

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA**

**SESSION 1993**

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SENATE BILL 268

Short Title: GPAC/End in-Person Taxpayer Assistance.

(Public)

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Sponsors: Senator Martin of Guilford.

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Referred to: Government Performance Audit.

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February 19, 1993

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT TO IMPLEMENT A RECOMMENDATION OF THE GOVERNMENT  
PERFORMANCE AUDIT COMMITTEE TO PHASE OUT PERSONALIZED,  
FACE-TO-FACE TAXPAYER ASSISTANCE AND INCREASE THE NUMBER  
OF TOLL-FREE TELEPHONE LINES USED FOR TAXPAYER ASSISTANCE.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

Section 1. The General Assembly finds that:

- (1) Revenue officers spend a significant percentage of their time helping taxpayers complete their tax returns and registering for business.
- (2) The taxpayer assistance function is an essential function of the Department of Revenue, but the Department should move toward providing assistance by way of toll-free lines rather than face-to-face in field offices.
- (3) By eliminating most face-to-face assistance and replacing it with increased telephone assistance over a five-year period, the Department of Revenue could eliminate 41 positions for a net savings of one million three hundred fifty-nine thousand five hundred seventy-six dollars (\$1,359,576) per year after the changes are fully implemented.
- (4) After these changes are implemented, taxpayers who are no longer receiving face-to-face assistance should be able to receive the same level of assistance over the telephone.
- (5) Telephone lines will be more convenient and efficient for taxpayers because they can receive assistance in their homes rather than waiting in line at a revenue office.

1           Sec. 2. The Department of Revenue, Field Operations Division, shall phase  
2 out most personalized, face-to-face taxpayer assistance that is currently provided by  
3 revenue officers in the field. Revenue officers should answer simple questions but  
4 should not fill out a taxpayer's return. At the appropriate point in the phaseout process,  
5 the Department of Revenue shall notify taxpayers to whom tax forms are mailed that  
6 revenue officers will no longer be providing this assistance, but the same level of  
7 assistance will be provided by telephone.

8           Sec. 3. The Department of Revenue, Field Operations Division, shall  
9 increase the scope of assistance currently provided by toll-free telephone lines to  
10 include all taxes. The Department of Revenue shall develop performance measures to  
11 monitor whether providing assistance by telephone is effective.

12           Sec. 4. Effective July 1, 1993, 10 revenue officer positions in the Field  
13 Operations Division of the Department of Revenue are eliminated. Effective July 1,  
14 1994, 10 more revenue officer positions in the Field Operations Division of the  
15 Department of Revenue are eliminated. It is the intent of the General Assembly that 10  
16 more revenue officer positions in the Field Operations Division of the Department of  
17 Revenue shall be eliminated in each of the following fiscal years: 1995-96 and 1996-97.  
18 It is the intent of the General Assembly that six more revenue officer positions in the  
19 Field Operations Division of the Department of Revenue shall be eliminated in the  
20 1997-98 fiscal year.

21           Sec. 5. The decrease in personnel provided in Section 4 of this act will result  
22 in savings to the General Fund of three hundred thirty-six thousand one hundred fifty-  
23 nine dollars (\$336,159) in the 1993-94 fiscal year and six hundred seventy-two  
24 thousand three hundred eighteen dollars (\$672,318) in the 1994-95 fiscal year. The  
25 intended personnel reductions in Section 4 of this bill, when combined with the actual  
26 reductions for the 1993-95 biennium, will result in the following annual savings to the  
27 General Fund:

28     1995-96	\$1,008,477
29     1996-97	\$1,344,636
30     1997-98	\$1,546,331
31     Each year thereafter	\$1,546,331.

32           Sec. 6. There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of  
33 Revenue, Field Operations Division, the sum of thirty-seven thousand three hundred  
34 fifty-one dollars (\$37,351) for the 1993-94 fiscal year and the sum of seventy-four  
35 thousand seven hundred two dollars (\$74,702) for the 1994-95 fiscal year to hire one  
36 new tax technician beginning in the 1993-94 fiscal year and one additional new tax  
37 technician beginning in the 1994-95 fiscal year. It is the intent of the General Assembly  
38 to appropriate additional funds to the Field Operations Division of the Department of  
39 Revenue so that one more tax technician position shall be added in each of the  
40 following fiscal years: 1995-96, 1996-97, and 1997-98. These tax technicians shall  
41 provide telephone assistance to taxpayers.

42           Sec. 7. This act becomes effective July 1, 1993.