

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2025**

S

3

**SENATE BILL 13
Commerce and Insurance Committee Substitute Adopted 2/4/25
House Committee Substitute Favorable 9/23/25**

Short Title: Political Terrorism Prevention Act.

(Public)

Sponsors:

Referred to:

January 30, 2025

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT TO ENHANCE CRIMINAL PENALTIES FOR POLITICALLY MOTIVATED
ACTS OF VIOLENCE.

Whereas, a functioning democracy depends on the ability of citizens to engage in public discourse through protest, debate, advocacy, and speech, without fear of retribution or violence; and

Whereas, political rhetoric, heated debate, and passionate disagreement are part of the American tradition, but violence in response to those ideas is not; and

Whereas, elected officials, public servants, campus speakers, political candidates, journalists, and everyday citizens have increasingly become the targets of threats, harassment, and physical attacks simply for expressing political views; and

Whereas, public campuses, political rallies, and social media platforms have become modern battlegrounds for ideological suppression, where disagreement is met not with argument, but with intimidation and, at times, acts of violence; and

Whereas, recent years have seen a disturbing rise in politically motivated violent acts, including the attempted assassination of Congressman Steve Scalise in 2017, the attempted assassination of Justice Brett Kavanaugh in 2022, the multiple assassination attempts on President Donald J. Trump in 2024, as well as the arson attack on Governor Shapiro's Residence in Pennsylvania, the assassination of Minnesota State Rep. Melissa Hortman, and most recently, the horrific and public assassination of Charlie Kirk in 2025; and

Whereas, these attacks are not random, but intentional efforts to silence speech, suppress dissent, and enforce ideological conformity through terror; and

Whereas, politically motivated violence is not merely criminal, it is an attack on the First Amendment, on civil society, and on the American way of life; and

Whereas, the State of North Carolina reaffirms its unwavering commitment to the principles of free expression, civil dialogue, and peaceful political engagement; and

Whereas, it is the duty of this General Assembly to protect its citizens, its public servants, and its democratic institutions from those who would use violence to silence political beliefs; Now, therefore,

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. G.S. 15A-101 reads as rewritten:

"§ 15A-101. Definitions.

Unless the context clearly requires otherwise, the following words have the listed meanings:

...



1 (6a) Politically Motivated Act of Violence. – Any act that constitutes a criminal
 2 offense under North Carolina law in which the offender intentionally targets,
 3 harms, threatens, or attempts to harm another person, in whole or in part,
 4 because of the victim's real or perceived political beliefs, viewpoints,
 5 affiliations, party membership, advocacy, candidacy for public office, voting
 6 history, participation in lawful political demonstrations, or public expression
 7 on political issues.

8 "

9 **SECTION 2.** G.S. 15A-1340.16(d) reads as rewritten:

10 "(d) Aggravating Factors. – The following are aggravating factors:

11 ...

12 (15a) The offense was a politically motivated act of violence as defined in
 13 G.S. 15A-101. The existence of this aggravating factor shall not limit the State
 14 from alleging other aggravating factors under G.S. 15A-1340.16.

15 "

16 **SECTION 3.** Article 81B of Chapter 15A of the General Statutes is amended by
 17 adding a new section to read:

18 "**§ 15A-1340.16H. Politically motivated violence sentence enhancement.**

19 (a) If a person is convicted of a felony offense, and the court or trier of fact finds that the
 20 offense was a politically motivated act of violence, then all of the following apply:

21 (1) The person shall be sentenced at a felony class level one class higher than the
 22 principal felony for which the person was convicted.

23 (2) The offender shall be ineligible for parole, early release, or any form of
 24 sentencing reduction.

25 (b) Political motivation may be proven by direct or circumstantial evidence, including
 26 statements, manifestos, affiliations, or targeting patterns.

27 (c) An indictment or information for the felony shall allege in that indictment or
 28 information the facts that qualify the offense for an enhancement under this section. One pleading
 29 is sufficient for all felonies that are tried at a single trial.

30 (d) The State shall prove the issues set out in subsection (a) of this section beyond a
 31 reasonable doubt during the same trial in which the defendant is tried for the felony unless the
 32 defendant pleads guilty or no contest to the issues. If the defendant pleads guilty or no contest to
 33 the felony but pleads not guilty to the issues set out in subsection (a) of this section, then a jury
 34 shall be impaneled to determine the issues."

35 **SECTION 4.** G.S. 15A-2000(e) reads as rewritten:

36 "(e) Aggravating Circumstances. – Aggravating circumstances that may be considered are
 37 limited to the following:

38 ...

39 (13) The capital felony was committed against a victim because of the victim's
 40 political beliefs, public political activity, candidacy for office, or affiliation
 41 with a political movement, and the act was committed to silence, intimidate,
 42 or retaliate against political expression."

43 **SECTION 5.** G.S. 15A-2004(b) reads as rewritten:

44 "(b) A sentence of death may not be imposed upon a defendant convicted of a capital
 45 felony unless the State has given notice of its intent to seek the death penalty. Notice of intent to
 46 seek the death penalty shall be given to the defendant and filed with the court on or before the
 47 date of the pretrial conference in capital cases required by Rule 24 of the General Rules of
 48 Practice for the Superior and District Courts, or the arraignment, whichever is later. If the State
 49 alleges political motivation under G.S. 15A-2000(e)(13), that aggravating circumstance shall be
 50 included in the notice of intent to seek the death penalty and may be considered during capital
 51 sentencing pursuant to G.S. 15A-2000, even if the defendant pleads guilty. A court may

1 discipline or sanction the State for failure to comply with the time requirements in Rule 24, but
2 shall not declare a case as noncapital as a consequence of such failure. In addition to any
3 discipline or sanctions the court may impose, the court shall continue the case for a sufficient
4 time so that the defendant is not prejudiced by any delays in holding the hearing required by Rule
5 24."

6 **SECTION 6.** Article 3A of Chapter 114 of the General Statutes is amended by
7 adding a new section to read:

8 "**§ 114-11.7. Special prosecutor and Attorney General notice.**

9 (a) The district attorney shall notify the Attorney General in any case involving a
10 politically motivated act of violence as defined in G.S. 15A-101.

11 (b) Upon request of the district attorney, the Attorney General may assign a special
12 prosecutor to any case involving a politically motivated act of violence as defined in
13 G.S. 15A-101.

14 (c) In addition to any rights conferred by the Crime Victims' Rights Act, Article 46 of
15 Chapter 15A of the General Statutes, the victim, or next of kin, shall be permitted to present an
16 impact statement during any phase of a criminal proceeding based on a politically motivated act
17 of violence as defined in G.S. 15A-101."

18 **SECTION 7.** If any provision of this act or its application is held invalid, the
19 invalidity does not affect other provisions or applications of this act that can be given effect
20 without the invalid provisions or application and, to this end, the provisions of this act are
21 severable.

22 **SECTION 8.** This act becomes effective December 1, 2025, and applies to offenses
23 committed on or after that date.