

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2025**

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HOUSE BILL 334

Short Title: GSC Unif. Community Prop. Disp. at Death Act. (Public)

Sponsors: Representative Stevens.

For a complete list of sponsors, refer to the North Carolina General Assembly web site.

Referred to: Judiciary 2, if favorable, Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House

March 10, 2025

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT TO ENACT THE UNIFORM COMMUNITY PROPERTY DISPOSITION AT
DEATH ACT, AS RECOMMENDED BY THE GENERAL STATUTES COMMISSION.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. Chapter 31C of the General Statutes is repealed.

SECTION 2. Chapter 30 of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new Article
to read:

"Article 5.

"Uniform Community Property Disposition at Death Act.

"§ 30-41. Title.

This Article may be cited as the Uniform Community Property Disposition at Death Act.

"§ 30-42. Definitions.

In this Article, the following definitions apply:

- (1) Community-property spouse. – An individual in a marriage or other relationship that satisfies all of the following:
 - a. Community property could be acquired under the relationship.
 - b. The relationship remains in existence at the time of death of either party to the relationship.
- (2) Electronic. – Relating to technology having electrical, digital, magnetic, wireless, optical, electromagnetic, or similar capabilities.
- (3) Jurisdiction. – The United States, a state, a foreign country, or a political subdivision of a foreign country.
- (4) Partition. – Voluntarily divide property to which this Article otherwise would apply.
- (5) Person. – Defined in G.S. 28A-1-1.
- (6) Personal representative. – Defined in G.S. 28A-1-1.
- (7) Property. – Defined in G.S. 32C-1-102.
- (8) Reclassify. – To change the characterization or treatment of community property to property owned separately by community-property spouses.
- (9) Record. – Information inscribed on a tangible medium or stored in an electronic or other medium and retrievable in perceivable form.
- (10) Sign. – With present intent to authenticate or adopt a record, to do either of the following:
 - a. Execute or adopt a tangible symbol.



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- b. Attach to or logically associate with the record an electronic symbol, sound, or process.
- (11) State. – Consists of the following:
- a. A state of the United States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the United States Virgin Islands, or any other territory or insular possession subject to the jurisdiction of the United States.
- b. An Indian tribe or band or Alaskan native village that is recognized by federal law or formally acknowledged by an entity listed in sub-subdivision a. of this subdivision.

"§ 30-43. Included and excluded property.

(a) Subject to subsection (b) of this section, this Article applies to all of the following property of a community-property spouse, without regard to how the property is titled or held:

- (1) If a decedent was domiciled in this State at the time of death, all of the following property:
- a. All or a proportionate part of each item of personal property, wherever located, that was community property under the law of the jurisdiction where the decedent or the surviving community-property spouse was domiciled either when the community property was acquired or, after acquisition, became community property.
- b. Income, rent, profit, appreciation, or other increase derived from or traceable to property described in sub-subdivision a. of this subdivision.
- c. Personal property traceable to property described in sub-subdivision a. or b. of this subdivision.
- (2) Regardless of whether a decedent was domiciled in this State at the time of death, all of the following property:
- a. All or a proportionate part of each item of real property located in this State traceable to community property or acquired with community property under the law of the jurisdiction where the decedent or the surviving community-property spouse was domiciled either when the community property was acquired or, after acquisition, became community property.
- b. Income, rent, profit, appreciation, or other increase, derived from or traceable to property described in sub-subdivision a. of this subdivision.

(b) If community-property spouses acquired community property by complying with the law of a jurisdiction that allows for creation of community property by transfer of property to a trust, this Article applies to the property only to the extent the property is held in the trust or characterized as community property by the terms of the trust or the law of the jurisdiction under which the trust was created.

(c) This Article does not apply to the following property:

- (1) Property that community-property spouses have partitioned or reclassified.
- (2) Property that is the subject of a waiver of rights granted by this Article.

"§ 30-44. Form of partition, reclassification, or waiver.

(a) Community-property spouses domiciled in this State may partition or reclassify property to which this Article otherwise would apply. The partition or reclassification must be in a record signed by both community-property spouses. Unless both community-property spouses agree otherwise, partition of community property is presumed to result in each spouse owning a one-half separate property interest in each item of property addressed in the record.

(b) A community-property spouse domiciled in this State may waive a right granted by this Article only by complying with the law of this State, including this State's choice-of-law rules, applicable to waiver of a spousal property right.

"§ 30-45. Community property presumption.

This Article is presumed to apply to all property acquired by a community-property spouse when domiciled in a jurisdiction where property acquired by the community-property spouse was presumed to be community property under the law of that jurisdiction. This presumption may be rebutted by a preponderance of the evidence.

