

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2025**

**S**

**1**

**SENATE BILL 995**

Short Title:   Fix Republican Failures on Public Safety Act. (Public)

---

Sponsors:    Senators Grafstein and Batch (Primary Sponsors).

---

Referred to:  Rules and Operations of the Senate

---

May 4, 2026

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
AN ACT TO PROVIDE PAY INCREASES FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS AND  
CORRECTIONAL OFFICERS, TO ESTABLISH MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES FOR  
PUBLIC SAFETY PERSONNEL, AND TO ADDRESS THE STAFFING AND  
RETENTION CRISIS CREATED BY REPUBLICAN FAILURES TO FUND PUBLIC  
SAFETY.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

**LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS**

**SECTION 1.** The General Assembly finds that:

- (1) For years, North Carolina Republicans have controlled the General Assembly and had every opportunity to invest in the men and women who keep our communities safe and they have failed to do so.
- (2) As a direct result of Republican inaction, North Carolina is experiencing a severe public safety staffing crisis. Law enforcement agencies across North Carolina are struggling to recruit and retain qualified officers due to non-competitive pay, leading to dangerous understaffing in communities statewide.
- (3) North Carolina law enforcement officers and correctional officers are among the lowest-paid in the region, lagging behind neighboring states, including Virginia, South Carolina, Georgia, and Tennessee.
- (4) High turnover and chronic understaffing compromise public safety and place enormous strain on the officers who remain, contributing to burnout, mental health challenges, and increased risk of on-the-job injury.
- (5) The General Assembly has a responsibility to correct these Republican failures, to invest in public safety, and to ensure North Carolina can recruit.

**LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER PAY INCREASES**

**SECTION 2.(a)** Effective July 1, 2026, the annual salary of each sworn law enforcement officer employed by the State of North Carolina shall be increased by seven thousand five hundred dollars (\$7,500).

**SECTION 2.(b)** The Office of State Human Resources shall establish a competitive salary schedule for law enforcement officers that accounts for years of service, rank, and regional cost-of-living and shall update this schedule not less than every two years. At minimum, the entry-level salary for a State Highway Patrol trooper shall be no less than sixty-two thousand five hundred dollars (\$62,500) per year.



1           **SECTION 2.(c)** The Department of State Treasurer, in consultation with the Office  
2 of State Budget and Management, shall make available to counties and municipalities a grant  
3 program to assist local governments in providing comparable pay increases to locally employed  
4 law enforcement officers.

5           **SECTION 2.(d)** For purposes of this section, "law enforcement officer" has the same  
6 meaning as "criminal justice officer," as defined in G.S. 17C-2, and includes sheriffs' deputies  
7 and municipal police officers.

## 8 9 **CORRECTIONAL OFFICER PAY INCREASES**

10           **SECTION 3.(a)** Effective July 1, 2026, the minimum starting salary for a  
11 correctional officer employed by the Department of Adult Correction shall be forty-five thousand  
12 dollars (\$45,000) per year. All currently employed correctional officers shall receive an annual  
13 salary increase of eight thousand dollars (\$8,000), effective July 1, 2026.

14           **SECTION 3.(b)** The Secretary of Adult Correction shall develop a retention  
15 incentive program that provides:

- 16           (1) A retention bonus of two thousand five hundred dollars (\$2,500) for each  
17 correctional officer who completes five years of service.
- 18           (2) A retention bonus of five thousand dollars (\$5,000) for each correctional  
19 officer who completes 10 years of service.
- 20           (3) Enhanced hazard pay of three thousand dollars (\$3,000) per year for officers  
21 assigned to facilities operating at or below seventy percent (70%) of  
22 authorized staffing levels.

23           **SECTION 3.(c)** The Department of Adult Correction shall report to the Joint  
24 Legislative Oversight Committee on Justice and Public Safety on vacancy rates and staffing  
25 levels quarterly, beginning October 1, 2026.

