

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA

EXTRA SESSION 1994

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SENATE BILL 2\*  
Second Edition Engrossed 2/11/94  
Third Edition Engrossed 2/18/94

Short Title: First Degree Murder/No Parole.

(Public)

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Sponsors: Senators Odom; Plexico, Plyler, Conder, Allran, Cochran, Forrester, Harris, Cooper, Speed, Lee, Gunter, Albertson, Warren, Daniel, Sands, Seymour, Ward, Carpenter, Johnson, and Kaplan.

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Referred to: Appropriations.

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February 9, 1994

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
2 AN ACT TO PROVIDE FOR LIFE WITHOUT PAROLE FOR FIRST DEGREE  
3 MURDER.

4 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

5 Section 1. G.S. 14-1.1(a) reads as rewritten:

6 "(a) For felonies that occur on or after the effective date of Article 81A of Chapter  
7 15A [July 1, 1981] of the General Statutes, the following punishments shall be  
8 applicable:

- 9 (1) A Class A felony shall be punishable by death or life imprisonment  
10 without parole as provided by Article 100 of Chapter 15A of the  
11 General Statutes;
- 12 (2) A Class B felony shall be punishable by life imprisonment;
- 13 (3) A Class C felony shall be punishable by imprisonment up to 50 years,  
14 or by life imprisonment, or a fine, or both imprisonment and fine;
- 15 (4) A Class D felony shall be punishable by imprisonment up to 40 years,  
16 or a fine or both;
- 17 (5) A Class E felony shall be punishable by imprisonment up to 30 years,  
18 or a fine or both;
- 19 (6) A Class F felony shall be punishable by imprisonment up to 20 years,  
20 or a fine or both;

- 1 (7) A Class G felony shall be punishable by imprisonment up to 15 years,  
2 or a fine or both;
- 3 (8) A Class H felony shall be punishable by imprisonment up to 10 years,  
4 or a fine or both;
- 5 (9) A Class I felony shall be punishable by imprisonment up to five years,  
6 or a fine or both;
- 7 (10) A Class J felony shall be punishable by imprisonment up to three  
8 years, or a fine or both."

9 Sec. 2. G.S. 14-17 reads as rewritten:

10 **"§ 14-17. Murder in the first and second degree defined; punishment.**

11 A murder which shall be perpetrated by means of poison, lying in wait,  
12 imprisonment, starving, torture, or by any other kind of willful, deliberate, and  
13 premeditated killing, or which shall be committed in the perpetration or attempted  
14 perpetration of any arson, rape or a sex offense, robbery, kidnapping, burglary, or other  
15 felony committed or attempted with the use of a deadly weapon shall be deemed to be  
16 murder in the first degree, and any person who commits such murder shall be punished  
17 with death or imprisonment in the State's prison for life without parole as the court shall  
18 determine pursuant to G.S. 15A-2000, except that any such person who was under 17  
19 years of age at the time of the murder shall be punished with imprisonment in the State's  
20 prison for ~~life~~ life without parole. Provided, however, any person under the age of 17  
21 who commits murder in the first degree while serving a prison sentence imposed for a  
22 prior murder or while on escape from a prison sentence imposed for a prior murder shall  
23 be punished with death or imprisonment in the State's prison for life without parole as  
24 the court shall determine pursuant to G.S. 15A-2000. All other kinds of murder,  
25 including that which shall be proximately caused by the unlawful distribution of opium  
26 or any synthetic or natural salt, compound, derivative, or preparation of opium, or  
27 cocaine or other substance described in G.S. 90-90(a)4, when the ingestion of such  
28 substance causes the death of the user, shall be deemed murder in the second degree,  
29 and any person who commits such murder shall be punished as a Class C felon."

30 Sec. 3. G.S. 15A-1370.1 reads as rewritten:

31 **"§ 15A-1370.1. Applicability of Article 85.**

32 This Article is applicable to all sentenced prisoners, including ~~Class A and Class B~~  
33 ~~felons~~, and Class C felons who receive a sentence of life imprisonment, who are not  
34 subject to Article 85A of this Chapter.

35 This Article does not apply to prisoners sentenced to life imprisonment without  
36 parole."

37 Sec. 4. G.S. 15A-1370.1, as amended by Section 21 of Chapter 538 of the  
38 1993 Session Laws, reads as rewritten:

39 **"§ 15A-1370.1. Applicability of Article 85.**

40 This Article is applicable to all prisoners serving sentences of imprisonment for  
41 convictions of impaired driving under G.S. 20-138.1 and prisoners serving sentences of  
42 ~~life imprisonment~~ imprisonment, except for prisoners serving life imprisonment without  
43 parole."

