

North Carolina Department of Public Safety
Legislative Update
for
Week of May 15, 2017

Legislative Summary

The Senate this week resumed its regular committee business following last week's hectic schedule to finalize and adopt a Senate budget. The House, on the other hand, held fewer committee meetings this week, focusing instead on internal meetings as the House turned its attention to crafting its own version of the budget. While the House sub-committees worked to define their respective budget priorities, Secretary Erik Hooks, along with the department's leadership and legislative teams, spent much of the week responding to requests from budget writers for information regarding how each agency within the department would be impacted by the Senate budget proposals. The House is expected to release its budget within the next two weeks.

Bills of Interest

Juvenile Justice Reinvestment Act ([H280](#))

Description:

North Carolina is currently the only state in the country that processes 16- and 17-year-old offenders through the adult criminal justice system. This bill would raise the age of juvenile jurisdiction to include 16- and 17-year-olds, except in the case of certain violent felonies.

Introduced by:

Representatives Chuck McGrady (R-Henderson), David Lewis (R-Harnett), Duane Hall (D-Wake) and Susan Martin (R-Wilson)

Amendments Proposed:

No amendments proposed at this time.

Actions Taken:

This bill passed third reading in the House on May 17 with a 104-8 vote. Members from both sides of the aisle spoke in favor of the bill and mentioned cost savings, brain development in juveniles, and morality, among others, as the basis for their support. Those in opposition to the bill cited unknown costs, the severity of some of the offenses committed by juvenile offenders, victims' rights and the general need to be 'tough' on crime as reasons to not support the legislation. H280 is now in the Senate for consideration and has been referred to the Senate Rules Committee.

Workers' Compensation/Prison Inmates ([H205](#))

Description:

This bill would require that the average weekly wage for inmates employed under the Prison Industry Enhancement Program (PIE) be calculated in accordance with North Carolina's Workers' Compensation Act.

Introduced by:

Representatives McNeill (R-Randolph) and Rep. Zachary (R-Yadkin)

Amendments Proposed:

A proposed committee substitute (PCS) to the bill as originally filed was offered shortly before the bill was taken up in committee. The PCS adds language unrelated to DPS which mandates that newsprint workers be treated as employees for purposes of labor regulations, employment security, workers' compensation and taxation, if certain conditions are met.

Actions Taken:

H205 was heard in the Senate Commerce and Insurance Committee on Thursday, May 18. Since the PCS was met with some controversy and little public notice was given on the new language, Thursday's hearing on the bill was for discussion only and no vote was taken. The Committee is expected to vote on the bill next week.