

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2025

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SENATE BILL 988

Short Title: Protecting Workers in the Age of AI Act. (Public)

Sponsors: Senators Batch, Garrett, and Theodros (Primary Sponsors).

Referred to: Rules and Operations of the Senate

May 4, 2026

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT TO PROTECT WORKERS IN THE AGE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND
TO APPROPRIATE FUNDS FOR ITS IMPLEMENTATION.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. This act shall be known and may be cited as the "Protect Workers in the Age of AI Act."

SECTION 2. Part 3B of Article 10 of Chapter 143B of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new section to read:

"§ 143B-438.14A. Artificial intelligence workforce transition and retraining.

(a) There is established within the Department of Commerce the Artificial Intelligence Workforce Transition Program (Program) and the AI Workforce Transition Fund (Fund).

(b) The purpose of the Program is to allocate funding to support workers displaced due to artificial intelligence or automation. Appropriations from the Fund shall be used for job retraining, credentialing programs, and workforce education. Funding shall be prioritized for training programs in health care, advanced manufacturing, infrastructure, and other skilled trades.

(c) Employers receiving State economic incentives shall report to the Department layoffs attributable to automation or artificial intelligence.

(d) The Department may engage in partnerships with community colleges, workforce boards, and apprenticeship programs to carry out the purposes of this section."

SECTION 3. G.S. 115D-20 is amended by adding a new subdivision to read:

"(16) To partner with the Department of Commerce to implement the Artificial Intelligence Workforce Transition Program pursuant to G.S. 143B-438.14A."

SECTION 4. Notwithstanding G.S. 115C-562.8 and any other provision of law to the contrary, the State Education Assistance Authority shall transfer to the Department of Commerce the sum of fifty million dollars (\$50,000,000) in unencumbered, nonrecurring funds remaining at the end of the 2025-2026 fiscal year that would otherwise be carried forward in the 2026-2027 fiscal year for the award of opportunity scholarship grants pursuant to G.S. 115C-562.8(d)(2). These funds are hereby appropriated to the Department of Commerce for the 2026-2027 fiscal year to establish the AI Workforce Transition Fund created in this act and to provide grants to community colleges and workforce training providers.

SECTION 5. This act becomes effective July 1, 2026.

