

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
1993 SESSION

CHAPTER 526
HOUSE BILL 1131

AN ACT TO DIRECT THE GOVERNOR'S COMMISSION ON WORK FORCE
PREPAREDNESS TO STUDY THE NEED FOR GRANT FUNDS FOR STATE
LITERACY PROGRAMS.

Whereas, the 1990 census shows that approximately five hundred forty thousand North Carolinians over the age of 25 have only an elementary school education; and

Whereas, this level of education is far below the level of twelve to fourteen years of education needed to function adequately in today's society; and

Whereas, the children of parents with low reading skills are destined to repeat the cycle of illiteracy unless they and their parents receive intensive literacy tutoring; and

Whereas, volunteer literacy councils across the State have worked faithfully as a partner of adult basic education and the education system of North Carolina for over 25 years; moreover, during this time, these councils have provided literacy services at their own expense, having received no public monies and having charged no fees for the services; and

Whereas, the need for program services continues to increase, but little money is available for program administration; this dearth of administrative support is forcing volunteer literacy programs to spend a larger amount of time and energy in fund-raising to keep up with administrative costs, thus having less time and energy to spend on recruitment of tutors and students and on facilitating student literacy; and

Whereas, limited federal funds have been approved for a North Carolina Literacy Resource Center which will be established under the jurisdiction of the Governor's Commission on Work Force Preparedness. The Center will coordinate literacy efforts within the State and will provide sorely needed resources and a link between the new National Institute for Literacy and service providers; and

Whereas a strong State literacy office is needed to: (i) support the volunteer literacy work now in progress, (ii) begin volunteer literacy work in the 35 North Carolina counties that do not have such programs, (iii) improve provider training, and (iv) launch new projects statewide that will greatly enhance the effectiveness of adult literacy efforts; and

Whereas, to accomplish these tasks will require a consistent and stable funding base; Now, therefore,

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

Section 1. The Commission on Work Force Preparedness shall study the efficacy of volunteer based community literacy programs and the need for establishing a State-funded grant program the purpose of which would be to provide funds to nonprofit, community-based adult literacy organizations. Grant funds would be used to assist these organizations in the development and implementation of adult literacy programs, to enable the organizations to provide services to more under-educated adults than are now being served, and for other purposes designed to improve the literacy rate in North Carolina.

Sec. 2. The Governor shall ensure the involvement of representatives from community-based literacy programs in and for the duration of the Commission's study authorized under Section 1 of this act.

Sec. 3. The Commission on Work Force Preparedness shall report its findings and recommendations pursuant to the study authorized under Section 1 of this act to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee not later than May 1, 1994.

Sec. 4. This act becomes effective July 1, 1993.

In the General Assembly read three times and ratified this the 24th day of July, 1993.

Dennis A. Wicker
President of the Senate

Daniel Blue, Jr.
Speaker of the House of Representatives