

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2019

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HOUSE BILL 633  
Committee Substitute Favorable 4/29/19

Short Title: Strengthen Criminal Gang Laws.

(Public)

Sponsors:

Referred to:

April 10, 2019

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
2 AN ACT TO STRENGTHEN THE LAWS AGAINST CRIMINAL GANGS.  
3 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:  
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5 **PART I. REVISE THE CRIMINAL GANG NUISANCE ABATEMENT ACT**

6 **SECTION 1.(a)** G.S. 14-50.43 reads as rewritten:

7 "**§ 14-50.43. Criminal gangs declared a public nuisance.**

8 (a) Public Nuisance. – A criminal gang, as defined in G.S. 14-50.16A(a), gang that  
9 regularly engages in criminal gang activity, as defined in G.S. 14-50.16A(2), activity constitutes  
10 a public nuisance. For the purposes of this section, subsection, the term "regularly" means at least  
11 ~~five~~ two times in a period of not more than 12 months.

12 (b) Filing Suit. – Any person-criminal gang, as an unincorporated association and in the  
13 name by which it is commonly known and without naming any of the individual members  
14 composing it, and any criminal gang member who regularly-associates with others to engage in  
15 criminal gang activity, as defined in G.S. 14-50.16A(2), other criminal gang members, may be  
16 made a defendant in a suit, brought pursuant to Chapter 19 of the General Statutes, to abate any  
17 public nuisance resulting from criminal gang activity. The complaint may also name, as a class  
18 of defendants, all unknown criminal gang members.

19 (b1) Service of Process. – For purposes of service of process, service of process upon any  
20 leader, officer, or organizer of a criminal gang, at least three members of a criminal gang, or any  
21 person representing a criminal gang or criminal gang member, shall constitute adequate service  
22 of process upon a criminal gang.

23 (c) Order. – If the court finds that a public nuisance exists under this section, the court  
24 may enter an order enjoining the criminal gang, or the defendant or defendants in the suit-suit,  
25 from engaging in criminal gang activities and impose other reasonable requirements  
26 requirements, including ordering any person not to associate with other persons associated with  
27 a criminal gang and to divest himself or herself of any involvement or interest, direct or indirect,  
28 in a criminal gang, to prevent the defendant or a gang from engaging in future criminal gang  
29 activities. Any gang member who is not specifically named in an injunction may be subject to  
30 the order only after personal service with a copy of the injunction.

31 (d) An order entered under this section shall expire three years after entry unless extended  
32 by the court for good cause established by the plaintiff after a hearing. The order may be  
33 modified, rescinded, or vacated at any time prior to its expiration date upon the motion of any  
34 party if it appears to the court that one or more of the defendants is no longer engaging in criminal  
35 gang activities.



1       (e) Witness Testimony. – Criminal gang activity, membership, association, leadership,  
 2 and existence may be proven through the testimony of a fact witness, an expert witness, or a  
 3 combined fact expert witness pursuant to the rules of evidence. In any proceeding, pursuant to  
 4 this Article, expert testimony is admissible to show particular conduct, status, and customs  
 5 indicative of criminal gangs and criminal gang activity, including any of the following:

- 6           (1) Characteristics of persons who are members of criminal gangs.  
 7           (2) Specific rivalries between criminal gangs.  
 8           (3) Common practices and operations of criminal gangs and members of those  
 9           gangs.  
 10          (4) Social customs and behavior of members of criminal gangs.  
 11          (5) Terminology used by members of criminal gangs.  
 12          (6) Codes of conduct, including criminal conduct, of particular criminal gangs.  
 13          (7) The types of crimes that are likely to be committed by a particular criminal  
 14          gang or by criminal gangs in general.

15       (f) Penalty. – In case of the violation of any injunction granted under the provisions of  
 16 this Article, the court, or, in vacation, a judge thereof, may do either of the following:

- 17           (1) Find the defendant guilty of contempt and punish the defendant as provided  
 18           in G.S. 19-4.  
 19           (2) Find the defendant guilty of a Class A1 misdemeanor.