## 26 27 **MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES FOR PUBLIC SAFETY PERSONNEL**

28           **SECTION 4.(a)** The General Assembly finds that:

- 29           (1) Law enforcement officers and correctional officers experience  
30 disproportionately high rates of posttraumatic stress, depression, anxiety, and  
31 suicide compared to the general population.
- 32           (2) Stigma and lack of access to confidential services remain significant barriers  
33 to officers seeking mental health treatment.
- 34           (3) Addressing officer mental health is inseparable from addressing officer  
35 retention and public safety outcomes.

36           **SECTION 4.(b)** The State Health Plan, in coordination with the Department of  
37 Health and Human Services and the Department of Adult Correction, shall:

- 38           (1) Ensure that all law enforcement officers and correctional officers covered  
39 under the State Health Plan have access to a minimum of 12 confidential  
40 mental health visits per year at no cost to the officer, with confidentiality  
41 protections that prevent disclosure to supervisors or employing agencies.
- 42           (2) Maintain a dedicated, 24-hour mental health crisis line staffed by clinicians  
43 with training specific to public safety personnel.

44           **SECTION 4.(c)** The Department of Public Safety and the Department of Adult  
45 Correction shall each establish a peer support program that does the following:

- 46           (1) Trains and certifies peer support officers in evidence-based mental health first  
47 aid and crisis intervention;
- 48           (2) Provides peer support officers with appropriate protected leave to perform  
49 peer support duties; and
- 50           (3) Partners with The University of North Carolina System and the Community  
51 College System to develop and deliver peer support training curricula.

1           **SECTION 4.(d)** Beginning January 1, 2028, and then annually thereafter, the  
2 Department of Public Safety and the Department of Adult Correction shall each report annually  
3 to the General Assembly on:

- 4           (1) The number of officers utilizing mental health services;
- 5           (2) Officer suicide rates and trends;
- 6           (3) Retention and vacancy data correlated with mental health programs; and
- 7           (4) Recommendations for program improvements.

## 8 9 **APPROPRIATIONS**

10           **SECTION 5.** To fund the compensation increases awarded in this act and to carry  
11 out the other purposes of this act, the following funds are appropriated, effective July 1, 2026:

- 12           (1) There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Office of State Budget and  
13 Management the sum of thirty-three million one hundred thousand dollars  
14 (\$33,100,000) in recurring funds for the 2026-2027 fiscal year to fund a State  
15 law enforcement officer pay raise of seven thousand five hundred dollars  
16 (\$7,500).
- 17           (2) There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of Adult  
18 Correction the sum of ninety-three million one hundred thousand dollars  
19 (\$93,100,000) in recurring funds for the 2026-2027 fiscal year to fund  
20 correctional officer pay raises of eight thousand dollars (\$8,000) and other  
21 compression adjustments.
- 22           (3) There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of Public  
23 Safety the sum of eight million nine hundred thousand dollars (\$8,900,000) in  
24 recurring funds for the 2026-2027 fiscal year to fund correctional officer pay  
25 raises of eight thousand dollars (\$8,000) and other compression adjustments.
- 26           (4) There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of Adult  
27 Correction the sum of one million five hundred thousand dollars (\$1,500,000)  
28 in recurring funds for the 2026-2027 fiscal year to fund retention bonuses.
- 29           (5) There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of Adult  
30 Correction the sum of nine million one hundred thousand dollars (\$9,100,000)  
31 for the 2026-2027 fiscal year for hazard pay.
- 32           (6) There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of the State  
33 Treasurer the sum of one hundred million dollars (\$100,000,000) in the  
34 2026-2027 fiscal year for the LEO Local Government Grant Program.
- 35           (7) There is appropriated from the General Fund to the State Health Plan the sum  
36 of thirty million dollars (\$30,000,000) in the 2026-2027 fiscal year to fund the  
37 mental health services expansion of 12 visits per year as provided by this act.
- 38           (8) There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of Public  
39 Safety the sum of ten million dollars (\$10,000,000) in the 2026-2027 fiscal  
40 year for peer support programs as provided by this act.

## 41 42 **EFFECTIVE DATE**

43           **SECTION 6.** Except as otherwise provided, this act becomes effective July 1, 2026.