A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT TO EXPAND THE MUTUAL AGREEMENT PAROLE PROGRAM TO ALLOW
FOR THE PAROLE OF INMATES SENTENCED TO LIFE IMPRISONMENT WITHOUT
PAROLE.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. Chapter 15A of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new
Article to read:

"Article 85C.
Parole Eligibility for Defendants Sentenced to Life Imprisonment Without Parole Under the
Mutual Agreement Parole Program.

§ 15A-1380.6. Applicability.
Notwithstanding any other provision of law, inmates serving life imprisonment without
parole may be eligible for release pursuant to this Article under the Department of Public Safety’s
Mutual Agreement Parole Program (MAPP) after serving a minimum of 20 years’ imprisonment
and complying with mandatory educational, vocational, and work requirements.

§ 15A-1380.7. Conditions of eligibility.
(a) Assessment. – Inmates serving a sentence of life imprisonment without parole shall
be assessed during the first five years of that sentence before becoming eligible for the Mutual
Agreement Parole Program (MAPP). During this assessment, the Division of Adult Correction
and Juvenile Justice shall evaluate the inmate’s behavioral, educational, and occupational needs.

After an inmate has completed the first five years of the inmate’s sentence, the inmate may
be offered a 15-year MAPP contract. The contract shall take into account the assessment
performed during the first five years of the inmate’s sentence.

(b) Mandatory Education. – After the completion of subsection (a) of this section, an
inmate participating in MAPP shall participate in mandatory education programs. The programs
shall include, at a minimum, the following:

(1) A General Education Diploma (GED) if the inmate does not already possess
a GED or high school diploma.

(2) A vocational trade program offered by the Division of Adult Correction and
Juvenile Justice.

The mandate to complete the education programs in subdivisions (1) and (2) of this
subsection may be satisfied by the inmate’s completion of an accredited associate or bachelor’s
degree program.
§ 15A-1380.8. Incidents of parole.

(a) Access to Parole. – Except as otherwise provided in this section, an inmate sentenced to life imprisonment without parole shall be subject to the conditions and procedures set forth in Article 85 of Chapter 15A of the General Statutes, including the notification requirement in G.S. 15A-1371(b)(3), after completion of subsections (a), (b), and (c) of G.S. 15A-1380.7.

(b) Term of Parole. – The term of parole for an inmate released pursuant to this Article from imprisonment from a sentence of life imprisonment without parole shall be five years and may be terminated earlier by the Post-Release Supervision and Parole Commission.

(c) Parole Violation. – An inmate sentenced to life imprisonment without parole who is paroled pursuant to this Article and who then violates a condition of parole and is returned to prison to serve the life sentence shall not be eligible for parole for five years from the date of the return to imprisonment.

(d) Life Imprisonment Without Parole. – Under this Article, if an inmate sentenced to life imprisonment without parole does not earn parole by complying with subsections (a), (b), and (c) of G.S. 15A-1380.7, the inmate shall remain imprisoned for the inmate's natural life.

§ 15A-1380.9. Retroactive application.

(a) Retroactive Parole Eligibility. – An inmate sentenced to life imprisonment without parole who has already served 20 or more years in prison by August 1, 2021, and who has completed some or most of subsections (a), (b), and (c) of G.S. 15A-1380.7 prior to that date shall be eligible for a modified Mutual Agreement Parole Program contract of one to three years.

(b) Post-Release Supervision. – Upon release pursuant to this section, inmates shall serve a period of five years of post-release supervision in compliance with G.S. 15A-1380.8."

SECTION 2. This act becomes effective August 1, 2021, and applies retroactively and prospectively to those persons serving a sentence of life imprisonment without parole.