

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2025

H

3

HOUSE BILL 258
Committee Substitute Favorable 3/19/25
Third Edition Engrossed 4/9/25

Short Title: Utility Worker Protection Act.

(Public)

Sponsors:

Referred to:

March 4, 2025

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT TO INCREASE THE PUNISHMENT FOR COMMITTING AN ASSAULT
AGAINST A UTILITY, COMMUNICATIONS, OR TRANSPORTATION WORKER.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. G.S. 14-33(c) reads as rewritten:

"(c) Unless the conduct is covered under some other provision of law providing greater punishment, any person who commits any assault, assault and battery, or affray is guilty of a Class A1 misdemeanor if, in the course of the assault, assault and battery, or affray, ~~he or she~~ he or she does any of the following:

(1) Inflicts serious injury upon another person or uses a deadly ~~weapon;~~ weapon.

(2) Assaults a female, he being a male person at least 18 years of ~~age;~~ age.

(2a) Assaults a pregnant ~~woman;~~ woman.

(3) Assaults a child under the age of 12 ~~years;~~ years.

(4) Assaults an officer or employee of the State or any political subdivision of the State, when the officer or employee is discharging or attempting to discharge his or her official ~~duties;~~ duties.

...

~~(7) Assaults a public transit operator, including a public employee or a private contractor employed as a public transit operator, when the operator is discharging or attempting to discharge his or her duties.~~

...

~~(9) Assaults a transportation network company (TNC) driver providing a transportation network company (TNC) service. For the purposes of this subdivision, the definitions for "TNC driver" and "TNC service" as defined in G.S. 20-280.1 shall apply.~~

(10) Assaults a utility or communications worker while the worker is (i) readily identifiable as a worker and (ii) discharging or attempting to discharge his or her duties. For purposes of this subdivision, the term "utility or communications worker" means an employee of, agent of, or under contract with an organization, entity, or company, whether State created or privately, municipally, county, or cooperatively owned, that provides electricity, natural gas, liquid petroleum, water, wastewater, telecommunications services, or internet access services. For purposes of this subdivision, the term "readily identifiable as a worker" shall be construed to include the worker wearing, at the time of the assault, a uniform, hat, or other outerwear bearing the logo of



* H 2 5 8 - V - 3 *

1 the utility or communications company for which the worker is an employee
2 of, agent of, or under contract with."

3 **SECTION 1.1.** Chapter 14 of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new
4 section to read:

5 **"§ 14-32.6. Felony assaults, batteries, and affrays; punishments.**

6 Unless the conduct is covered under some other provision of law providing greater
7 punishment, any person who commits any assault, assault and battery, or affray is guilty of a
8 Class I felony if, in the course of the assault, assault and battery, or affray, he or she:

9 (1) Assaults a public transit operator, including a public employee or a private
10 contractor employed as a public transit operator, when the operator is
11 discharging or attempting to discharge his or her duties.

12 (2) Assaults a transportation network company (TNC) driver providing a
13 transportation network company (TNC) service. For the purposes of this
14 subdivision, the definitions for "TNC driver" and "TNC service" as defined in
15 G.S. 20-280.1 shall apply."

16 **SECTION 2.** Prosecutions for offenses committed before the effective date of this
17 act are not abated or affected by this act, and the statutes that would be applicable but for this act
18 remain applicable to those prosecutions.

19 **SECTION 3.** This act becomes effective December 1, 2025, and applies to offenses
20 committed on or after that date.