20       (g) Definitions. – The following definitions apply in this section:

- 21           (1) Criminal gang. – As defined in G.S. 14-50.16A.  
 22           (2) Criminal gang activity. – As defined in G.S. 14-50.16A.  
 23           (3) Criminal gang member. – As defined in G.S. 14-50.16A."

24       **SECTION 1.(b)** This section becomes effective December 1, 2019, and applies to  
 25 offenses committed on or after that date.  
 26

## 27 **PART II. REVISE THE CRIMINAL GANG SUPPRESSION ACT**

28       **SECTION 2.(a)** G.S. 14-50.16A reads as rewritten:

### 29 **"§ 14-50.16A. Criminal gang activity.**

30       Definitions. – The following definitions apply in this Article:

- 31           (1) Criminal gang. – Any ongoing organization, association, or group of three or  
 32 more persons, whether formal or informal, that (i) ~~has as one of its primary~~  
 33 ~~activities the commission of criminal or delinquent acts engages in criminal~~  
 34 gang activity and (ii) shares a common name, identification, signs, symbols,  
 35 tattoos, graffiti, attire, or other distinguishing characteristics, including  
 36 common activities, customs, or behaviors. The term shall not include three or  
 37 more persons associated in fact, whether formal or informal, who are not  
 38 engaged in criminal gang activity.  
 39           (2) Criminal gang activity. – The commission of, attempted commission of, or  
 40 solicitation, coercion, or intimidation of another person to commit (i) any  
 41 offense under Article 5 of Chapter 90 of the General Statutes or (ii) any  
 42 offense under Chapter 14 of the General Statutes except Article 9, 22A, 40,  
 43 46, or 59 thereof, and further excepting G.S. 14-82, 14-145, 14-183, 14-184,  
 44 14-186, 14-190.9, 14-247, 14-248, or 14-313 thereof, and either of the  
 45 following conditions is met:  
 46           a. The offense is committed with the intent to benefit, promote, or further  
 47 the interests of a criminal gang or for the purposes of increasing a  
 48 person's own standing or position within a criminal gang.  
 49           b. The participants in the offense are identified as criminal gang members  
 50 acting individually or collectively to further any criminal purpose of a  
 51 criminal gang.

- (3) Criminal gang leader or organizer. – Any criminal gang member who acts in any position of management with regard to the criminal gang and who meets ~~two or more~~ any of the following criteria:
- a. Exercises decision-making authority over matters regarding a criminal gang.
  - b. Participates in the direction, planning, ~~organizing, or commission or organizing of~~ criminal gang activity.
  - c. Recruits other gang members.
  - d. Receives a larger portion of the proceeds of criminal gang activity.
  - e. Exercises control and authority over other criminal gang members.

...."

**SECTION 2.(b)** G.S. 14-50.17 reads as rewritten:

**"§ 14-50.17. Soliciting; encouraging participation.**

(a) It is unlawful for any person to cause, encourage, solicit, or coerce a person ~~16-18~~ years of age or older to participate in criminal gang activity.

...."

**SECTION 2.(c)** G.S. 14-50.18 reads as rewritten:

**"§ 14-50.18. Soliciting; encouraging participation; minor.**

(a) It is unlawful for any person to cause, encourage, solicit, or coerce a person under ~~16~~ 18 years of age to participate in criminal gang activity.

...."

