

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2025

H

1

HOUSE BILL 844

Short Title: Finding Grace Family Bill. (Public)

Sponsors: Representatives Echevarria, Wheatley, and Riddell (Primary Sponsors).
For a complete list of sponsors, refer to the North Carolina General Assembly web site.

Referred to: Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House

April 10, 2025

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
2 AN ACT TO CHANGE HEALTH CARE AND ADOPTION LAWS.
3 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

4
5 **PART I. ADOPTION LAW CHANGES**

6 **SECTION 1.1.** G.S. 7B-100 reads as rewritten:

7 **"Chapter 7B.**

8 **"Juvenile Code.**

9 **"SUBCHAPTER I. ABUSE, NEGLECT, DEPENDENCY.**

10 **"Article 1.**

11 **"Purposes; Definitions.**

12 **"§ 7B-100. Purpose.**

13 This Subchapter shall be interpreted and construed so as to implement the following purposes
14 and policies:

- 15 (1) To provide procedures for the hearing of juvenile cases that assure fairness
16 and equity and that protect the constitutional rights of juveniles and parents;
17 (2) To develop a disposition in each juvenile case that reflects consideration of
18 the facts, the needs and limitations of the juvenile, and the strengths and
19 weaknesses of the family.
20 (3) To provide for services for the protection of juveniles by means that respect
21 both the right to family autonomy and the juveniles' needs for safety,
22 continuity, and permanence; and
23 (4) To provide standards for the removal, when necessary, of juveniles from their
24 homes and for the return of juveniles to their homes consistent with preventing
25 the unnecessary or inappropriate separation of juveniles from their parents.
26 (5) To provide standards, consistent with the Adoption and Safe Families Act of
27 1997, P.L. 105-89, for ensuring that the best interests of the juvenile are of
28 paramount consideration by the court and that when it is not in the juvenile's
29 best interest to be returned home, the juvenile will be placed in a safe,
30 permanent home within a reasonable amount of time. two years."

31 **SECTION 1.2.** G.S. 7B-1111 reads as rewritten:

32 **"§ 7B-1111. Grounds for terminating parental rights.**

33 (a) The court may terminate the parental rights upon a finding of one or more of the
34 following:

35 ...



* H 8 4 4 - V - 1 *

1 (7) The parent has willfully abandoned the juvenile for at least six ~~consecutive~~
2 cumulative months immediately preceding the filing of the petition or motion,
3 or the parent has voluntarily abandoned an infant as a safely surrendered infant
4 pursuant to Article 5A of this Subchapter for at least 60 consecutive days
5 immediately preceding the filing of the petition or motion.

6"

7 **SECTION 1.3.** G.S. 48-1-110 reads as rewritten:

8 "**§ 48-1-110. ~~Support~~ Adoption information; support for adoptive families at risk of**
9 **dissolution.**

10 (a) The Department of Health and Human Services shall provide information on its
11 website addressing all of the following:

12 (1) Benefits of adoption and the adoption process in North Carolina.

13 (2) Adoption agencies in North Carolina and related services.

14 (3) Causes of disruption of adoptive placement or dissolution of adoption and
15 resources available to avoid disruption or dissolution.

16 (4) Services to assist women during and after pregnancy and childbirth.

17 (5) Abortion alternatives and related services.

18 (b) The Department of Health and Human Services shall develop a program to provide
19 needed supports to families at risk of adoption dissolutions in order to keep families together."

20 **SECTION 1.4.** G.S. 48-2-206 reads as rewritten:

21 "**§ 48-2-206. Prebirth determination of right to consent.**

22 (a) At any time after ~~approximately three months from the date of~~ conception as
23 reasonably determined by a physician, the biological mother, agency, or adoptive parents chosen
24 by the biological mother may file a special proceeding with the clerk requesting the court to
25 determine whether consent of the biological father is required. The biological father shall be
26 served with notice of the intent of the biological mother to place the child for adoption, allowing
27 the biological father 30 days after service to assert a claim that his consent is required.

28"

29 **SECTION 1.5.** G.S. 48-2-607 reads as rewritten:

30 "**§ 48-2-607. Appeals.**

31 (a) Except as provided in subsections (b) and (c) of this section, after the final order of
32 adoption is entered, no party to an adoption proceeding nor anyone claiming under such a party
33 may question the validity of the adoption because of any defect or irregularity, jurisdictional or
34 otherwise, in the proceeding, but shall be fully bound by the order. No adoption may be attacked
35 either directly or collaterally because of any procedural or other defect by anyone who was not a
36 party to the adoption. The failure on the part of the court or an agency to perform duties or acts
37 within the time required by the provisions of this Chapter shall not affect the validity of any
38 adoption proceeding.

39 (b) A party to an adoption proceeding may appeal a final decree of adoption entered by a
40 clerk of superior court to district court by giving notice of appeal as provided in G.S. 1-301.2. A
41 party to an adoption proceeding may appeal a judgment or order entered by a judge of district
42 court by giving notice of appeal as provided in G.S. 1-279.1.

43 (c) A parent or guardian whose consent or relinquishment was obtained by fraud or
44 duress may, within six months of the time the fraud or duress is or ought reasonably to have been
45 discovered, move to have the decree of adoption set aside and the consent declared void. A parent
46 or guardian whose consent was necessary under this Chapter but was not obtained may, within
47 six months ~~of the time the omission is or ought reasonably to have been discovered,~~ move to
48 have the decree of adoption set aside. Any action for damages against an adoptee or the adoptive
49 parents for fraud or duress in obtaining a consent must be brought within six months of the time
50 the fraud or duress is or ought reasonably to have been discovered."

