

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2023**

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**SENATE BILL 500**

Short Title: Community Safety Act. (Public)

Sponsors: Senators Batch, Garrett, and Mohammed (Primary Sponsors).

Referred to: Rules and Operations of the Senate

April 4, 2023

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
2 AN ACT TO STRENGTHEN POLICIES AND STANDARDS SURROUNDING LAW  
3 ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS AND TO APPROPRIATE FUNDS.  
4 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

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6 **PART I. DIRECT THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE TO ASSIST LAW  
7 ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES IN APPLYING FOR GRANT FUNDS AND FUND  
8 POSITIONS TO MEET THE REQUIREMENTS OF THIS PART**

9 **SECTION 1.1.** The Department of Justice shall provide assistance to law  
10 enforcement agencies seeking grant funds, including, but not limited to, the following:

- 11 (1) Alerting law enforcement agencies to available grant funds.  
12 (2) Assisting law enforcement agencies with drafting and submitting grant  
13 proposals and applications.

14 **SECTION 1.2.** There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of  
15 Justice two hundred thousand dollars (\$200,000) in recurring funds for the 2023-2024 fiscal year  
16 to be used to hire two full-time grant writers to assist law enforcement agencies pursuant to the  
17 requirements of Section 1.1 of this Part.

18 **SECTION 1.3.** This Part becomes effective July 1, 2023.

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20 **PART II. SUPPORT COMMUNITY POLICING PROGRAMS**

21 **SECTION 2.1.** There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of  
22 Justice the sum of two hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$250,000) in recurring funds for the  
23 2023-2024 fiscal year to be used to award grants to law enforcement agencies for initiatives  
24 supporting community policing.

25 **SECTION 2.2.** This Part becomes effective July 1, 2023.

26  
27 **PART III. CREATE INCENTIVES FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS AND  
28 AGENCIES**

29 **SECTION 3.1.** There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of  
30 Justice the sum of five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000) in recurring funds for the 2023-2024  
31 fiscal year to be used to provide the following types of grants:

- 32 (1) Grants provided to law enforcement agencies to be awarded to law  
33 enforcement officers exhibiting exemplary service, as established by the  
34 Department of Justice.  
35 (2) Grants awarded to law enforcement agencies for meeting racial or gender  
36 diversity benchmarks, as established by the Department of Justice.



1           **SECTION 3.2.** No grant awarded pursuant to this Part shall exceed ten thousand  
2 dollars (\$10,000).

3           **SECTION 3.3.** This Part becomes effective July 1, 2023.

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5 **PART IV. REVISE POLICE USE OF FORCE POLICIES**

6           **SECTION 4.1.** G.S. 15A-401(d) reads as rewritten:

7           "(d) Use of Force in Arrest. –

8           ...

9           (2) A law-enforcement officer is justified in using deadly physical force upon  
10 another person for a purpose specified in subdivision (1) of this subsection  
11 only when it is or appears to be reasonably necessary thereby:

12           ...

13           Strangleholds, lateral vascular neck restraints, carotid restraints, or any other  
14 tactics that restrict oxygen or blood flow to the head or neck shall be  
15 considered the use of deadly force under this subdivision.

16           Nothing in this subdivision constitutes justification for willful, malicious or  
17 criminally negligent conduct by any person which injures or endangers any  
18 person or property, nor shall it be construed to excuse or justify the use of  
19 unreasonable or excessive force.

20           (3) Under all circumstances in which a law-enforcement officer uses force of any  
21 kind, a law-enforcement officer shall use the minimum amount of force  
22 reasonably necessary to accomplish the law-enforcement action and shall  
23 attempt to utilize de-escalation tactics when possible."

24           **SECTION 4.2.** The Attorney General, in consultation with the North Carolina  
25 Sheriffs' Association and the North Carolina Association of Chiefs of Police, shall develop  
26 uniform use of force policies that may be adopted by all law enforcement agencies in the State.  
27 These policies shall be submitted to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Justice and  
28 Public Safety no later than December 1, 2024, shall be published on the Department of Justice  
29 website, and shall be distributed in digital format by the Attorney General to all law enforcement  
30 agencies in the State.

31           **SECTION 4.3.** Section 4.1 of this Part becomes effective October 1, 2024, and  
32 applies to actions taken on or after that date. The remainder of this Part is effective when it  
33 becomes law.

