

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2023

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HOUSE BILL 685

Short Title: Letters of Character Ref and Study. (Public)

Sponsors: Representatives Harrison and Mills (Primary Sponsors).

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

Referred to: Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House

April 19, 2023

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT TO CLARIFY WHEN A COVERED PERSON MAY USE THE PUBLIC POSITION WITH RESPECT TO LETTERS OF CHARACTER REFERENCE FOR INDIVIDUALS SEEKING UNPAID WORK AND FOR INDIVIDUALS BEING NOMINATED FOR PUBLIC SERVICE AWARDS FROM THE STATE AND TO REQUIRE THE LEGISLATIVE ETHICS COMMITTEE AND THE STATE ETHICS COMMISSION TO CONDUCT A STUDY OF ETHICAL STANDARDS AND THEIR POWERS, DUTIES, AND FUNCTIONS.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1.(a) G.S. 138A-31(b)(7) is amended by adding two sub-subdivisions to read:

"e. An individual seeking an internship, externship, fellowship, or any other unpaid volunteer work program, at the request of that individual or in response to the inquiry of an organization offering the position as to the qualifications and character of that individual.

f. An individual being nominated for an award recognizing public service to the State or one of its political subdivisions."

SECTION 1.(b) This section is effective when it becomes law and applies to letters written on or after that date.

SECTION 2.(a) In addition to the requirements of G.S. 120-105, the Legislative Ethics Committee shall study the ethical standards for legislators and the powers, duties, and functions of the Committee. The purpose of the study is to examine if revisions are necessary to provide more effective advice to legislators and enhance the trust of the public. As part of the study, the Legislative Ethics Committee is directed to study all of the following:

- (1) Whether revisions to the Legislative Ethics Act, Article 14 of Chapter 120 of the General Statutes, are needed.
- (2) Whether revisions to the State Government Ethics Act, Chapter 138A of the General Statutes, are needed.
- (3) Whether revisions to the lobbying laws in Chapter 120C of the General Statutes are needed.

SECTION 2.(b) The Committee shall report its findings and recommendations to the 2024 Regular Session of the 2023 General Assembly no later than January 15, 2024.

SECTION 3.(a) In addition to the requirements of G.S. 138A-10(a)(9) and (a)(11), the State Ethics Commission shall study the ethical standards for legislators and public servants and the powers, duties, and functions of the Commission. The purpose of the study is to examine



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1 if revisions are necessary to provide more effective advice to legislators and public servants and
2 enhance the trust of the public. As part of the study, the Commission is directed to study whether
3 revisions to the State Government Ethics Act, Chapter 138A of the General Statutes, are needed.

4 **SECTION 3.(b)** The Commission shall report its findings and recommendations to
5 the 2024 Regular Session of the 2023 General Assembly no later than January 15, 2024.

6 **SECTION 4.** Except as otherwise provided, this act is effective when it becomes
7 law.