"§ 30-46. Disposition of property at death.

(a) One-half of the property to which this Article applies belongs to the surviving community-property spouse of a decedent and is not subject to disposition by the decedent at death.

(b) One-half of the property to which this Article applies belongs to the decedent and is subject to disposition by the decedent at death.

(c) The property that belongs to the decedent under subsection (b) of this section is not subject to the surviving community-property spouse's right to petition for an elective share under Article 1A of this Chapter or the surviving community-property spouse's right to elect a life estate under Article 8 of Chapter 29 of the General Statutes.

(d) This section does not apply to property transferred by right of survivorship or under a revocable trust or other nonprobate transfer.

(e) This section does not limit the right of a surviving community-property spouse to the year's allowance under Article 4 of this Chapter or the property exemptions under Article X of the North Carolina Constitution and Article 16 of Chapter 1C of the General Statutes.

(f) If at death a decedent purports to transfer to a third person property that, under this section, belongs to the surviving community-property spouse and transfers other property to the surviving community-property spouse, this section does not limit the authority of the court under other laws of this State to require that the community-property spouse elect between retaining the property transferred to the community-property spouse or asserting rights under this Article.

"§ 30-47. Other remedies available at death.

(a) At the death of a community-property spouse, the surviving community-property spouse or a personal representative, heir, or nonprobate transferee of the decedent may assert a right based on either of the following acts:

(1) An act of the surviving community-property spouse or decedent during the marriage or other relationship under which community property then could be acquired.

(2) An act of the decedent that takes effect at the death of the decedent.

(b) In determining a right under subsection (a) of this section and corresponding remedy, the court shall apply equitable principles and may consider the community property law of the jurisdiction where the decedent or surviving community-property spouse was domiciled when the property was acquired or enhanced.

"§ 30-48. Right of surviving community-property spouse.

(a) The surviving community-property spouse of a decedent may assert a claim for relief with respect to a right under this Article in accordance with the following:

(1) With respect to a claim for relief asserting a right in or to property, the surviving community-property spouse must do either of the following:

a. Within one year of the decedent's date of death, commence a civil action in superior court against an heir, devisee, or nonprobate transferee that is in possession of the property.

b. Within six months after the issuance of letters testamentary or letters of administration in connection with the decedent's testate or intestate proceeding, file a petition with the clerk of superior court or

commence a civil action in superior court in the county in which the primary administration of the decedent's estate lies. A petition with the clerk of superior court shall be filed as an estate proceeding, and the proceeding shall be conducted in accordance with the procedures of Article 2 of Chapter 28A of the General Statutes.

(2) With respect to a claim for relief other than a claim under subdivision (a)(1) of this section, the surviving community-property spouse must do either of the following:

a. If a personal representative of the decedent's estate is not appointed, commence a civil action in superior court within one year of the decedent's date of death.

b. Satisfy the procedural requirements of sub-subdivision (a)(1)b. of this section.

(3) The incapacity of the surviving spouse does not toll the time for commencing an action or filing a petition as provided in this section.

(b) Unless a timely demand is made under sub-subdivision (a)(1)b. or (a)(2)b. of this section, the personal representative may distribute the assets of the decedent's estate without personal liability for a community-property spouse's claim under this Article.

"§ 30-49. Right of heir, devisee, or nonprobate transferee.

An heir, devisee, or nonprobate transferee of a deceased community-property spouse may assert a claim for relief with respect to a right under this Article in accordance with the following:

(1) With respect to a claim asserting a right in or to property, the heir, devisee, or nonprobate transferee must do either of the following:

a. Within one year of the decedent's date of death, commence a civil action in superior court against the surviving community-property spouse who is in possession of the property.

b. Satisfy the procedural requirements of G.S. 30-48(a)(1)b.

(2) With respect to a claim for relief other than a claim under subdivision (1) of this section, the heir, devisee, or nonprobate transferee must do either of the following:

a. If a personal representative of the decedent's estate is not appointed, commence a civil action in superior court within one year of the decedent's date of death.

b. Satisfy the procedural requirements of G.S. 30-48(a)(1)b.

(3) The incapacity of the heir, devisee, or nonprobate transferee does not toll the time for commencing an action or filing a petition as provided in this section.

"§ 30-50. Protection of third person.

(a) With respect to property to which this Article applies, a person is not liable under this Article if all of the following apply:

(1) The person transacts in good faith and for value with either of the following:

a. A community-property spouse.

b. After the death of the decedent, a surviving community-property spouse, personal representative, heir, devisee, or nonprobate transferee of the decedent.

