

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2025

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HOUSE BILL 844

Short Title: Finding Grace Family Bill. (Public)

Sponsors: Representatives Echevarria, Wheatley, and Riddell (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 10, 2025

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT TO CHANGE HEALTH CARE AND ADOPTION LAWS.
The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

PART I. ADOPTION LAW CHANGES

SECTION 1.1. G.S. 7B-100 reads as rewritten:

"Chapter 7B.

"Juvenile Code.

"SUBCHAPTER I. ABUSE, NEGLECT, DEPENDENCY.

"Article 1.

"Purposes; Definitions.

"§ 7B-100. Purpose.

This Subchapter shall be interpreted and construed so as to implement the following purposes and policies:

- (1) To provide procedures for the hearing of juvenile cases that assure fairness and equity and that protect the constitutional rights of juveniles and parents;
- (2) To develop a disposition in each juvenile case that reflects consideration of the facts, the needs and limitations of the juvenile, and the strengths and weaknesses of the family.
- (3) To provide for services for the protection of juveniles by means that respect both the right to family autonomy and the juveniles' needs for safety, continuity, and permanence; and
- (4) To provide standards for the removal, when necessary, of juveniles from their homes and for the return of juveniles to their homes consistent with preventing the unnecessary or inappropriate separation of juveniles from their parents.
- (5) To provide standards, consistent with the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997, P.L. 105-89, for ensuring that the best interests of the juvenile are of paramount consideration by the court and that when it is not in the juvenile's best interest to be returned home, the juvenile will be placed in a safe, permanent home within ~~a reasonable amount of time.~~ two years."

SECTION 1.2. G.S. 7B-1111 reads as rewritten:

"§ 7B-1111. Grounds for terminating parental rights.

(a) The court may terminate the parental rights upon a finding of one or more of the following:

...



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(7) The parent has willfully abandoned the juvenile for at least six ~~consecutive~~ cumulative months immediately preceding the filing of the petition or motion, or the parent has voluntarily abandoned an infant as a safely surrendered infant pursuant to Article 5A of this Subchapter for at least 60 consecutive days immediately preceding the filing of the petition or motion.

...."

SECTION 1.3. G.S. 48-1-110 reads as rewritten:

"§ 48-1-110. Support-Adoption information; support for adoptive families at risk of dissolution.

(a) The Department of Health and Human Services shall provide information on its website addressing all of the following:

(1) Benefits of adoption and the adoption process in North Carolina.

(2) Adoption agencies in North Carolina and related services.

(3) Causes of disruption of adoptive placement or dissolution of adoption and resources available to avoid disruption or dissolution.

(4) Services to assist women during and after pregnancy and childbirth.

(5) Abortion alternatives and related services.

(b) The Department of Health and Human Services shall develop a program to provide needed supports to families at risk of adoption dissolutions in order to keep families together."

SECTION 1.4. G.S. 48-2-206 reads as rewritten:

"§ 48-2-206. Prebirth determination of right to consent.

(a) At any time after ~~approximately three months from the date of conception~~ as reasonably determined by a physician, the biological mother, agency, or adoptive parents chosen by the biological mother may file a special proceeding with the clerk requesting the court to determine whether consent of the biological father is required. The biological father shall be served with notice of the intent of the biological mother to place the child for adoption, allowing the biological father 30 days after service to assert a claim that his consent is required.

...."

SECTION 1.5. G.S. 48-2-607 reads as rewritten:

"§ 48-2-607. Appeals.

(a) Except as provided in subsections (b) and (c) of this section, after the final order of adoption is entered, no party to an adoption proceeding nor anyone claiming under such a party may question the validity of the adoption because of any defect or irregularity, jurisdictional or otherwise, in the proceeding, but shall be fully bound by the order. No adoption may be attacked either directly or collaterally because of any procedural or other defect by anyone who was not a party to the adoption. The failure on the part of the court or an agency to perform duties or acts within the time required by the provisions of this Chapter shall not affect the validity of any adoption proceeding.

(b) A party to an adoption proceeding may appeal a final decree of adoption entered by a clerk of superior court to district court by giving notice of appeal as provided in G.S. 1-301.2. A party to an adoption proceeding may appeal a judgment or order entered by a judge of district court by giving notice of appeal as provided in G.S. 1-279.1.

(c) A parent or guardian whose consent or relinquishment was obtained by fraud or duress may, within six months of the time the fraud or duress is or ought reasonably to have been discovered, move to have the decree of adoption set aside and the consent declared void. A parent or guardian whose consent was necessary under this Chapter but was not obtained may, within six months ~~of the time the omission is or ought reasonably to have been discovered~~, move to have the decree of adoption set aside. Any action for damages against an adoptee or the adoptive parents for fraud or duress in obtaining a consent must be brought within six months of the time the fraud or duress is or ought reasonably to have been discovered."

SECTION 1.6. G.S. 115C-81.30 reads as rewritten:

"§ 115C-81.30. Reproductive health and safety education provided by local school administrative units.