34  
35 **PART V. ESTABLISH MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR THE HIRING AND TRAINING**  
36 **OF LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS**

37           **SECTION 5.1.** G.S. 17C-6(a) reads as rewritten:

38           "(a) In addition to powers conferred upon the Commission elsewhere in this Article, the  
39 Commission shall have the following powers, which shall be enforceable through its rules and  
40 regulations, certification procedures, or the provisions of G.S. 17C-10:

41           ...

42           (2a) Establish the minimum age requirement that shall be met in order to qualify  
43 for entry level employment as a criminal justice officer in temporary or  
44 probationary status or in a permanent position, which shall not be less than 21  
45 years of age.

46           ...."

47           **SECTION 5.2.** G.S. 17C-13(b) reads as rewritten:

48           "(b) Notwithstanding G.S. 15A-145.4 or G.S. 15A-145.5, the Commission may gain  
49 access to a person's misdemeanor and felony conviction records, including those maintained by  
50 the Administrative Office of the Courts in its confidential files containing the names of persons  
51 granted expunctions. The Commission may deny, suspend, or revoke a person's certification

1 based solely on that person's felony ~~conviction, conviction~~ or the conviction of four or more  
2 misdemeanors, whether or not ~~that conviction was~~ the convictions were expunged."

3 **SECTION 5.3.** G.S. 17E-4(a) reads as rewritten:

4 "(a) The Commission shall have the following powers, duties, and responsibilities, which  
5 are enforceable through its rules and regulations, certification procedures, or the provisions of  
6 G.S. 17E-8 and G.S. 17E-9:

7 ...

8 (2a) Establish the minimum age requirement that shall be met in order to qualify  
9 for entry level employment as an officer in temporary or probationary status  
10 or in a permanent position, which shall not be less than 21 years of age.

11 ...

12 The Commission may certify, and no additional certification shall be required from it, programs,  
13 courses and teachers certified by the North Carolina Criminal Justice Education and Training  
14 Standards Commission. Where the Commission determines that a program, course, instructor or  
15 teacher is required for an area which is unique to the office of sheriff, the Commission may certify  
16 such program, course, instructor, or teacher under such standards and procedures as it may  
17 establish."

18 **SECTION 5.4.** G.S. 17E-12(b) reads as rewritten:

19 "(b) Notwithstanding G.S. 15A-145.4 or G.S. 15A-145.5, the Commission may gain  
20 access to a person's misdemeanor and felony conviction records, including those maintained by  
21 the Administrative Office of the Courts in its confidential files containing the names of persons  
22 granted expunctions. The Commission may deny, suspend, or revoke a person's certification  
23 based solely on that person's felony ~~conviction, conviction~~ or the conviction of four or more  
24 misdemeanors, whether or not ~~that conviction was~~ the convictions were expunged."

25 **SECTION 5.5.** Sections 5.1 and 5.3 of this Part become effective January 1, 2024,  
26 and apply to officers hired or employed on or after that date. Sections 5.2 and 5.4 of this Part  
27 become effective January 1, 2024, and apply to (i) officers hired on or after that date and (ii)  
28 officers employed on or after that date that are convicted of a felony or misdemeanor on or after  
29 that date. The remainder of this Part is effective when it becomes law.

## 30 31 **PART VI. FUND ADDITIONAL DETECTIVES OR INVESTIGATIVE OFFICERS TO** 32 **INVESTIGATE THE SEVERE CRIMES**

33 **SECTION 6.1.** There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of  
34 Justice the sum of one million dollars (\$1,000,000) in recurring funds for the 2023-2024 fiscal  
35 year to be used to provide grants to law enforcement agencies to temporarily provide partial or  
36 total funding for detective or other investigative law enforcement positions in order to aid in the  
37 investigation of person crimes that would constitute a charge of a Class D felony or higher.

38 **SECTION 6.2.** This Part becomes effective July 1, 2023.

## 39 40 **PART VII. SEVERABILITY CLAUSE AND EFFECTIVE DATE**

41 **SECTION 7.1.** If any Part, section, or provision of this act is declared  
42 unconstitutional or invalid by the courts, it does not affect the validity of this act as a whole or  
43 any portion other than the portion declared to be unconstitutional or invalid.

44 **SECTION 7.2.** Except as otherwise provided, this act is effective when it becomes  
45 law.