

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA**

**SESSION 1993**

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HOUSE BILL 1517

Short Title: Funds/Ergonomics Res. Ctr.

(Public)

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Sponsors: Representatives H. Hunter; and Bowman.

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Referred to: Appropriations.

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May 25, 1994

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT TO APPROPRIATE FUNDS TO THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR FOR  
THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN ERGONOMICS RESOURCE CENTER.

Whereas, Cumulative Trauma Disorders are the fastest growing occupational injury and illness classification in North Carolina; and

Whereas, Cumulative Trauma Disorders include physical ailments such as back strains, carpal tunnel syndrome, and tendonitis; and

Whereas, Cumulative Trauma Disorders can be permanently disabling to the extent that affected persons are unable to work or perform normal daily tasks such as holding a glass or brushing their teeth; and

Whereas, Cumulative Trauma Disorders have increased in excess of 2000% in the past eight years in North Carolina; and

Whereas, Cumulative Trauma Disorders, not including cumulative trauma injuries to the back, have an average worker's compensation payout in excess of \$11,500; and

Whereas, Cumulative Trauma Disorders can be extremely painful and can result in restricted bodily motions, inability to lift or grasp objects, or other debilitating conditions; and

Whereas, the United States Department of Labor estimates that Cumulative Trauma Disorders to soft human tissue will account for more than 50% of workers' compensation payouts by the end of this decade; and

Whereas, Cumulative Trauma Disorders can be prevented through the use of sound ergonomic principals to eliminate ergonomic stressors; and

1           Whereas, the failure to provide a workplace that is free from ergonomic  
2 stressors is a violation of the Occupational Safety and Health Act of North Carolina; and

3           Whereas, it is the intent of the General Assembly of North Carolina to  
4 encourage and facilitate the use of sound ergonomic work practices in North Carolina;  
5 and

6           Whereas, there are numerous employers in North Carolina who wish to  
7 incorporate sound ergonomic work practices in their workplaces; and

8           Whereas, the widespread use of sound ergonomic work practices could save  
9 millions of dollars paid out annually in workers' compensation claims, disability  
10 payments, and welfare payments; and

11           Whereas, it is the intent of the General Assembly of North Carolina to  
12 provide a mechanism by which North Carolina employers can voluntarily implement  
13 sound ergonomic work practices with the confidence that such practices will satisfy the  
14 requirements of the Occupational Safety and Health Act of North Carolina, and that  
15 North Carolina employers will not be cited for ergonomic violations during a reasonable  
16 implementation period so long as they are meeting stated benchmarks in addressing  
17 ergonomic hazards; and

18           Whereas, it is the intent of the General Assembly of North Carolina to  
19 provide technical assistance and support to North Carolina employers, to provide  
20 education, training, and assistance to North Carolina employers and employees, and  
21 promote research in an effort to reduce the incidence of Cumulative Trauma Disorder in  
22 North Carolina workplaces; Now, therefore,

23 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

24           Section 1. There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of  
25 Labor the sum of nine hundred one thousand sixteen dollars (\$901,016) for the 1994-95  
26 fiscal year for the establishment of the North Carolina Ergonomics Resource Center.

27           Sec. 2. This act becomes effective July 1, 1994.