

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2019**

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**HOUSE BILL 278  
Committee Substitute Favorable 5/6/19**

Short Title: Study Parity for First Responders.

(Public)

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Sponsors:

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Referred to:

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March 7, 2019

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT TO CREATE A JOINT STUDY COMMITTEE ON PARITY FOR FIRST RESPONDERS TO PROVIDE A SPECIAL SEPARATION ALLOWANCE FOR STATE AND LOCAL FIREFIGHTERS AND RESCUE SQUAD WORKERS.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

**SECTION 1.** There is established the Joint Study Committee on Parity for First Responders (Committee). The Committee shall consist of five members of the House of Representatives, appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, with one member designated as cochair, and five members of the Senate, appointed by the President Pro Tempore of the Senate, with one member designated as cochair. Members serve at the pleasure of the appointing officer.

**SECTION 2.** The Committee shall study a special separation allowance for State and local firefighters and rescue squad workers. At a minimum, the Committee shall do the following:

- (1) Work with the municipalities and the State Treasurer to determine the cost to each municipality for the cities and counties to provide a separation allowance to local firefighters and rescue squad workers with a plan implementation date of July 1, 2024.
- (2) Determine funds availability and current funding sources that could be used by the municipalities to provide a separation allowance.
- (3) Develop a funding mechanism to pay for a separation allowance on an actuarially sound basis.
- (4) Consider alternative benefit designs that would yield a benefit equivalent to a separation allowance, if applicable.
- (5) Explore other issues the Committee identifies that are related to the objectives of this study.

**SECTION 3.** The Committee shall meet upon the call of its cochairs. A quorum of the Committee is a majority of its members. No action may be taken except by a majority vote at a meeting at which a quorum is present. Members of the Committee shall receive subsistence and travel expenses as provided in G.S. 120-3.1.

**SECTION 4.** The Committee, while in the discharge of its official duties, may exercise all powers provided for under G.S. 120-19 and Article 5A of Chapter 120 of the General Statutes. The Committee may contract for professional, clerical, or consultant services, as provided by G.S. 120-32.02.

**SECTION 5.** The Legislative Services Officer shall assign professional and clerical staff to assist the Committee in its work. The Director of Legislative Assistants of the House of



1 Representatives and the Director of Legislative Assistants of the Senate shall assign clerical  
2 support staff to the Committee.

3       **SECTION 6.** The Committee may solicit input from relevant State departments,  
4 municipalities, State and municipal organizations, and other stakeholders while conducting the  
5 study.

6       **SECTION 7.** The Committee shall submit a final report on the results of its study,  
7 including proposed legislation, to the members of the Senate and the House of Representatives  
8 on or before the convening of the 2020 Regular Session of the 2019 General Assembly, by filing  
9 a copy of the report with the Office of the President Pro Tempore of the Senate, the Office of the  
10 Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the Legislative Library. The Committee shall  
11 terminate on May 15, 2020, or upon the filing of its final report, whichever occurs first.

12       **SECTION 8.** This act is effective when it becomes law.