

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2019**

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HOUSE BILL 1202

Short Title: NCGA Transparency and Accessibility Act. (Public)

Sponsors: Representatives Ball, John, and Lofton (Primary Sponsors).

For a complete list of sponsors, refer to the North Carolina General Assembly web site.

Referred to: Appropriations, if favorable, Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House

May 27, 2020

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT TO CREATE THE NORTH CAROLINA GENERAL ASSEMBLY TECHNOLOGY
TASK FORCE AND TO APPROPRIATE FUNDS TO IMPLEMENT CLOSED
CAPTIONING FOR LEGISLATIVE PROCEEDINGS.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. Findings. – The North Carolina General Assembly should have the means to operate efficiently and effectively, whether members and staff are present on the Legislative Campus, teleworking, or some combination thereof, and the public should have easy, 24/7 access to meetings, materials, and the opportunity to provide comment, through a variety of modes, to include audio and video replay via Web site and telephone, and online access to forms and archived materials. Further, the North Carolina General Assembly should comply with the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) by offering closed captioning and/or transcription services.

SECTION 2.(a) There is created the North Carolina General Assembly Technology Task Force (Technology Task Force). The Technology Task Force shall investigate the current status of information technology operations at the North Carolina General Assembly to ensure that the General Assembly runs seamlessly, whether under normal or exceptional circumstances such as a pandemic or weather-related event, and to ensure meaningful public participation for individuals with disabilities and those with limited connectivity.

SECTION 2.(b) The Technology Task Force shall consist of 15 members as follows:

- (1) The Director of the Information Services Division of the General Assembly and two employees of the Division appointed by the Director.
- (2) One Senator and one Senate legislative assistant appointed by the Majority Leader of the Senate.
- (3) One Senator and one Senate legislative assistant appointed by the Minority Leader of the Senate.
- (4) One Representative and one House legislative assistant appointed by the Majority Leader of the House of Representatives.
- (5) One Representative and one House legislative assistant appointed by the Minority Leader of the House of Representatives.
- (6) Four members of the public jointly selected by the Majority and Minority Leaders of each chamber as follows:
 - a. An individual who represents the disabilities community.
 - b. A registered lobbyist.
 - c. A State agency legislative liaison.



1 d. A member of the press.

2 **SECTION 2.(c)** The appointing authorities shall select individuals who regularly use
3 the General Assembly Web site and other technology provided by the General Assembly. All
4 appointments to the Technology Task Force shall be made no later than August 1, 2020. The
5 Majority and Minority Leaders of the Senate shall jointly appoint a Senate cochair. The Majority
6 and Minority Leaders of the House of Representatives shall appoint a House cochair. Vacancies
7 shall be filled by the appointing authority. The Technology Task Force shall meet upon the joint
8 call of the cochairs. A majority of the Technology Task Force shall constitute a quorum.
9 Members of the Technology Task Force shall receive per diem, subsistence, and travel
10 allowances in accordance with G.S. 120-3.1, 138-5, or 138-6 as appropriate. Subject to the
11 approval of the Legislative Services Commission, the Technology Task Force may meet in the
12 State Legislative Building or the Legislative Office Building. The Legislative Services
13 Commission, through the Legislative Services Officer, shall assign professional staff to assist in
14 the work of the Technology Task Force. The House of Representatives' and the Senate's Directors
15 of Legislative Assistants shall assign clerical staff to the Technology Task Force, and the
16 expenses relating to the clerical employees shall be borne by the Technology Task Force. The
17 Technology Task Force, while in the discharge of its official duties, may exercise all the powers
18 provided under the provisions of G.S. 120-19 and G.S. 120-19.1 through G.S. 120-19.4,
19 including the power to request all officers, agents, agencies, and departments of the State to
20 provide any information, data, or documents within their possession, ascertainable from their
21 records, or otherwise available to them and the power to subpoena witnesses.

22 **SECTION 2.(d)** The Technology Task Force shall study all of the following:

- 23 (1) How other states have implemented meaningful public participation for
24 individuals with disabilities and those with limited connectivity.
25 (2) Technology, including hardware and software, telephony, and other
26 prerequisite infrastructure to enable legislators and staff to work efficiently
27 and effectively, whether present on the Legislative Campus, teleworking, or
28 some combination thereof.
29 (3) Any other issues the Technology Task Force deems relevant to its work

30 **SECTION 2.(e)** The Technology Task Force shall develop a five-year plan for the
31 installation, deployment, and testing of all recommended technology, including cost estimates
32 for implementation of the plan, and report its findings and recommendations to the Legislative
33 Services Commission prior to the convening of the 2021 General Assembly. The Technology
34 Task Force shall terminate upon the earlier of the filing of its report or January 1, 2021.

35 **SECTION 3.** There is appropriated from the General Fund to the General Assembly
36 the sum of seventy-five thousand dollars (\$75,000) in nonrecurring funds for the 2020-2021
37 fiscal year. The funds shall be used to plan and deploy a one-year trial of closed captioning of
38 legislative proceedings.

39 **SECTION 4.** This act becomes effective July 1, 2020.