(2) The person does not know or have reason to know that the other party to the transaction is exceeding or improperly exercising the party's authority.

(b) Good faith under subdivision (a)(1) of this section does not require the person to inquire into the extent or propriety of the exercise of authority by the other party to the transaction.

(c) With respect to real property to which this Article applies, a lien creditor or a purchaser for value of the property is not liable under this Article unless, before the lien was

1 acquired or the purchase was made, the community-property spouses gave notice in a registered
2 instrument of their intention for this Article to apply to the property. Priority among this
3 registered instrument and other registered instruments is governed by G.S. 47-18.

4 **"§ 30-51. Principles of law and equity.**

5 The principles of law and equity supplement this Article except to the extent inconsistent
6 with this Article.

7 **"§ 30-52. Uniformity of application and construction.**

8 In applying and construing this Article, a court shall consider the promotion of uniformity of
9 the law among jurisdictions that enact the Uniform Community Property Disposition at Death
10 Act."

11 **SECTION 3.** G.S. 28A-2-4 reads as rewritten:

12 **"§ 28A-2-4. Subject matter jurisdiction of the clerk of superior court in estate proceedings.**

13 (a) The clerks of superior court of this State, as ex officio judges of probate, ~~shall have~~
14 original jurisdiction of estate proceedings. Except as provided in subdivision (4) of this
15 subsection, the jurisdiction of the clerk of superior court is exclusive. Estate proceedings include,
16 but are not limited to, the following:

17 ...

18 (4) Proceedings to ascertain heirs or devisees, to approve settlement agreements
19 pursuant to G.S. 28A-2-10, to determine questions of construction of wills, to
20 determine priority among creditors, to determine whether a person is in
21 possession of property belonging to an estate, to order the recovery of property
22 of the estate in possession of third parties, to determine a claim for relief
23 regarding the disposition of community property at death as provided in
24 Article 5 of Chapter 30 of the General Statutes, and to determine the existence
25 or nonexistence of any immunity, power, privilege, duty, or right. Any party
26 or the clerk of superior court may file a notice of transfer of a proceeding
27 pursuant to this subdivision to the Superior Court Division of the General
28 Court of Justice as provided in G.S. 28A-2-6(h). In the absence of a transfer
29 to superior court, Article 26 of Chapter 1 of the General Statutes ~~shall apply~~
30 applies to an estate proceeding pending before the clerk of superior court to
31 the extent consistent with this Article.

32 (b) Nothing in this section ~~shall affect~~ affects the right of a person to file an action in the
33 Superior Court Division of the General Court of Justice for declaratory relief under Article 26 of
34 Chapter 1 of the General Statutes. In the event that either the petitioner or the respondent in an
35 estate proceeding requests declaratory relief under Article 26 of Chapter 1 of the General
36 Statutes, either party may move for a transfer of the proceeding to the Superior Court Division
37 of the General Court of Justice as provided in Article 21 of Chapter 7A of the General Statutes.
38 In the absence of a removal to superior court, Article 26 of Chapter 1 of the General Statutes
39 ~~shall apply~~ applies to an estate proceeding to the extent consistent with this Article.

40 (c) Without otherwise limiting the jurisdiction of the Superior Court Division of the
41 General Court of Justice, the clerk of superior court ~~shall does~~ not have jurisdiction under
42 subsection (a) or (b) of this section or G.S. 28A-2-5 of the following:

43 ...

44 (4) ~~Proceeding~~ Proceedings to determine proper county of venue as provided in
45 G.S. 28A-3-2.

46"

47 **SECTION 4.** If a provision of this act or its application to a person or circumstance
48 is held invalid, the invalidity does not affect another provision or application that can be given
49 effect without the invalid provision.

50 **SECTION 5.** The Revisor of Statutes shall cause to be printed, as annotations to the
51 published General Statutes, all relevant portions of the Official Comments to the Uniform

1 Community Property Disposition at Death Act and all explanatory comments of the drafters of
2 this act as the Revisor may deem appropriate.

3 **SECTION 6.** If a right with respect to property to which this act applies is acquired,
4 extinguished, or barred on the expiration of a limitation period that began to run under another
5 statute before the effective date of this act, that statute continues to apply to the right even if the
6 statute has been repealed or superseded by this act.

7 **SECTION 7.** This act becomes effective January 1, 2026. Except as provided in
8 Section 6 of this act, this act applies to a judicial proceeding commenced on or after that date,
9 regardless of the date of death of the decedent.