Chapter 99D.

Civil Rights.

§ 99D-1. Interference with Civil Rights.

(a) It is a violation of this Chapter if:

(1) Two or more persons, motivated by race, religion, ethnicity, or gender, but whether or not acting under color of law, conspire to interfere with the exercise or enjoyment by any other person or persons of a right secured by the Constitutions of the United States or North Carolina, or of a right secured by a law of the United States or North Carolina that enforces, interprets, or impacts on a constitutional right; and

(2) One or more persons engaged in such a conspiracy use force, repeated harassment, violence, physical harm to persons or property, or direct or indirect threats of physical harm to persons or property to commit an act in furtherance of the object of the conspiracy; and

(3) The commission of an act described in subdivision (2) interferes, or is an attempt to interfere, with the exercise or enjoyment of a right, described in subdivision (1), of another person.

(b) Any person whose exercise or enjoyment of a right described in subdivision (a)(1) has been interfered with, or against whom an attempt has been made to interfere with the exercise or enjoyment of such a right, by a violation of this Chapter may bring a civil action. The court may restrain and enjoin such future acts, and may award compensatory and punitive damages to the plaintiff. The court may award court costs and attorneys' fees to the prevailing party. However, a prevailing defendant may be awarded reasonable attorneys' fees only upon a showing that the case is frivolous, unreasonable, or without foundation.

(b1) The North Carolina Human Relations Commission may bring a civil action on behalf, and with the consent, of any person subjected to a violation of this Chapter. In any such action, the court may restrain and enjoin such future acts, and may award compensatory damages and punitive damages to the person on whose behalf the action was brought. Court costs may be awarded to the Commission or the defendant, whichever prevails. Notwithstanding the provisions of G.S. 114-2, the Commission shall be represented by the Commission's staff attorney.

(c) No civil action may be brought or maintained, and no liability may be imposed, under this Chapter against a governmental unit, a government official with respect to actions taken within the scope of his official governmental duties, or an employer or his agent with respect to actions taken concerning his employees within the scope of the employment relationship. (1987, c. 718; 1991, c. 433, ss. 1, 2.)