

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2025

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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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

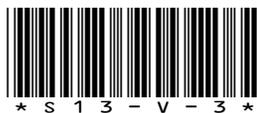
30 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

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

32 **"§ 15A-101. Definitions.**

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

34 ...



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.