44 Sec. 5. G.S. 15a-1371(a1) reads as rewritten:

1       "(a1) A prisoner serving a term of life imprisonment other than for first degree  
2 murder and with no minimum term is eligible for parole after serving 20 years. A  
3 prisoner serving a term of life imprisonment for first degree murder shall be imprisoned  
4 for the remainder of his natural life. This subsection applies to offenses committed on  
5 and after July 1, 1981."

6           Sec. 6. G.S. 15A-1371(a1), as amended by Section 22 of Chapter 538 of the  
7 1993 Session Laws, reads as rewritten:

8       "(a1) A prisoner serving a term of life imprisonment other than for first degree  
9 murder is eligible for parole after serving 25 years. A prisoner serving a term of life  
10 imprisonment for first degree murder shall be imprisoned for the remainder of his  
11 natural life. This subsection applies to offenses committed on and after January 1,  
12 1995."

13           Sec. 7. G.S. 15A-1372(a), as amended by Section 23 of Chapter 538 of the  
14 1993 Session Laws, reads as rewritten:

15       "(a) Term of Parole. – The term of parole for any person released from  
16 imprisonment may be no greater than:

- 17           (1) One year for a conviction for impaired driving under G.S. 20-138.1; or
- 18           (2) Three years for a sentence of life ~~imprisonment.~~ imprisonment other  
19 than for first degree murder."

20           Sec. 8. G.S. 15A-2002 reads as rewritten:

21 **"§ 15A-2002. Capital offenses; jury verdict and sentence.**

22       If the recommendation of the jury is that the defendant be sentenced to death, the  
23 judge shall impose a sentence of death in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 15,  
24 Article 19 of the General Statutes. If the recommendation of the jury is that the  
25 defendant be imprisoned for life in the State's prison, the judge shall impose a sentence  
26 of imprisonment for life in the State's ~~prison.~~ prison, without parole."

27           Sec. 9. G.S. 15A-2002, as amended by Section 29 of Chapter 538 of the 1993  
28 Session Laws, reads as rewritten:

29 **"§ 15A-2002. Capital offenses; jury verdict and sentence.**

30       If the recommendation of the jury is that the defendant be sentenced to death, the  
31 judge shall impose a sentence of death in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 15,  
32 Article 19 of the General Statutes. If the recommendation of the jury is that the  
33 defendant be imprisoned for life in the State's prison, the judge shall impose a sentence  
34 of imprisonment for life in the State's ~~prison.~~ prison, without parole.

35       The judge shall instruct the jury, in words substantially equivalent to those of this  
36 section, that a sentence of life imprisonment means a sentence of life ~~with eligibility for~~  
37 ~~parole consideration after 25 years.~~ without parole."

38           Sec. 10. G.S. 143B-266(a), as amended by Section 42 of Chapter 538 of the  
39 1993 Session Laws, reads as rewritten:

40       "(a) There is hereby created a Post-Release Supervision and Parole Commission  
41 of the Department of Correction with the authority to grant paroles, including both  
42 regular and temporary paroles, to persons held by virtue of any final order or judgment  
43 of any court of this State as provided in Chapter 148 of the General Statutes and laws of  
44 the State of North Carolina, except that for persons sentenced under Article 81B of

1 Chapter 15A of the General Statutes, only those sentenced to life imprisonment are  
2 eligible for parole. This section shall not apply to persons sentenced to life  
3 imprisonment without parole for a conviction of first degree murder. The Commission  
4 shall also have authority to revoke, terminate, and suspend paroles of such persons  
5 (including persons placed on parole on or before the effective date of the Executive  
6 Organization Act of 1973) and to assist the Governor in exercising his authority in  
7 granting reprieves, commutations, and pardons, and shall perform such other services as  
8 may be required by the Governor in exercising his powers of executive clemency. The  
9 Commission shall also have authority to revoke and terminate persons on post-release  
10 supervision, as provided in Article 84A of Chapter 15A of the General Statutes."

11           Sec. 11. Sections 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, and 10 of this act are effective upon ratification  
12 and apply only to offenses occurring on or after the effective date. Sections 3, 5, and 8  
13 expire January 1, 1995, but prosecution for, or sentences based on, offenses occurring  
14 before that date are not abated or affected by the expiration of those sections. Sections  
15 4, 6, 7, and 9 of this act become effective January 1, 1995, and apply to offenses  
16 occurring on or after that effective date. Prosecution for, or sentences based on,  
17 offenses occurring before the effective date of this act are not abated or affected by the  
18 repeal, expiration, or amendment in this act of any statute, and the statutes that would be  
19 applicable to those prosecutions or sentences but for the provisions of this act remain  
20 applicable to those prosecutions or sentences.