(a) Each local school administrative unit shall provide a reproductive health and safety education program commencing in the seventh grade. Materials used in this instruction shall be age-appropriate for use with students. Law enforcement agencies, criminal justice agencies, and nongovernmental organizations with experience in sex-trafficking prevention and awareness may provide materials and information. Information conveyed during the instruction shall be objective and based upon scientific research that is peer reviewed and accepted by professionals and credentialed experts in any of the following fields: sexual health education, adolescent psychology, behavioral counseling, medicine, human anatomy, biology, ethics, or health education. Reproductive health and safety instruction provided by the local school administrative units shall do the following:

...

(14) Provide information about adoption, the benefits of adoption, and where additional information can be found about adoption.

...."

PART II. ABORTION LAW REVISIONS

SECTION 2.1. G.S. 90-21.81A reads as rewritten:

"§ 90-21.81A. Abortion.

(a) Abortion. – It shall be unlawful after the ~~twelfth-sixth~~ week of a woman's pregnancy to procure or cause a miscarriage or abortion in the State of North Carolina.

(b) Partial-Birth Abortion Prohibited. – It shall be unlawful for a qualified physician, any health care provider, or any person to perform a partial-birth abortion at any time."

SECTION 2.2. G.S. 90-21.81B reads as rewritten:

"§ 90-21.81B. When abortion is lawful.

Notwithstanding any of the provisions of G.S. 14-44 and G.S. 14-45, and subject to the provisions of this Article, it shall not be unlawful to procure or cause a miscarriage or an abortion in the State of North Carolina in the following circumstances:

(1) When a qualified physician determines there exists a medical emergency.

(2) During the first ~~12-six~~ weeks of a woman's pregnancy, when the procedure is performed by a qualified physician licensed to practice medicine in this State in a hospital, ambulatory surgical center, or clinic certified by the Department of Health and Human Services to be a suitable facility for the performance of abortions, in accordance with G.S. 90-21.82A or during the first ~~12-six~~ weeks of a woman's pregnancy when a medical abortion is procured.

(3) After the twelfth week and through the twentieth week of a woman's pregnancy, when the procedure is performed by a qualified physician in a suitable facility in accordance with G.S. 90-21.82A when the woman's pregnancy is a result of rape or incest.

(4) During the first 24 weeks of a woman's pregnancy, if a qualified physician determines there exists a life-limiting anomaly in accordance with this Article."

SECTION 2.3. G.S. 90-21.81C reads as rewritten:

"§ 90-21.81C. Abortion reporting, objection, and inspection requirements.

(a) Procedure Information. – A qualified physician who advises, procures, or causes a miscarriage or abortion after the ~~twelfth-sixth~~ week of a woman's pregnancy shall record all of the following: (i) the method used by the qualified physician to determine the probable gestational age of the unborn child at the time the procedure is to be performed, (ii) the results of the methodology, including the measurements of the unborn child, and (iii) an ultrasound image of the unborn child that depicts the measurements. The qualified physician shall provide this

information, including the ultrasound image, to the Department of Health and Human Services pursuant to subsection (c) of this section.

(b) Recording of Findings. – A qualified physician who procures or causes a miscarriage or abortion after the ~~twelfth-sixth~~ week of a woman's pregnancy shall record the findings and analysis on which the qualified physician based the determination that there existed a medical emergency, life-limiting anomaly, rape, or incest and shall provide that information to the Department of Health and Human Services pursuant to subsection (c) of this section. Materials generated by the physician or provided by the physician to the Department of Health and Human Services pursuant to this section shall not be public records under G.S. 132-1. The information provided under this subsection shall be for statistical purposes only, and the confidentiality of the patient and the physician shall be protected. It is the duty of the qualified physician to submit information to the Department of Health and Human Services that omits identifying information of the patient and complies with Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA).

...."

SECTION 2.4. G.S. 90-21.82A reads as rewritten:

"§ 90-21.82A. Suitable facilities for the performance of surgical abortions.

...

(b) During the first ~~12-six~~ weeks of pregnancy, a physician licensed to practice medicine under this Chapter may perform a surgical abortion in a hospital, an ambulatory surgical facility, or an abortion clinic; provided, however, that (i) the clinic has been licensed by the Department of Health and Human Services to be a suitable facility for the performance of abortions and (ii) the licensed physician performs the abortion in accordance with this Article and Article 1K of this Chapter.

(c) After the ~~twelfth-sixth~~ week of pregnancy, a physician licensed to practice medicine under this Chapter may not perform a surgical abortion or dispense abortion-inducing drugs as permitted under North Carolina law in any facility other than a hospital."

PART III. EFFECTIVE DATE

SECTION 3. Except as otherwise provided, this act is effective when it becomes law, with:

- (1) Sections 1.1, 1.3, 1.4, and 1.5 of this act becoming effective October 1, 2025.
- (2) Section 1.2 of this act becoming effective October 1, 2025, and applying to petitions on or after that date.
- (3) Section 1.6 of this act becoming effective at the beginning of the 2026-2027 school year.