51 **SECTION 1.6.** G.S. 115C-81.30 reads as rewritten:

1 **"§ 115C-81.30. Reproductive health and safety education provided by local school**
 2 **administrative units.**

3 (a) Each local school administrative unit shall provide a reproductive health and safety
 4 education program commencing in the seventh grade. Materials used in this instruction shall be
 5 age-appropriate for use with students. Law enforcement agencies, criminal justice agencies, and
 6 nongovernmental organizations with experience in sex-trafficking prevention and awareness may
 7 provide materials and information. Information conveyed during the instruction shall be
 8 objective and based upon scientific research that is peer reviewed and accepted by professionals
 9 and credentialed experts in any of the following fields: sexual health education, adolescent
 10 psychology, behavioral counseling, medicine, human anatomy, biology, ethics, or health
 11 education. Reproductive health and safety instruction provided by the local school administrative
 12 units shall do the following:

13 ...

14 (14) Provide information about adoption, the benefits of adoption, and where
 15 additional information can be found about adoption.

16"

17
 18 **PART II. ABORTION LAW REVISIONS**

19 **SECTION 2.1.** G.S. 90-21.81A reads as rewritten:

20 **"§ 90-21.81A. Abortion.**

21 (a) Abortion. – It shall be unlawful after the ~~twelfth-sixth~~ week of a woman's pregnancy
 22 to procure or cause a miscarriage or abortion in the State of North Carolina.

23 (b) Partial-Birth Abortion Prohibited. – It shall be unlawful for a qualified physician, any
 24 health care provider, or any person to perform a partial-birth abortion at any time."

25 **SECTION 2.2.** G.S. 90-21.81B reads as rewritten:

26 **"§ 90-21.81B. When abortion is lawful.**

27 Notwithstanding any of the provisions of G.S. 14-44 and G.S. 14-45, and subject to the
 28 provisions of this Article, it shall not be unlawful to procure or cause a miscarriage or an abortion
 29 in the State of North Carolina in the following circumstances:

30 (1) When a qualified physician determines there exists a medical emergency.

31 (2) During the first ~~12-six~~ weeks of a woman's pregnancy, when the procedure is
 32 performed by a qualified physician licensed to practice medicine in this State
 33 in a hospital, ambulatory surgical center, or clinic certified by the Department
 34 of Health and Human Services to be a suitable facility for the performance of
 35 abortions, in accordance with G.S. 90-21.82A or during the first ~~12-six~~ weeks
 36 of a woman's pregnancy when a medical abortion is procured.

37 (3) After the twelfth week and through the twentieth week of a woman's
 38 pregnancy, when the procedure is performed by a qualified physician in a
 39 suitable facility in accordance with G.S. 90-21.82A when the woman's
 40 pregnancy is a result of rape or incest.

41 (4) During the first 24 weeks of a woman's pregnancy, if a qualified physician
 42 determines there exists a life-limiting anomaly in accordance with this
 43 Article."

44 **SECTION 2.3.** G.S. 90-21.81C reads as rewritten:

45 **"§ 90-21.81C. Abortion reporting, objection, and inspection requirements.**

46 (a) Procedure Information. – A qualified physician who advises, procures, or causes a
 47 miscarriage or abortion after the ~~twelfth-sixth~~ week of a woman's pregnancy shall record all of
 48 the following: (i) the method used by the qualified physician to determine the probable
 49 gestational age of the unborn child at the time the procedure is to be performed, (ii) the results of
 50 the methodology, including the measurements of the unborn child, and (iii) an ultrasound image
 51 of the unborn child that depicts the measurements. The qualified physician shall provide this

1 information, including the ultrasound image, to the Department of Health and Human Services
2 pursuant to subsection (c) of this section.

3 (b) Recording of Findings. – A qualified physician who procures or causes a miscarriage
4 or abortion after the ~~twelfth-sixth~~ week of a woman's pregnancy shall record the findings and
5 analysis on which the qualified physician based the determination that there existed a medical
6 emergency, life-limiting anomaly, rape, or incest and shall provide that information to the
7 Department of Health and Human Services pursuant to subsection (c) of this section. Materials
8 generated by the physician or provided by the physician to the Department of Health and Human
9 Services pursuant to this section shall not be public records under G.S. 132-1. The information
10 provided under this subsection shall be for statistical purposes only, and the confidentiality of the
11 patient and the physician shall be protected. It is the duty of the qualified physician to submit
12 information to the Department of Health and Human Services that omits identifying information
13 of the patient and complies with Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996
14 (HIPAA).

15"

16 **SECTION 2.4.** G.S. 90-21.82A reads as rewritten:

17 "**§ 90-21.82A. Suitable facilities for the performance of surgical abortions.**

18 ...

19 (b) During the first ~~12-six~~ weeks of pregnancy, a physician licensed to practice medicine
20 under this Chapter may perform a surgical abortion in a hospital, an ambulatory surgical facility,
21 or an abortion clinic; provided, however, that (i) the clinic has been licensed by the Department
22 of Health and Human Services to be a suitable facility for the performance of abortions and (ii)
23 the licensed physician performs the abortion in accordance with this Article and Article 1K of
24 this Chapter.

25 (c) After the ~~twelfth-sixth~~ week of pregnancy, a physician licensed to practice medicine
26 under this Chapter may not perform a surgical abortion or dispense abortion-inducing drugs as
27 permitted under North Carolina law in any facility other than a hospital."
28

29 **PART III. EFFECTIVE DATE**

30 **SECTION 3.** Except as otherwise provided, this act is effective when it becomes
31 law, with:

- 32 (1) Sections 1.1, 1.3, 1.4, and 1.5 of this act becoming effective October 1, 2025.
- 33 (2) Section 1.2 of this act becoming effective October 1, 2025, and applying to
34 petitions on or after that date.
- 35 (3) Section 1.6 of this act becoming effective at the beginning of the 2026-2027
36 school year.