

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2007

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HOUSE BILL 223

Short Title: Sex Offender/Prerelease Treatment/Funds. (Public)

Sponsors: Representatives Goforth, Ray, Glazier (Primary Sponsors); Alexander, Carney, Coates, Cole, England, Frye, Harrison, Howard, Luebke, McLawhorn, Pierce, Rapp, Wainwright, Weiss, and Wray.

Referred to: Judiciary II, if favorable, Appropriations.

February 15, 2007

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

1 AN ACT TO DIRECT THE DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION TO EXPAND THE
2 SEX OFFENDER ACCOUNTABILITY AND RESPONSIBILITY (S.O.A.R.)
3 PROGRAM, TO APPROPRIATE FUNDS FOR THE S.O.A.R. PILOT
4 PROGRAMS, AND TO EXPAND THE SCOPE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF
5 CORRECTION STUDY REGARDING MANDATORY MENTAL HEALTH
6 TREATMENT PROGRAMS FOR INCARCERATED SEX OFFENDERS.
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8 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

9 **SECTION 1.(a)** The Department of Correction shall expand the Sex
10 Offender Accountability and Responsibility (S.O.A.R.) program by establishing two
11 S.O.A.R. pilot programs at two other prisons to be determined by the Department of
12 Correction. The Department of Correction shall report to the House and Senate
13 Appropriations Subcommittees on Justice and Public Safety regarding the location of
14 the two pilot programs before implementing the pilot programs. The S.O.A.R. Program,
15 located at Harnett Correctional Center, is an intensive 20-week treatment program for
16 sex offenders in prison and is the only treatment program for sex offenders in prison.
17 The S.O.A.R. Program is voluntary and its treatment philosophy is based on an offender
18 admitting guilt and wanting treatment.

19 **SECTION 1.(b)** In addition to the two pilot programs established pursuant
20 to subsection (a) of this section, the Department of Correction shall also develop a
21 proposal to implement a program similar to S.O.A.R. for sex offenders who are less
22 than 21 years old. The Department of Correction shall report to the House and Senate
23 Appropriations Subcommittees on Justice and Public Safety regarding the proposal by
24 April 15, 2007, and shall include in the report all of the following: treatment methods
25 recommended for use in the proposed program, cost estimate of the proposed program,
26 and possible site locations for the proposed program.

1 **SECTION 1.(c)** The Department of Correction shall track offenders who
2 complete the S.O.A.R. Program and the two S.O.A.R. pilot programs to determine the
3 recidivism rate of those who complete the program and to determine whether the
4 program should be expanded statewide.

5 **SECTION 2.** Section 18 of S.L. 2006-247 directs the Department of
6 Correction to study and develop a plan for mental health treatment programs for
7 incarcerated sex offenders designed to reduce the likelihood of recidivism. In
8 conducting that study, the Department shall also do all of the following:

9 (1) Identify the highest priority sex offenders who need treatment.

10 (2) Address whether mental health treatment programs should be
11 mandatory for sex offenders.

12 (3) Determine the treatment approach and cost of implementing a
13 mandatory treatment program.

14 **SECTION 3.** There is appropriated from the General Fund to the
15 Department of Correction the sum of seven hundred thirty-nine thousand eight hundred
16 seventy-two dollars (\$739,872) for the 2007-2008 fiscal year to cover the start-up costs
17 for the two S.O.A.R. pilot programs established in Section 1(a) of this act and the sum
18 of six hundred fifty-seven thousand two hundred sixteen dollars (\$657,216) for the
19 2008-2009 fiscal year to maintain the two S.O.A.R. pilot programs.

20 **SECTION 4.** This act becomes effective July 1, 2007.