities and  
34 threats that might lead to acts of terrorism or other violence against innocent civilians. When  
35 selecting individuals to participate in the program, the sheriff shall conduct background checks  
36 on potential participants and shall exclude individuals based on prior criminal convictions or  
37 pending criminal charges or investigations. Any individual who is also a veteran must have  
38 received an honorable discharge to be eligible to participate in the program.

39 (c) Volunteer Services. – The sheriff may use graduates of the program to provide  
40 appropriate volunteer services that support the operations of the department and increase safety  
41 and security within the community. These services may include volunteers participating in  
42 community patrols or other observational activities. No individual may be armed while providing  
43 volunteer services unless the individual has successfully completed a basic law enforcement  
44 training course as approved by the North Carolina Sheriffs' Education and Training Standards  
45 Commission and is authorized in writing to do so by the sheriff of the department sponsoring the  
46 program."

47 **SECTION 3.** This act is effective when it becomes law.