**SECTION 2.(d)** Article 13A of Chapter 14 of the General Statutes is amended by adding two new sections to read:

**"§ 14-50.31. Use of witness testimony.**

Criminal gang activity, membership, association, leadership, and existence may be proven through the testimony of a fact witness, an expert witness, or a combined fact expert witness pursuant to the rules of evidence. In any proceeding, pursuant to this Article, expert testimony is admissible to show particular conduct, status, and customs indicative of criminal gangs and criminal gang activity, including any of the following:

- (1) Characteristics of persons who are members of criminal gangs.
- (2) Specific rivalries between criminal gangs.
- (3) Common practices and operations of criminal gangs and members of those gangs.
- (4) Social customs and behavior of members of criminal gangs.
- (5) Terminology used by members of criminal gangs.
- (6) Codes of conduct, including criminal conduct, of particular criminal gangs.
- (7) The types of crimes that are likely to be committed by a particular criminal gang or by criminal gangs in general.

**"§ 14-50.32. Venue.**

In any criminal proceeding brought under this Article, the crime shall be construed to have been committed in any county in which any act was performed as part of criminal gang activity."

**SECTION 2.(e)** This section becomes effective December 1, 2019, and applies to offenses committed on or after that date.

**PART III. MISCELLANEOUS REVISIONS**

**SECTION 3.(a)** G.S. 15A-1340.16E reads as rewritten:

**"§ 15A-1340.16E. Enhanced sentence for offenses committed by ~~criminal gang members as a part of criminal gang activity.~~**

(a) Except as otherwise provided in subsection (b) of this section, if a person is convicted of any felony other than a Class A, B1, or B2 felony, and it is found that the offense was committed as part of criminal gang ~~activity as defined in G.S. 14-50.16A(2),~~ activity, then the

1 person shall be sentenced at a felony class level one class higher than the principal felony for  
2 which the person was convicted.

3 (b) If subsection (a) of this section applies and the person is found to (i) be a criminal  
4 gang leader or ~~organizer as defined in G.S. 14-50.16A(3),~~ organizer or (ii) have possessed or  
5 used a firearm during the commission of the offense, the person shall be sentenced at a felony  
6 class level two classes higher than the principal felony for which the person was convicted.

7 (c) No defendant sentenced pursuant to this section shall be sentenced at a level higher  
8 than a Class C felony. Any sentence imposed under this section shall run consecutively with and  
9 shall commence at the expiration of any sentence being served by the person sentenced under  
10 this section.

11 (d) An indictment or information for the felony shall allege in that indictment or  
12 information the facts that qualify the offense for an enhancement under this section. One pleading  
13 is sufficient for all felonies that are tried at a single trial.

14 (e) The State shall prove the issues set out under subsection (a) or (b) of this section  
15 beyond a reasonable doubt. The issues shall be proven and found in the same manner as provided  
16 for aggravating factors in G.S. 15A-1340.16(a1), (a2), or (a3) as applicable.

17 (f) This section shall not apply to any gang offense included under Article 13A of  
18 Chapter 14 of the General Statutes.

19 (g) The following definitions apply in this section:

20 (1) Criminal gang activity. – As defined in G.S. 14-50.16A.

21 (2) Criminal gang leader or organizer. – As defined in G.S. 14-50.16A.

22 (3) Firearm. – As defined in G.S. 14-409.39."

23 **SECTION 3.(b)** Article 35 of Chapter 14 of the General Statutes is amended by  
24 adding two new sections to read:

25 **"§ 14-269.9. Possession of certain weapons during the commission or attempted**  
26 **commission of a felony.**

27 (a) Definitions. – The following definitions apply in this section:

28 (1) Brandish. – To display all or part of the firearm or weapon of mass death and  
29 destruction, or otherwise make the presence of the firearm or weapon of mass  
30 death and destruction known to another person.

31 (2) Firearm. – As defined in G.S. 14-409.39.

32 (3) Weapon of mass death and destruction. – As defined in G.S. 14-288.8.

33 (b) Offense. – It is unlawful for a person to possess a firearm or weapon of mass death  
34 and destruction during the commission or attempted commission of a felony under (i) this  
35 Chapter or (ii) Article 5 of Chapter 90 of the General Statutes.

36 (c) Penalty. – Unless the conduct is covered under some other provision of law providing  
37 greater punishment, a person who violates subsection (b) of this section is guilty of the following:

38 (1) A Class D felony, if the person discharges the firearm or weapon of mass death  
39 and destruction during the commission or attempted commission of the felony.

