

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2025

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SENATE BILL 294

Short Title: Budgeting Accountability and Transparency. (Public)

Sponsors: Senators Meyer, Applewhite, and Grafstein (Primary Sponsors).

Referred to: Rules and Operations of the Senate

March 17, 2025

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT TO INTRODUCE GREATER ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY INTO THE BUDGET PROCESS BY AMENDING THE STATE BUDGET ACT TO INCREASE PUBLIC NOTICE AND PARTICIPATION AND BY REMOVING LEGISLATIVE CONFIDENTIALITY FOR CERTAIN COMMUNICATIONS TO OR FROM LEGISLATORS REQUESTING BUDGET PROVISIONS OR FUNDS MADE.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. Article 5 of Chapter 143C of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new section to read:

"§ 143C-5-1A. Rules for adoption of the Current Operations Appropriations Act.

(a) To facilitate public participation in the appropriations process, prior to placing on the calendar a vote on (i) second reading on each house's version of the Current Operations Appropriations Act (Act) or (ii) adoption of a conference report that includes a conference committee substitute for the Act (collectively, "budget adoption votes"), each house of the General Assembly shall comply with all of the following requirements:

- (1) Provide for a period of at least one week in which the public may provide comments virtually on the Act. The Legislative Services Officer shall provide for a public comment portal through the General Assembly's website.
- (2) During the public notice period required by subdivision (1) of this subsection, hold at least one public hearing with opportunity for comments from the public in the State Legislative Building or the Legislative Office Building.
- (3) During the public notice period required by subdivision (1) of this subsection, hold at least three nonvoting committee meetings for consideration and debate on the Act. These meetings may be held by the full Appropriations Committees of each house, the Appropriations subcommittees or area committees, or any other standing committees with areas of responsibility germane to provisions in the Act.
- (4) Provide a copy of the Act and the Committee Report described in G.S. 143C-5-5 to all legislators at least five legislative days prior to any budget adoption votes.

(b) This section shall be considered and treated as a rule of procedure in the Senate and the House of Representatives unless provided otherwise by a rule of either house of the General Assembly.

SECTION 2. Article 17 of Chapter 120 of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new section to read:

"§ 120-133.5. Appropriations communications.



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1 (a) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, all documents received from State
2 agencies and from individual legislators to legislative employees or to other legislators
3 documenting requests for provisions or funding in the Current Operations Appropriations Act,
4 as defined in G.S. 143C-1-1(d), are no longer confidential and become public records when the
5 Current Operations Appropriations Act becomes law.

6 (b) Nothing in this section shall be construed as a waiver of the common law
7 attorney-client privilege nor of the common law work product doctrine with respect to legislators,
8 as defined in G.S. 120-129."

9 **SECTION 3.** This act is effective when it becomes law and applies to the adoption
10 of the Current Operations Appropriations Act for the fiscal year beginning on or after that date.