40 (2) A Class F felony, if the person brandishes the firearm or weapon of mass death  
41 and destruction during the commission or attempted commission of the felony.

42 (3) A Class H felony for any other violation of subsection (b) of this section.

43 (d) Separate Offense. – A violation of subsection (b) of this section is a separate offense  
44 from the underlying felony offense and shall not merge with other offenses.

45 **"§ 14-269.10. Sell, deliver, transfer, or give certain weapons for use in criminal gang**  
46 **activity.**

47 (a) Definitions. – The following definitions apply in this section:

48 (1) Criminal gang activity. – As defined in G.S. 14-50.16A.

49 (2) Firearm. – As defined in G.S. 14-409.39.

50 (3) Weapon of mass death and destruction. – As defined in G.S. 14-288.8.

1       (b) Offense. – It is unlawful for a person to sell, deliver, transfer, or give a firearm or  
2 weapon of mass death and destruction to a person the transferor knows or reasonably should  
3 know is participating in criminal gang activity.

4       (c) Penalty. – Unless the conduct is covered under some other provision of law providing  
5 greater punishment, a person who violates subsection (b) of this section is guilty of a Class G  
6 felony."

7       **SECTION 3.(c)** G.S. 14-415.1 reads as rewritten:

8       "**§ 14-415.1. Possession of firearms, etc., by felon prohibited.**

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

16       ~~Every person violating the provisions of this section shall be punished as a Class G felon.~~  
17 person who violates the provisions of this section is guilty of the following:

18       (1) A Class D felony, if the person was participating in criminal gang activity, as  
19 that term is defined in G.S. 14-50.16A, at the time of the violation.

20       (2) A Class D felony for a second or subsequent violation of this section.

21       (3) A Class F felony for any other violation of this section.

22       ...."

23       **SECTION 3.(d)** Article 4 of Chapter 8C of the General Statutes is amended by  
24 adding a new section to read:

25       "**Rule 416. Evidence of criminal gang activity.**

26       (a) For purposes of this rule, the term "criminal gang activity" is as defined in  
27 G.S. 14-50.16A.

28       (b) In any proceeding in which a person is accused of conducting, participating in, or  
29 conspiring to commit, criminal gang activity, or in any proceeding under Article 13B of Chapter  
30 14 of the General Statutes, evidence of the defendant's commission of criminal gang activity and  
31 other crimes, wrongs, or acts shall be admissible and may be considered for its bearing on any  
32 matter to which it is relevant.

33       (c) In any proceeding in which the prosecution intends to offer evidence under this rule,  
34 the prosecutor shall disclose the evidence to the defendant, including statements of witnesses or  
35 a summary of the substance of any testimony that is expected to be offered, at least 10 days in  
36 advance of trial, unless the time is shortened or lengthened or pretrial notice is excused by the  
37 judge upon good cause shown.

38       (d) This rule shall not be the exclusive means to admit or consider the evidence described  
39 in this rule."

40       **SECTION 3.(e)** This section becomes effective December 1, 2019, and applies to  
41 offenses committed on or after that date.

#### 42 **PART IV. SEVERABILITY CLAUSE**

43       **SECTION 4.** If any provision of this act or its application is held invalid, the  
44 invalidity does not affect other provisions or applications of this act that can be given effect  
45 without the invalid provisions or application, and to this end the provisions of this act are  
46 severable.  
47

#### 48 **PART V. SAVINGS CLAUSE**

1           **SECTION 5.** Prosecutions for offenses committed before the effective date of this  
2 act are not abated or affected by this act, and the statutes that would be applicable but for this act  
3 remain applicable to those prosecutions.  
4

5 **PART VI. EFFECTIVE DATE**

6           **SECTION 6.** Except as otherwise provided, this act becomes effective December 1,  
7 2019.